**Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.**

As I stood in front of an eagerly awaiting crowd, whose eyes was dead-locked upon me, my heart was pounding. My shaking shoulders felt the combined weight of their collective gaze, and my palms grew clammy with anxiety. I could feel adrenaline seeping through my veins, unlocking my spider senses to an intolerable degree. The only thing I could hear was my heartbeat, as if it were the only audible symphony in existence. My mind was a whirlpool of conflicting/scrambled thoughts and voices, one was trying to tell me what to do next, another telling me to fasten my speech/presentation up. I felt doubt and anxiety creeping me every step of the way. My self conciousness was slowly fading, ears were ringing and the only words that came out of my mouth was ‘’uhmm”. As I finished my presentation, I walked the path of shame, covering my face as if it was a mask, every step felt was filled with disappointment and regret. As I looked into the crowd, their unchanging expression worsens the feeling as if I have not satisfied them fully.

The days that followed were like a video replay in my head, replaying my speech over and over again and haunting me. I made the decision to face the fact that I am afraid of public speaking and, rather than viewing it negatively, to view it as a talent to develop and as another step toward being a better version of myself.

Unexpectedly, my laptop started ringing with notifications. My attention was drawn to a particular email with the subject line "Take the World Fellowship," which described a 6-month program run by Harvard and MIT mentors that featured practical group projects on current global issues, feedback-led communication training, monthly think out loud sessions, workshops, and challenges on social innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as monthly think out loud sessions.

Without a doubt, I feel compelled to enroll in this program from the very core of my soul. I clicked "apply" and stopped looking back. In that setting, it truly tested me and put me in awkward positions, like speaking and expressing my ideas on "what is the most important skill in entrepreneurship" or being reprimanded by mentors when they ask questions.

At first, I fidgeted a lot, worried a lot about what other people thought of me, and lacked confidence. But as time goes on, things like communication classes taught by my MIT mentor Nwanacho Nwana, like how to structure speeches, have really helped me to become a better prepared and confident speaker. I was more affable with strangers and more assured when giving presentations.After each one that was successful, I gradually grew more confident. After a few weeks, my self-assurance was at an all-time high.

I also had to alter my thinking during this process; I had to concentrate on what I would say next and block out any concerns I could have had about how others would react to my speech or how to speed it up. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, they found my speech to be enjoyable. If it didn't work out, I recognized that I had assurance that I tried at least tried to develop myself, and this made me overlook the idea of failure. I also thought of every occasion to speak as a challenge for myself to become the greatest version of myself, which made me speak my opinions. Throughout this process, I realized how important my mindset plays a role in life, and made me further inspired to put myself in challenging situations and improve my skillset.

Even if I discovered the tricks to boost confidence and fundamentally improve public speaking, I still need to work on skills like improvising. The ability to think quickly and flexibly is crucial and needs to be developed further because the human brain would not be able to completely recall every word that I came up with for my script.

This experience taught me more about myself, for instance since of my empathy and intuition, I can quickly connect with the audience. This increases engagement since I can access the openness and attitude of the people I'm speaking to. However, I also became aware that I frequently stutter and that I must speak slowly and in a higher pitched voice to avoid sounding hushed. With great confidence, I was able to assist communities by teaching science and English to young children, as well as work on initiatives like the prototype software Lexical, which supports linguistic minorities in the healthcare industry. But overall, this was because everyone was not afraid to voice out their opinions showing the importance of public speaking and shows how this period of personal growth really impacted my life.