



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Passing Hope On to Others – Part 3

Guest(s): Troy and Kim Meeder

Air Date: August 28, 2024

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson. And I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. And today we're going to hear part three, the conclusion, of a hope filled conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Troy and Kim Meeder. By the way, if you're just joining us for this series and missed part one and part two of the broadcast, I encourage you to go back and listen to them at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, even though this program was recorded several years ago, its message can still be inspiring and encouraging for all of us today. Our guests once again are Troy and Kim Meeder, and they're the founders of the Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch. This is a small ministry that's had a huge impact on young children, as well as animals. They're located in central Oregon and the ranch takes abused horses and pairs them with emotionally wounded kids for mutual healing. Kim Meeder is the author of six books, including *Hope Rising* and *Encountering Our Wild God*. Both Troy and Kim are accomplished communicators and travel nationally to speak at conferences, churches and other venues to spread the message of hope. Now, I must advise you. Some of the messages shared are difficult to listen to and they may not be appropriate for young listeners, so parental discretion is definitely advised. And now let's join Dr. James Dobson and his guests, Troy and Kim Meeder, on this classic episode of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Kim, before we went on the air, I asked you what your favorite story was or which one that you would most like to tell here at the beginning of this program, and you told me that you'd like to tell us about Angelica and Promised Land, which is also in this book, *Bridge Called Hope*. Tell us about Angelica.

Kim Meeder: Not long ago, we brought home a very unique horse to the ranch, who was unique because of his very, very pale golden color. He had a couple appaloosa spots and a beautiful white mane and tail, but what made him unique is that his feet were bright purple. And that was an indication to me that this horse had sustained such severe trauma to all four of his hooves that the hoof capsule had

filled with blood, and the bright purple was evidence of that. And so the good news-

Dr. James Dobson: Would that come from riding him too hard and too long over rocky terrain? Is that what-

Kim Meeder: What I knew about him is that it had come from the previous owners not trimming his feet for so long that for him to move normally was no longer a possibility and that had damaged his feet so badly that they had actually filled with blood.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, goodness.

Kim Meeder: The good news is that our care, he began to recover rapidly. And it was during this time that I received a call from a friend of mine who was volunteering for an organization that helps meet the needs of terminally ill children. And she said, "I have this very shy little girl that is just horse crazy. Can I bring her out?" And I said, "You bet." And I remember when they came, watching this little girl pop out of the car and thinking, "Oh, you just look like the neighborhood cutie," just slender with wavy blonde hair and really intense blue eyes. And as she drew closer to me, I could see her just go deeper and deeper into this veil of shyness. And it was during our communication that I noticed a very faint but very definite ring of blue around her lips.

And all I knew about Angelica's condition is that she had a very rare heart disease, which inhibited her heart from growing. And so as she grew in stature, her heart did not. And what I knew is that the oldest living survivor with this condition had died at the age of nine, and Angelica had just passed the threshold of her 10th birthday. So these were precious days.

In her stress, I thought, "Oh, Kim, this communication isn't working," and I said, "Hey. You know what? I understand we have something in common, that we're both horse crazy. I have a young horse here that really is in desperate need of some horse crazy girl love. Do you think you can spare some?" And she popped up and started to look not at me, but for the horse. And I thought, "Ah, this is it." So together we went and got a halter. And as we were haltering this young horse, I could see that he was so kind and so gentle with this very, very ill child that I chose to let her lead him alone and I would walk behind her in case she needed help, which she didn't. And once at the hitching post, I gathered all the gear that we needed to groom him and just thought, "We'll just groom in silence for a while."

And it took a few moments, and finally, without looking at me, she just finally said very quietly, "I just love horses." And that was the first little thread of communication to bridge between us. And during this time, we began to speak a little more and a little more and finally we had a little stream going back and forth. And one of the questions that she asked me was, "What is his name?"

