Dalai Lama-Scientist is a documentary that contains a life-changing message and veritable impact; it changes your perspective and offers a renewed sense of hope, purpose and so much more. I have always wanted to meet the Dalai Lama—now more so than ever—given his amazing qualities and meaningful teachings. I believe he has contributed a great deal to humanity, and continues to do so. He inspires me to aim high and contribute all that I can, and I imagine that that's something he inspires in anyone who watches this film.

The documentary also provides a more behind-the-scenes look as to who the Dalai Lama is as a fellow human being, covering his interests in the fields of science and modern technology. His interest in these subjects is prominently captured throughout the film, especially where it concerns the scientific dialogues that have taken place for decades.

Dalai Lama-Scientist first premiered in August of 2019 at the 76th Venice International Film Festival. It was shown at the Cinema Astra as a part of the Venice Production Bridge and is set for an international streaming release on May 19.

Featuring never-before-seen footage, graphics, and even animation, the film has it all. It doesn't hold back, but while there is plenty of information about subjects from psychology to quantum physics to the Dalai Lama, it's not overwhelming. The pace of the film is even and smooth, allowing you to gracefully move from one subject to another. It's easy to follow along, and the graphics provided for each scientific subject allow audiences to better understand just what is being discussed between the Dalai Lama and the scientists present. You don't have to be an expert on science or even the Dalai Lama to understand what's going on, that work has already been done for you, so all you have to do is sit back and enjoy. Who knew subjects like cognitive science and quantum physics shared similar principles with Buddhist science?

That's the thing about Dalai Lama-Scientist, it never ceases to amaze you, which is its key to keeping you invested. The learning aspect of it is enjoyable, as slides are provided to show you how each idea discussed from Western science is similar to Buddhist science. It opens
Dalai Lama-Scientist, is the sixth in a film series titled the Nobel Legacy Film Series, according to Dawn Gifford-Engle, the filmmaker, who is also an activist and co-founder of the PeaceJam Foundation. The film series began with Desmond Tutu: Children of the Light. Engle adds that her husband kept saying, “this is history, we need to film it”, and they’ve filmed everything over 27 years, ending up with a “whole room full of footage of these different Nobel laureates.” From that, they decided to create the Nobel Legacy Film Series.

Bringing this marvelous film to life was no easy feat, however. According to Engle, “it was six years ago that we sat with the Dalai Lama and his staff and said okay, what hasn’t been captured? There’s a lot of movies about the Dalai Lama, but what hasn’t been captured? And what is important to capture? And it was his work in the field of science.”

Because the film has so much footage, graphics, animation, science and technology, it took a while to put together.

“It was monumental what we had to do to make this film. We had to bring in advisors like Francisco Varela, the scientist who passed away, who was the Dalai Lama’s dear friend. His wife became one of our advisors. Several of the scientists in the film became advisors. We had on the Buddhist side, others who are close to His Holiness were advisors, so we got a lot of people helping us to get it right.” Engle noted.
In addition to the advisors, Engle mentioned that they had to track down and clean up footage that was in less-than-perfect condition. Musicians, a motion graphics expert and an animator were also brought onto the project to help everything come together.

“It didn't come from me, that's the thing I'm saying. Like, I sat through some of those early scientific dialogues and I didn't understand what was going on. Because we put together this incredible team of people who helped me to understand so that I could help everybody else to see it and experience it...it was a team effort, absolutely.” Engle declares.

The animation is used to detail the Dalai Lama's background early on in the film, and it was brilliantly depicted. Engle said it was a calculated risk to go with the animation.

“We tried to do it really, really respectfully...cause there is no footage of the things, he tells these stories all the time of his childhood and there is no footage. We knew that so we tried the animation and we showed it to them, to his private office. Everybody loved it! It just brought to life stories that they'd been hearing for years. So we were like phew!” Engle recalls.

