

Aren't you all the luckiest people in the world?

Oh my God, I envy you.

Hi Amanda.

>> Hi Oprah.

>> I can't believe I just said that [LAUGH].

So we have been so excited and eagerly anticipating this day.

This campus has been buzzing since the announce, announcement was made last week that you'd be coming here.

And I received.

>> Thanks for the buzz.

I'm so glad you know I still have buzz.

So good.

>> I received a lot of support and advice from my friends and that was really great and I just wanted to say I think the best advice I've heard was don't worry Amanda, if you mess up, Oprah can just interview herself [LAUGH].

>> [LAUGH] So, if I falter, feel free to ask yourself some questions, and we'll, and we'll be good.

[LAUGH] But to get things started, I want, I thought we'd frame today's talk with framing three sections with quotes of yours that you shared after wrapping up your 25th season and final season of the Oprah Winfrey Show.

And I thought some of these quotes, I mean you share so much wisdom but, these these really spoke to me, and thought would be a great way to frame our discussion.

>> Okay.

>> So this first one that I will read for everyone and for you so you don't have to strain your neck is you have to know what sparks the light in you so that you, in your own way, can illuminate the world.

So I wanted to take this time to talk about your early career and how you discovered your calling.

So lets go back to when you were college age.

Did you know that you wanted to get into TV and media specifically?

>> No I did not.

I thought that I was going to be a teacher.

I was in my Sophomore class at Tennessee State University.

I'd already been working in radio since I was 16 and my I remember I was in Mr. Cox's drawing class for theatre.

And I was terrible drawer.

He said, I couldn't draw a straight line with a ruler.

[LAUGH] And and I got a call in that class, from a guy at the local station CBS, and he have been calling me several times when I was working in radio.

So I started working in radio at 16, and one of them is fire prevention contest, another one story.

And so when I went back to the station to pick my prize, some guy said, would you like to hear your voice on tape.

I said sure and I started reading this copy on tape.

They called everybody in the building, said here this kid read.

I was 16 they hired me in radio.

So I was in radio at 16.

And so I started getting calls about my freshman year to come into television.

I had never thought about it.

And still was living at home, and couldn't figure out how I'd manage those, I had biology at 1 o'clock, and so I couldn't figure out how I would be able to manage my schedule.

[COUGH] And Mr. Cox said to me, the one same, same professor said you can't draw a straight line with a ruler.

He said, I came back from, from taking this phone call and he said who was that I said there's this guy at CBS

he keeps calling me, he wants me to interview for a job, and Mr. Cox said, that is why you go to school fool.

[LAUGHING] So that CBS can call you.

[LAUGH] That is why you are in school.

So I, he said you, you leave now and go call him back.

And, and, I did.

And I was hired in television not knowing anything about it.

>> Mm-hm.

>> Having in mind Barbera Walters but thinking.

Oh, okay I can do that.

Not knowing how to write or film or anything.

>> Mm-hm.

>> And I think it was because it was the, it was the times and I literally had somebody who was willing to work with me that I, that I managed to, to find my way.

But I had to find my way, because, the reporting never really fit me, and what did work for me.

I'm this old, I'm so old that when I started that it was the year of live action cam.

[COUGH] And so, it was like video cameras live, and so, the news stations would do a live, a live shot they would throw to somebody live even if nothing was going on.

>> Right.

>> Just so they could say live action cam.

And what I found was I wasn't so good at the writing part but if

I was just standing up and talking about what had just happened it was really good.

And then I started to feel, so I started at 19 working in television, became an anchor immediately afterwards.

My father still had an 11 o'clock curfew.

Can you believe such a thing?

[LAUGH] That I am, that I am the 10 o'clock anchor [LAUGH] in Nashville Tennessee. I am the woman on the newscast.

[LAUGH] Reading the news, and my father would say be home by 11.

[LAUGH] And I'd say, dad, the news is on at ten, he goes and it's off at 10:30 so be home by 11.

[LAUGH] So I, I, I had a very strict Gracier father.

So, anyway, I, I could feel inside myself, that reporting was not the right thing for me even though I was happy to have the job.

>> Right.

>> I got an offer to go to Atlanta.

I was making \$10,000 a year in 1971, but still in college, so I was thinking I was doing pretty good.

>> Yeah.

>> I got an offer to go to Atlanta for \$40,000 which I thought.

It's over.

[LAUGH] I'm gonna make \$40,000.

And my boss at the time said to me you do not know what you don't know.

>> Mm-hm.

>> And you need to stay here until you can learn to write better until you can can perfect your craft as, as a journalist.

And so I, I he said we can't give you 40, but we can give you 12.

So [LAUGH] so I stayed and you know the reason why I stayed is cuz I could feel inside myself that even though the 40 was alluring at the time, that he was absolutely right.

So to make a long story short, cuz I'd be here all day just talking about how it all came about.

I started listening, to what felt like the truth for me.

>> Mm-hm.

>> A couple of years later I moved to Baltimore.

I could feel that as a reporter, and by this time, 22, I'm making 22,000.

I met my best friend Gale there who said oh my god, can you imagine when your thirty and your making 30,000.

[LAUGH] And then you're 40 and then it's 40,000.

[LAUGH] We actually had that conversation in the bathroom.

So this is I started to feel that reporting wasn't for me.

But I had my father, I had my friends.

Everybody was saying, oh my God, you're, you're an anchorwoman, you're on TV.

I mean, you can't give up that job.

>> Right.

>> And when I was, by the time I was making 25, my father goes, you just hit the jackpot.

You not gonna make no more money than that.

That's just it.

So I was torn between what the world was saying to me, and what I felt to be the truth for myself.

It felt like an unnatural act for me reporting, although I knew that to a lot of people, it was glamorous.