And I could tell that this was very, very important to her. And I told her, "Honey, he doesn't have a name yet. We try to rename all the horses when they come to the ranch as a symbol of their passage into what we hope is a better life. Maybe today you can help me find the right name." And that was the first time she looked at me and nodded, yeah, that sounded okay to her too.

We had come to a crossroad now where we had finished grooming the horse and I really wasn't sure what to do next because I wasn't sure what she could do. And so I decided that instead of asking her what she couldn't do, I would ask her what she wanted to do. And to my sorrow, this just set in motion a chain reaction that I couldn't have known was coming. And her eyes just gave her away, that it was like watching this silent fight between her illness and her will. It was like hearing her illness shouting, "I'm a really, really sick kid and it's harder and harder for me to get to do the things that I love," and her will shouting back, "Yeah, I'm a really sick kid, but I'm a little kid and little kids should get your ride little horses. I really want to ride." And finally she looked up at me without saying a word and her eyes were just full of tears and she said in a really squeaky little voice, "I really think I should get to ride." And I said, "Me too. Let's do it together."

As we went into tack room to gather our things, she said, "What do you think we should name him?" And I said, "You know. He's so special. His coloring is such pale gold. He looks like Heaven. I think that someday when I get to the Promised Land that there's going to be a lot of that color there." And I turned around just in time to see her totally crumple. And I had inadvertently pushed her in a direction she's going physically with full realization that, "I'm just a kid and it's really unfair that I'm not ever going to grow up." And I felt so bad and I wanted to cry and she wanted to cry. And it was just such an awkward moment. And we just stood there in silence as all these little teardrops started to dot the tack room floor. And then she said really quiet, "If I was ever lucky enough to have my own horse, I would name him Promised Land."

And so I knelt down on the floor in front of her and looked up and this little tear ran down her face and she caught it with her bottom lip. And I said, "Honey, do you think that's the right name?" She said, "Yeah. I think it is." And I said, "Promised Land it is. It's a really good name." And so I gave her a hug and I stood up and gathered the rest of our things and she had walked out onto the porch in front of me and apparently gained some new resolve. And I came up behind her just as she put her hands on her hips and leaned forward and almost shouted, "Hey, Promised. How do you like your new name?"

And so we took him into the round pen together and I said, "He doesn't know you yet and I think he really wants to. So I would like you to play a game with him first. So I want you to rub his forehead and his nose and I'm going to count to 20, and then I want you to go anywhere in this round pen and curl up a little ball and hide." So that child took that horse's muzzle, which is very sensitive, between her hands, and started rubbing like she was going to start a fire between her palms. I've never counted to 20 so fast in my life. And she pulled

her hands away and I thought for sure his nose was going to be either hairless, smoking or bleeding. And that precious little horse, God bless him, he never moved a foot. He just took it all like a man.

And she took about 10 steps away and curled up in a ball and looked at me and I said, "Hey. No fair peaking." And she put her head under her arm and this sweet little horse swung his head over and walked over and smelled her back. And she turned around and she saw him standing over her and she just went, "Ahh." And she looked back and forth between the horse and me and just this wide-eyed wonder and she finally said, "Did you teach him to do that?" And I said, "No. He's never been in this pen in his life. He did that because he wanted to. I think he likes you. You must be really special, but let's see if he'll do it again." And so we played this many times and until she was just laughing and laughing and it was such a beautiful-

Dr. James Dobson: And the horse would go to-

Kim Meeder: Every time.

Dr. James Dobson: Every time.

Kim Meeder: Every time. And so finally we decided it was time for her to ride, and I lifted her into the saddle. I was going to go ahead and lead him and she was going to steer with the reins and we made one whole lap around the round pen and she was just chatting and chatting and talking away. And then she stopped, and I turned back and looked in her face and the blue ring around her lips had spread all over her face and she had her hand on her chest and she was mouthing to me, "I'm done. I'm done." And I just dropped the horse's rope and scooped her off his back and said, "Honey, what do you need?" And she mouthed to me, "I need to lay down."

