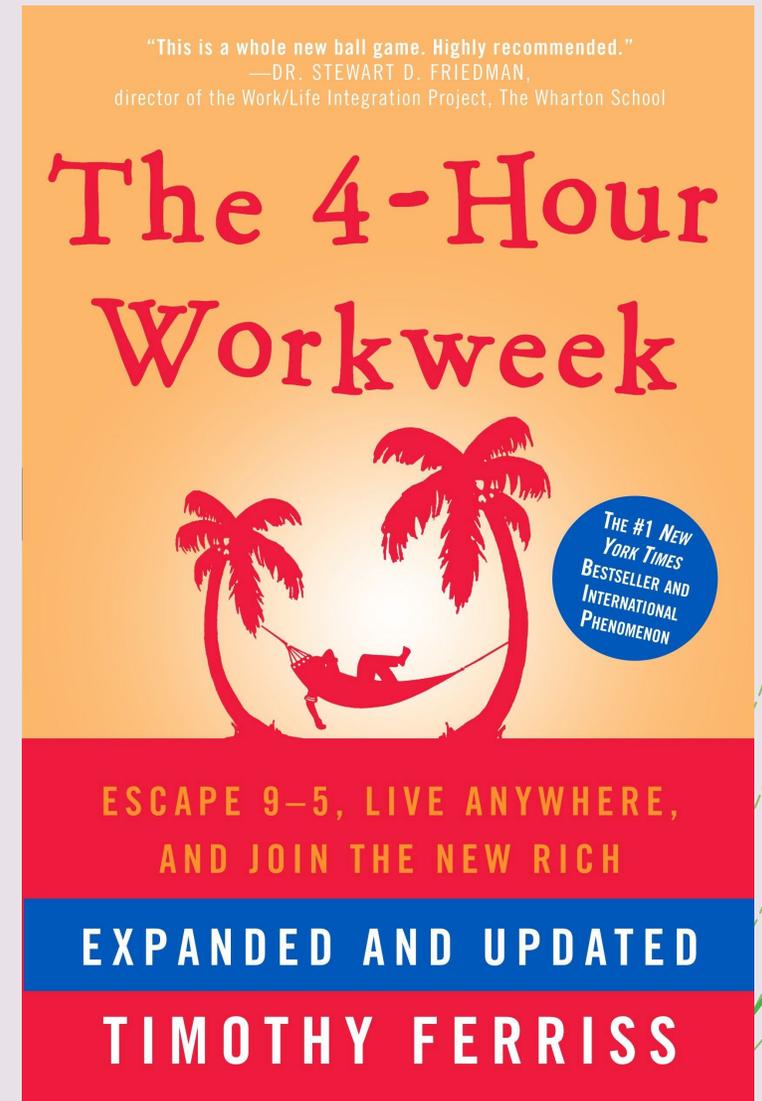
A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the top left is a small potted plant with green grass-like leaves. To its right is a white computer keyboard. In the bottom right is a white coffee cup on a saucer with dark coffee. Below the keyboard is a black notebook with a white lined page and a black pen. A small black binder clip is on the desk near the keyboard. The background is a light brown wooden surface with some white dashed lines and a green line graphic.

*‘The dreaded and dreadful Robert Lake’:  
Navigating Elitism and the ‘Race to  
Nowhere’ in Academia*