And, I started to just inside myself think what, what do I really wanna do, what I really wanna do.

And I will say this.

Knowing what you don't want to do is the best possible place to be if you don't know what to do.

Because knowing what you don't want to do leads you to figure out what it is that you really do wanna do.

>> Okay.

So you discovered talk then, right?

Around that time?

>> I didn't discover talk.

I was being, I got demoted.

>> God.

>> They wanted to fire me but I was, I was under contract.

They didn't wanna give up the 25,000 so they were trying to keep me on to the end of the year.

So they put me on the, this is how life works, [CROSSTALK] they put me on a talk show to try and avoid having to pay me the contract out and the moment I sat on the talk show interviewing the Carvel ice cream man and his multiple flavors.

[LAUGH] I knew that I had found home for myself.

Because when I was a news reporter, it was so unnatural for me, I, you know, to cover somebody's tragedies and difficulties and then to not to have feel anything for it.

And I would go back after a fire.

>> Mm-hm.

>> And I would take the blankets and then I would get a note from my boss saying, what the hell are you doing?

>> Right.

>> You're just supposed to report on it.

>> Can't be that empathetic.

>> Can, cannot be that empathetic.

And it felt unnatural for me.

So if I were to put it in business terms, if it were were to leave you with a message, that the truth is I have from the very beginning listened to my instinct.

All of my best decisions in life have come because I was attuned to what really felt like the next right move for me.

And so, it didn't feel right.

I knew that I wouldn't be there forever.

I never even learned the street in Baltimore, because I thought I was there longer than I thought, I was there eight years I should've learned the streets.

[CROSSTALK] I kept saying to myself I'm not gonna be here long, I'm not gonna be here, I'm not gonna be here so I'm not gonna learn the street.

So when I got the call to come to Chicago.

>> Mm-hm.

>> After you know starting with a, with a coanchor and, and working in talk, for several years, I knew that it was the right thing to do.

And I knew that if I didn't even if I, didn't succeed cuz at the time, there was a, there was a guy named Phil Donahue.

>> Yeah.

>> Who was the king of talk.

>> Mm-hm.

And was on in Chicago, and every single person, except my best friend Gale, said you are gonna fail.

Every single person, [INAUDIBLE] my bosses by this time thought I was terrific, and said, you're gonna, you're, you're waking into a land mine.

You're gonna fail.

You're gonna fail.

Chicago's a racist city.

You're black you're not gonna make it.

Everything to, to keep me same.

Then they offered me a car and apartment and all this stuff, and I said no.

If I fail, then I will find out what is the next thing for me.

>> Right.

>> What is the next true thing for me.

>> It felt right to you, so you went for it.

>> Cuz it felt like this is now the move I need to make.

And I was not one of those people you know, all of my the people who worked with me in the news, they would have their taps and they'd have their stories, and they'd have you know resume's ready.

I didn't have any of that, cuz I knew that the time would come.

>> Mm-hm.

>> Where I would, where what I needed would show up for me.

>> Okay.

>> And when that showed up, I was ready.

Because my definition of luck, is preparation meeting the moment of opportunity.

>> Right.

>> And I was prepared to be able to step into that, that, that world of talk in a way that I, I knew I could do it.

>> Great.

So, often in your career I'm sure you were a minority.

Perhaps as the only woman.

The only black person, the only person from a poor family.

Did this pr, affect you on your professional path?

And how did you navigate situations in which you might have felt more alone?

>> Hm.

>> And now how did that impact how you lead and how you might help people who may be feeling that same thing?

>> Okay, that's a lot of questions.

>> I'm sorry, all right let's let's-.

>> Let me put my glasses on.

>> I figured I had you here, I was gonna, I was gonna ask as much as I can.

>> Oh, Amanda went deep on me for a minute there.

Whoa.

Back up sister girl, c'mon, back up.

[LAUGH] So first one is.

>> So how did you navigate in which you would have felt more-

>> Always the only, only woman walk in the room-

>> Mm-hm.

>> Still and there is a room full of white men, usually older thrills me.

Just thrills me.

[LAUGHING] I just, I just love it.



[LAUGHING] Usually the only black person in the room.

Also, never really concerned me because I, I don't look at people through color.

I didn't get to be where I am by, and, who I am, by looking at the color of people's skin.

I really, literally, took Martin Luther King at his word. and, understand that the content of a person's character, and, refuse to let anybody else do that to me.

So, I love it, just love it.

And there's a wonderful phrase by Maya Angelou, from a poem that she wrote called To Our Grandmothers, that she says, when I come as one but I stand as 10,000.

[COUGH] So when I walk into a room and particularly before I have something really challenging to do or I'm gonna be in a circumstance where I feel I'm going to be you know, against some difficulties.

I would literally sit, and I would call on the 10,000.

>> Mm-hm.

>> I would call on back to the ancestors, I would call on those people who come before me, call on those women who forged a path that I might be able to sit in the room with all of those white men, and I love it so much.

[LAUGH] I, I call on, I call on that.

>> Right.

>> Because I know that my being where I am, and first of all, being who I am and where I am didn't come just out of myself that I come from a heritage and so I own that.

>> Mm-hm.

>> And I step into that room not just as myself but I bring all of that, that, energy with me.

So it has never been an issue for me except when

I was, I think, 23, still working in, still working in Baltimore.

>> Mm-hm.

>> I'd gone to my boss and said that the guy who was working with me, co, co, my cohost on the People Are Talking show, was making more money than I.

And we were, we were cohosts.

So I went to my boss and I said, this was in 1970, I was older than 23, this was 1979, 80, and I said I, I just would like to-. You know how intimidating it is to go to the boss in the first place.

[INAUDIBLE] But I'm gonna go, and I'm gonna stand up for myself.

