

Why Meghan Markle's feminist sparkle means she won't be a 'push-over princess'

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

5 Mar 2018

This week, duchess-to-be Meghan Markle confirmed she plans to minimise the mansplaining man-ologue and "shine a light on women feeling empowered," as she begins to work with British royal charities. If you didn't hear how an 11-year-old Markle convinced FMCG giant Procter & Gamble that equality and inclusivity is a good thing by changing the wording of its Ivory dishwashing liquid ad, you're in for a treat...



Screengrab of Markle from her 2015 UN Women speech.

Meghan Markle is really living the dream. [Eonline](#) confirms she was the most Googled actress of 2016, largely due to her now-former role as high powered paralegal Rachel on *Suits*, but also because that's when news first broke that she was dating Prince Harry. Now she's set to become royalty when she marries Harry this May.

This will not be a push-over princess, duchess or other lady of leisure, however. Markle has already made her feelings on equality known, with her impassioned speech in front of former United Nations (UN) secretary-general Ban Ki-moon at the UN Women's 2015 conference.

In it, Markle shared that she unknowingly and accidentally became a female advocate when she was just 11-years-old and found a dishwashing liquid TV commercial unfair. The ad's tagline? **"Women all over America are fighting greasy pots and pans,"** and two boys from her class agreed that's where women belong – in the kitchen. Young Markle felt a need to do something to try right this wrong. And so, following her father's advice, she wrote letters to the most powerful people she could think of.

These included American First Lady at the time, Hilary Clinton; as well as Linda Ellerbee, who hosted a kids' news programme Markle enjoyed; and powerhouse attorney Gloria Allred. In the UN Women speech, Markle confirmed that she received letters of encouragement from all three.

Even more remarkable? Ellerbee's kids' news show *Nick News* sent a camera crew to her home to cover the story. Markle also obviously wrote to the soap manufacturer, and about a month after the TV crew visited, Procter & Gamble, actually changed the wording in the commercial for their Ivory clear dishwashing liquid, from "Women" to "People".

Markle says that's the moment she realised the magnitude of her actions and that she had already created her own small level of impact by standing up for equality.

“ Women need a seat at the table, they need an invitation to be seated there, and in some cases, where this isn't available, they need to create their own table. It is said that girls with dreams become women with vision. May we empower each other to carry out such vision. Because it isn't enough to simply talk about equality. One must believe in it. And it isn't

enough to simply believe in it. One must work at it. Let us work at it, together, starting now. ”

Now, she's one of those powerful people the rest of us look up to, and she's taking further steps towards righting societal wrongs and getting female voices heard.



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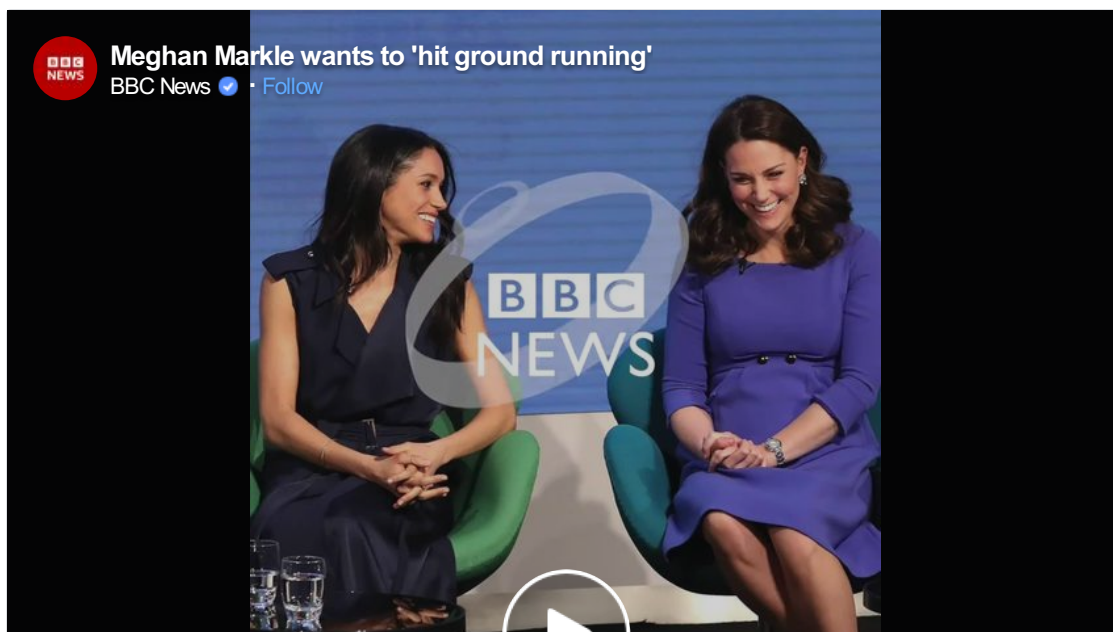


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Just this week, she appeared with the rest of the young royals – Wills, Kate and Harry – as they took to the stage at the first-ever Royal Foundation Forum – I'm neither on first-name basis with them nor one of the UK monarchy obsessed, it was in a BBC video that popped up on my Facebook feed, I couldn't resist clicking through to:



In the BBC interview, Markle amplified her UN Women message, that women need a seat at the table – if not their own table – with the caveat that men also need to play a part and be educated in how to listen.

Changing the 'mainsplaining manologue'

With mansplaining memes rife in 2018, at a time where you just can't click on a link without stumbling upon a #MeToo and #TimesUp hashtag – no complaints here, raise those hands – this is exactly what the world needs.





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[Vogue](#) adds that as a former actress herself, the #MeToo and #TimesUp allegations in Hollywood likely hit closer to home for Markle than most.

In Markle's view, it's less about women finding their voice and more about feeling empowered to use it, while educating men on how to listen to that voice.

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And this was not the most straightforward of engagements for the foursome, either! The group took seats on the stage at the first-ever Royal Foundation Forum, where they discussed their passions and projects for the coming years (Markle will officially become a patron after she marries Harry in May).

William kicked things off in festive fashion by stating that the crew was "particularly happy" to have Markle along for the first time for a Royal Foundation event. A bit later, Kate spoke on her own at the podium about her plans for Heads Together, the campaign specifically focused on mental-health issues, as she shared, "We are all so proud of the work we did with our partners to challenge the stigma which has prevented so many people from speaking openly about their mental well-being."



VANITYFAIR.COM
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The foursome unites on stage for a panel about their future plans.

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[Vanity Fair](#) reports that Markle is set to hit the ground running championing the cause for gender equality and women's rights issues after the wedding, quoting her as stating:

“ I hear a lot of people speaking about girls' empowerment and women's empowerment; you will hear people saying they are helping women find their voices. I fundamentally disagree with that because women don't need to find their voices, they need to be empowered to use it and people need to be urged to listen. ”

This Facebook post is no longer available. It may have been removed, or the privacy settings of the post may have changed.

I, for one, am certainly looking forward to hearing more of Markle's voice in future!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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