

◆ Get unlimited access to the best of Medium for less than \$1/week. [Become a member](#)



Oprah with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle — Interview Transcript

Kate Sheppard Follow 50 comments April 4, 2021
[Open in app](#) ↗

≡ Medium

Search

Write





-INTERVIEW BEGINS-

Oprah: Woah!

Meghan: I know!

Oprah: You really *are* having a baby!

Meghan: We're having a baby!

Oprah: That's more than a bump.

Meghan: I know.

Oprah: Wow.

Meghan: I know. Hi, hi, hi...

Oprah: I wish we could hug. Virtual hugs.

Meghan: I know.

Oprah: Yeah, distance hug. So, you know, we're... We can't hug because we're practicing...

Meghan: All the things.

Oprah: Doing all the things. We've been so strict. Everybody around here, literally, is double-masked and has face shields. But you look lovely.

Meghan: Thank you. So do you.

Oprah: Pregnant and lovely.

Meghan: Thank you. Yes.

Oprah: Do you know if you're having a boy or girl?

Meghan: We do this time. I'll wait for my husband to join us and we can share that with you.

Oprah: OK, that would be really great. I can't wait to hear. So before we get into it...

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: ...I just want to make it clear to everybody that, even though we're neighbours, down the ... I'm down the road, you're up the road....

Meghan: Yeah. This isn't my house. This isn't your house.

Oprah: This isn't my house; we're using a friend's house 'cause they had a very nice...

Meghan: Beautiful.

Oprah: ... pergola. Um, that there has not been an agreement, you don't know what I'm going to ask...

Meghan. No.

Oprah: ...and there is no subject that's off limits...

Meghan: Yep.

Oprah: ...and you are *not* getting paid for this interview.

Meghan: All of that's correct.

Oprah: All of that is correct. So, you ready?

Meghan: Yeah. I am. I thought that was it. I thought we were done now. She just wanted to ask about the baby, and we're good to go.

Oprah: OK. But I remember sitting in the chapel, and... thanks for inviting me by the way.

Meghan: You're welcome.

Oprah: So, I was there on that wedding day, and I so recall this sense of magic. I mean, I'd never experienced anything like it. And when you came through that door, it seemed like you were, like, floating down the aisle. Were you even inside your body at that time?

Meghan: I've thought about this a lot because...it was like having an out-of-body experience that I was very present for. And that's the only way that I can describe it. Because the night before, I slept through the night...

Oprah: Hmmhmm.

Meghan: ...entirely. Which, in and of itself, is a bit of a miracle. Um...and then...woke up and started listening to that song, Going to the Chapel.

Oprah: Ahhh.

Meghan: And just tried to make it fun and light and remind ourselves that this was our day. But I think we were both really aware, even in advance of that, this...this wasn't *our* day. This was the day that was planned for the world.

Oprah: Everybody who gets married knows that you are really marrying the family, too.

Meghan: Mmm.

Oprah: But you weren't just marrying a family, you were marrying 1,200-year-old institution, you're marrying the monarchy. What did you think it was going to be like?

Meghan: I will say that I went into it naively.

Oprah: Hmmhmm.

Meghan: Because I didn't grow up knowing much about the Royal Family. It wasn't something that was part of conversation at home. It wasn't something that we followed. My mom even said to me a couple of months ago, she said, "Did Diana ever do an interview?" Now, now I can say, "Yes, a very famous one." But my mom doesn't even know that, right?

Oprah: But you were certainly aware of the royals.

Meghan: Yeah, of course.

Oprah: And if you're going to marry a royal, then you would do research about what that would mean.

Meghan: Well, I didn't do any research about what that would mean.

Oprah: You didn't do any research.

Meghan: No. I'd never looked up my husband online. I just didn't feel a need to because everything I needed to know, he was sharing with me. Or everything that we thought I needed to know, he was telling me.

Oprah: So you didn't have a conversation with yourself, or talking to your friends, or thinking about what it's like, what it would be like to marry a prince, who is Harry, who you had fallen in love with, and what it would mean to be a part of that family? You didn't give it a lot of thought?

Meghan: No. We thought about...what we thought it might be...

Oprah: Yeah. Which is... That's what I'm trying to get.

Meghan: Yeah, I mean, like, I didn't fully understand what the job was, right?

Oprah: Hmmhmm.

Meghan: What does it mean to be a working royal? What do you do? What does that mean? I knew that he and I were very aligned on all of our cause-driven work. That was part of our initial connection, umm, and what we talked about in our, the beginning of our courtship. But I think there was no way to understand what the day-to-day was going to be like.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: And it's so different because I didn't romanticise any element of it but I think as Americans especially, what do you know about the royals? It's what you read in fairy tales.

Oprah: Right.

Meghan: You think it's what you know about the royals, right? So...

Oprah: Right.

Meghan: ...it's easy to have an image of it that is so far from, from reality. And that's what was really tricky over those past few years, is when the perception and the reality are two very different things, and you're being judged on the perception, but you're living the reality of it...

Oprah: Hmmhmm.

Meghan: ...there's a complete misalignment, and there's no way to explain that to people.

Oprah: Well, you know, if every family, I think, things get serious when you are brought in to meet to mother or the grandmother.

Meghan: Mm-hm.

Oprah: And in everybody's family who's watching right now...

Meghan: Yes.

Oprah: ...the grandmother is the matriarch...

Meghan: Mh-hm.

Oprah: ...er, and known in many families as 'the queen'.

Meghan: Mh-hm. Yeah.

Oprah: And it's...

Meghan: And she was one of the first people I met. I met her...

Oprah: In your situation, it's *The Queen*.

Meghan: The real Queen.

Oprah: The real Queen...

Meghan: Yes.

Oprah: ...that you're meeting. What was that like? Were you worried about making the right impression?

Meghan: Um, there wasn't actually a huge formality the first time I met, um, Her Majesty The Queen. I... We were going to lunch at Royal Lodge, er, which is where some other members of the family live, specifically Andrew and Fergie...

Oprah: Hmm-hmm.

Meghan: ...and, umm, Eugenie and Beatrice would spend a lot of time there. And Eugenie and I had known each other before I had known Harry, so that was comfortable, and we were, we're friends with them as a couple. Um, and then it turned out the Queen was finishing a church service there in Windsor. And so she was going to be at the house. And I remember, Harry and I are in the car and he says, "OK, well, my grandmother's there so you're going to meet her." "Oh, great. I love grand...I loved my grandmother, I used to take care of my gran...this is great." He goes, "Right, do you know how to curtsy?" "What?" He said, "Do you know how to curtsy?" Now, I thought, genuinely, that that was what happens outside.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: I thought that was part of the fanfare, or...

Oprah: Uh-huh.

Meghan: I didn't think that's what happens inside...

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: ...And I said, "But, it's your grandmother." He goes, "It's the Queen."

Oprah: Wow.

Meghan: And that was really the first moment that the penny dropped that this wasn't... it was easy for me to up until then to go...

Oprah: So, did you google how to curtsy?

Meghan: No, we were in the car.

Oprah: OK.

Meghan: We were in the car, we're five minutes from arriving.

Oprah: How does one curtsy? Yes.

Meghan: Deeply, um, to show respect.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And I learned it very quickly, um, right in front of the house. We just practiced and walked in and...

Oprah: You and Harry practiced?

Meghan: Yeah? And Fergie ran out. And she said, “Are you ready? Do you know how to curtsy?” I said, “Oh my goodness, you guys.” Um, so I practiced really quickly and we went in and I met her and apparently I did a very deep curtsy. And...I don’t remember it. And then we just sat there and we chatted. And, um... And it was lovely and easy, and I think thank *God* I hadn’t known a lot about the family, thank *God* I hadn’t researched. I would have been so in my head about all of it.

Oprah: Mh-hmm.

Meghan: I would have had a...

Oprah: So you’re...you’re basically...what you’re sharing with us is that you were no more nervous than the regular person who goes to meet somebody’s grandmother. You weren’t that intimidated because it was The Queen?

Meghan: Yeah. I think it’s two things. It’s...I had confused the idea of... I thought, “I grew up in LA, you see celebrities all the time...”

Oprah: Mh-hmm.

Meghan: This is not the same, right? But it’s very easy I think, especially as an American, to go, “Oh, these are famous people.” It’s like, no, this is a completely different ball game.

Oprah: Yeah.

— — —

Oprah: What does it feel like here? What's the word?

Meghan: Peace.

Oprah: Peace.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah [v/o]: The day after our interview, I stopped over to Harry and Meghan's new home.

Meghan [to a dog]: Hi, Guy.

Oprah: Hi, Guy.