[LAUGH] And, I said, Richard's making more money than I am, and I, and I, and I don't think that's fair because we're doing the same job.

We sit in the same show.

We do the same.

And, my general manager said, why, why should you make as much money as he?

And I said, cuz we're doing the same job.

And he said but he has children.

[LAUGH] Do you have children?

And I said no.

He said, well he has to pay for college educations.

So he has, he owns his own home.

Do you own your home?

I said no.

He said, he has a mortgage to pay.

He has insurance, he has do you have that?

No.

So, tell me, why, why do you need the same amount of money?

And I said, thank you for your time.

And I left.

I left.

I didn't complain about it.

I didn't file a, a, a, a suit about it.

I knew, that in that moment, it was time for me to go, and that I started the process for myself, of preparing myself for, you will not be here long.

You are not gonna be able to get what you need.

I had a boss at the time who was African American, and had just been for the first time, made an assistant news director, and was drunk with power.

Drunk with power, and felt it his, I think, I don't know, I think he woke up in the morning thinking of things he could do to harass me.

I decided not to file a suit against it, cuz I knew, at the time, I would lose.

>> Right.

>> That no good would come of it, that I would be blackballed in television, that it would turn into a major thing, and I knew, I didn't have long to stay there.

I had a vision for what the future was, even though I couldn't place exactly where my future would be, I knew who held the future.

Cuz I am really guided by a force that's bigger than myself.

I know that my being here on the planet is not just of my own being.

>> So you used that as momentum to just leave, cut your losses and go.

>> No, I just [INAUDIBLE] and I filed it away.

>> [CROSSTALK] Yeah.

>> There will come a time.

>> [LAUGH] Huh, it's gonna come back.

Yeah, you were right.

I think you were right.

>> When I will be sitting in the same room.

And it happened, like, in the late 90s. I had the Oprah show and I ran into that guy.

Lord, Jesus, thank you.

[LAUGH] [LAUGH] Oh my god.

Oh, one of the sweetest moments I've ever happened.

[LAUGH] Oh, go ahead.

>> Okay.

[LAUGH] Here we go.

So, right now, as we sit here, we're about five miles from Facebook and Sheryl Sandberg.

And last year, she published the book Lean In.

And it's gotten incredible traction.

It had some, you know, criticism as well.

And I was wondering if you were to write a book on women in careers.

What would your title be?

>> Mine would be, actually.

Mine wouldn't be lean in.

It would be, step up and into yourself, because, this is the truth.

There is no real doing in the world, without being first.

For me, being.

Your presence, your connection to yourself, and that which is greater than yourself, is far more important than what you do.

But also, is the thing that fuels what you do.

>> Right.

>> And I know that one of the things that is so important for what happens here.

At the graduate school, is that you have leaders who are self actualized, and understand what your contribution to change the world can be.

You can only do that, if you know yourself.

You can only do that, unless you take, unless you, you cannot do it unless you take the time.

To actually know who you are, and why you are here.

Now, I happen to know, for sure, that every human being comes, comes called.

And that the calling goes beyond the definition of what your job is.

That there is innate, there is an innate, supreme moment of destiny, for everybody.

And, that's why when I was in Baltimore, I could feel, this isn't it.

>> Mm-hm.

>> This isn't it.

And then in Chicago after 25 years of success on the show, I started to feel, this isn't it, there is something more, something more, something more that's calling me to what is the supreme moment.

And everybody has that.

And you cannot fulfill it, unless you have a level of self awareness, to be connected to what is the inner voice, or the instinct, I call it your emotional GPS system.

That allows you to make the best decisions for yourself.

And every decision, that has profited me.

>> Mm-hm.

>> Has come from me listening to that inner voice first, and every deci, every time I've gotten into a situation where I was in trouble, it's because I didn't listen to it. I overrode that voice, that instinct, with my own, with my own head, my own thinking.

I tried to rationalize it, I tried to tell myself.

But, you know, okay, you're gonna make a lot of money oh, no.

And so, I am, I sit here you know, profitable, successful, by all the definitions of the world.

But, what really, really, really resonates deeply with me. Is that I live, a fantastic life.

My inner life is really intact.

My, I live from the inside out.

And so, everything that I have, I have because I let it be fueled by who I am.

And what I realized my contributions to the planet could be.

And what my real contribution is, it looks like I'm a, I was a talk show host.

It looks like, you know, I'm in the movies.

It looks like, you know, I have a network.

But my real contribution, the reason why I'm here, is to help connect people to themselves.

And the higher ideas of consciousness.

I'm here to help raise consciousness.

So my television platform, was to help raise consciousness.

At the beginning I didn't realize that.

I thought, oh my God, I got a show!

[LAUGH] And it wasn't until I was interviewing the Ku Klux Klan one day.

And, can you, imagine all the great lessons come from things that are, that are sometimes challenging.

I was interviewing Ku Klux Klan, and I thought, as an African American oh, I'm gonna get them, I'm gonna show for every Jewish person, for every person who's been discriminated against.

And during the commercial break, I saw the klan exchanging signals and looks at each other.

And then something inside, that instinct, I thought, I am doing nobody any good.

They are loving this.

They are using me.

I think I'm doing an interview.

They are using me.

I did not know it at the time.

I brought them on, actually, those same guys back, in for my last year.

And they told me, that they used that show, for their recruitment.

I could feel that happening.

And I made a decision after that show, I'll never do anything like that again.

I'll never let my platform be used.

>> Right.

>> And I will not be used.

And, at the time, in the 90s, early 90s, everybody was doing, confrontational television.

And I thought I was above the fray, cuz I'm, cuz I'm not like like Jerry Springer, I don't do that.

[LAUGH] So in my egoic delusion, I thought because I am not that bad.

