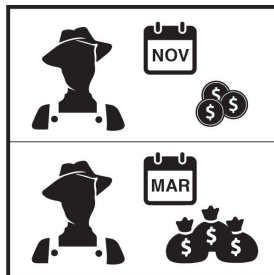


SCARCITY | Research Highlights¹



MINNESOTA HUNGER STUDY | SCARCITY OF FOOD

During WWII, aid workers needed guidance on how to bring people back from the brink of starvation. Researchers at the University of Minnesota launched a yearlong experiment on hunger. Thirty-six young men went on a starvation diet—the effects on their bodies were clear, but it affected their minds as well. The subjects' conversations were fixated on food—they planned to open restaurants and memorized recipes. In the absence of food, they could not focus on anything else.



SUGARCANE FARMERS | SCARCITY OF MONEY

Sugarcane farmers in India are paid only once per year. In the months after a harvest they are well off, but by the end of the harvest cycle they are relatively poor. Researchers tested the farmers on their long-term thinking at both points in time. Immediately post-harvest, farmers had strong impulse control and thought long-term. But, at the end of the harvest cycle, when resources were scarce, the same farmers lost that long-term thinking in favor of focusing on how to make it to the next week.

SCARCITY | How It Shows Up in People's Lives



BRANDY | SCARCITY OF MONEY

Brandy worked for a company for over a decade and had access to the company card for business-related expenses. One day, in a rush to pick up her baby from day care, she accidentally used her company card to purchase diapers. Brandy was terminated. Without Brandy's income, her marriage was strained, and she left her spouse. Without steady employment, her household supplies dwindled. Brandy ordered a new credit card to make ends meet, and stocked up immediately on supplies, maxing out the card. She forgot to factor in costs for gas and the credit card bill itself—soon, she was trapped by debt. In retrospect, she can see her mistake in not budgeting for the whole month, but in the moment, it was either “pay the bills” or “feed the kids.”



KATY | SCARCITY OF TIME

Katy is a driven person. She graduated top of her class in medical school, but when she started her residency her new schedule was grueling. In her free time, Katy became fixated on exercise, and gradually her home-life fell apart—she had no groceries, a messy home, and forgot to pay a bill. Katy previously battled anorexia—when she was trapped in this scarcity tunnel, old habits returned. Katy only realized the path she was on when it started impacting her work—the final straw was when she almost forgot to order insulin for a diabetic patient. She entered a residential treatment center and finally emerged from the tunnel. Katy started scheduling time to do “nothing” and this freed up bandwidth and allowed her to enjoy her work and perform better.

¹ These highlights are adapted from the podcast: Vedantam, Shankar. “Hidden Brain.” [Tunnel Vision](#). NPR, 20 Mar. 2017. Web.