

“Where Are They Now” Series: Mark Rasmussen

Intro: This is the Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. Your host, Caitlin Pyle, digs deep with people from all over the world who make money from home. Get ready to wake up to a world of possibility for freedom, flexibility, and a life you'll love.

Caitlin: Well, hi everybody. Welcome back to another episode of Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. We're back for season 2. I'm your host Caitlin Pyle and we've decided to mix it up and bring you a series of 10 episodes, each episode with a different topic all related to working at home. This series is called “Where are they now?” where I'm re-interviewing previously featured guests to explore their progress and hear their journey since we last spoke. You can find a link to all the previous interviews in the show notes and join us now as we follow up with the Work-At-Home Hero, Mark. Mark Rasmussen, welcome back to the show.

Mark: Thanks Caitlin. That's a lovely introduction and you got my surname right -- I'm very impressed.

Caitlin: Thank you so much. Well, it might have something to do with the fact that I've interviewed you before and I've had to say it. And you're in, you're in Canada, which is where you were when I last had you on the show, correct?

Mark: That's right, yeah, still Toronto.

Caitlin: Well, we were talking a little bit before we went on record here that you're thinking about moving back to the motherland of Australia.

Mark: Well, what's left of it after the bush fires, but yeah.

Caitlin: Dude, you're telling me.

Mark: No, it's been heartbreaking. I'll be honest with you, it's been really tough. For all my entire life and everybody I know back there that, you know, we have droughts, we have bush fires, it's sort of sick. From there we've had floods and everything but everybody, including myself, says I think it's the worst its ever, ever been. So it's been really tough and I've had family directly affected and friends indirectly and stuff. So it's been really, really hard to watch from afar but yeah, I would love to return to the motherland.

Caitlin: Well, what kind of sprung that decision on? Is it just kind of wanting to move on from Canada? You've lived all over the place though, right?

Mark: Yeah, yeah. So I mean, I've lived in the U.K, I lived in London for a bit and Edinburgh. I mean, I'm kinda talking like, you know, a year or more. I lived in Auckland, for about six months or so. I'm originally from Melbourne, but I lived in Sydney for 2 and 1/2 years.

Caitlin: Lemme, lemme stop you because I just realized my listeners are probably gonna, our listeners are probably gonna laugh at me but I told them your name but then I didn't do the fancy intro. So lemme just stop and say Mark was a professional writer for over 15 years and he wrote and produced three short films, he's done five feature scripts, and an adult novel. Oh, sounds kinda risqué, Mark, jeez.

Mark: Actually, adult fiction.

Caitlin: Adult fiction, okay. That makes more sense. On top of his creative writing, you're also a respected journalist and reporter and you've covered everything to sport, film, music, business, travel, the whole works and, but since you've been working from home, you've been doing professional editing, copy writing and building websites. I remember this from your previous episode and that's where you get most of your income. You had your first and only child about 2 years ago, so your focus now has been on writing kids' books, right? And you've done two so far, yeah?

Mark: Yeah, so he actually, kinda actually turns 3 mid March, he's actually a St. Patrick's Day baby.

Caitlin: How about that.

Mark: So he turns 3, so yeah, for some reason, not some reason, he's the reason I guess, I just kind of, I was reading so many kids' books and I would honestly, a lot of them are so bad or poorly written or without much of a message. And I thought I could do better than this. So he's kinda been the inspiration behind couple of the ones which I'm tryna get out there now but kind of three years, wow.

Caitlin: And, how has your income been since we last interviewed you? It fluctuates obviously as most of our incomes do when we work from home.

Mark: Yeah, it has. It was steady there for a little while, and then it's kinda took a hit in more recent times cause I'm really starting to segue out of web builds, especially. But I get as much copyrighting work as I would like, it pays more but I'm just starting to segue out of that and so it's kinda taking a bit of a dive. I'm not really putting much stuff out there anymore. I'm just, to be honest, I'm really over. I'm really over it and I wanna go a different way.

Caitlin: That's great. Well, let's talk about that. Where do you wanna go? And what do you think is inspiring this change, this push or change?