I'm really not bad.

But I was doing confrontational television.

I thought I was exposing, men with affairs.

We happened to have a guy on who was talking about how he had an affair with his wife.

And he was crazy enough to come on, with his wife, and his girlfriend.

People ask me, why do people do that.

It's because, nobody ever asked him so.

[LAUGH] You say, would you come on with your wife and girlfriend?

He goes sure >> [LAUGH] He was thinking.

>> He was thinking.

So, he comes on with the wife and the girlfriend.

This is the life-changing moment for me.

The Klan, and this woman.

The wife is there.

He's in the center, and the girlfriend.

And he tells his wife, he announces.

We were live television at the time.

And he announced that, to, to, to the world and to his wife, that his girlfriend was pregnant.

And I did, you see her face?

Your mouth's open, right there.

[LAUGH] I did exactly that.

I went, oh my God!

And you could hear the gasp in the audience.

And, they're like, and, I literally really, it still makes my eyes water to think about it.

I looked at her face, and I felt her humiliation.

I felt her shame, I felt it, and I, said never again.

[COUGH] I will get outta television, if I have to do this.

And I went and I had a meeting with the producers, cuz

I just had the Klan before, now I got the adulteress here.

[LAUGH] And [LAUGH] some uplifting show, I must say.

[LAUGH] And I said to the producers, we are gonna change.

We're gonna turn this around.

And I am no longer gonna be used by television.

I am going to use television.

What a concept!

I am gonna use television, as a force for, for,

I didn't say at the time for good, I said.

You know, let's think about what we wanna say to the world.

>> Yeah.

>> And how we wanna use this as a platform, to speak to the world.

How do we want to see the world change?

How do we wanna impact to the world, and then let all of our shows really, be focused, and seated around that. I then said to the producers exactly what I said to you backstage.

>> Mm-hm.

>> Do not bring me a show, unless you have fully thought out what is your intention for doing it.

Because, if there is, if, if, if there is a religion, or a mantra, or law that I live by, I live by the third law of motion in physics.

Which is Stanford.

Which is [LAUGH] for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction.

That is, that is, that is, that is my religion.

I know that what I'm thinking, and therefore gonna act on, is going to come back to me, in this, in a, in a, in a circular motion.

Just like gravity.

Like what goes up comes down.

And so, what also propels the action, is the intention.

So, I don't do anything, without being fully clear, about why I intend to do it.

Because the intention, is going to determine, the reaction, the result, or the consequence in every circumstance.

I don't care what it is.



So, I said to my producers, come to me with your intention, at whatever it is, whatever shows you're proposing, whatever ideas you're proposing, and then I will decide based upon the intention, do I really wanna do that?

>> Right.

>> Is his is how we wanna use this platform?

And that really is the secret to why we were number one, all those years, is because it was an intention-fueled, intention-based coming out of purposeful programming.

[CROSSTALK] Yeah, that's what it was.

>> Great, and that's a perfect segue to go to our second section.

Which I read this quote, and it just struck me as so true, and I wanted to delve into it.

I've talked to nearly 30,000 people on this show, and all 30,000 had one thing in common.

They all wanted validation, I will tell you that every single person, you will ever meet, shares that common desire.

So, Oprah, you are a true renaissance woman.

You know, you have your own network, you had this amazingly successful show for 25 years.

You've been in movies.

You are one of the most important philanthropists of our time.

So, what are the qualities?

>> I love hanging around you what else are you gonna say?

[LAUGH] I'm just taking it all in.

>> I love it too so we [CROSSTALK].

>> You know, the part I love the most, is renaissance woman.

When she said that, I went, what does that really mean?

[LAUGH].

>> I don't know but I like it.

>> I was a history major so it seemed like a natural.

>> I'm a renaissance woman.

[LAUGH] Who knew?

Okay, go ahead.

>> Good, I'm glad you like it [LAUGH] [COUGH] What are the qualities of your leadership that make you successful at such diverse pursuits?

>> And what works for, in one area, that maybe doesn't work in another?

>> Well, I tell you. it, it works in all areas because I, my life is fueled by my being.

>> Yep.

>> And the being fuels the doing, so, I come from a centered place.

I come from a focus place, I come from compassion it's just, it's just my nature, I come from a willingness to understand.

And to be understood.

>> Right.

And I come from wanting to, to, to connect.

I mean, the secret of that show, for 25 years, is that people could see themselves in me.

All over the world.

They could see themselves in me.

And even as I became.

More and more financially successful, which was a big surprise to me.

I was like, oh my God!

This is so exciting!

>> You mean, you got more than that 30,000?

>> I got more than 30,000, by the time I was 30, so [LAUGH] so my.

[LAUGH] But, what, what I realized is.

Through the whole process, because I'm grounded, in my own self, that although I could have more shoes, my feet stayed on the ground.

Although I was wearing better shoes, these are kinda cute today too.

[LAUGH] So I could keep my feet on the ground, even though I could get more shoes.

And I can understand.

I could understand that it really was, because I was grounded.

I've, I've done the, was doing, and continued to this day, to do the consciousness work.  
I work at staying awake.

And being awakened, is just another word for spirituality, but spirituality throws people off, and they think you mean religion.

When I was hiring people for my company, for own looking for presidents.

When people would come in, I'd say, tell me what is your spiritual practice?

And literally, would throw out, people would [UNKNOWN] well, I'm not religious.

I said, I didn't ask you about your religion.

I asked you what's your spiritual practice.

What do you do, to take care of yourself?

What do you do to keep yourself centered?

What do you do to let, and, you know one women started crying.

You know that's not the person.

>> Okay.

That's a sign.

>> That's a sign.

So, so to answer your question.

>> Yeah.

>> Everything is fueled that comes from me really wanting to be a better person on earth.