Robert J. Lake

# Some harrowing statistics...

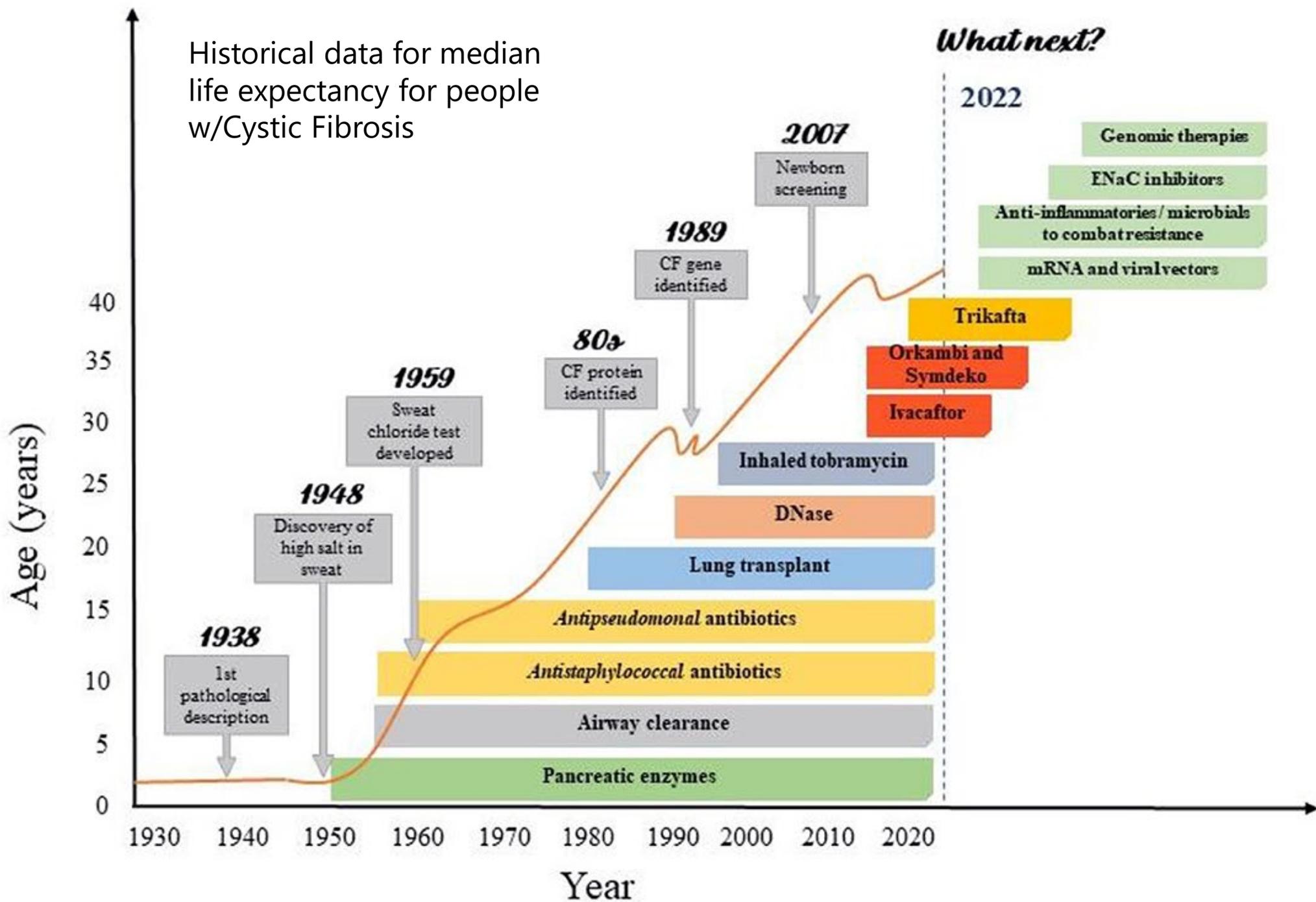
- + Faculty in the UK, US and Australia reported high levels of stress, anxiety and other mental health issues (Kinman, 2001)
- + Academic staff struggled with mental illness 3-4 x gen. population (Winefield, et al., 2003)
- + 24% of professors at Canadian universities experienced psychological strain (Catano et al., 2010)
- + 37% of professors/grad students in the UK experienced a mental health disorder (stress, anxiety, depression etc.) (Guthrie et al., 2017)
- + 43% of professors in the UK noted poor mental health stemming from depression, anxiety or burnout (Gorczyński et al. 2017)
- + 64% of academics in Canada indicated they had suffered a mental health issue during their career (Mantler, et al., 2021)
- + 7.3% of US graduate students at Emory University had suicidal thoughts (2.3% had suicide 'plans') (Garcia-Williams, et al. 2014)







Historical data for median life expectancy for people w/Cystic Fibrosis





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# Let's Get Over Ourselves: Students are Customers, Now and Forever

# Students as customers: a paradigm shift in higher education

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Technology ▾

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4 MINUTE READ

# Treating students like customers in the new postsecondary normal



Published on 2021/10/21

CUSTOMER SERVICE

# The Benefits to Seeing Students as Customers

Belinda Elliott-Bielecki | Director of Marketing and Communications in the College of Extended Learning, University of New Brunswick