And I rushed through the gate and I went and laid her down on a picnic bench in the shade. And the woman that brought her was just pounding out a 911 to mom. And I sat down with her and just put my fingers through hers as she was gasping for breath and was praying for her and thought, "Lord, is this it? Is she now going to go home? Is this the last moment?" And I could hear Him say, "My child, these are not things for you to know. What you need to focus on is being faithful to me to the very end."

And as her world began to come back to normal and she began to pink up again, I went up and got some juice and some snacks for her and came back down. And that's when I realized that the horse was leaning over the gate looking for her, his new friend. And so she was still laying in a fetal position on this bench in the shade. And I brought him out onto the lawn to stand directly over her, that he had lifted her spirits once today, maybe he could do it twice. And as any horse owner knows, all horses eat grass all the time. It's what they're hardwired

to do. And he could have gone anywhere to do anything. He was completely loose. And he didn't. He didn't move a foot again.

And I watched as this beautiful golden horse just arched his neck out to its full length and then lowered his chin until it touched the hollow of her temple. And he was above her. She didn't see him, and she startled and she saw him and she said, "Oh, it's you. I knew you'd come." And it was just in such a moment as these that I see the faithfulness of our Lord that when we need Him and we call on His name, He will come in a way that we know it's just Him.

Dr. James Dobson: I wonder if our eyes could be open and there would be an angel standing beside that horse saying, "Go to the little girl."

Troy Meeder: "Go to the little girl."

Dr. James Dobson: "Go comfort the little girl. She needs you."

Kim Meeder: We see things like this all the time, and there's no explanation for why this horse didn't graze. I mean, that's what horses do. And he was so intent on being with this child when she needed him the most that he stood over her for the rest of our time together with his chin resting on the side of her temple, just such ultimate tenderness with a child that was dying.

Troy Meeder: We pray for our horses.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you pray for-

Troy Meeder: Oh, absolutely. We gather around them as a staff and we put our hands on them and pray for them and pray that the Lord will work through part of His creation, that part of His creation will shout the glory of the Lord to those children.

Dr. James Dobson: And you see the evidence of it day by day.

Troy Meeder: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Kim Meeder: Every day.

Dr. James Dobson: And there's no amount of money you could be paid that would in any way compete with what you experience on a daily basis.

Troy Meeder: The blessings. The blessings overflow. We could be living on macaroni and cheese and be happy the rest of our lives because the blessings are those children and those moments, those moments when you think this is what life is all about.

Dr. James Dobson: How do you choose the horses that come?

Kim Meeder: I pray about that too, but oftentimes the children choose. When the kids come, we will say, "Out of these eight horses, which one do you think is the right one for you?" and allow the Holy Spirit an opportunity to move. And very often those kids will choose the horse that is the most like them, inadvertently.

Dr. James Dobson: When I was a school psychologist, there was a young woman that I worked with, little girl. She was in the eighth grade and she was a wreck physically. I mean, she was not attractive. She had very straggly hair that looked like it hadn't been washed. She had braces. She had pimples all over her face. And you know how kids treat somebody like that. It's awful. And I worked with her and tried to tell her I cared about her and other people cared about her and tried to help her talk through her pain. And I was working on that. It was very difficult in the context of school to really solve a problem like that, at least not very quickly. And one morning I got a call from the vice principal who said and named this little girl and said she's just taken every pill she could find in her parents' medicine cabinet.

Before 911 got there, the sheriff got there. So we put her in the sheriff's car and I drove with her and the sheriff to the hospital. And she never came back. And I never knew what happened to her. I'm sure her parents... I guess she had parents, I don't know, came and got her. But I wish that that little girl could come to your ranch. Wouldn't that have been something? If I could have brought her out there.

Kim Meeder: Me too.