>> And this is what I know to be true, the reason why the show worked is because I understood that that audience.

My viewers, the people who watched us everyday, and would come, and just like you all did.

Get tickets, and they would come with their, you just came across campus, but that's good, too.

But people would come from all over the world, just to be there with their aunts, their mothers, and they'd come with their cousins.

And there'd be a few men and they're going, What the hell [LAUGH].

Or saying, Well, I went to Oprah with you, I went to Oprah.

At least get me clear for three or four weeks, I went to Oprah.

I had such regard for that, and I just had a conversation with John Mackey who runs Whole Foods.

And has written this fabulous book, you should get it, called Conscious Capitalism.

>> And he was talking about how the investment in the stakeholders, the people you are serving.

That connection between the people who you're trying to serve and sell to is equally as important as the people who you're buying from.

>> Right.

>> Equally as important as the people who are, you know, supporting you financially.

As your stockholders if you were, you know, you know a public company.

So, I always understood that there really was no difference between me and the audience.

At times, I might have had better shoes.

But at the core, the core of, of what really matters, that we are the same.

You know how I know that?

Cuz all of us are seeking the same thing.

You're here at this fabulous school and will go out into the world.

And each pursue, based upon what you believe your talents are, what your skills are, maybe your gifts are, but you're seeking the same thing.

Everybody wants to fulfill the highest, truest expression of yourself as a human being.

That's what you're looking for.

The highest, truest expression of yourself as a human being.

And because I understand that.

I understand that if you're working in a bakery and that's where you want to be.

And that may be the, that may be what you always wanted to do is to bake.

>> Mh-hm.

>> Pies for people, or to offer your gift.

Then, then that's, that's for you.

And there's no difference between you and me, except that's your platform.

>> That's your show everyday.

So my understanding of that has allowed me to, you know.

>> Reach everyone.

>> To reach everyone.

And, and there's no way that you wouldn't.

Because that, that's what I truly feel.

And when I sit down to talk to somebody, whether I'm talking to a murderer.

I sat down and I interviewed a guy who, killed his twin daughters.

I've interviewed child molesters.

Trying to figure out what, what it is, what is, what it is they do and why they do it.

Obviously lots of people who have been victimized through molestation.

Presidents, politicians, Beyoncé herself [LAUGH].

>> Ha Beyoncé.

>> At the end of every interview the murderer to Beyoncé.

The question everybody asks that you mentioned is, was that okay, how was that.

Everybody says that and I, and I know just wait for it.

Was that okay, was I okay, and when I finish I'll say to you, was I okay.

>> I'm gonna ask you too.

>> Okay.

You're very okay.

You're doing very okay, very okay.

>> Whew!

>> Very okay, so, what I started to feel, feel, sense, is that there's a common thread that runs through every interview.

It doesn't matter what is, or what it is about, everybody wants to know.

And this is the truth, all of your arguments are really about the same thing.

It's about.

Did you hear me?

Did you see me?

And did what I said mean anything to you?

That's what everything's about.

So the reason why I left my boss's office, when I was asking for a raise, I, I knew he didn't hear nor see me neither.

And that I was not going to get the validation that I needed.

Now I couldn't articulate that at the time, but

I just knew let me get out of here.

But now, I know, I can feel it inside of myself.

I'm not going to get the validation that I'm looking for.

I also know, that that's what every human being is looking for.

They are looking to know, are you fully here with me.

Are you fully here, or are you distracted?

That's what your, that's what your children want to know, that's your, what the people you work for want to know, that's what you want to know.

Is did, did, did you hear me?

And every argument isn't about what you think your arguing about.

It's really about, but can you hear me?

>> Yes ma'am.

>> And many people have even said it.

>> Yes.

>> Have you not said it?

You're not hearing me.

>> You're not hearing me.

So, having, having that understanding.

And I would have to say that the show, one of the reasons why

I live such a fantastic life, is because I pay attention.

I pay attention to my life.

And your life is your greatest teacher.

Every single thing that's happening to you every day.

Your, your joys, your, your, your sadnesses, your challenges, your worries, your, everything is happening to bring you closer to in here.

Everything is trying to take you home to yourself.

And when you're at home with yourself, when you're solidly there, connected to whatever you call creation.

Even if you don't call it anything, connected to an energy force that is.

That has unlimited power for you.

You could connect to, to that.

You, you, you are your best.

My greatest, one of my greatest lessons came from a guy who wrote a book called Seed of the Soul.

I was doing him on the show and I started talking this consciousness spiritual talk, you know, two months after I started the, the show.

And my producers will all be like, oh God, there she goes again.

But I knew that even though masses of people were not tuning in for that.

That the whole purpose of that platform was to try to lift people up.

And now, I have a network and I can articulate what it is I'm trying to do.

I'm trying to bring little pieces of light into people's lives.

Because what is my job?

My job is not to be an interviewer.

My job is not to be a talk show host or just to own a network.

I am here to raise the level of consciousness, to connect people to ideas and stories, so that they can see themselves and live better lives.

>> Thank you.

I want to switch gears and focus a bit on philanthropy.

>> Are you worried about getting all of your stuff in?

>> no, we're doing great.

We're just going to keep going.

I think everyone likes this, right?

We're good?

>> Okay.

>> So, I watched your interview with the Forbes conference on philanthropy.

And you said something really interesting.

Which is that early on some of your biggest mistakes in giving were because you made emotional decisions.

>> Yeah.

>> And yet we learn here at the GSB like, one of the crucial messages that we take away from us is that it is really important to be, as you said before, self aware, to be understanding often to share our emotions with others.

You yourself have been the master of you know, harnessing vulnerability, with yourself and your guests over the years.

So, how do you strike a balance between emotion and logic.

