

Yale Dean in 1949: Stop Worrying About Security So Much

Recently, while reading an old book about [a young man's adventures at Yale](#), I came across a speech delivered by the dean of that school, who was speaking to the graduating class of 1949.

Periodicals at the time apparently suggested that the graduating class had indicated it was “primarily interested in seeking security,” and the speaker, [William C. De Vane](#), chided students for this.

He said such men were not the men who built America or, for that matter, Yale:

I would remind you that it was just one hundred years ago that Americans of every type and descriptions invaded the West Coast in search of their fortunes, and formed the vanguard of a vast colonial movement which increased immeasurably the health and strength of this country. I would remind you that it was they and men like them that have brought this country to greatness. It was not men who sought security first, adventure and enterprise next, who built Yale.

That was nearly 80 years ago, during which time Americans have, most would agree, only grown more jealous of their security.

Surveys show an overwhelming majority of college-age students admit they value [job security over passion](#). As a result, entrepreneurship among Millennials is [becoming rarer and rarer](#).

What is the source of this trend? I have no idea. De Vane, however, did:

...if it is true that your attitudes lent weight to their conclusions, then Yale has failed. For Yale expects of her graduates something more than a sodden search for security.

If young people are not leaving academic institutions—especially elite colleges—with a passion to go and *create something*, is this the fault of the schools?

More importantly, can the trend be reversed? Or are we simply a nation that is [getting tired and running out of big ideas](#)?