Dr. James Dobson: And instead of going to a mental hospital someplace, which is probably what happened, if I could have brought her out to your ranch and she'd have stepped out of that car after she'd been stabilized, what would you have done for her? What would've been the first thing you would've done?

Kim Meeder: Well, that kid actually did come to the ranch. She's been coming for quite some time.

Dr. James Dobson: I wonder where she is today.

Kim Meeder: You have to wonder, but to answer your question, oh, golly. Last January, a call for help came. This woman called and said that of her neighbors' five horses, one of them had just starved to death and died and would we come and help. And I gathered three young women from the ranch, and on our way over we were discussing how we would effect this rescue. And of those three young women, one of them was just like this girl and her name was Carmen. And Carmen had come to me earlier in the year and she pushed her sleeves up and showed me her arms and she said, "I've been cutting to release my horror, my pain, and they mock me, every one of them. They begged me to just stop being a coward and finish what I started." And she said, "I know that if I don't get some help soon, I'm not going to live much longer."

And so Carmen went with me on this rescue. And very quickly we were able to negotiate buying of the four remaining horses, the very worst of the four, which was a 2-year-old quarter horse filly that was just emaciated beyond imagination. A horse-

Dr. James Dobson: You had to buy them?

Kim Meeder: Oh, we have to buy almost all the horses we rescue. And this horse, instead of weighing a normal 1,000 pounds at two or two and a half years of age, this horse didn't even weigh... She barely tipped the scales at 440 pounds. She was not even half the size she should have been. And in our efforts to move this very destitute horse to our ranch, we weight taped her, vaccinated, gave her some medications, food and water, and then settled her in our quarantine paddock. And that was so taxing for her that she went to the highest place in this corral and just collapsed in the snow. And I remember thinking, "Lord, is this it? Is this horse going to lay down and die?"

And Carmen had told me earlier that, "Loneliness is a prison that I would not wish on my worst enemy." And I watched Carmen walk over and put her folded arms on top of the gate and just resting her chin, watching this devastated little horse. And I just watched for a while. And I could only imagine she was thinking the same thing about this little horse, that, "Loneliness is a prison and I wouldn't wish this for you either." And this young woman very quietly made her way into the corral, which was full of maybe eight inches of snow, and forsaking all of her own safety and comfort, she laid down in the snow with this little devastated horse.

And this was a little horse that the first time I touched it, she tried to bite me first and kick me second. She was so unaccustomed to human beings. And Carmen watched this horse turn and look at her and then relax, "Oh, you're here for me." And she said that this horse took so much comfort in her presence that the horse laid down flat on its side. And as the horse rolled backwards, she rolled slightly out of the way. So her chest was in full contact to this horse's back. And she told me that, "There I was this broken girl with a broken horse and this horse immediately went to sleep. She was so exhausted." And she told me that I couldn't believe it, "All of a sudden she started blinking and twitching and her feet were jerking and she was dreaming." Who knew that horses have dreams?

And she said, "You know, Kim. I've been running from God for a really long time. And it was during those moments that I felt like God was saying to me that, 'Through all the trauma and hardship that this horse has been through, she is still fighting for her dreams. And my child, it's time for you to do the same thing.'" And she said, "That was the moment that I made the decision that I was going to start fighting for my life. And everything changed." And then we went from just a young dreaming horse to a young dreaming horse with a young dreaming girl. Hope changes us from the inside out. I think it's Psalms 46:10 that

says, "Be still and know that I am God." And that can happen in as many moments as there are human beings.

Dr. James Dobson: It's not a coincidence then that you named your book *A Bridge called Hope: Stories of Triumph from the Ranch of Rescued Dreams*? Did it come out of that story?

Kim Meeder: In part, yes, it did.

Dr. James Dobson: There's so many others that it could have been a number of them.

Kim Meeder: There are. It could be all of them.

Dr. James Dobson: Did the little horse survive?