## Local university shuts down, students left scrambling to finish their studies



# University World News

THE GLOBAL WINDOW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED KINGDOM

## The unkindest cut? – Behind the paring of the humanities

Nathan M Greenfield 13 August 2022



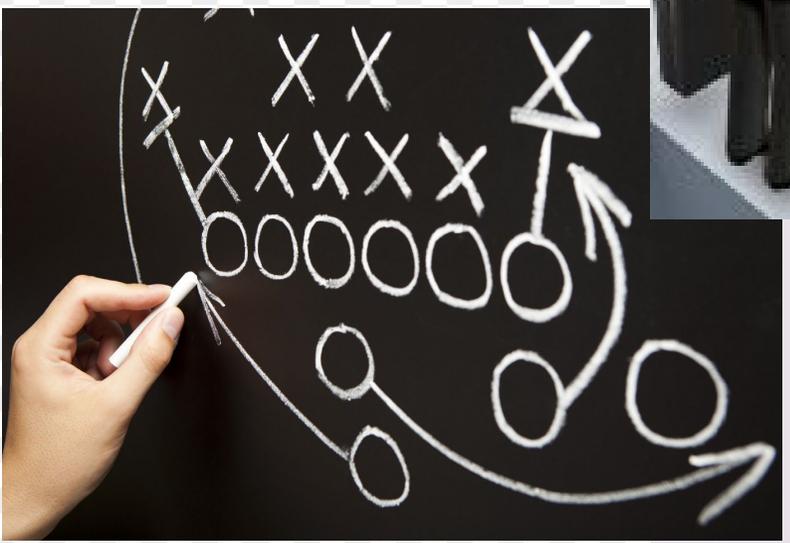
## UK university staff vote for strike action over pay, conditions and pensions

Union calls on vice-chancellors to negotiate to prevent higher education being brought to 'complete standstill'

## Inside Laurentian University's demise

The institution was restructured to align the curriculum with market demands—an administrative task, not an intellectual one

Ron Srigley / December 10, 2021 / 28 min read



Strategy



Execution



Success



# 'Prestige Politics'

+ The massification of higher education. Simple premise:

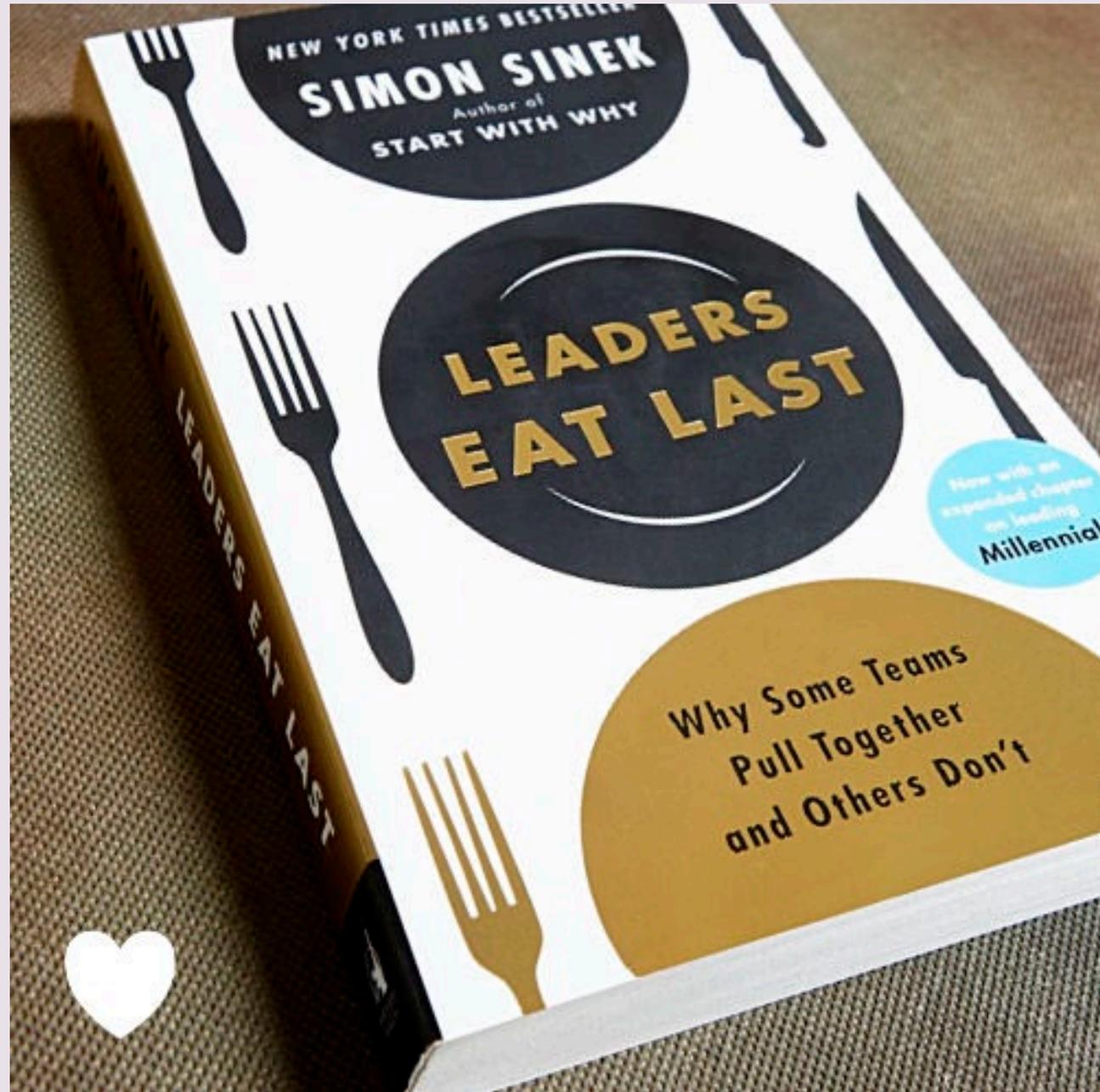
More universities created



Sustained need to maintain  
or enhance prestige