_Dalai Lama-Scientist_ allows you to get to know the Dalai Lama on an entirely new level. As Engle notes, “those that are close to the Dalai Lama say that actually this is the film, of all the films that have been made about him, this is the film that actually gets him as a human being right...it really is who he is.”
The film makes you feel like you’re there, experiencing the scientific dialogues, learning alongside the Dalai Lama. It makes you feel like you know the Dalai Lama better, and by extension, it makes him more relatable, and we daresay, approachable. You can’t help but admire his fascination and desire to learn more about science and technology. You can’t help but want to embark on that same journey with him, wanting to learn and make a contribution to the world just as the Dalai Lama has, and continues to do. He truly is an amazing person, and we’re reminded of that throughout the film.

Engle first met the Dalai Lama thirty years ago. When she first met him, she noticed how “he was just completely different, very humble, the same with everybody whether it was a leper on the street or the ambassador from Great Britain. He was the same.” She adds that “For me what was really interesting is that when I was around the Dalai Lama, I kept waiting for who is the person that he’s trying to be, and who is he really. Because from working for the US Congress, always there was the public persona and the way they were in their downtime and with their staff…I never saw that with the Dalai Lama and that just kind of blew me away, and it’s like wow there is a different way to be a leader.”

This is also testament to just how great a leader and person the Dalai Lama truly is. He doesn’t look at you as less or more, everyone is equal. Few leaders do that, and that’s what makes him stand out not just as a leader, but as a person too. There are many things we can learn from the Dalai Lama, and his treatment of others is definitely one of those things. “He always looks right into your eyes...looks down right into your soul.” Engle notes. “He sees the essence of who you are.”

Engle expressed that they’d love to make a sequel, but that “you’d need to give it at least 10 years to have more to talk about.” Keep a lookout in the meantime for the upcoming film about another Nobel Peace Prize winner on the board of the PeaceJam Foundation, Shirin
Ebadi. It’s set to be released this year.

For Engle, the film taught her quite a bit.

“I was involved some, in some of the early scientific dialogues, and I didn't really understand what was going on. You know, I didn't understand the Buddhism and I didn't understand the science. So for me, taking a deep dive into quantum physics, taking a deep dive into all the scientific subjects and then taking a deep dive into Tibetan Buddhism and working with all of the experts, I learned so much...and I'm really grateful for it.”

Chances are there’s something for everyone to learn and take away from the film. Whether you’re a scientist, a Buddhist, someone who wants to learn more, or someone who just wants to enjoy what's onscreen, *Dalai Lama-Scientist* has something for everybody.

“I hope that they really understand the Dalai Lama as a human being, and feel like they are closer to him and they can relate to him, and they can understand what it is that he's been doing and they can see that it's not science versus religion, that they can come together in kind of a powerful way and inspire each other...I think it's a very hopeful film. When it ends I think people should feel really good, [like] wow these two big forces and fields are coming together and working on behalf of humanity, this is incredible!” Engle remarks, in what she hopes audiences will take away from the film.

Granted that especially in these times when futures look uncertain, we could use a spark of hope now more than ever. Engle recalls a quote that the Dalai Lama often says, and that’s that “there’s always hope because things are always changing.” Nothing remains stagnant, so as long as things keep moving forward, hope exists.
In summary, *Dalai Lama-Scientist* offers many things. You get to learn more about the Dalai Lama as a person, you get to learn more about different sciences (from psychology to quantum physics), you get to see the beautiful friendships formed between the scientists and the Dalai Lama, as well as how the Dalai Lama is integrating science into his own teachings, and you get to see the impact of how all these people coming together means a brighter future for humanity. People getting together and sharing ideas in settings like the ones portrayed in the scientific dialogues in the film is a major step forward in innovation and problem-solving, seeking to better the quality of life and humanity as a whole. Sprinkle in some messages of hope, and we have a beautiful film to watch for years to come.

“It's wonderful to have a film that people love and then they've learned so much and they have a whole new understanding, a whole new level of understanding, and what a gift to be able to give people.” Engle says.

The streaming release is May 19 and it will be available for streaming on Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, Vimeo, Kanopy, Google Play, Fandango, and others. Meanwhile, DVD pre-orders are available at Target, Barnes and Noble, Best Buy and Amazon.