

Kirsten Chevalier

Shafer, x1188

I am writing this speech four hours before it's due. What better way to summarize the Wellesley experience than to use a technique honored by generations of Wellesley students? Procrastination. Like keeping your bathroom supplies in a little basket and snacking on Baked Lays, it's something everyone at Wellesley seems to do. Why do we do it? Wellesley doesn't assign *that* much work. Most of us could safely start early on every assignment, put in ample time, and still get 8 hours of sleep a night. Imagine what would happen if you did! You'd have time to talk over your work with other students and with your professors, to write more than one draft of a paper even when it *isn't* required. Are you afraid of what would happen if you didn't procrastinate? Putting off an assignment until the last minute provides a convenient excuse for why it's not the best you could do. If that excuse were taken away, how would you deal with failure?

What else are you afraid of? Some time ago I went to a recruiting session at Wellesley where the company representatives proclaimed, "You don't need to use your major to work for us!" This seems to be an apt description of many jobs my fellow seniors are taking, and to me, there's something unsettling about it. Why would you major in a field if you didn't think it was one of the most beautiful things in the world? There's nothing wrong

with changing your mind about what interests you, but few subjects you'd major in at Wellesley are narrow enough that you can master them in just four years. I chose my major because I think it's the most interesting thing in the world and I want to spend my life doing it. How could you choose a major based on anything less? Seeking out a job where you won't use anything specific you learned in college seems to indicate that either your last four years were miserable, or that you'll spend the next few years being miserable. Are you doing this because you didn't like your major, or because you're afraid that you didn't learn it well enough? As a college graduate, how can you work at a job that requires no unique skills unless you feel that *you* have nothing unique to offer the world?

The world needs more people who do what they love, no matter what that might be. It may seem as if you have to work at a job that wastes your talents in order to pay the rent, but maybe you're not looking hard enough. And maybe you're confusing being able to pay the rent with being able to enjoy the lifestyles of the rich and famous. What is the point of choosing a job solely because it pays well? Don't you want to change the world, even in a small way? Don't you want to become immortal, to create some lasting artifact, whether an artistic work, a neat invention, or children

whose minds you shape? It's harder to focus on these things when you're focused on material gain.

Speaking of changing the world, why does it seem like so many Wellesley students are unwilling to take a stand for what they believe in? Few of us call ourselves "feminists". Why? Presumably, all of us would like the world to be a better place for women. Why not do something about it? Being active as a feminist doesn't necessarily mean carrying signs in protests – it can mean speaking up when someone makes a sexist remark. It can mean refusing to conform to fashion standards that require women to put themselves on display (unless you happen to *like* wearing 5-inch platform shoes). It can mean training yourself not to end every sentence as if it's a question – you know, like this? You can't expect anyone to take you seriously if your speech constantly undermines what you say, you know what I mean? Maybe I'm totally wrong, I don't know.

Every one of you has something unique to give the world. Find a way to use it, instead of settling for the blandness of a life spent working for money to buy a car to get to work faster. Don't be afraid to put yourself into what you do – be afraid of what will happen if you spend the rest of your life fitting in.