Meghan: Yeah, Guy's been...Guy's been through everything with me.

Oprah: Yeah, from the beginning.

Meghan: I mean...

Oprah: From the very first date, yeah.

Meghan: Guy, I mean, I had him in Canada. I got him from a kill shelter in Kentucky. Hi, girls.

Oprah [v/o]: We put on our wellies to feed the hens Meghan and Harry recently rescued from a factory farm.

Meghan: Hi!

Oprah: I love your little designer house here. "Archie's Chick Inn." Oh, how cute is that?

Harry: She's always wanted chickens.

Meghan: You know, I just love rescuing.

Oprah: So, this is a part of your new life. What are you most excited about?

Meghan [to a chicken]: Whoops! You're OK.

Oprah: What are you most excited about in the new life? Here, chick, chick, chick, chick.

Meghan: I think just being able to live authentically.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: Right? Like this kind of stuff. It's so...basic, but it's really fulfilling. And just getting back down to basics. I mean, I was thinking about it. Even our wedding, you know, three days before our wedding, we got married.

Oprah: Ah!

Meghan: No-one knows that. But we called the archbishop and we just said, "Look, this thing, this spectacle, is for the world. But we want our union between us. So, like, the vows that we have framed in our room are just the two of us in our back yard with the Archbishop of Canterbury..."

Oprah: Oh!

Meghan: ...and that was the piece that...

Harry: Just the three of us. #Just the three of us.#

Meghan: Just the three of us.

— — —

Oprah: You know, the wedding was the most perfect picture, you know, anybody's ever seen. But through that picture that we were all seeing, behind the scenes obviously, there was a lot of drama going on. And soon after your marriage, the tabloids started offering stories that painted a not-so-flattering picture of you in your new world. There were rumours about you being Hurricane Meghan.

Meghan: I hadn't heard that.

Oprah: OK. So, there were rumours about you being Hurricane Meghan, for the departure of several high-profile Palace staff members.

Meghan: Interesting.

Oprah: And there was also a story...Did you hear this one? About you making Kate Middleton cry.

Meghan: This, I heard about.

Oprah: You heard about that. OK.

Meghan: This was. That was a turning point.

Oprah: That was a turning point?

Meghan: Yeah. The narrative with, with Kate, which didn't happen, was really, really difficult and something that... I think that's when everything changed, really.

Oprah: You said the narrative with Kate, it didn't happen. So specifically, did you make Kate cry?

Meghan: No.

Oprah: So, where did that come from?

Meghan: [sigh]

Oprah: Was there a situation where she might have cried, or she could have cried?

Meghan: No, no, the reverse happened. And I don't say that...to be disparaging to anyone because... it was a really hard week of the wedding, and she was upset about something, but she owned it and she apologised,

and she brought me flowers and a note apologising, and she did what I would do if I knew that I hurt someone, right? To just take accountability for it. What was shocking was... What was that? Six, seven months after our wedding?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: That the reverse of that would be out in the world.

Oprah: The story came our six, seven months after it actually happened?

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: So, when you say...

Meghan: I neve...I would have never wanted that to come out about her... ever. Even though it had happened, I protected that from ever being out in the world.

Oprah: So, when you say the reverse happened, explain to us what you mean by that.

Meghan: A few days before the wedding, she was upset about something pertaining ... Yes, the issue was correct, about flower girl dresses, and it made me cry and it really hurt my feelings. And I thought in the context of everything else that was going on in those days leading to the wedding, that...it didn't make sense to not be doing what, whatever everyone else was doing, which was trying to be supportive, knowing what was going with my dad and whatnot.

Oprah: This was a really big story at the time-

Meghan: Hmm.

Oprah: –that you made Kate cry. Now you're saying you didn't make Kate cry, Kate made you cry.

Meghan: Hmm.

Oprah: So, we all want to know what would make you cry? What were you going through? You were going through all of the anxiety that brides go through, putting their weddings together –

Meghan: Hmm.

Oprah:- and going through all of the issue with your father. Was he coming? Was he not coming?

Meghan: Hmm.

Oprah: And there was a confrontation about the dresses.

Meghan: It wasn't a confrontation. And I actually think it's... I don't think it's fair to her to get into the details of that, because she apologised–

Oprah: OK.

Meghan: –and I've forgiven her, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: What was hard to get over was being blamed for something that not only I didn't do, but that happened to me, and the people who were part of our wedding going to our comms team and saying, "I know this didn't happen. I don't have to tell them what actually happened–"

Oprah: OK.

Meghan: “–but I can at least go on the record and say, “She didn’t make her cry”. And they were all told the same.

Oprah: So, all the time the story is out there that you had made Kate cry ... you knew all along and people around you knew that that wasn't true–

Meghan: Everybody in the institution knew it wasn't true.

Oprah: So, why didn't somebody just say that?

Meghan: That's a good question.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: I'm not sharing that piece about Kate in any way to be disparaging to her. I think it's really important for people to understand the truth.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: But also I think a lot of it that was fed into by the media... And, look, I would hope that she would have wanted that corrected, and maybe in the same what that the Palace wouldn't let anybody else...

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: ...negate it, they wouldn't let her. Because she's a good person. And I think so much of what I have seen play out is this idea of polarity, where if you love me you don't have to hate her. And if you love her, you don't need to hate me.

Oprah: Mh-hm. You know, there were several stories that compared headlines written about you to those written about Kate.

Meghan: Mmm.

Oprah: Um, since you don't read things, let me just tell you what was said.

Meghan: OK.

Oprah: Er, there were stories where Kate was being praised for holding her baby bump.

Meghan: Oh, gosh. Have I done it since we've been sitting down?

Oprah: Yes, you've been doing it the whole time.

Meghan: Probably. OK.

Oprah: Kate was praised for cradling her baby bump. And the headline about you doing the same thing said, "Meghan Can't Keep Hands Off Her Baby Bump for Pride or Vanity."

Meghan: What does it have to do with pride or vanity?

Oprah: Well, I'm just telling you about the stories, OK?

Meghan: OK, I hear you.

Oprah: Then, there was a whole online, er, piece about this. “Kate Eating Avocados to Help with Morning Sickness.”

Meghan: Oh, I heard... OK, I heard about the avocado one.

Oprah: But *you* were eating avocados–

Meghan: And fuelling murder, apparently.

Oprah: “...wolfinig down a fruit linked to water shortages, illegal deforestation and environmental devastation.” There seems to be there was a–

Meghan: That’s a really loaded piece of toast. I mean...

Oprah: [laughing]

Meghan: I mean, you have to laugh at a certain point because it’s just ridiculous.

Oprah: That’s good. “That’s a loaded piece of toast.” It’s about deforestation, and–

Meghan: Oh, man.

Oprah: -oh, wow. So, do you think there was a standard for Kate in general, and a separate one for you? And, if so, why?

Meghan: Um...I don't know why. I can see now what layers were at play there.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: Um, and again they really seem to want a narrative of...a hero and a villain.

Oprah: Yeah. You came in as an American, you came in as an actress, you came in as a divorcee, you came in as an independent woman, you came in as the first mixed raced person to marry into the family. And yours was a different story-

Meghan: Mm.

Oprah: And did that concern you in...in...in... being able to fit in? Did you think about that at all?

Meghan: Well, I thought about it because they made me think about it, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: But I think at the same time, now, upon reflection, thank God all of those things were true, thank God I had that life experience, thank God I had known the value of working. My first job was when I was thirteen at a frozen yoghurt shop called Humphrey Yogart.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: Um, I've always worked, I've always valued independence, I've always been outspoken, especially about women's rights. I mean, that's the sad irony of the last four years. I've advocated for so long for women to use their voice ... and then I was silent. Um...

Oprah: Were you silent, or were you silenced?

Meghan: The latter.

Oprah: So how does that work? Were you told by the comms people or the... I don't know, the institution? Were you told to keep silent? How were you told to handle tabloids or gossip? Were you told to say nothing?

Meghan: Everyone from ... everyone in my world, um, was given very clear directive from the moment the world knew Harry and I were dating to always say, "No comment". That's my friends, my mom and dad.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: Um, and we did.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: I did anything they told me to do. Of course I did because it was also through the lens of, "And we'll protect you." So even as things started to roll out in the media that I didn't see but my friends would call me and say, "Meg, this is really bad." Because I didn't see it, I'd go, "Don't worry, I'm being protected."

Oprah: Mmm.

Meghan: I believed that. And...And I think that was...That was really hard to reconcile, because it was only...it was only once we were married and everything started to really worsen...that I came to understand that not only was I not being protected, but that they were willing to lie to protect other members of the family. But they weren't willing to tell the truth to protect me and my husband.

