

**Transcript Segment, Part 3**  
**“Toward a Meaningful Life”**

**Presented by Theresa A. O’Keefe, PhD**

So then the bigger question then becomes, how do you navigate towards a meaningful life? How do you get there? This is a tricky thing. What you're trying to teach basically is how you engage people in loving in the world. How do you get them to believe that that's the thing to do, when so much around them speaks a contrary story? So much around us says that really, what's most important is get what you can for yourself, or get what you can for at least the people you like, right? But not risk loving, especially don't risk loving people you don't like.

Certainly don't risk loving people who you disagree with. Certainly don't risk loving people who look different from you. And so it's very challenging to keep encouraging people to live and love, even to know that that's a thing to do.

So I'm going to suggest some strategies for faith risk. The first task you need to do is interpret and connect. S

an adolescent is to figure out how to interpret the world well, you've actually got to help them interpret. How do you make sense of the world that's around you?

Now sailing looks like an easy thing. Wind pushes the sails, right? Isn't that how it goes? Easy peasy. No, it's not. You have to constantly interpret how the wind isn't pushing the sails but interacting with the sails. And when you add more than one sail, it gets even more complicated, because now the two sails are interacting with each other, which then means that the wind that's around them is interacting with it, and that's what's going to determine if your boat's moving. You have to learn how to interpret that and interpret the relationship between them.

You also have to interpret the water. I've been sailing races some nights that there's so little wind, the tide is moving us backwards, and you're like, "Oh no, we're crossing the start line again." You have to be able to interpret forces that are moving at counter-purposes and figure out, how do I use them in a way that benefits me? How do I use them so that we go forward in a way that's helpful and appropriate?

Interpreting the landscape around you is essential, not simply for sailing, but for life. What do people expect of me? How do I figure out what they're saying? How do I understand what's going on here?

What happens in adolescence is that it becomes much more important that people talk to you and that you listen to them, because you need people who maybe have a clue as to



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how to read what's going on. And so it becomes really essential in adolescence that you begin to have people who will take the time to listen to your own concerns and respond to them intelligently. Listen to your own ideas and give you feedback and encouragement. You need someone to help you interpret the world well.

Now the first thing you're interpreting is yourself. Am I worthwhile? Am I of any value? Am I anything? Does anybody care?

Interpreting ourselves and others along a horizon of love is careful work. It's grace-full work, meaning it's full of grace. It gives us the opportunity to give and to receive love.

Call to mind those people in your life, significant and minor, who helped you see the value



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So we have to think about, well, what are the sources of our stories? For me, it's Scripture,



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never not be your parent and you can never not be the child of your parent, and that conversation is always loaded with all sor

