



Tyranny of the Shoulds podcast

Episode 3: Lighting the Fire

Psychoanalyst Karen Horney coined the phrase in the 1950s, yet we still struggle with “shoulds” today. “Shoulds” come from our families, friends, society and sometimes from ourselves. The tyranny is that we struggle to be our ideal self yet it’s something we will never reach.

The Irish poet W B Yeats once said that “*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*” So why is it that most of us just end up filling the pail when we go to college?

Student debt

- Currently more than £17 billion is loaned to c. 1.3 million students in England each year. The value of outstanding loans at the end of March 2021 reached £141 billion. The Government forecasts the value of outstanding loans to be c. £560 billion (2019-20 prices) by the middle of this century. The average debt of those who finished their courses in 2020 was £45,000.
- The UK government expects 25% of current full-time undergraduates who take out loans will repay them in full: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01079/>

Government spending on Higher Education

- Government spending on higher or tertiary education in the United Kingdom was 4.86 billion British pounds in 2020/21, compared with 4.37 billion in the previous financial year: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/298902/higher-education-spending-uk/>

Student numbers

- In 2019/20 there were 2.46 million students at UK higher education institutions.
- Applicants for 2020 were up by 3.2% to a new record high. Applications from home students were up by 2.1%, those from the EU were down by 0.4% and those from other overseas students were up by 12.3%: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7857/>

Percentage of UK population with a bachelor's degree

- In 2018, approximately 49 percent of people aged between 30 and 34 in the UK had obtained a degree, the eleventh-highest in Europe: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/676995/university-degree-awards-uk/>

Impact of degree on salary

- The median salary for working-age graduates was £35,000 in 2020. This was £9,500 more than non-graduates (£25,500) but £7,000 less than postgraduates (£42,000).