How do you make sure that you're making logical decisions when you're giving.

>> These are so well thought out.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay, let me think about that for a moment.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay.

Well I would have to say, that, you need both.

You need emotion and you need logic.

So, in the beginning, I was purely emotional.

Made a lot of mistakes.

I happened to be sitting.

I was sharing this story with Dean Saloner just before he came on.

I was sitting in Nelson Mandela's living room.

And I'm not just saying that to name drop.

>> I was actually sitting there.

>> You stayed with him, right.

>> I stayed with him for, stayed with him for ten days.



And as I said to the dean [UNKNOWN] I could have, I literally could have written a book called 29 meals.

Cuz I had 29 meals with him at that particular time.

I wish I had.

>> Yeah you should.

>> I should've.

>> You should do it now.

>> I didn't record it so some things I think was that the 2nd meal or the 12th meal.

Anyway, so I was sitting in Nelson, sitting with Adiva and.

We were talking about how, how do you really make an impact in the world.

And we were reading the paper and we, I'd reached the point where

I was no longer like, oh my God what am I gonna say.

Cuz we were just sitting in silence reading the paper.

And there was an article in the paper about, you know, some tragic situation.

And we both started talking about the way to end poverty is through education.

And I said to him, I really at some point would like to build a school over there.

And then, he got up and called the minister to education, and said get over here now,

Oprah wants to build a school.

And I was like well I was thinking about it.

I didn't say I wanted to do it today.

But so we literally started the process then.

It was an emotional decision for me in that I think philanthropy should come out of you, your doing should come out of your being.

Everybody knows my story as a poor negro child growing up in apartheid Mississippi.

And if it were not for education and being born at the right time.

Cuz I was literally born in the year of desegregation.

Five years before, three years before, two years before, nobody would of even had the hope that my life could of been any different.

So because I was born at that time, and literally moved out of Mississippi by the time I was in my first classroom.

I was in Kindergarten.

Wrote my kindergarten teacher a letter, Ms. New.

I said, dear Ms. New, I do not belong here.

>> Cuz I know a lot of big words.

And then, I wrote every big word I knew.

Elephant [LAUGH], hippopotamus, Mississippi, Nicodemus.

Shadrackmeshackinthebindigo from the bible, so, and then Ms News says, who did this?

I said, I did.

So,they marched me off to the principals office, the only time I was ever in there.

Principals office, principal made me write those words again and

I got myself out of kindergarten, into first grade.

>> Oh my god.

>> First grade, skipped second grade, hello her.

The Renaissance began.

>> Yea.

>> You've always had this conviction.

You've always, it seems like you've always known who you are, even if you were.

>> Well I knew I didn't belong there with those kids.

>> You knew that.

>> In kindergarten, you're sitting there, that's what I'm talking about listen to your instincts.

You're looking around and say these kids [LAUGH] they are playing with some blocks [CROSSTALK].

And I know Nicodemus [LAUGH].

I do not think I belong in here, I do not belong in here so my point is,

[LAUGH] my point is education really opened the door as we all know.  
I'm not gonna give you the education speech.  
How do you change a person's life.  
I had prior to starting my school in South Africa,  
I had this big idea that I was going to, emotional.  
That I was gonna take all, 100 families out of the projects, in Cabrini Green.  
And I was gonna give them a new life and I was gonna buy them homes and stuff and  
that did not work.  
It failed miserably.  
I had a Big Sister program that I started, failed miserably.  
So I realized that for me.  
First of all, I realize you don't change, as you all are recognizing through the seed  
program.  
You first have to change the way a person thinks and see themselves.  
So you've gotta to create a sense of aspiration, a sense of hopefulness so a person can  
see, can begin to even have a vision for a better life.  
And if you can't connect to that, then, then, then, then you, then you lose.  
You lose and they lose.  
And it's just money after money after money.  
So, for me it's using my philanthropy to do what I have found to be enormously, helpful.  
You know, the light in my life was education.  
So for me, in the beginning when I started to make money, especially when it's  
published, everybody and your brother calls you.  
And then you've got to make a decision.  
Am I going to do what everybody else wants me to do?  
Or, am I going to be led by who I really am?  
And I learned, as will happen to anybody who's successful in your family, people start  
treating you like the First National Bank.  
And, you've got to decide.  
You've got to draw the boundaries for yourself.

And decide, how are you gonna use, your money, your talent, your time, in such a way that it's going to serve you first.

Because if you, if it doesn't allow you to be filled up.

Then you get depleted and you no longer, you can't keep doing it.

So my decisions are now emotional and logical.

Meaning I choose education, but I do it in such a way that's actually going to benefit the person that I'm serving.

Then it's not just, oh I want to help people.

>> Thank you.

So to move on to our last part, you said at the end of your 25 years, gratitude is the single greatest treasure I will take with me from this experience.

So now, you started your own network and you continue to be very involved in your philanthropy and your school.

Is there anything left that you're scared to try?

>> Whoa, Amanda.

You must have been up all night long.

>> I've prepared a little bit.

Just a little.

>> Oh, my goodness.

Anything left that I'm scared to try? no.

[LAUGH] No, and I'm just trying to think what, I'm just trying to think, well, is there something that I haven't thought of.

>> Well, there's not much you haven't done so.

>> Well, but I stay in my lane.

>> Yeah.

>> I stay, I know where my lane is.

I know what my lane is.

I know that my real calling is what I said earlier.

I know what it looks like to the rest of the world.

Oh, she's a talk show celebrity but I really know what I'm here to do, which is the number one thing I would say to you.

First let me answer your question.

So no, there's nothing, I'm not scared to try?

I haven't even, I had hit my stride but I haven't done what I ultimately came to do.

There still is a supreme moment of destiny that awaits me and I also knew that during the Oprah Show.