Greater status insecurity  
among professors



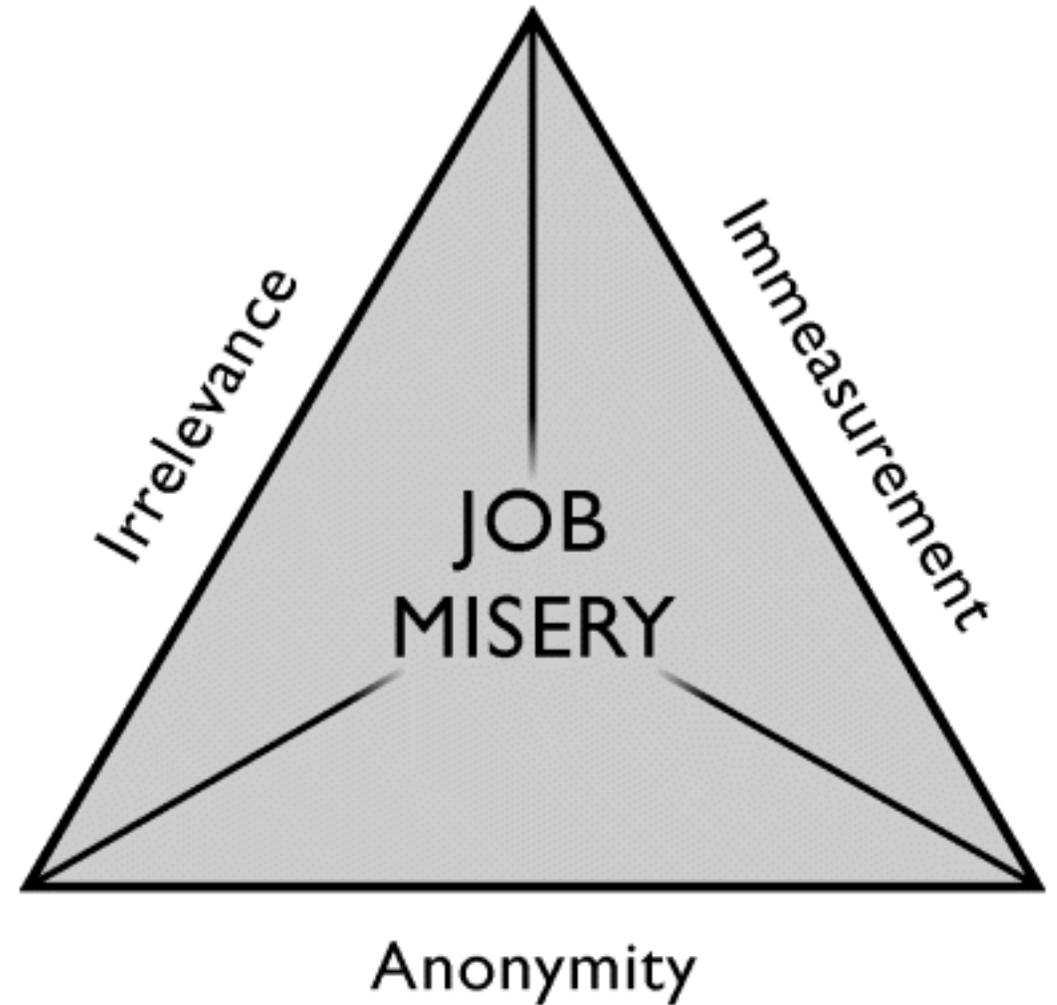