Mark: Well, it's a combination of things. I've been in North America now for eight or so years. So, yeah, five in LA, before I came to Toronto where I've been here for, lived for something like eight or nine years now, of being in North America. I'm just a bit fatigued of North America, no offense to anyone North American listeners, and I suddenly have a lot of North American friends but I'm just fatigued and I've been feeling this pull or this call to go home. I just would like to go home for a while. I've only been home once in that whole entire time and I'm really starting to kinda miss my tribe and my parents are getting older and things like that, so it's a combination of that but it's also, yeah, I really wanna, I wanna live somewhere cheaper and live a more humble existence, if that makes sense? Because I really wanna channel more of my creative side and my writing is still the one thing I love more than anything, other than my son. So, I wanna do that and I'm wanting to also tie it all up with automating my income but in a different way and using the writing as a catalyst to build up a bit of a profile and obviously, hopefully sell some books and get them out there and then start building a writing program around that. That's essentially where I'm aiming and to do that I really do have to live out of a major city and I'm actually tired of living in cities right now and I've made the seas around the world. So, I just would like to live somewhere cheaper and make all these kinda happen and give myself a little bit more time and base creatively and--

Caitlin: The country named Bali is flashing in my head right now, because it's right close to Australia. It's easy to get to, simple I should say, maybe not easy, and it's a lot cheaper from what I understand and Thailand as well.

Mark: Yeah, I have fled with the idea of Bali. I've actually got a friend from high school that's in Bali and everything and I have really, seriously thought about it because of the cost factors and everything. I think I really just wanna go home for now and then sort of figure it out but yeah, I've seriously thought about that. Even over the last few years I've thought about it because I went to a holiday to the Dominican Republic, for example, and I totally fell in love with Santa Domingo -- it's like this 500 year old town, or city, you know, small town, city, and there's so much history and I knew somebody there and he said yeah, you could probably rent a place here for like \$300 a month and at the time I was in Domingo, I was paying about a \$1,000 and I'm like, God that's just, that's a no brainer. I should be here and pay that and you know, I can have a couple of months free to write but it didn't pan out so it has crossed my mind.

Caitlin: And I'm sure it makes it a little bit more difficult with your son as well and wanting to make sure that you stay in close proximity to him.

Mark: Yeah, yeah, I mean, I mean pretty much now everything is decisions are made with him in mind, however, that also said I still very much wanna pursue the things that I wanna pursue that will give me, I mean, I'm hoping ultimate satisfaction and a sizeable income and everything like that and something to kinda and a legacy. I'm getting older and I feel like other than all the travel I've had and which I've had a lot, I don't really have much of a legacy and I'd like to leave a legacy and he's obviously a legacy and I really wanna make sure he grows up to

be a really great fine, young, upstanding, young man and respects everything and everyone and so yeah but I'd also like to leave something behind, so, if that makes sense.

Caitlin: I love that and I mean, you've got your two children's books so far and as you were speaking about that I'm thinking, yeah, and there's so much potential there. You're creating these character groups with your books, you can create some maybe activity books and have that as like an online lead magnet and advertise you can get this free activity book. And then when they opt it and get it, you email it to them and you have this little video on the thank you page that says, hey, thanks for downloading my activity book, did you know that there's a whole story in teaching, you know, x, y and z virtues to kids? And kinda giving them a preview about what your book is actually about and then upsell them on a book and maybe something else and you can do the whole thing digitally. And that's just like where my mind goes when I'm hearing you talk about wanting to leave a legacy and wanting to reach people and wanting to do something that you love which is right. And I'm excited, I'm excited for you so, I dunno. I've got some ideas and so I know that, as you're transitioning, I think you're gonna find the right fit cause you've got the motivation now and I think that's, that's half of it, wouldn't you say?

Mark: Yeah, no I mean, We're kind of in alignment like I've been thinking about it for a while and I think when we spoke I was trying to get out an automated business, separate of the website and copyrighting stuff up and running, and I'd gotten all the materials and everything ready and I just didn't quite have enough money to kinda do the promotional, advertising and stuff and I, yeah, literally had everything kinda set up for opt ins and sort of free booklets and then start building out a sort of program and an idea from there and I posed the idea or the concept to a few people cause it was a, it's film making essentially and just I saw a gap in the market for film makers and the way we use technology and nobody was doing what I was thinking of doing. And a lot of people really, genuinely loved it. They really thought there was serious potential there that kinda disrupt the film industry in a sense for, like Indie film makers and I really believe it but yeah, just it was the money factor in the end that kinda stopped me short but it has never left me. I was working with a guy that, very successful in running automated programs and stuff and does very, very well as a result. He then sets up a whole platform and everything and he walks you through the whole process and it's the best I've ever, ever found and cheap as well. I couldn't believe how cheap the platform was per month, but I just didn't quite get over the line for that one but now thinking I'd like to keep that going but use the writing and my knowledge in that to go from there.

