**Excerpt from Why Not Me by Mindy Kaling:**

Confidence is just entitlement. Entitlement has gotten a bad rap because it's used almost exclusively for the useless children of the rich, reality TV stars, and Conrad Hilton Jr., who gets kicked off an airplane for smoking in the lavatory and calling people peasants or whatever. But entitlement in and of itself isn't so bad. Entitlement is simply the belief that you deserve something. Which is great. The hard part is, you'd better make *sure* you deserve it. So, how did I make sure that I deserved it?

To answer that, I would like to quote from the Twitter bio of one of my favorite people, Kevin Hart. It reads:

My name is Kevin Hart and I WORK HARD!!! That pretty much sums me up!!! Everybody Wants To Be Famous But Nobody Wants To Do The Work!

People talk about confidence without ever bringing up hard work. That's a mistake. I work a lot. Like, *a lot* a lot. I feel like I must have been watching TV as a kid and that cartoon parable about the industrious ants and the lazy grasshopper came on at a vital moment when my soft little brain was hardening, and the moral of it was imprinted on me. The result of which is that I'm usually hyper-prepared for whatever I set my mind to do, which makes me feel deserving of attention and professional success, when that's what I'm seeking.

I didn't always feel this way. When I was a kid, I thought I could cruise through life and get ahead on charm, like a little Indian Ferris Bueller. In the summer after fourth grade, my parents enrolled me in a two-week-long basketball camp. If it surprises you that a girl with my build was interested in basketball, it should. But I was, because I had a fantasy that I was in *Hang Time*. And I was terrible. I could've gotten better, but I didn't want to do drills. I just wanted to play pickup games, socialize, and drink Gatorade. I never wanted to practice. At the end of the two-week camp, I was no better at basketball. But at the farewell ceremony, trophies were handed out and I got one for "Coolest Clothes." I ran home, delighted, and placed it proudly on top of our TV for all to see.

Weeks later, I went to the TV room to find that it was gone. My beautiful trophy! Was it stolen by a gang of criminals jealous of my peach denim shorts from the Limited Too?! Mom told me she had "put it away." I didn't understand. Someone had singled me out for praise and the trophy deserved to be seen. Then my mom said something to me, slowly and carefully, like she always did to make sure I was really listening: "They gave you that trophy so you wouldn't feel bad, not because you deserved it. You should know the difference."

I was of course incredibly hurt and thought Mom was nuts. I thought, There's a great deal of value in being well dressed at basketball day camp. It keeps morale up and adds a sense of cheeky fun to the whole day. Later, I realized what she had said was true. A bunch of unearned trophies around the house would make me hooked on awards, which is bad in general, but especially bad if you don't deserve them. The whole experience made me want to win another trophy, but win it for actually doing something great.