Oprah: So are you saying you did not feel supported by the...powers that be? Be that The Firm, the monarchy, all of them.

Meghan: Um [sigh]. It's hard for people to distinguish the two because it's a family business, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: So there's the family and then there's the people that are running the institution. Those are two separate things and it's important to be able to compartmentalise that. Because the Queen, for example, has always been wonderful to me. I mean, we had one of our first joint engagements together. She asked me to join her. And I-

Oprah: Was this on the train?

Meghan: Yeah, on the train.

Oprah: Yeah. Mh-hm.

Meghan: And we had breakfast together that morning, and she'd given me a beautiful gift, and I just really loved being in her company. And I remember being in the car-

Oprah: Can you share what the gift was?

Meghan: Yeah, she gave me, um, some beautiful pearl earrings and a matching necklace. And, um, we were in the car, going between engagements, and she has a blanket that sits across her knees for warmth, and it was chilly, and she was like, "Meghan, come on." And put it over my knees as well, right?

Oprah: Oh, nice.

Meghan: Like, just moments of... And it made me think of my grandmother, where she's always been warm and inviting and really welcoming.

Oprah: So, OK, so she made you feel welcome.

Meghan: Yes.

Oprah: Did you feel welcomed by everyone? It seemed like you and Kate at the Wimbledon game where you were going to watch a friend play tennis... Was it what it looked like? You are two sisters-in-law, out there in the world-

Meghan: Mm.

Oprah: -getting to know each other. Was she helping you, embracing you into the family, helping you adjust?

Meghan: I think everyone welcomed me.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And...and when you say, “Was it what it looked like?”, my understanding and my experience of the past four years is it’s nothing like what it looks like. It’s nothing like what it looks like. And I remember so often people within The Firm would say, “Well, you can’t do this because it will look like that. You can’t...” So even, “Can I go and have lunch with my friends?” “No, no, no, you’re oversaturated, you’re everywhere, it would be best for you to not go out to lunch with your friends.” I go, “Well, I haven’t...I haven’t left the house in months.” I mean, there was a day that one of the members of the family, she came over, and she said, “Why don’t you just lay low for a little while. Because you are everywhere right now.” And I said, “I’ve left the house twice in four months. I am everywhere but I am nowhere.” And from that standpoint, I continued to say to people, “I know there’s an obsession with how things look, but has anyone talked about how it feels? Because right now I could not feel lonelier.”

Oprah: Hm. You were feeling lonely even though...your prince, you’re in love, you’re with him?

Meghan: I’m not lonely...I wasn’t lonely with him.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: There were moments where he had to work or he had to go away. There were moments in the middle of the night. And so there was very little that I was allowed to do.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And, yeah, so of course that breeds loneliness when you've come from such a full life, or when you've come from freedom. I think the easiest way that now people can understand it is what we've all gone through in lockdown.

Oprah: Yeah, well everyone can certainly relate now.

— — —

Oprah: Well, I would have to say, in South Africa, when the reporter stopped and asked, "Are you OK?"...

Meghan: Mm.

Oprah: ...and, oof, we all felt that, why did that question strike such a nerve? What was going on with you internally at that time?

Meghan: That was the last day of the tour. You know, those tours are...I'm sure they have beautiful pictures and it looks vibrant and all of that is true. It's also really exhausting and I was fried. And I think it just hit me so hard because we were making it look like everything was fine. I can understand why people were really surprised to see that there was pain there...

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: ...because we were doing our job. Our job was to be on and to smile and so, when he asked me that, um...I guess that I had felt that it had never occurred to anyone that I...that I wasn't OK and that I had really been

suffering, and I had known for a long time and had been asking the institution for help for quite a long time.

Oprah: Help for what?

Meghan: Um...After we had gotten back from our Australia tour, which was about a year before that, um... and we talked about when things really started to turn, when I knew we weren't being protected...

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: ...and it was during that part of my pregnancy, especially, that I started to understand what our continued reality was going to look like.

Oprah: What kind of protection did you want that you feel you didn't receive?

Meghan: I mean, they would go on the record and negate the most ridiculous story for anyone, right? I'm talking about things that are super artificial and inconsequential. But the narrative about, you know, making Kate cry, I think was the beginning of a real character assassination, and they knew it wasn't true. And I thought, "Well, if they're not going to kill things like that then what are we going to do?" Separate from that, what was happening behind closed doors was, you know, we knew I was pregnant, we now know it's Archie, um, and it was a boy. We didn't know any of that at the time. We can just talk about it as Archie now. And that was when they were saying they didn't want him to be a prince or a princess, not knowing what the gender would be, which would be different from protocol, and that he wasn't going to receive security.

Oprah: What?

Meghan: It was really hard.

Oprah: What do you mean?

Meghan: He wasn't going to receive security. This went on for the last few months of our pregnancy, where I'm going, "Hold on a second."

Oprah: That your son, and Harry...Prince Harry's son were...was not going to receive security.

Meghan: That's right. I know.

Oprah: How? How...? But how does that work?

Meghan: How does that work? It's like, "No, no, no, look, because if he's not going to be a prince..." It's, like, "OK, well, he needs to be safe. So we're not saying don't make him a prince or a princess, whatever it's going to be. But if you're saying the title is what's going to affect their protection, we haven't created this monster machine around us, in terms of click-bait and tabloid fodder, you've allowed that to happen, which means our son needs to be safe."

Oprah: So how did they explain to you that your son, the grandson...the great-grandson of the Queen...

Meghan: Mh-hm.

Oprah: ...is not going to have... He wasn't going to be a prince. How did they tell you that? And what reasons did they give? And say, "Therefore, you're not...you don't need protection."

Meghan: There...There's no explanation.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: There's no version... I mean that's the other piece of that.

Oprah: Who tells you that?

Meghan: Um, I heard a lot of it through Harry, and then other parts of it through conversations with family members, um, and it was a decision that they felt was appropriate. And they thought, 'Well, I'm-

Oprah: Was the title, was him being called a prince...Archie being called a prince, was that important to you?

Meghan: If it meant that he was going to be safe, then of course. All the grandeur surrounding this stuff is an attachment that I don't personally have, right? I've been a waitress, an actress, a princess, a duchess. I've always just still been Meghan, right? So, for me, I'm clear on who I am independent of that stuff, and the most important title I will ever have is 'Mom'. I know that. Um, but the idea of our son not being safe, and also the idea of the first member of colour in this family not being titled in the same way that other grandchildren would be, you know, the other piece of that conversation is there's a convention — I don't know if it's George V or George VI convention — that when you're the grandchild of the monarch, so when Harry's dad becomes King, automatically...Archie and our next baby would become prince or princess or whatever they're going to be.

Oprah: Mh-hm. So for you it's about protection and safety. Not so much as what the...what the title means to the world—

Meghan: That's a huge piece of it, but I mean but the-

Oprah: And that having the title gives you the safety and protection.

Meghan: Yeah, but also it's not their right to take it away, right?

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: And so I think, even with that convention I'm talking about, while I was pregnant, they said they want to change the convention for Archie.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: Well, why?

Oprah: Did you get an answer?

Meghan: No.

Oprah: You still don't have an answer?

Meghan: No.

Oprah: You know, we had heard, the world, those of us out here, reading the things or hearing the things, that it was you and Harry who didn't want Archie to have a prince title. So, you're telling me that is not true?

Meghan: No. And it's not our decision to make, right? I...even though I have a lot of clarity on what comes with the titles — good and bad — and, from my experience, a lot of pain...

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: ...I, again, wouldn't wish pain on my child, but that is their birthright to then make a choice about.

Oprah: OK. So it feels to me like things started to change when you and Harry decided that you were not going to take the picture that had been part of the tradition for years...and-

Meghan: We weren't asked to take a picture. That's also part of the spin that was really damaging. I thought, "Can you just tell them the truth? Can you say to the world that you're not giving him a title and we want to keep him safe and that if he's not a prince then it's not part of the tradition? Just tell people and then they'll understand."

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: But they wouldn't do that.

Oprah: But you were...you both obviously were aware that that had been part of the tradition, and there was...was there a specific reason why you didn't want to be a part of that tradition? I think many people interpreted that as you were both saying, "We're going to do things our way, we're going to do things in a different way."

Meghan: Mm. That's not it at all. I mean, I think what was really hard... So picture, now that you know what was going on behind the scenes, right? There was a lot of fear surrounding it. I was very scared of having to offer up our baby knowing that they weren't going to be kept safe.

Oprah: You certainly must have had some conversations with Harry about it, and have your own suspicions as to why they didn't want to make Archie a prince. What are those thoughts? Why do you think that is? Do you think it's because of his race?