I've kept a journal since I was 15 years old.

It's so pitiful when you go back and see how pathetic you were as a person, sometimes.

But I always knew even during that show, that the show, we live in a fame culture, we lived in a fame centered world, you know.

Had this literally been during the Renaissance, people would have valued different things.

We've been doing the Transcendentalist period, people valued different things but in our culture we value fame.

So I always understood that that was the basis for me being known, in the world because people wouldn't be able to hear you, unless you came with some swag or swagger, you know?

And I also understood that that was just the foundation to be heard but that there was a lot more to be said.

So for me, owning a network or being a part of a network is about continuing to use that platform to raise the consciousness.

I do a show on Sundays, which you can see live called Super Soul Sunday, where I literally talk to thought leaders from around the world and ask the questions.

Not as good as you, I'm gonna consult with you.

>> Ask the questions in life that really matter to get people thinking about what really matters in their lives and the responses that I get from people, just regarding that show let me know that I'm on the right track.

I'm moving in the right direction and so, I'm not afraid because I know that all of us have limited time here but the real question is who are you and what do you want to do with it?

And how are you going to use who you are?

My favorite line from Seed of the Soul is when the personality, comes to serve the energy of your soul, that is authentic empowerment.

So as graduates of this great school, to take what you've learned here, to take what is a part of your nature and what you've developed as skills and what really feeds your passion, to take that and to align that with the deeper potential impossibility of your soul's coming.

If you align your personality with what your soul came to do, and everybody has it, align your personality with your purpose and nobody can touch you and you wake up everyday and you are fired up.

You're just like oh, my God, another day!

It's so great!

Because everybody has a purpose.

So you're whole thing is to figure out what that is.

Your real job is to figure out why you're really here and then get about the business of doing that.

>> Okay.

>> That's it.

>> So we all know now what we have to do, right?

Only wait.

[LAUGH] >> Yeah.

>> So Oprah, thank you so much.

>> Are we gonna take some questions?

>> Well, yeah, so that's what I wanted to say.

I'd love to put it up.

>> Everybody has a class at 1:15, right?

Okay, I'll get you out of here.

[Laugh] They told me hard out.

One o'clock.

Yeah.

But so we think we have, do we have a first question from Twitter, coming forward?

Throughout the session, the first question asked today was Matt Sucedo who asked, will you marry me?

>> Oh, it looks like he's up there.

>> Matt, where's the ring?

>> Matt, do

we need marriage?

Oh my god, that's gonna be such a pre-nup between us, I've gotta say.

[LAUGH] >> What else you got, Andre?

>> And then we had Javier Hernandez, who asked,

Oprah who has been your favorite interviewee and why?

>> Well, actually, I would have to say, there's so many over the years and the truth is that the people whose names that I can't even remember and you probably wouldn't remember, have been the most revelatory, the most impactful.

I mean, watching people step out of tragedies and define triumph for themselves.

Those people, really, have been the ones that really shaped me and made me a better human being.

I did an interview once with a woman and actually with Doctor Phil, where she had come to the show and then was planning to kill herself afterwards she said because her daughter had been murdered eight years before and she couldn't get past it and she just wanted to come on the Oprah show and talk about it.

And Phil said to her, why do you spend all your time lamenting, all these years lamenting the death, instead of celebrating the life?

You've let the one day define your daughter's entire life and she looked up at him and she said you know, I never thought about it that way before with tears.

I could feel that, the shift in her.

So the most important moments for me have been when literally, I can see that somebody has made a shift in the way they see themselves in the world or you know, what we call now, an aha moment.

Those, I live for that, those are my favorite interviews but most recently, I just last week interviewed Pharrell.

Oh, my god.

I was so happy.

>> But you made him cry.

I didn't make him cry.

I didn't make him cry, Amanda.

>> But he cried but it was happy tears.

>> Yeah, I would have to say.

I don't actually try to make people cry and if I think, literally, we cut a lot of it because he went into the ugly cry.

[LAUGH] He went into the ugly cry.

>> You could tell it was real.

>> Yeah, it was very real and so we said, we gotta save the brother.

The brother cannot walk out into the world with the ugly cry.

It's okay to have a little snuffle snuffle but then just don't go [SOUND].

But I could also feel him.

I mean, I understand, you know why?

Because I just loved him.

I just loved him.

Anybody who, and anybody who saw that interview if you liked him a little bit before, you really loved him afterwards because that's a person who's absolutely connected to here.

>> And he, yeah, he knows his purpose.

>> Yeah.

>> Yeah, he does.



>> Oh, he's very much connected to it and when he saw, he started crying when he saw the videos of people all over the world dancing to the happy song.

>> There is a version made here too.

>> Here?

>> Yeah.

>> You guys did one too?

>> Yeah, I think some of the MBA ones right?

Raise your hand if you are in it.

>> Yeah!

>> Didn't it make you happy to do it?

Yeah, so he saw that video, like 30 seconds of video from people in all these different countries and the name of the countries were up.

He just felt the emotion and the impact of using his life in such a way that you're able now to touch all of those people, which is really what we're all looking to do and all of us have the ability to do it, at whatever level you are.

At whatever level, and I always say to people, oh, I have a big stage.

Some people have a smaller stage.

Some people have you know, what's your stage?

We're going to take one from the audience now.

>> Yeah.

>> Let's do it.

All right.

Here we go.

>> Introduce yourself.

>> Hi, I'm Kirsten.

I'm a second year MBA student here at the JSB.

So this week at the JSB we're hosting something called Climate

Week to raise awareness about climate change among the business students here.

So you've interviewed people like Leo to Al

Gore, President Obama on this really important issue.

So I want to get a sense from you, how do you navigate raising the level of consciousness around issues like climate change that are important, but are also very complex and politicized?

