



***Make Work Matter***  
***Your Guide to Meaningful Work in a Changing World***

by Michaela O'Donnell PhD  
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## ***Practical Guide for Navigating Vocational Challenges, Confusion and Changes in Today's New Work World***

Executive director of Fuller Seminary's De Pree Center for Leadership, Michaela O'Donnell helps readers pursue meaningful work that will forge inspiring transformation in the world.

People are sent into a new world of work with old, outdated tools, expectations, and strategies. This leaves them ill-equipped in finding meaningful work that will make an impact in their communities. The result? Unmet expectations, unfulfilled longings, and a curiosity about how to do the work they sense God is calling them to. Built from research on exemplars who excel at navigating the unknown and filled with stories and insights from faithful entrepreneurs, *Make Work Matter* (Baker Books, Oct. 2021), teaches readers to:

- discover what God is calling them to do in a changing world
- define where they are in this season of work
- embrace what the Bible says (and doesn't say) about calling
- develop a mindset and habits suited for the new world of work
- reflect on and work out ways that sustain them on the journey

This book will close the gap between what people are doing now and the meaningful work they desire to accomplish. It is the solution to help people chart their way forward!

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**Michaela O'Donnell, PhD**, is executive director of Fuller Seminary's De Pree Center for Leadership. She is an entrepreneur, a teacher, and a sought-after speaker and consultant who regularly presents on the topics of vocation, career, and leadership to religious, secular, academic, and lay audiences.

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## Endorsements



“*Make Work Matter* is a book that, like your work, matters. I have been working, teaching, and advocating for a deeper and broader integration of faith and work in hopes of a fuller realization of God's invitation to participate in the ongoing incarnation through our work for over four decades. Happily, Michaela O'Donnell of Fuller Seminary's De Pree Center is one of my favorite and most trusted colleagues in this mission. . . . This book goes the next step beyond the many books now espousing good ideas about the sacred value of good work and moves into how to actively discern, find, and do it. The pursuit of good work takes work—and this book is a powerful tool to focus your labors and ease the challenge of that worthy pursuit. I recommend it heartily.”

—**Dave Evans**, cofounder, Stanford Life Design Lab;  
coauthor, *Designing Your Life* and *Designing Your Work Life*; and venture partner, Praxis Labs

“Most of us spend more waking hours on work than anything else. In the midst of the demands of navigating the twists and turns of work today, *Make Work Matter* gives you the road map you need to maximize those hours for your own growth, calling, fulfillment, and formation.”

—**Kara Powell**, PhD, chief of leadership formation and executive director, Fuller Youth Institute;  
coauthor, *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager*

“Dr. Michaela O'Donnell's *Make Work Matter* offers a life-giving, meaning-making invitation, recipe, and coaching-session about work—all in one. She is a very motivating exemplar of what she writes about, and her voice resonates with lived wisdom, creativity, and courage. In a time of extraordinary changes in work, turn here for true help.”

—**Mark Labberton**, president, Fuller Theological Seminary

“Honestly, there aren't many people who can actually help you make your work matter. A challenge like that requires a blend of theory, theology, and pragmatism. Most people have expertise in just one, so too often their advice is (at best) half baked. Michaela is different. She's an entrepreneur, practical theologian, and academic. She gets the messiness of it all and teaches us to wrestle with the possibilities. This book, like Michaela, is approachable, down to earth, and just plain helpful. Michaela, where were you when I was trying to find meaning in the junkyard?”

—**Roy Goble**, CEO of Goble Properties; cofounder, PathLight International; author, *Junkyard Wisdom: Resisting the Whisper of Wealth in a World of Broken Parts* and *Salvaged: Leadership Lessons Pulled from the Junkyard*

# Suggested Interview Questions

1. In your book you talk about 'holy wrestling.' Please discuss some examples of what that can look like for different people and what steps they can take to begin the process of building a new 'tool kit.'
2. Please talk about the gap between where people are currently and the meaningful work they imagine themselves doing. How can a person recognize if they are stuck, and what steps can they take to close that gap?
  - Feeling Overwhelmed
  - Feeling Anxious
  - Feeling Lonely
3. You refer to *Make Work Matter* as being a roadmap for people to use in discovering deeper truths about what God has in store for them. Can you unpack some of the ways they will be able to make these discoveries?
  - Define where they are in this season of work
  - Embrace what the Bible says (and does not say) about calling
  - Develop a mindset and habits suited for a new world of work
  - Reflect on and work out ways that sustain them for the journey
4. How does the 'hustle' of today's mindset work against advancement? What are some better ways to embrace the fast pace of the current quickly evolving work world?
  - Embrace quicker cycles of action and reflection
  - Prioritize the skills that enable being able to deal with a dynamic, changing world: resilience, creativity, empathy, risk-taking, and reflection
5. Using the kayak and white-water rapids analogy, what are 3 things you suggest readers do to survive and thrive while navigating their career decisions?
  - Get "good enough" at reading the rapids - make sense of the currents of change that impact life and work.
  - Lean in and let go in the face of change – to harness the momentum of change.
  - Let water off your boat - It's important to identify when to take on water and how to let it off
6. Please discuss how the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, industrialization, and the Information Age all shaped the evolution of what 'calling' equals.
7. What is 'the entrepreneurial way' and who is it for?



8. In your book you discuss how the fruits of justice and shalom may show up in the world. In what ways can readers cultivate these fruits of redemption in their contexts and communities?
9. In your discussions with people about defining success, what are the 4 questions you ask them?
  - How have they learned to define success?
  - How have they learned to define failure?
  - What practices have moved them toward success?
  - What practices have helped them deal with failure?
10. For your research, you had several discussions with people from different backgrounds, please explain the common theme you found in their answers about success.
11. How is redemption a compass for imagination?
12. In teaching the process of moving from empathy to imagination and from to risk to reflection, how do you help people overcome their fear of 'risk'?



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