# The THREE SIGNS *of a* Miserable Job

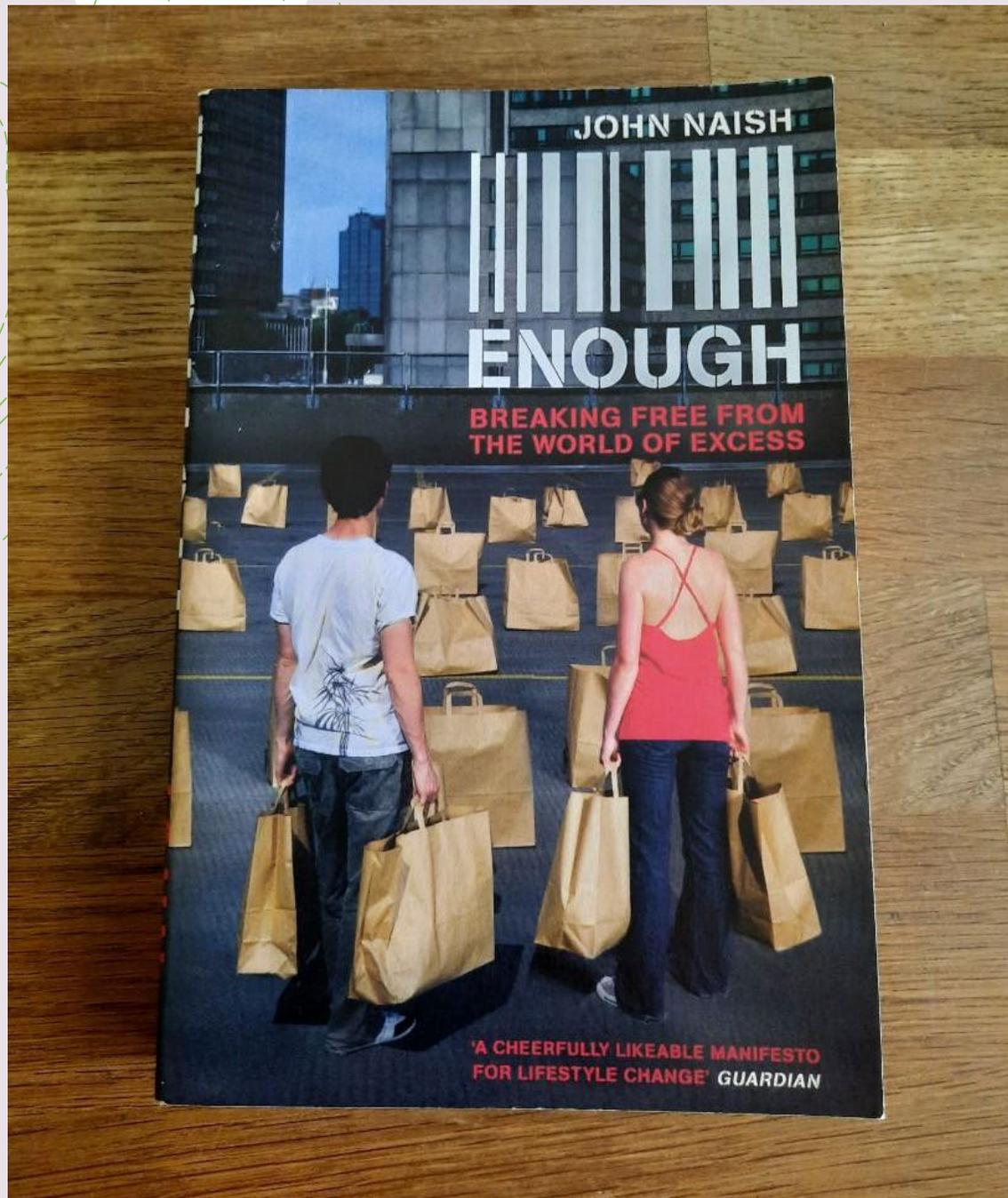
A FABLE FOR MANAGERS  
(and their employees)