Meghan: [sigh]

Oprah: And I know that's a loaded question, but...

Meghan: But I can give you an honest answer. In those months when I was pregnant, all around this same time, so we have in tandem the conversation of he won't be given security, he's not going to be given a title. And also concerns and conversations about how dark his skin might be when he's born.

Oprah: What?

Meghan: And...

Oprah: Who...who is having that conversation with you?

Meghan: [nods]

Oprah: What?

Meghan: So...um...

Oprah: There is a conversation...hold on. Hold up, stop right now.

Meghan: There were several conversations about it.

Oprah: There's a conversation with you...

Meghan: With Harry.

Oprah: ...about how dark your baby is going to be?

Meghan: Potentially, and what that would mean or look like.

Oprah: Whoo.

Meghan: [nods]

Oprah: And you're not going to tell me who had the conversation?

Meghan: I think that would be very damaging to them.

Oprah: OK. So how...how does one have that meeting? I...

Meghan: That was relayed to me from Harry. Those were conversations that family had with him. And I think, um...

Oprah: Whoa.

Meghan: It was really hard to be able to see those as compartmentalised conversations.

Oprah: Because they were concerned that if he were too brown, that that would be a problem? Are you saying that?

Meghan: I wasn't able to follow up with why. But that...if that's the assumption you're making I think that feels like a pretty safe one, which was really hard to understand, right? Especially when...look, I...The Commonwealth is a huge part of the monarchy. And I lived in Canada, which is a Commonwealth country, for seven years. But it wasn't until Harry and I were together that we started to travel through the Commonwealth, I would say 60-70% of which is people of colour, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And growing up as a woman of colour, as a little girl of colour, I know how important representation is. I know how you want to see someone who looks like you in certain positions-

Oprah: Obviously.

Meghan: Even...even Archie. Like, we read these books and now he's been... there's one line in one that goes, "If you can see it, you can be it." And he goes, "You can be it!" And I think about that so often, especially in the context of these young girls, but even grown women and men, who, when I would meet them in our time in the Commonwealth, how much it meant to them to be able to see someone who looks like them...

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: ...in this position. And I could never understand how it wouldn't be seen as an added benefit.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And a reflection of the world today. At all times, but especially now, to go, “How inclusive is that that you can see someone who looks like you in this family? Much less one who is born into it.

— — —

Oprah: You'd said in a podcast that it became ‘almost unsurvivable’, and that struck me because it sounds like you were in some kind of mental trouble. What was actually going on? ‘Almost unsurvivable’ sounds like there was a breaking point.

Meghan: Yeah, there was. I just didn't see a solution. I would sit up at night and I was just, like, “I don't understand how all of this is being churned out.” And, again, I wasn't seeing it. But it's almost worse when you feel it through the expression of my mom or my friends, or them calling me, crying, just like, “Meg, they're not protecting you.” And I realised that it was all happening just because I was breathing.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: And... Look, I was really ashamed to say it at the time, and ashamed to have to admit it to Harry, especially, um, because I know how much loss he's suffered...

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: ...but I knew that if I didn't say it, that I would do it...and I just didn't... I just didn't want to be alive anymore. And that was a very clear and real and frightening...constant thought. And I remember... I remember how he just cradled me, and I was... I went to the institution and I said that I

needed to go somewhere to get help. I said, “I’ve never felt this way before and I need to go somewhere.” And I was told that I couldn’t, that it wouldn’t be good for the institution. And I called...

Oprah: So the institution is never a person, or is it a series of people?

Meghan: No, it’s a person.

Oprah: It’s a person.

Meghan: It’s several people. But I went to one of the most senior people just to...to get help. And that, you know, I share this because ... there are so many people who ... are afraid to voice that they need help. And I know personally how hard it is not just to voice it, but when you voice it to be told no...

Oprah: Oof.

Meghan: And so I went to human resources. And I said, “ I just really ... I need help.” Because in my old job, there was a union and they would protect me. And I remember this conversation like it was yesterday. Because they said, “My heart goes out to you because I see how bad it is. But there’s nothing we can do to protect you because you’re not a paid employee of the institution.”

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: This wasn’t a choice. This was emails and begging for help, saying, very specifically, “ I am concerned for my mental welfare.” And people going, “Yes, yes, it’s disproportionately terrible, what we see out there to anyone else.” But nothing was ever done. So we had to find a solution.

Oprah: Wow. "I don't want to be alive anymore." That's... That's, um...

Meghan: I thought it would have solved everything for everyone, right?

Oprah: So were you thinking of harming yourself? Were you having suicidal thoughts?

Meghan: Yes. This was very, very clear.

Oprah: Wow.

Meghan: Very clear and very scary. And, you know, I didn't know who to even turn to in that.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: And one of the people that I reached out to, who's continued to be a friend and confident, was one of, um, my husband's mom's best friends, one of Diana's best friends. Because it's like, who else could understand what... what it's actually like on the inside?

Oprah: Did you ever think about going to a hospital? Or is that possible, that you can check yourself in some place?

Meghan: No, that's what I was asking to do.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: You can't just do that. I couldn't just, you know, call and Uber to the palace(!)

Oprah: [laughs] Yeah.

Meghan: You couldn't just go. You couldn't... I mean, you have to understand, as well, when I joined that family, that was the last time until we came here that I saw my passport, my driver's licence, my keys. All that gets turned over. I didn't see any of that anymore.

Oprah: Well, the way you're describing this, it's like you were trapped and couldn't get help, even though you're on the verge of suicide. That's what you are describing. That's what I'm hearing.

Meghan: Yes.

Oprah: And that would be an accurate interpretation, yes?

Meghan: That's the truth.

Oprah: That's the truth.

Meghan: You know, and if you think about... it was... One of the things that, it still haunts me, is this photograph that someone had sent me. We had to go to an official event. We had to go to this event, um, at the Royal Albert Hall, and a friend said, "I know you don't look at pictures, but oh, my God, you guys look so great," and sent it to me, and I zoomed in and what I saw was the truth of what that moment was, because right before we had to leave for that, I had just had that conversation with Harry that morning, and it was the next day that I talked to the institution...

Oprah: You had the conversation, "I don't want to be alive anymore?"

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: Oof.

Meghan: No, and it was...it wasn't even, "I don't want to..."

Oprah: And then you put a...

Meghan: ...want to." It was like, "These are the thoughts that I'm having in the middle of the night that are very clear..."

Oprah: Yes. Yeah. Yes, clarification, yeah.

Meghan: '...and I'm scared because this is very real. This isn't some abstract idea. This is methodical. And this is not who I am." But we had to go to this event. And I remember him saying, "I don't think you can go." And I said, "I can't be left alone."

Oprah: Because you were afraid of what you might do to yourself?

Meghan: [nods] [voice breaking] And we went and that...

Oprah: I'm so sorry to hear that.

Meghan: And that picture. If you zoom in, what I see, is how tightly his knuckles are gripped around mine. You can see the whites of our knuckles. Because we are smiling and doing our job. But we're both just trying to hold on. And every time that those lights went down in that royal box, I was just weeping, and he was gripping my hand, and then it was...

Oprah: Wow.

Meghan: "OK, intermission is coming, the lights are about to come on, everyone's looking at us again, and you have to just be on again."

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: Um, and that's, I think, so important for people to remember; you have no idea what's going on for someone behind closed doors. You have no idea. Even the people that smile the biggest smiles and shine the brightest lights, it seems, to have compassion for what's actually, potentially going on.

Oprah: I know. The public is looking at you, and to think that you, earlier in the day, had said to Harry that you didn't want to be alive anymore.

Meghan: Yeah, and just hours before, just sitting on the...the steps in our cottage...

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: Just sitting there and...and then going, "OK, well, go upstairs and put your make-up bag in your sink and try and pull yourself together."

Oprah: Well, nobody should have to go through that, and you know Harry and I are working on this mental health series for Apple, and yeah, so we hear a lot of these stories. Nobody should have to go through that.

Meghan: It takes so much courage to admit that you need help.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: It takes so much courage to voice that. As I said, I was ashamed. I'm supposed to be stronger than that.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: I don't want to put more on my husband's shoulders. He's carrying the weight of the world. I don't want to bring that to him. I bring solutions.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: To admit that you need help, to admit how dark of a place you're in.

— — —

Oprah: You've said some shocking things here, revealing...

Meghan: Wasn't planning to say anything shocking. I'm just telling you what's happened. [laughs]

Oprah: OK. [laughs]

Meghan: [laughs] I'm sorry if it shocked you. It's been a lot.

Oprah: I'm a little shocked.