Caitlin: So that's great that you're, you're letting that evolve naturally and I was, we were kinda chatting before the show and you mentioned you know, you have a partner and I'm wondering what the dynamic has been, with all these changes in your life and you're talking about moving back to Australia and maybe some mindset difficulties that you come, that you come up against that you've had to work through as you feel the winds starting to change in your life. What kind of maybe fears or anxieties have popped up for you and how have you been able to move through that, either alone or with a partner? Or family really.

Mark: Fears and anxieties.

Caitlin: You seem very chill, and so it's totally fine that you haven't had to deal with that. I just deal with that a lot and so I'm always curious to ask.

Mark: Not that, I mean, I am kinda fairly chill. I don't let a lot bother me. I mean, I run with bulls in Pamplona or in dove off upon 150ft platform with the bungee cord and all kinda stuff and--

Caitlin: Oh my goodness

Mark: I've done some crazy, wild things that, somethings I'm not too proud of. I guess I kinda do have some fears. I mean, you know, one thing is yeah, I'm getting older and I'm realizing I don't actually have security that will comfort, that a lot of my friends have, of my age do. You know, I mean, they've got the home and even though they're paying off a mortgage or whatever at least they kind of got that and I don't have that. So there're fears that are like, what am I always gonna be renting? And when I hit a certain age, which I feel like really isn't that far away, you start to feel, especially as a man, this is kinda gonna sound weird to everybody because females generally are the ones that have, I guess a few more fears or whatever because of the culture of how things are, but as a man you really start to feel more obsolete as you get older and I'm really seeing the changes not just in technology but in lifestyle and the things we embrace. And I can really see how people older, like my dad and everything, I mean, he's now retired but his generation really struggled to find work now that would sustain them for a long period of time. And in this whole gig economy which everyone loves and promotes and everything, there really is no safety, there is no security, there's no regularity or anything. And I'm really seeing massive changes and I'm certainly aware of changes and shifts because of the work that I do and organizations that I've worked for and they're now companies, you know. They are getting people on contract as opposed to putting them in full time employment because that's one way for them to get around paying benefits and everything, which you know, like basically I'm sick is you would know like, you don't have an income for a week or so, or even more its, it can be pretty tight. So, yeah, I do have fears and some anxieties, despite my chilled persona, and then that's why I don't have the security. So that is definitely one, and obviously, something I really wanna talk about here but yeah, potentially

Caitlin: That's totally fine.

Mark: Yeah now, I'm potentially, you know thinking of uprooting completely and leaving everything behind. And you can draw into that what you can make of that but--

Caitlin: Change is in the air. We can it leave there, that's totally fine. I think it's great that you're confronting all that though and know for me it was really hard to confront the fact that my life had changed and looking at it, just what the heck is this? Who am I? What am I doing here?

Just feeling really disconnected from everything around me and feeling so crippled by that and I think that you're already on the right track and you've got good intentions and you're thinking about the future but not to the point that it gets you to where you're dysfunctional with any kind of fear and anxieties. You know what you're doing, you know what you love and that's, I think you've already won in that respect. And I was thinking as you were saying that you don't own anything, like home wise, but I'm like you got friends that do. So I was thinking, well, go live with them then. You'll always have some place to go because everything that you need to function is inside you. You know, you've got your brain, you've got your skills and once you have that there's nobody that can take that away from you. You'll always have a way to make money. It might not always be fun, right? But you'll always have a way to make money and take care of your son and yourself so.