**PATRICK LENCIONI**

AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLER *THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM*





# + What is enough?

Stress of status comparisons



Sustained elevated Cortisol levels

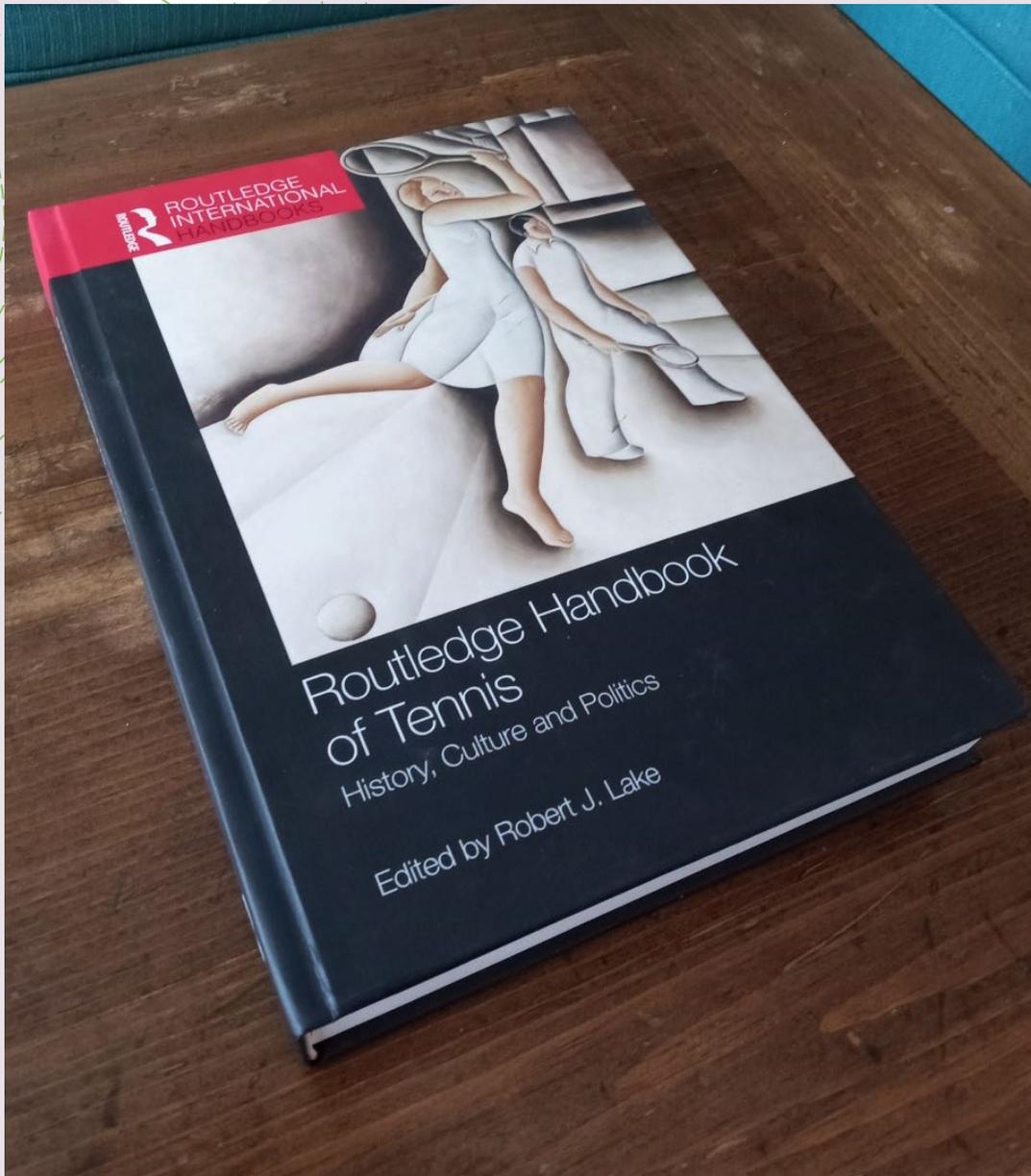


Negative health outcomes

# Elitism

+ *'Elitism is the belief or notion that individuals who form an elite – a select group of people perceived as having an intrinsic quality, high intellect, wealth, power, notability, special skills or experience – are more likely to be constructive to society as a whole, and therefore deserve influence or authority greater than that of others'*





Yours is '*indicative of an inveterate elitist mentality*'.

You have become '*a discredit to the academy and to the subject*'.

Your vitriol against me is '*as ignorant as it is unfounded*'.

Elitism

The diagram consists of three green rounded rectangular boxes. The top box contains the word 'Elitism'. Below it are two boxes, 'Racism' on the left and 'Sexism' on the right. A double-headed arrow connects 'Elitism' to 'Racism', and another double-headed arrow connects 'Elitism' to 'Sexism'. A third double-headed arrow connects 'Racism' and 'Sexism' horizontally. The background is light gray with decorative green dashed lines and white circles in the corners.

Racism

Sexism



# Does **prestige** always **=** **Quality**?



'How you like them apples?'

A two-panel comic strip featuring two stick figures. The figure on the left is speaking with an open mouth and a surprised expression, gesturing with his right hand. The figure on the right has a neutral, slightly questioning expression. The background is white with a grey border. The entire scene is set against a light purple background with decorative green dashed lines and white circles.

Wow! I can't believe you're *only* an Instructor at Douglas College!

Um... thanks?  
Wait... WTF??!!





Welcome to Douglas College. Put your egos here





## Good Stress



## Bad Stress





# Elitism: What Can We do?

1. Check our own egos.



**A simple maxim for us to  
follow at NASSS...**

*'Everyone has an equal right to speak and to be heard, and we should embrace all forms of dialogue so long as they are kind, considerate, thoughtful, relevant, and respectful of one's dignity.'*



# Elitism: What Can We do?

1. Check our own egos.
2. Call out elitism.

# Is this you?



1. Privileging or giving more value to the words of one person over another simply because they work at a more prestigious institution
2. Privileging or giving more value to the words of one person over another simply because they have a more prestigious or higher professional title or because they have a more prestigious job title
3. Privileging or giving more value to the words of one person over another simply because they represent a group that is considered more elite