Meghan: It's been a lot.

Oprah: How do you feel about the Palace hearing you speak your truth today? Are you afraid of a backlash, or...of their reaction?

Meghan: I mean, I think...I'm not going to live my life in fear. You know, I think so much of it is said with an understanding of just truth.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: But I think, to answer your question ... I don't know how they could expect that after all of this time, we would still just be silent if there is an active role that The Firm is playing in perpetuating falsehoods about us.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: That, at a certain point, you're gonna go, "But, you guys, someone just tell the truth." And if that comes with risk of losing things...I mean I've... I've lost...There's a lot that's been lost already.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: And I grieve a lot. I mean, I've lost my father, I've lost a baby...I nearly lost my name. I mean, there's a loss of identity, but I'm still standing. And my hope for people, in the takeaway from this, is to know that there's another side....

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: To know that life is worth living.

Oprah: OK. I'm so glad you see that now. We are gonna take a break, y'all...

Meghan: [laughs]

Oprah: And Harry's gonna join us. We'll be right back with Harry.

— — —

Oprah: So...hi.

Harry: Hello.

Oprah: Thanks for joining us.

Harry: Thanks for having me.

Oprah: You've been watching on the side, yeah?

Harry: Yeah, some of it.

Oprah: Yes. I wanna say... First of all, let's say congratulations...

Meghan: [laughs]

Harry: Thank you.

Oprah: ...for the new addition to your family. Meghan said she wanted to wait until you were here to tell us — is it a boy, or is it a girl?

Meghan: You can tell her.

Harry: No, go for it.

Meghan: No, no.

Harry: It's a girl.

Meghan: A girl.

Oprah: [squeals]

Harry: Yes!

Meghan: [claps]

Oprah: You're gonna have a daughter! Wow.

Meghan: It's a girl.

Oprah: When you realised that, and saw it on the ultrasound, what was your first thought?

Harry: "Amazing." Just grateful. Like, any...to have any child, any one or any two would have been amazing, but to have a boy and a girl, I mean, what more can you ask for? But now, you know, we've...we've got our family. We've got the four of us and our two dogs, and it's great.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: Done. Done? Two is it?

Harry: Done.

Meghan: Two is it.

Oprah: Two is is.

Meghan: Two is it.

Oprah: And when's the baby due?

Meghan: In summertime.

Oprah: This summertime.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: Um, so you all have been living in sunny California now for...

Meghan: Er...since March.

Oprah: Since March, OK.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: And so you stayed at Tyler Perry's house for several months.

Harry: Three months, I believe.

Meghan: Yeah, because we didn't have a plan.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: We needed...we needed a house, and he offered us his security as well. So we...it gave us breathing room to try to figure out what we were going to do.

Harry: The biggest concern was that while we were in Canada in someone else's house, um, I then got told, short notice, that security was going to be removed. By this point, courtesy of the Daily Mail, the world knew exact ... our exact location. So suddenly it dawned on me, "Hang on a second, the borders could be closed. We're gonna have our security removed. Who knows how long lockdown is gonna be? The world knows where we are. It's not safe, it's not secure-

Meghan: When also...

Harry: We probably need to get out of here.

Oprah: So what security did you have at the time that was going to be removed?

Harry: We had our UK security.

Oprah: So you got word from overseas?

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: That, "We're taking away your security." Why were they doing that?

Harry: Um, their justification is a change in status. Um, of which I pushed back and said, "Well, is there a change of threat or risk?" Um, and after many weeks of waiting, eventually I got confirmation the that, no, the risk and

threat hasn't changed, but due to our change of status, which we would no longer be a "official" working members of the royal family, they're obviously... What we proposed was sort of part-time, or at least as much as we could do without being fully consumed because of, I think, what most of you guys have covered already.

Meghan: We actually didn't talk about that. It's been so spun in the wrong direction, as though, we quit, we walked away, we... All the conversations of the two years before we finally announced it...

Oprah: OK, let me ask the question.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: So, over a year ago, er, you shocked the world. You announced that you were stepping back as senior members of the royal family, and then the media reported that you had 'blindsided' the Queen, your grandmother.

Harry: [nods]

Oprah: So here's a time to set the record straight. What was the tipping point that made you decide you had to leave?

Harry: Yeah, it was desperate. I went to all the places which I thought I should go to to ask for help. We both did.

Meghan: Mm.

Harry: Separately, and together.

Oprah: So you left because you were asking for help and couldn't get it?

Harry: Yeah, basically. But we never left.

Meghan: We never left the family and we only wanted to have the same type of role that exists, right? There's senior members of the family, and then there are non-senior members. As we said specifically we're stepping back from senior roles to be just like several... I mean, I can think of so many right now who are all... Their Royal Highnesses, Prince or Princess, Duke or Duchess who earn a living, live on Palace grounds, can support the Queen if and when called upon. So we weren't reinventing the wheel here. We were saying, "OK, if this isn't working for everyone, we're in a lot of pain, you can't provide us with the help that we need, we can just take a step back. We can do it in a Commonwealth country." We had suggested New Zealand, South Africa...

Harry: Yeah. Take a breath.

Meghan: ...Canada...

Oprah: Yeah. And you wanted to take a breath from what specifically? Let's be clear.

Harry: From this...this constant barrage. My biggest concern was history repeating itself, and I've said that before on numerous occasions very publicly. Um, and what I was seeing was history repeating itself, but more perhaps... or definitely far more dangerous because then you add race in and you add social media in. When I'm talking about history repeating itself, I'm talking about my mother. When you can see something happening in the

same kind of way, anybody would ask for help, as the system of which you are a part of...

Oprah: Mm.

Harry: ...especially when you know there's a relationship there, that they could help and share some truth, or call the dogs off, whatever you want to call it. So to receive no help at all and to be told continuously, "This is how it is. This is just how it is. We've all been through it." And I think the biggest turning point for me was the...And it didn't take very long because it was actually right at the beginning...was OK, this union, us, me being, having a girlfriend was going to be a thing. Of course it was. But I...I never expected, or I never thought...

Oprah: Because she was mixed-raced?

Harry: No, just the two of us to start with. I hadn't really thought about the mixed-race piece, because I thought, "Well, firstly..." you know, "I've spent many years doing the work and doing my own learning." But that my upbringing and the system of which I was brought up in and what I've been exposed to it wasn't...I wasn't aware of it to start with. But, my God, it doesn't take very long to suddenly become aware of it.

Oprah: Yeah. Because you said you really weren't aware of unconscious bias and all that that represents-

Harry: No...

Oprah: ...until you met Meghan.

Harry: Yeah, you know, sad as it is to say, it takes living in her shoes, in this instance, for a day, or those first eight days, to see where it was gonna go... and how far they were gonna take it.

Oprah: And get away with it.

Harry: And get away with it. And be so blatant about it. That's the bit that shocked me. We're talking about the UK press here, right? And this...the UK is my home. That is...that is where I was brought up. So, yes, I've got my own relationship, um, that goes back a long way with the media. I...I asked for calm from the British tabloids — once as a boyfriend, once as a husband, and then once as a father.

Oprah: So when I ask the question, "Why did you leave?" the simplest answer is...?

Harry: Lack of support. And lack of understanding.

Oprah: So I want clarity. Was the move about getting away from the UK press? Because the press, as you know, is everywhere. Or was the move because you weren't getting enough support from The Firm?

Harry: It was both.

Oprah: Both?

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: Did you blindside the Queen?

Harry: No. I've never blind-sided my grandmother. I have too much respect for her. Um...

Oprah: So where did that story come from?

Harry: Um, I hazard a guess that it probably could have come from within the institution.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: I remember when you talked to her several times about this over...

Harry: Two years.

Meghan: ...two years. But even the night before, days before, with the statement coming out, I remember that conversation we had with her.

Oprah: So how do you know she wasn't blindsided?

Harry: I-

Oprah: Because the way it was presented through the press is that suddenly you made this announcement, she didn't know it was coming...

Harry: No, I... When we were in Canada I...I had three conversations with my grandmother and two conversations with my father, before he stopped taking my calls. And then said, "Can you put this all in writing, what your plan is?"

Oprah: Your father asked you to put it in writing?

Harry: Yeah. He asked me to put it in writing. I put all the specifics in there. Even the fact that we were planning on putting the announcement out on the 7th of January.

Oprah: So you just said that your dad stopped taking your calls. Why did he stop taking your calls?

Harry: Because...I took matters in... By that point, I took matters into my own hands. It was like, "I need to do this for my family. This is not a surprise to anybody. It's really sad that it's got to this point, but I've got to do something for my own mental health, for my wife's, and for Archie's as well." Because I could see where this was headed.

