

Creating a mindset of abundance versus scarcity by Rose Miller

I went to the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Together for a Cure fundraiser where the keynote speaker gave an eloquent speech about being a Victor or Victim. Dealing with MS can be daunting on a continual basis. It can impact your ability to live your life fully. The Keynote wrapped up a victorious talk with- "Will life happen to you or for you? Do you see your life as a nightmare or a fairytale?" She told the crowd how MS will not defeat her.

I was reading Michael J. Fox's new book where he writes about how he takes after his late mother, who had an impactful positive attitude. He said, "She never added up the losses. She'd always look at the gains."

Boiled down, these two people exhibited a mindset of abundance versus a mindset of scarcity.

Stephen Covey initially coined these terms in his best-selling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Scarcity mentality refers to people seeing life as a finite pie, so that if one person takes a big piece, that leaves less for everyone else.

Psychology studies have found that children who believe intelligence can be developed were better able to overcome academic challenges versus children who believe their intelligence is fixed in some way. A scarcity mindset can limit a child's growth.

Studies completed by researchers on adults found that people who had more positive beliefs around aging lived 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perception of aging. Embrace those wrinkles because your mindset can prolong your life!

My local business community should examine whether our actions/words reflect a scarcity or abundance mindset. People complain about how the region is siloed. Business and regional silos are indicators of a scarcity mindset. Silos support a belief we will lose something by sharing resources versus believing we are all stronger and richer together.

I worked with a multi-state business once where the people in the Boston office told me how upset they were that the semiconductor industry picked the Capital Region over them. They had so much more to offer the industry and its employees. Then when speaking to some local businesses, many would say, I can't believe they picked our region versus Boston or Austin! We don't have as much to offer as those regions. Good grief.

The former Mayor of Albany was famous for his abundance mindset. He campaigned for a new convention center for over a decade. People would laugh and say, "We can't support a convention center." But his persistence was complete when a new convention center was erected. It is bustling with activity and there are plans for expansion.

The new president of the local black chamber of commerce warned attendees about how she has encountered similar rhetoric. She is originally from the Capital Region. She was happy to return to where her family still lives. She believes the region has a lot to offer and she was excited about the opportunities here. However, she is mystified by how many people have asked her why she would

consider moving back here when she lived in another, more exciting city. She encouraged the crowd to reverse the scarcity mindset.

We may be conditioned to have a scarcity mentality. Are promotions and raises scarce, are resources limited, do managers hoard information, is micromanagement abound, and is short-term thinking the norm? A scarcity mentality can be what keeps us from achieving our goals. It can keep students from staying or new hires from moving here. An abundance mindset communicates there is plenty here for everybody.

We can make the shift from a scarcity to abundance mindset by focusing on what we have, surrounding ourselves with positive messages, and creating winning situations whenever we can.

When faced with a career change or thinking about starting a business, instead of mentally listing all your limitations, instead focus on all your experience, contacts you've made, and all the ways you can bring value to the company or customer.

Find and start spending time with people who always see new opportunities. Positive attitudes rub off. As Tony Robbins has said, "The quality of a person's life is most often a direct reflection of the expectations of their peer group." Look at the people with whom you spend time. Search for people who inspire you.

A scarcity mindset believes that if one person wins, another loses. Look for ways for both parties to leave with a sense of accomplishment. Consider practicing this in both your personal and professional life.

We chose our local region many years ago because of its ideal proximity to three large cities, its many business opportunities, a good quality of life, and its excellent schools. We have an abundance of opportunities for personal, professional, and economic growth. We can all be victors.

In the year ahead, let's stop adding up the losses and start speaking proudly of our gains.

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