# Elitism: What Can We do?

1. Check our own egos.
2. Call out elitism.
3. Stay focused on the goal.

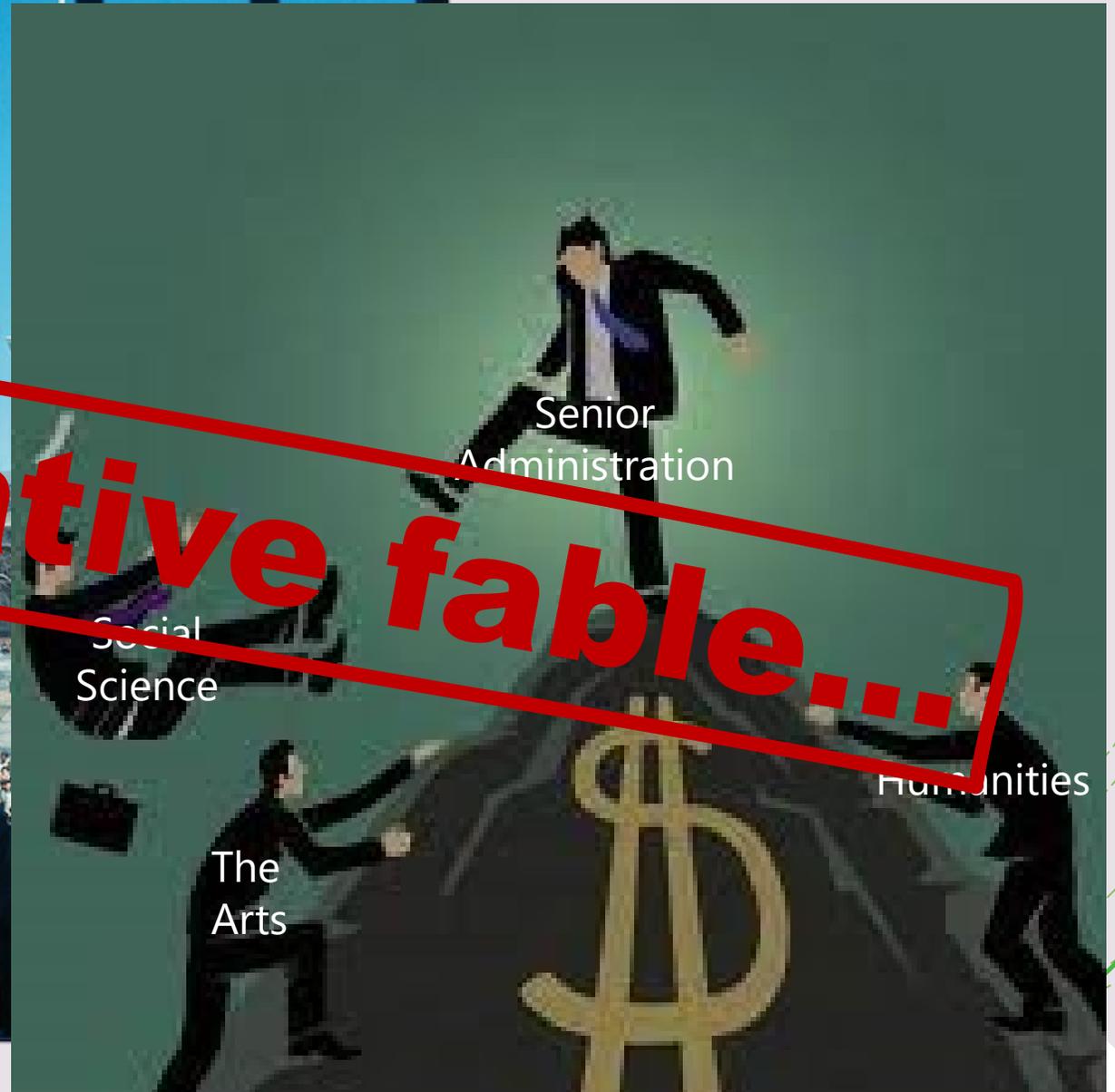


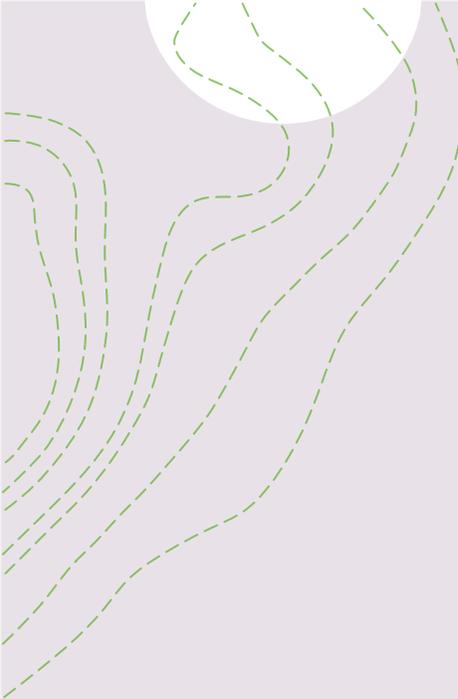
# Conclusion

+ Can we have this?

**An alternative fable...**

+ Without this?





**Thank you so much.**