— — —

Meghan: To have sat back and not said that for so long, it just feels really...

Oprah: To have been silent all this time?

Meghan: Yeah. Yeah.

Harry: Been three-and-a-half, four years... or longer, actually.

Meghan: We were saying, gosh, it must have been years ago, we were...I was sitting in Nottingham Cottage, and The Little Mermaid came on.

Oprah: Uh-huh.

Meghan: Now, who would, as an adult, really watched The Little Mermaid? But it came on and I was, like, "Well, I'm just here all the time so may as well

watch this." And I went, "Oh, my God. She falls in love with the prince, and because of that she has to lose her voice."

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: But by the end she gets her voice back.

Oprah: Gets her voice back.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: And this is what happened here. You feel like you got your voice back.

Meghan: Yeah.

— — —

Oprah: So you're stepping back out of frustration, and you just need to get out. And, you know, you heard Meghan share with us all the moment that she came to you, had the courage enough to say out loud, "I don't want to live anymore."

Harry: Mh-hm.

Oprah: And...you didn't know what to do.

Harry: I had no idea what to do. I wasn't...I wasn't...I wasn't prepared for that. I went...I went to a very dark place as well, but I...I...I wanted to be there for her. And I-

Meghan: And also, we didn't leave right at that moment.

Harry: ...was terrified.

Meghan: Right? We still... That's almost a year after.

Oprah: So did you tell other people in the family, "I need to get help for her"? "We need help for her"?

Harry: No. That's just not a conversation that would be had.

Oprah: Why?

Harry: Um... I guess I was ashamed of admitting it to them.

Oprah: Oh!

Harry: And I don't know whether...I don't know whether they've had the same...whether they've had the same feelings or thoughts. I have no idea. Um, it's a very trapping environment that a lot of them are stuck in.

Oprah: You were ashamed of admitting that Meghan needed help?

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: Hm.

Harry: I didn't have anyone to turn to.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Harry: Um, you know we've got some very close friends that..that have been with us through this whole process.

Oprah: Mm.

Harry: But, for the family, they very much have this mentality of, "This is just how it is. This is how it's meant to be. You can't change it. We've all been through it."

Oprah: "We've all been through the pressure, we've all been through being-

Harry: Yes. But what was different-

Oprah: ...exploited."

Harry: What was different for me for the race element. Because now it wasn't just about her, but it was about what she represents. And, therefore, it wasn't just affecting my wife, it was affecting so many other people as well. And that's... That was the trigger for me to really engage in those conversations with palace...senior palace staff, and with my family to say, "Guys, this is not gonna end well."

Oprah: And when you said, "end well", what did you mean?

Harry: For anyone, it's not gonna end well. Because the way that I saw it was...there is a way of doing things, but, for us, for this union, and the specifics around her race, there was an opportunity, many opportunities, for my family to show some public support.

Oprah: Mm.

Harry: And I guess one of the most telling parts, the saddest parts, I guess, over seventy Members of Parliament, female Members of Parliament, both Conservative and Labour, came out and called out the...the colonial undertones of articles and headlines written about Meghan, yet no-one from my family ever said anything over those three years. And that...that hurts. But I also am acutely aware of where my family stand and how scared they are of the tabloids turning on them.

Oprah: Turning on them for what? They're the royal family.

Harry: Yes, but it's, um...there is this invisible what's...what's...what's termed or referred to as 'the invisible contract' behind closed doors. Between the institution and the tabloids, the UK tabloids.

Oprah: How so?

Harry: Well, it is... To simplify it, it's bas...it's...it's a case...if you, as a family member, are willing to wine, dine and give full access to these reporters, er, then you will get better press.

Oprah: What do you care about better press if you're royal?

Harry: I think everyone needs to have some compassion for them in that situation, right? There is a level of control by fear-

Meghan: [nods] Mm.

Harry: ...that has existed for generations. I mean-

Oprah: But who is controlling whom?

Harry: ...generation after generation.

Meghan: Mm.

Oprah: It's the institution... From our point of view, just the public, it's...

Harry: Yeah, but the institution survives based on that...on that perception.
So actually-

Oprah: So you're saying there's this relationship that Meghan was speaking of. It's like symbiotic. One lives or thrives because the other exists.

Meghan: Mm.

Oprah: That's what you're saying?

Harry: That's the idea.

Meghan: Well, I mean, I think there's a reason that these tabloids have holiday parties at the Palace. They're hosted by the Palace, the tabloids are. You know, there is a construct that's at play there, and because, from the beginning of our relationship, they were so attacking and inciting so much racism, really...

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: I mean, it changed our...the risk level, because it wasn't just catty gossip. It was bringing out a part of people that was racist in how it was charged.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: And that changed the threat. That changed the level of death threats — that changed everything.

Oprah: So tell me this, you said...a moment ago, it hurts that your family has never acknowledged the role that racism played in here. Did you think she was well received in the beginning?

Harry: Yes. Far better than I expected.

[Harry and Meghan laugh.]

Harry: But, you know, my grandmother has been amazing throughout. You know, my father, my brother, Kate and all the rest of the family, they were, they were really welcoming. But it really changed after the Australia tour. After our South Pacific tour.

Meghan: That's when we announced we were pregnant with Archie. That was our first tour.

Harry: But it was also...it was also the first time that the family got to see how incredible she is at the job and that brought back memories.

Oprah: I'm thinking, because I watch The Crown, OK? Do you all watch The Crown?

Meghan: [laughs]

Harry: I've watched some of it. We've watched some of it.

Meghan: We've watched some of it.

Oprah: But there is this, er... I think it was the fourth season, actually, where there is an Australian tour. So is that what you're talking about? It brought back memories of that? The Australian tour where...

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: ...your father and your mother went there, and your mother was bedazzling? So are you saying there were hints of jealousy?

Harry: Look, I... [sighs] I just wish that we would all learn from the past but to see the way...to see how effortless it was for Meghan to come into the family so quickly in Australia and across New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga, and just be able to connect with people-

Oprah: But...

Harry: In such a... I know, I know, I know, I know, I know... But it's...

Oprah: Why...? I mean, why wouldn't everybody love that? Isn't that what you want? You want her to come into the family and to...as the Queen said at one point, the way that Meghan had basically, not her words, but assimilated into the family.

Meghan: Mm.

Harry: Yeah, I think, um, you know, as we talked about, she was very much welcomed into the family, not just by the family but by the world.

Oprah: Yeah. Hm-hm.

Harry: Certainly by the Commonwealth. I mean, here you have one of the greatest assets to the Commonwealth that the family could have ever wished for.

Oprah: I just can't... I'm kinda going back to this. So, then, you're in Canada because you had stepped back, your Firm says you're no longer gonna have protection. So, did you ask for that? Because did you want... were you trying to have it both ways? You wanted to step back but also keep your foot in royal business, it seems.

Harry: It's interesting that you talk about it being, you know, "have it both ways." On the...on the security element, I never thought that I would have my security removed. Because I was born into this position. I inherited the risk.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Harry: So that was a shock to me. That was what completely changed the whole plan. Not that we had a plan.

Oprah: So that you, as Prince Harry, are gonna have your security removed?

Meghan: Yeah. And I even wrote letters to the family, saying, "Please, it's very clear the protection of me or Archie is not a priority. I accept that. That is fine. Please keep my husband safe. I see the death threats. I see the racist propaganda. Please keep him safe. Please don't pull his security and announce to the world when he and we are most vulnerable." And they said it's just not possible.

Oprah: Mh-hm. I think what we really have got to clear up here is because one of the...stories that continues to live, either through rumours or social media out in the world, is that you, Meghan, are the one who manipulated, calculated and are responsible for this Megxit. And...

Meghan: Oh, my Gosh! It's amazing how they can use "Meg" for everything.

Oprah: Yes. There are even stories that you knew all along that this was going to happen. You went through the whole process. And it was all intentional to build your brand.

Meghan: Can you imagine how little sense that makes? I left my career, my life, I left everything because I love him, right? And our plan was to do *this* forever-

Harry: Yeah. Yeah, for us. That's what it was.

Meghan: Our plan, for me, I mean, I wrote letters to his family when I got there, saying, "I am dedicated to *this*. I'm here for you. Use me as you'd like." There was no guidance as well, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: There were certain things you couldn't do. But, you know, unlike that you see in the movies, there's no class on how to...how to speak. How to cross your legs. How to be royal. There's not of that training. That might exist for other members of the family. That was not something that was offered to me.

Oprah: So nobody tells you anything?

Meghan: No.

Oprah: Nobody prepares you.