Mark: Yeah, I know, thanks Caitlin, and I appreciate what you're saying and but yeah, you're right and there are certain positives or pluses to doing what I totally trust and believe in what I'm doing and so it comes with that sorta age and experience and wisdom too, but I really am moving forward towards some certain goals that I want. And I've been reading all different books and there's a book I would recommend a lot of people by Gary John Bishop. It's called Stop Doing That Shit. Get out of self sabotaging. And it was really kinda eye opening in a lot of ways because we all have a lot of self talk and negative talk and self doubts and everything and he was kinda tryna get around that and cut through the bullshit and just say, you know, we've all got a past. It's all dark and blurred and murky and whatever but do what a lot of companies do and every like fashion industry or car companies where they, okay, this is what we wanna get to, so they focus on the end result and then work backwards. I really kinda subscribed to that is how close is exactly what I want there. Now I've just gotta take those steps to get there, as opposed to kinda starting at the other end without really knowing where you gonna get to, hoping that you'll get somewhere. Do you know what I mean? Does that make sense?

Caitlin: Yeah, that absolutely makes sense and then so much of it is just taking one step at a time and knowing that you're not gonna see the top of the staircase before you set off climbing the stairs. Because the staircase is being built step by step by you and so you get on, you have everything you need to take the first steps. You build that first step then you get on step one, you literally take a step up onto the step that you just built and start building step two. That's what it's like to create your own life and it's so scary and dark, and I mean dark as in you can't see what's ahead of you, that kinda dark and other types of dark as well from time to time. But it's all about taking things one day, one step, one second at a time and not giving up because I really, truly believe that's the only way you can fail at life, at business, at relationships, at anything is if you just stop trying.

Mark: Well, that reminds one of my favorite quotes, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, which is by Lao Tzu. I think his name is pronounced so and it's totally true, you know.

Caitlin: That's absolutely true. So, let me ask you cause I wanna make sure that I get in as many questions as possible. You have a son and so we'd ask you in your little pre-interview what specific ways your life has improved and first thing you said was that you have a son and so I wanna ask you about that cause we have a lot of parents and soon to be parents, wanna be parents, people whose kids have grown and they're, you know, doing the thing but still wanting to make time for their family. What's it been like managing, how has your business changed since you introduced your son into the mix?

Mark: Well, the first year was really tough for kinda time wise and sleep wise and everything cause my partner had a year, she's within Canada. So we got the fortunate opportunity of having a -- she had a years maternity leave which is just amazing.

Caitlin: Oh, that's amazing.

Mark: Yeah, I wish a lot of other countries followed suit, but it's just I think you guys in the U.S, like think it's like 6 weeks or--

Caitlin: It's horrible, it's so bad.

Mark: Yeah. And, I know, I look back now and I'm like that whole year, and I got to spend that year with him cause I was also working from home, just how much you get from that. So the first year was really tricky because yeah, you know, you're losing sleep, especially those first 6 months and whatever and you don't get as much done as you would love to. But then he went to daycare when he was about 18 months old or just before. And I took care of him for 3 months after she went back to work. So 15 months, I was pretty much with him and then obviously, I had all this free time that I could start focusing and getting back to what I was doing before he was born and just getting back into the routines and patterns and everything. So, there was that. So it turned everything around and obviously, the focus is on him and your intention is to, okay, it's new coming and you know, now I've gotta start spending on things that I never thought I would have to buy. And so you start shifting that way. So it's completely changed everything, turned it all upside down. But in a lot of ways, I think for the better because, yeah, I'm now really starting to focus more to my writing and he's been a lot of inspiration, especially for a couple of the kids' books. So, yeah, it's changed things a lot but I feel like for the better. Even if things are tiring in some areas or trickier in balance of that.

Caitlin: Absolutely, and it sounds like you had to grow up fast when you became a dad. Yeah, a lotta growth and now you're being able to grow as you watch him grow and I don't think there are many things in the world that are more rewarding than that.

Mark: Yeah, it's, I mean, I'm in my forties. I'm filled with some doubt there and I really thought by the time I'd turn forty it actually had passed me by and I had ended up making peace with that and then he kinda came along unexpectedly, and I'm with it, and I'm so glad it happened that way. Cause I just don't think I would have honestly been ready in my thirties. But

I mean, you have to deal with it, no matter what age you are. Cause I don't think I would've been ready for it mentally. The way I am now, the way I sorta view the world and my life. So there is that other aspect of it too, that I'm a bit older and I've got the years under the belt.