Kim Meeder: She did.

Troy Meeder: She did.

Kim Meeder: She did. And she's a pistol. And the two of them are good friends to this day.

Dr. James Dobson: So the young girl is still working with you?

Kim Meeder: Carmen actually received Christ just a few months ago. She's doing really, really well.

Dr. James Dobson: That's the greatest thrill of all, isn't it?

Troy Meeder: Absolutely.

Kim Meeder: Hope will find us if we ask. The Lord is always there willing to give hope.

Dr. James Dobson: Troy, I tell you. It's been something having you all here.

Troy Meeder: It's been our blessing and our honor.

Dr. James Dobson: And to see the way the Lord is using what you're trying to do.

Troy Meeder: Such a simple thing.

Dr. James Dobson: If people who don't know you real well had to describe what you're doing, they would say your ultimate purpose there is to help children and to help horses. But I suspect that there's a higher calling, which is to introduce kids to Jesus Christ.

Troy Meeder: Absolutely.

Kim Meeder: Jesus Christ is the answer to every question, every single one. And outside of His love and His mercy, there is no hope. But the good news is that because of the finished work of Jesus Christ, hope is offered freely to all of us. Every moment of every day we can choose hope. And what that means based on that truth is that no one can make us a prisoner of pain and suffering, but us. Jesus Christ is reaching out to us. All we have to do is choose to reach back to Him. That's all.

Dr. James Dobson: My dad had a phrase like that that said, "That'll preach."

Troy Meeder: "That'll preach." I've heard that before too.

Dr. James Dobson: "That'll preach."

Troy Meeder: "That'll preach."

Dr. James Dobson: I'm not a tax expert, but it just occurs to me that there might be somebody out there who's got a piece of land that they didn't pay very much for because they bought it 20 years ago, 30 years ago, and they could give that piece of land to these folks for an expanded ranch and get a tax deduction for the entire amount. I don't understand that completely, but I know that people do that because some of them make contributions to us in that way. I hope the Lord lays that on somebody's heart out there to give them a hand. And if they can't give land, they can make a contribution to these children. A gift to them is a contribution directly to the life and heart of a child.

Kim Meeder: Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: You haven't heard that there are 100 acres right next to your ranch. You didn't know that, did you? They are I guess...

Troy Meeder: They're somewhere around there.

Kim Meeder: God knows them all.

Troy Meeder: God knows... He knows them all.

Dr. James Dobson: I am teasing but who knows?

Troy Meeder: Who knows? Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Who knows what God has in mind?

Kim Meeder: God owns them all and it's up to Him.

Troy Meeder: Yeah. Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Kim Meeder and her husband, Troy, have been with us for three days now, and it's been a delight. I'm emotionally drained. Well, thanks again. We care about you all and your ranch and your work.

Troy Meeder: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Kim Meeder: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: And I hope some of our listeners will help you pay the bill for it. Thanks for being with us, and we'll do it again.

Kim Meeder: God bless you, dear friend.

Troy Meeder: God bless you guys.

Roger Marsh: Powerful conversations we've been listening to over the past three days here on Family Talk. I hope that the ministry and testimony of Troy and Kim Meeder has inspired you to answer the call that God has placed on your own life. Now, if you'd like to learn more about Troy and Kim or the Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch, visit our website at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And if you or someone you know is going through a rough season right now, be sure to get a copy of Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. We'll be happy to send you a copy as our way of thanking you for your tax-deductible donation of any amount when you go to the broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. You'll see the link right there on the bottom of the page. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk for your copy of Dr. Dobson's classic book, *When God Doesn't Make Sense*.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for tuning into Family Talk today. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for a powerful brand new program featuring Dr. Dobson's recent conversation with author Victor Marx and his wife, Eileen. They'll be talking about what it means to be a dangerous gentleman for God. Powerful discussion indeed. You won't want to miss it. Coming up tomorrow right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.