Harry: No, but-

Meghan: Sorry, but even down to, like, the National Anthem, no-one thought to say, "Oh, you're American. You're not going to know that." That's me, late at night, googling, "How...what's the National... I've got to learn this. I don't want to embarrass them. I need to learn these 30 hymns for church. All of this is televised. We were doing the training behind the scenes, cos I just wanted to make them proud.

Oprah: OK, but he's the question. Do you think you would have left, or ever stepped back, were it not for Meghan?

Meghan: Mm.

Harry: No. The answer to your question is no.

Oprah: You would not have?

Harry: I wouldn't have...I wouldn't have been able to because I, myself, was trapped as well. I didn't see a way out.

Oprah: She felt trapped? You were trapped?

Harry: Yeah, I didn't see a way out.

Oprah: But you'd had this life your whole life. This has been your life your whole life.

Harry: Yeah, but, you know, I was trapped but I didn't know I was trapped.

Oprah: Hm.

Harry: But the moment I met Meg, and then our worlds sort of collided in the most amazing of ways, and then to see how the race...

Oprah: Please explain how you, Prince Harry, raised in a palace in a life of privilege, literally a prince, how you were trapped?

Harry: Trapped within the system. Like the rest of my family are. My father and my brother, they are trapped. They don't get to leave. And I have huge compassion for that.

Oprah: Well, OK, so the impression of the world, maybe it's a false impression, is that...for all these years before Meghan, you were living your life as a royal, Prince Harry, the beloved Prince Harry, and that you were enjoying that life. We didn't get the impression that you were feeling trapped in that life.

Harry: Enjoying the life because there were photographs of me smiling while I was shaking hands and meeting people? Like, I'm sure you guys have covered some of that. That's...that's a part of the job. That's a part of the role. That's what's expected. No matter who you are in the family. No matter what's going on in your personal life. No matter what's just happened, if the bikes roll up and the car rolls up, you've got to get dressed, you gotta get in

there, wipe the tears away, shake off whatever you're thinking about and you've got to be on your A-game.

Oprah: Mh-hm. What do you think your mom would say about this stepping back, this decision to step back from the royal family? How would she feel about this moment?

Harry: I think she would feel very angry with how this has panned out, and very sad. But ultimately...all she wa...all she'd ever want is for us to be happy.

Oprah: You wanted freedom from that life, you wanted freedom to make your own money. You wanted freedom to make deals with Netflix and Spotify. But you also wanted to serve the Queen.

Harry: Yeah, well, we didn't want to...we didn't want to give up, or we didn't want to turn our backs on the associations and the people that we'd been supporting.

Oprah: But also, Oprah, it exists.

Harry: Yeah. It exists. But also the Netflix and the Spotify, they're all... That was never part of the plan.

Meghan: No.

Oprah: Because you didn't have a plan(!)

Meghan: We didn't have a plan.

Harry: We didn't have a plan. But... That was suggested by somebody else but the point of where my family literally cut me off financially. And I had to afford...afford security for us.

Oprah: Wait. Hold...hold up. Wait a minute. Your family cut you off?

Harry: Yeah. In the first half, the first quarter of 2020. But I've got what my mum left me. And, without that, we would not have been able to do this.

Oprah: OK.

Harry: So, you know, touching back on what you asked me, what my mum would think of this, I think she saw it coming.

Meghan: Mm.

Harry: And I certainly felt her presence throughout this whole process. And I'm...you know, for me, I'm...I'm just really relieved and happy to be sitting here, talking to you with my wife by my side. Because I can't begin to image what it must have been like for her going through this process by herself all those years ago because it has been unbelievably tough for the two of us, but at least we had each other.

Oprah: What's your relationship now with your family?

Harry: I've spoken...I've spoken more to my grandmother in the last year than I have done for many, many years.

Oprah: Do you all Zoom calls?

Harry: Er, we did a couple of Zoom calls with Archie.

Meghan: Sometimes. Yeah, they can see Archie.

Oprah: Yeah.

Harry: Um, my grandmother and I have a really good relationship.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Harry: And an understanding. And I have a deep respect for her. She's my Colonel in Chief, right?

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Harry: Um, she always will be.

Oprah: Your relationship with your father?

Harry: [silence]

Oprah: Is he taking your calls now?

Harry: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. He is. Um, there's a lot to work through there. You know? I feel really let down...because...he's been through something similar. He knows what pain feels like. And this is... And Archie's his grandson. Um... But at the same time, you know, of course, I will...I will always...I will always love him, but there's a lot of hurt that has happened. And...and I will continue to make one of my priorities to try and...heal that relationship.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: Mm.

Harry: Um, but they only know what they know. And that's the thing. I've tried to...

Meghan: Or what they're told.

Harry: Or what they're told. And I've tried to educate them through the process that I have been educated.

Oprah: Because is it like being in a big royal bubble?

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: Yeah. And your brother? Relationship? Much has been said about that.

Harry: Yeah. And much will continue to be said about that. You know, as I've said before, you know, I love William to bits. He's my brother. We've been through hell together. And we have a shared experience. But we, you know, we were on different paths.

Oprah: Well, what is particularly striking is what Meghan shared with us earlier, is that no-one wants to admit that there's anything about race, or that race has played a role in the trolling and the vitriol, and yet Meghan has shared with us that there was a conversation with you about Archie's skintone.

Harry: Mh-hm.

Oprah: What was that conversation?

Harry: That conversation, I'm never going to share. Um, but at the time...at the time it was awkward. I was a bit shocked. Um...

Oprah: Can you tell us what the question was?

Harry: No. I'm not comfortable sharing that.

Oprah: OK.

Harry: Um, but that was right at the beginning, right? Um...

Oprah: Like, "What will the baby look like?"

Harry: Yeah. "What will the kids look like?"

Oprah: "What will the kids look like?"

Harry: But, um, that was right at the beginning when she wasn't going to get security. When members of my family were suggesting that she carries on acting because there's not enough money to pay for her and all this sort of stuff. Like, there were some real obvious signs before we even got married that this was going to be really hard.

Oprah: Hm. So, in conclusion, if you'd had the support, you'd still be there?

Harry: Without question.

Meghan: Yeah.

Harry: I'm sad that what's happened has happened. But I know and I know that I'm comfortable knowing that we did everything that we could to make it work. And we did everything on the exit process the way that...the way that it should have been done.

Oprah: Mm.

Meghan: With as much respect-

Harry: With as much respect.

Meghan: ...And oh, oh, my God, we just did everything we could to protect them.

Oprah: So what do you say to the people who say that you came here, you made these multi-million-dollar deals, and that you were just money-grabbing royals?

Harry: First off, this was never the intention.

Oprah: Mh-hm.

Meghan: Yeah.

Harry: Um, and we're certainly not complaining. We... Our life is great now. We've got a beautiful house. We've got a beautiful... I've got a beautiful family. And the dogs...the dogs are really happy. Um, but at the time, during COVID, the suggestion by a friend was, "What about streamers?"

Meghan: Yeah, we genuinely hadn't thought of that before.

Harry: We were like... I'd never thought about it. Um, so there were all sorts of different options. And, look, from my perspective, all I needed was enough money to be able to pay for security to keep my family safe.

Oprah: Mm. How will you use Archewell as a means of speaking to things that are important to you in the world?

Meghan: I think in creating... I mean, every...life is all about storytelling, right? About the stories that we tell ourselves, the stories we're told, what we buy into. And for us to be able to have storytelling through a truthful lens, that hopefully is uplifting, is going to be great. Um, knowing how many people that that can land with. And being able to give a voice to a lot of people that are underrepresented and aren't really heard.

— — —

Meghan: This morning I woke up earlier than H and saw a note from someone on our team in the UK saying that the Duke of Edinburgh had gone to the hospital.

Oprah: Yeah.

Meghan: But I just picked up the phone and I...I called the Queen just to check in. You call.

Oprah: You check in?

Meghan: Just like I, you know, I would... That's what we do. It's like being able to default to not having to every moment go, "Is that appropriate?"

Oprah: Yeah.

Harry: For so many in my family, what they do is... there's a level of control in it, right? Because they're fearful of what the papers are going to say about them.

Oprah: Yeah.

Harry: Whereas, with us, it was like, "Just be...yourself. Just be genuine. Just be authentic. Just go and do what it is. If you get it wrong, you get it wrong. If you get it right, you get it right."

— — —

Oprah: Your exit agreement with the royal family, that is coming up at the end of this month.

Harry: The decision is...I think.. Yeah, I mean, the decision, as of last week or whatever it was, um, is that they will be removing everything.

Oprah: Are you hurt by that decision?

Harry: I am hurt. But, the same time, I completely respect my grandmother's decision.