Caitlin: Definitely, now I'm approaching 33 at the time of this recording and I can see the many ways now that I'm different than I was when I was 20. But I still get frustrated when I think about the ways that I'm still the same and I'm hoping that now the more aware that I become, the easier it will be to take steps to rectify those things, those character traits and tendencies and things that you kind of get programmed with in the public school system and just being in, you know, the United States even. I've learned from traveling, as I'm sure you have as well, that there are people in the world that exist with far less than people in the western world subsist upon, and they are happier. They don't have any, well, I shouldn't say they don't have any anxiety, or they don't deal with as many mental health issues is what I've noticed. Like I did a week of pop up clinics, in Nicaragua, in January and they have no need for, they have so little, but they're so much happier and so most of their issues are, are physical, you know, respiratory stuff, musculoskeletal, for which they need care and pain medication, multi-vitamins, we prescribe those a lot but none of this, well, a lot of Americans are on anti-anxiety medication. I use anti-anxiety medication, like but if I lived in Nicaragua and that was my upbringing like I would be way more chill I think. And so it's so interesting to see those dynamics and I'm not really sure why I started talking about that but I--

Mark: No, no, no but I totally agree with you. I mean, I've been in Nicaragua. It's a great little country but yeah. And I've been in other places that are considered poorer regions of the world. And but you're right, like people in my experience too, like yours, people that seem to have less, are actually happier. I mean, they're dirt poor and they're, you know, sorta living in sorta semi-squalor and everything but--

Caitlin: But they have lots of kids and they're focusing on the family and they're always hanging out with their family and that's their tribe and they're focused on what's important and--

Mark: Yeah, you really see that, you know, I mean, if anyone hasn't traveled and, I really got hope everybody has, but if you haven't, to all the listeners like you really need to do it because it really does open up your eyes and it gives you new perspectives. It's gonna make you appreciate what you have back home. You know, I mean, I hopefully, you don't need all these luxuries and it makes you start to realize that, "do I really need the 72 inch screen television, when really the 50 inch or whatever's smaller or a laptop would be fine?" you know.

Caitlin: A laptop, exactly.

Mark: But yeah, it just gives you a new view on life and the world and really what's important and what you value and you get that when you travel. Cultures, the food, and everything that you eat, and the people. I mean, I've got so many amazing stories and

memories like you will have from your travels that just stay with me, have stayed with me for 20 years or more or longer, so --

Caitlin: I think that's great, and Mark your updated episode, I think it's been inspiring, I think it's been encouraging too, to a lot of our listeners. We're gonna tag you of course in the Work-At-Home Heroes Facebook group, so people can ask you questions about your episode, but where can people get in touch with you? Do you have, like, a website or something that people can go check out more of what you're doing?

Mark: You know, I recently revamped the whole website like so I've sort of, as I said earlier, I've shifted away or moving away from the web builds and the copyrighting. I do have a sort of a link at the very bottom that I could still do but I've sort of been a bit loathed to do that. So I revamped my website recently more in, to keep in line with where I'm at. So, its marktrasmussen.com and so I've geared that website now towards, exactly what it is I wanna do and there's still parts of it that are in transition, I guess, for lack of a better word but the whole intention, as I said earlier is to continue my writing, my creative writing, adult fiction, and kids' stories and build out a course from that and start automating everything from that with the knowledge and the experiences I've got through different programs and things that I've done. And yeah, so there's still parts that I wanna do and then start building up exactly like what you've done, Caitlin, building up a huge community network and fans and followers and stuff. And that's the aim and the intention. But that's where people can find me. I'm hoping, you know, I hope people can reach out. I'd love to hear, I did hear from a couple people last time and I'd love to hear from other people as well, I mean, yeah, I was obviously expecting a talk about a few different things. It just kinda went where it went but yeah. Feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear from people and know how people are going and everything too. And yourself Caitlin.

Caitlin: Yeah, thank you so much. I look forward to staying in touch with you and thank you, again, so much for rejoining us on Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. Folks at home, you can get the first five chapters of my book called, Work-At-Home for free, by going to workathome. sorry, workathomeschool.com/book. And if you like to follow this podcast, please leave us a review on your preferred podcast platform cause that will help us reach more people and bring you more great content. Finally, you can find more episodes just like the other "Where are they now?" episodes, you can find the former episodes from the 1st season and the other episodes in this season at workathomeschool.com/podcasts or on iTunes or wherever. We got show notes on the website. So, thanks again Mark for joining us. It's been awesome catching up with you.

Mark: Yeah, thanks Caitlin. Look I was touched that you were interested to wanna chat more. So thank you. I appreciate it.