[LAUGH] We came prepared.

We came prepared today, huh?

>> I do not know the answer to that question.

I do not know.

[SOUND] If i knew that, we would have, I would have like, made it a club and we would have, I would have had every body come join my environmental club.

Now, I don't know that is such a complex, beautiful question and the fact that you are even asking it or engaged in the process of trying to figure out the answer thrills me, cuz that's what would happen here at Stanford.

So I really do not have an answer to that question.

>> Thank you.

Thank you, do we have time for one more?

>> You have to because you can't end on a question without an answer.

>> We got one.

>> I came here to get stumped, yeah.

>> Hi Oprah, my name is Melissa and I wanted to know, how do you think about balancing selflessness with selfishness?

Selflessness with selfishness.

Why are you asking me that question?

[LAUGH] It's kind of the tension between putting yourself first and also, taking care of others.

Okay.

Well, I would say this.

There is no, you have no, well, everybody's heard the whole oxygen mask thing.

The truth is, you don't have anything to give that you don't have.

So you have to keep your own self full.

That's your job.

You know, one of my daughters is here today from Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy. Stand up Shenay, so everybody can see you.

[SOUND] You're going to end your first year soon.

Oh my god, it's your first year.

I say to my girls all of the time, that you're real work is to figure out where your power base is and to work on the alignment of your personality, your gifts that you have to give with the real reason why you're here.

That's the number one thing you have to do, is to work on yourself and to fill yourself up and keep your cup full.

Keep yourself full.

I used to be afraid of that.

I used to be afraid, particularly, from people who'd say, oh, she's so full of herself.

Mm, she's so full of herself and now, I embrace it.

I consider it a compliment that I am full of myself because only when you're full.

I'm full, I'm overflowing.

My cup runneth over.

I have so much.

I have so much to offer and so much to give and I am not afraid of honoring myself, you know.

It's miraculous when you think about it.

First of all, for me, my father and mother never married.

They had sex one time underneath an oak tree because she was wearing a poodle skirt in 1953.

>> And my dad to this day says, I wanna know what was under that skirt.

That's what I wanna know.

He wanted to know what was under the skirt.

They didn't really have a relationship.

She wanted one but you know, he went under the skirt and that was it and one time, under the oak tree, bam.

Renaissance.

>> [LAUGH] >> Woman is born.

>> That's why I know my life is bigger than that.

My life has to be bigger, as your is, bigger than a moment, than a poodle skirt.

It's much bigger.

The design, the reason why I'm here is much bigger than oh, I think I wanna see what's under there.

So the ability to take care of that, to honor that, to honor yourself and that which is greater than yourself, that which was the reason for your being here.

There's no selflessness in that.

Only through that do you have the ability to offer yourself, your whole self, your full expression of who you are, to the rest of the world.

So I remember the very first time I had a life coach. They weren't called that at the time but an expert on who shared with our audience, the women.

She did a list and say where are you on the list?

And literally, in that audience, women booed her, when she said put yourself top of the list.

This was in 1992.

In 1992, the idea of being top of your own list, was people like, how dare she?

She doesn't have children.

I said, she didn't say abandon your children and go running in the streets.

She just said, put yourself at the top of the list.

Nurture yourself.

Honor yourself.

Stop the crazy mind chatter in your head that tells you all the time that you're not good enough because that's the number one, I've found too, issue with everybody.

The reason people say, you know, how is that?

How is that?

>> It's cuz you wanna know how do you measure up.

Well, to know that your just being here, your just being here, however that sperm, bam, hit that egg, however that occurred for you, that your being here is such a miraculous thing and that your real job is to honor that, is to honor that.

And the sooner you figure that out, oh wow, wow, I'm one of the lucky ones.

I got to be here.

So how do you continue to prepare yourself to live out the highest, fullest, truest expression of yourself as a human being?

I just wanna end with this: there are no mistakes.

There really aren't any, cuz you have a supreme destiny.

When you're in your little mind, in your little personality mind or you're not centered, you really don't know who you are but you come from something greater and bigger.

We really all are the same.

You don't know that, you get all flustered, you get stressed all the time, wanting something to be what it isn't.

There's a supreme moment of destiny calling on your life.

Your job is to feel that, to hear that, to know that and sometimes, when you're not listening, you get taken off track.

You get in the wrong marriage, the wrong relationship, you take the wrong job.

Yeah, but it's all leading to the same path.

There are no wrong paths.

There are none.

There's no such thing as failure really, because failure is just that thing, trying to move you in another direction.

So you get as much from your losses, as you do from your victory cuz the losses are there to wake you up.

The losses are to say, fool, that is why you go to school, so that CBS can call you.

So when you understand that you don't allow yourself to be completely thrown by a grade or by a circumstance because your life is bigger than any one experience and if I

had, I always ask people on Super Soul Sunday to tell me, what would you say to your younger self?

Every person says in one form or another, I would have said, relax.

>> [COUGH] >> Relax.

It's gonna be okay.

It really is gonna be okay because even if you're on a detour right now and that's how you know, when you're not at ease with yourself, when you're feeling like [SOUND], that is the cue that you need to be moving in another direction.

Don't let yourself get all thrown off, continue to be thrown off course.

When you're feeling off course, that's the key.

How do I turn around?

So when everybody was talking about, when I started this network, if I had only known, good lord, how difficult it would be.

The way through the challenge is to get still and ask yourself what is the next right move?

Not think about oh, I got all of this to, what is the next right move and then from that space make the next right move and the next right move and not to be overwhelmed by it because you know your life is bigger than that one moment.

You know you're not defined by what somebody says is a failure for you because failure is just there to point you in a different direction and that's all the time I got right now.

>> Thank you.