Oprah: OK.

Harry: I would still love for us to be able to continue to support those associations–

Meghan: Yeah.

Harry: ...albeit without the title or the role.

Oprah: Could you be as satisfied now, doing this through your own organisation, Archewell?

Meghan: Well, this is what we're doing, right? We're still doing it. We're still going to always do the work. But I also think it's important for you, or everyone, to know this decision that was made about patronages and all of that was before anyone knew that we were sitting down with you.

Harry: Yeah.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: I think that it's... I can only imagine that they–

Oprah: Well, I heard a story that you're getting punished. Now those were being take away because you *did* sit with me.

Meghan: Yeah, but that was... I mean, those letters, those conversations, that was finalised before anyone even knew that we were going to sit down. So it's just not true.

Oprah: All right. Tell me this, Harry. What delights you now, in your everyday experience and the things that you actually cherish in your life here with

Archie and Meghan?

Meghan: Hm.

Harry: Um...this year has been crazy for everybody. Um, but to have outdoor space where I can go for walks with Archie and we can go for walks as a family and with the dogs. And we can go on hikes. Or go, you know, down to the beach, which is so close. All of these things are just... I guess, the highlight for me is sticking him on the back of the bicycle in his little baby seat and take him on these bike rides, which is something I was never able to do when I was young. I can see him on the back, and he's got his arms out, and he's like, "Whooo!" Chatting, chatting, chatting, going, "Palm tree. House." And all this sort of stuff, and I do, I think to myself, "Wow-

Oprah: What's his new favourite word? What's his favourite word now?

Meghan: Oh, my gosh. He's on a roll. In the past couple of weeks it has been 'hydrate', which is just hysterical-

Harry: But also whenever anyone leaves the house, he's like, "Drive safe."

Meghan: "Drive safe!"

Harry: Which is really...which is really...which is really cute, but I'm like-

Meghan: Cos he's not even two yet.

Oprah: You said that your brother was trapped. You said that you love your brother and always will love your brother. You didn't tell me what the relationship is now, though.

Harry: Um, the relationship is space...at the moment. And, you know, time heals all things, hopefully.

Oprah: Any regrets?

Harry: No, I mean... No, I think we've done... I'm really proud of us, you know? Um, I'm so proud of... I'm so proud of my wife. Like, she safely delivered Archie during a period of time that was so cruel and so mean. And every single day I was coming back from work, from London, I was coming back to my wife crying, while breast-feeding Archie.

Oprah: Hm.

Harry: That's coming from someone who wasn't reading anything. And as you touched on earlier, if she *had* have read anything, she wouldn't be here now. So, we did what we had to do. And now we've got another little one on the way.

Meghan: I have one. My regret is believing them when they said I would be protected.

Oprah: Hm.

Meghan: I believed that. And I regret believing that, because I think had I really seen that that wasn't happening, I would have been able to do more. But I think... I wasn't supposed to see it. I wasn't supposed to know. And... and now...because we're actually on the other side, we've actually not just survived, but are thriving. You know, this. I mean, this is miracles. Yeah, I think that all of those things that I was hoping for...have happened. Um, and

in some ways, this is just the beginning for us. You know, we've been through a lot, it's felt like a lifetime. [laughs] A lifetime.

Oprah: So your story with the prince *does* have a happy ending?

Meghan: It does.

Harry: Yeah.

Meghan: Yeah, it really did.

Oprah: It has a happy ending because you made it so.

Meghan: Yeah, greater than any fairy tale you've ever read.

Oprah: Yeah. Greater than any fairy tale.

Meghan: Yeah. Yes.

Oprah: What you've described here today, being trapped and not even being aware of it and all the things that had transpired, and then she comes into your life, and then you're doing therapy, do you think, in some way, she saved you?

Harry: Yeah. Without question. There was...there was a bigger purpose. There were other forces at play, I think, throughout this whole process. I'm the last person to think, "Ooh!", you know.

Oprah: Yeah.

Harry: But it's undeniable when these things have happened, where the overlap is. So, yeah, she did without...without...yeah...without question, she saved me.

Meghan: I would... I mean, I think that's lovely, I would disagree. I think he saved all of us, right? He ultimately called it and was like, "We've got to find a way... for us, for Archie." And you made a decision that saved, that certainly saved my life, um, and saved all of us. But, you know, you need to want to be saved.

Oprah: Well, thank you for sharing your love story. We can't wait for the big day sometime this summer.

Meghan: Yes, indeed.

Oprah: Sometime this summer.

Meghan: Yeah.

Oprah: Thank you both for trusting me to share your story.

Meghan: Thank you for giving us the space to do it.

Harry: Yeah, thank you.

[Harry And Meghan](#)

[Oprah](#)

[Interview](#)

[Transcript](#)

[The Royal Family](#)



Written by **Kate Shaw**

Follow

2 followers · 1 following

Telling the truth.

No responses yet



Justin Reesor

What are your thoughts?



Recommended from Medium



In Long. Sweet. Valuable. by Ossai Chinedum



Saurav Mandal

I'll Instantly Know You Used Chat Gpt If I See This

Trust me you're not as slick as you think

May 16 26K 1547



...



...

:2510.01171v3 [cs.CL] 10 Oct 2025

ABSTRACT

Post-training alignment often reduces LLM diversity, leading to a phenomenon known as *mode collapse*. Under prior work that attributes this effect to algorithmic limitations, we identify a fundamental problem: data bias drives *typicality bias* in preference data, whereby annotators systematically favor familiar text as a result of well-established findings in cognitive psychology. We formalize this bias theoretically, verify it on preference datasets empirically, and show that it plays a central role in mode collapse. Motivated by this analysis, we introduce *Verbalized Sampling (VS)*, a simple, training-free prompting strategy to circumvent mode collapse. VS prompts the model to draw a uniform probability distribution over a set of modes (e.g., “Give me 5 ideas about coffee and their corresponding probabilities”). Comprehensive experiments show that VS significantly improves performance across creative writing (poems, stories, jokes), dialogue simulation, open-ended QA, and synthetic data generation, without sacrificing factual accuracy and safety. For instance, in creative writing, VS increases diversity by 1.6-2.1x over direct prompting. We further observe an emergent trend that more capable models benefit more from VS. In sum, our work provides a new data-centric perspective on mode collapse and a practical inference-time remedy that helps unlock pre-trained generative diversity.

Problem: Typicality Bias Causes Mode Collapse

Solution: Verbalized Sampling (VS) Mitigates Mode Collapse

Different prompts collapse to different modes:



In Generative AI by Adham Khaled

Stanford Just Killed Prompt Engineering With 8 Words (And I...)

ChatGPT keeps giving you the same boring response? This new technique unlocks 2x...

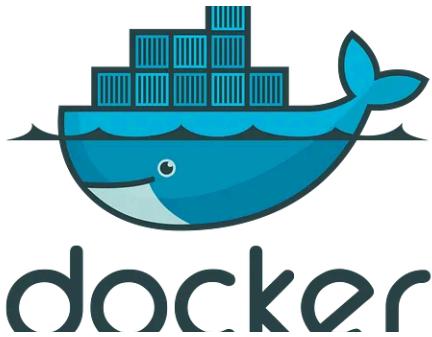
Oct 19 16.1K 357



...



...



Abhinav

Docker Is Dead—And It's About Time

Docker changed the game when it launched in 2013, making containers accessible and...

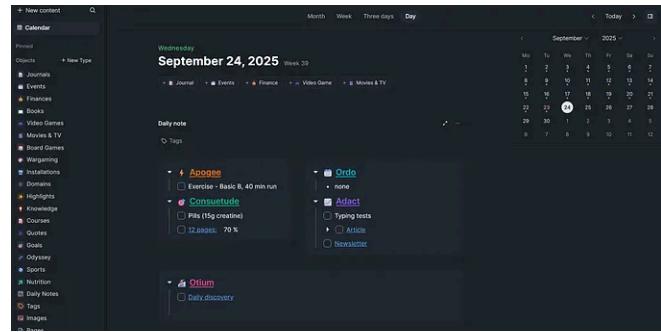
Do Hard Things if You Want an Easy Life

The one skill that changes everything

Jun 13 22K 877



...



Tosny

7 Websites I Visit Every Day in 2025

If there is one thing I am addicted to, besides coffee, it is the internet.

Sep 23 7.2K 257



...



In Data Science Collective by James Wilkins

You're using ChatGPT wrong. Here's how to prompt like a pro

Smarter prompts lead to smarter responses.

⭐ Jun 8 7.2K 206



...

⭐ Jun 4 8.7K 506



...

See more recommendations