

I cannot tell you how often I would sit down to write and instead I would find myself going online to look at shoes and to put different shoes in various online carts and then remove some and put some back and order some and then not order some.

I'm actually thinking of starting a society of esteemed procrastinators and I suspect that many of you would probably sign up. Procrastination is a form of fear and it is difficult to acknowledge fear. But the truth is that you cannot create anything of value without both self-doubt and self-belief. Without self-doubt you become complacent, without self-belief you cannot succeed; you need both.

And there is also the fear of measuring up - of keeping up, which for you might be heightened by the heavy weight of all those Harvard expectations.

I want to share a line from a lovely poem by Mary Oliver: whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination.

When you fall into the funk of competition, when you compare yourself with other Harvard graduates, when you worry that you didn't get that job at Goldman or McKinsey or in Silicon Valley right after graduation or didn't win a Pulitzer at 30 or didn't become a managing director or partner of something at 35, think of literature.

Think of the early bloomers and the late bloomers. Think of the many experimental novels that do not follow the traditional form. Your story does not have to have a traditional arc. There is an Igbo saying [Igbo language]; it translates literally to: whenever you wake up, that is your morning. What matters is that you wake up.

The world is calling you. America is calling you. There is work to be done,

there are tarnished things that need to shine again. There are broken things that need to be made whole again. You are in a position to do this. You can do it.

ALSO READ: [Charlie Day: Fail, Pick Yourself Up & Fail Again \(Full Transcript\)](#)

Be courageous. Tell the truth. I wish you courage and I wish you well.

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