

7 Key Ways Scarcity Sabotages Networking

People in scarcity see the glass as half full.

By Kimberly George

SCARCITY MENTALITY is prevalent in society. We see it all around us, from cutthroat competition and hoarding, to rising heating costs and gas prices. But did you ever stop to think that scarcity may be keeping you from networking success? As a business coach working with hundreds of business owners, I've found that the number one reason people don't get the networking results they want is due to scarcity thinking.

Here's the crux of the issue: scarcity is more than the belief that there's not enough to go around. The ultimate scarcity is resisting *who you are*. This phenomenon occurs repeatedly in people who struggle with networking. Scarcity silently sabotages goals, results, and success. It keeps us from bringing our best selves to the networking experience. This article will show you how.

Seven key illusions

I have identified seven key illusions, or indicators, of scarcity mentality that hold us back during networking. Are any of these illusions hampering your networking efforts?

The illusion of not enough. "I'm not good at small talk." This illusion is characterized by the belief that who you are isn't enough, so you need more—more information, more time, and more education. This illusion brings about a fear that you have nothing interesting to say and nobody will want to talk to you.

The illusion of comparisons. "If I could just be like Jim, I'd be a better networker." This illusion causes you to look outside of yourself for validation, acceptance,

and approval from others. We model ourselves after people we think we should be like, instead of being like ourselves, which is more appealing. This illusion makes you fear that you can't be a successful networker because you're not as outgoing as your co-worker.

The illusion of struggle. "Networking is too much work." People stuck in this illusion make things harder than they have to be, resist opportunities coming to them, and are typically distracted by over-achieving. This is exemplified by treating networking as hunting, not farming. This illusion makes you believe that unless you give your business card to every single person in the room, you won't be a successful networker.

The illusion of time. "I'll try networking when I have more time." This illusion keeps us stuck in the past with bad experiences, or holding out for the future, thereby missing the opportunity of what we can do today. This illusion gives you a fear that because your last networking experience was less than perfect it means networking isn't for you.

The illusion of control. "I can't go into a room where I don't know anybody." This illusion convinces us that all conditions, timing, and opportunities must be perfect before we can act. Perfectionism runs rampant in this illusion. This illusion fuels the idea that if your co-worker is unable to go to the mixer with you, you won't go either.

The illusion of hope. "If I show up at a networking event, I'll get more clients."

Hope is a source of scarcity when it keeps us waiting for someone or something else to make things happen for us, instead of doing what we can do. You can have the best product or service in the world, but if no one knows about it, you won't have any sales. This illusion has you hoping that going to a mixer, but doing none of the preparation and research to maximize your opportunities at the event, will get you business.

The illusion of certainty. "If I knew I'd get business, I'd go." People who struggle with this illusion need to know an outcome before they can do something. Life does not come with a money-back guarantee. The more preparation you are, the greater confidence you will have about your experience. This illusion makes you fear that you won't know anyone, and you will spend the whole evening holding the wall up, looking like a fool.

Did you see yourself in one or more of these illusions? Don't worry. There is a solution. Successful networkers are abundant networkers.

The first step you must do to transition to an abundant networker is to realize that each of the illusions keeps you from doing what you *can* do. They keep you playing small, and they keep you scared or intimidated. Most importantly, the illusions keep you from expressing yourself and that is an essential skill of abundant networking.

The next step is to identify which illusions are strongest for you. When you think of networking, what do you say to yourself? Are you excited or are you filled with dread? Those feelings point toward your scarcity.

Once you've identified a networking fear, you need to ask yourself:

- What is this fear grounded in? What evidence or proof do I have that this is real for me? (99.9 percent of the time, you will have no evidence whatsoever.)

● How does thinking this way serve me? (Most likely, you will quickly realize that your thinking is just fear and you can make a conscious choice to think and act differently in a way that serves you better.)

These two questions are simple, yet powerful. They provide the awareness you need to move from scarcity thinking to abundant thinking.

Let's explore abundance a little bit further. In addition to having the ability to be who they are in the world, abundant networkers embody the following aptitudes:

- **self worth**—they understand and demonstrate, with a quiet confidence, that who they are is more than enough
- **effectiveness**—they prepare for networking events in advance, such as asking for introductions, creating goals of who they want to meet, and utilizing business cards, contact management software, and name tags
- **self expression**—they know how to talk about what they do and how they add value; they are not stalled by the question “what do you do?”
- **actualization**—they practice the art of engagement, not only going to networking events but following up to build long-term relationships that bring referrals and countless other benefits
- **surrender**—they let go of seeking a quick fix, understanding that relationship building is a process that takes time, energy, and attention
- **significance**—they do what they can, consistently and with energy and enthusiasm, understanding that the power of networking is in being yourself when it matters most (which is all the time!)
- **inquiry**—they are naturally curious and interested in the people they meet, and adept at listening and utilizing questions to draw others into conversation.

Abundant networkers seek to build relationships rather than complete transactions. They see people they haven't met as future friends instead of strangers. Networking events are full of possibilities, not threats. Abundant networkers have a networking plan and strategy instead of just showing up and winging it. They understand that what

they put out into the world will come back to them, directly and indirectly.

Most importantly, remember this: People in scarcity see the cup as half empty. Positive thinkers see the cup as half full. *But people in abundance see the cup as overflowing.*

Which kind of networker are you?

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