

Deep Culture Podcast – Transcript

The Deep Culture Podcast explores the psychological impact of intercultural experiences, informed by the sciences of brain, culture and mind. Join hosts **Joseph Shaules** and **Ishita Ray** as we look at the personal growth that can come from travel, living and working abroad, learning a foreign language, growing up in a multicultural context—and the challenges of bridging different cultural worlds.

Episode 56 – Culture, Scarcity and Flourishing

Do you have enough? Are you happy? These questions are difficult to answer both in everyday life and across cultures. In this episode, Joseph Shaules and Ishita Ray dive into the psychology of scarcity and flourishing. We learn how feelings of scarcity affects cognitive function, and shape cultural communities. We look at research into life satisfaction in different countries, and hear stories about navigating between worlds of scarcity and abundance from: Mahel Rolando Caballero Ramirez; Torhild Liane Harr Skårnes; Sanne Bosma and husband Armèn; and Emre Seven.

Time	Speaker	
00:00:00	Sanne	There was something sacred about food. And in the exceptional case that bread can no longer be preserved because, for example, it is molded, there is a custom to kiss it before you toss it in the garbage bin.
00:00:25	Joseph	Hello, this is Joseph Shaules and welcome to the Deep Culture podcast where we explore culture and the science of mind. And I am here today with Ishita Ray. How are you doing today, Ishita?
00:00:36	Ishita	Hi, Joseph. I'm great and I'm happy to be here again.
00:00:40	Joseph	So, Ishita, the title of today's episode is Culture, Scarcity and Flourishing. And it was inspired by a conversation that you and I had about how different your life is now compared to where you grew up.
00:00:55	Ishita	Yes, I'm living in Tokyo now, super high tech. But I grew up in India, in West Bengal. Growing up, I did not have lots of things that people in Tokyo take for granted, like tap water you can drink, stable electricity. My grandparents' homes had no indoor plumbing.

		But I was rich in other ways. The extended family always got together, I knew all the neighbors as kids, we wandered in and out of their houses. If I saw a neighbor at the market buying mutton, I might just happen to stop by around dinner time.
00:01:30	Joseph	Well, as you know, I grew up in California, so for sure I took tap water for granted. But there were not very many kids in my neighborhood. My parents were divorced. It was me and my mom and my brother. I spent a lot of time playing by myself. So those things that you're describing, they sound great to me.
00:01:51	Ishita	So how do we make sense of this? I grew up with economic scarcity, but rich community. For you, maybe it was a bit the opposite. And both of us have moved back and forth between these different worlds.
00:02:05	Joseph	And a lot of people do, immigrants for example, who look for economic opportunity in so called rich countries. What's that like for them?
00:02:14	Ishita	And if you grow up in a world of economic richness, how is it to live and work in a local village somewhere?
00:02:23	Joseph	So all of this got us interested in research which looks at the psychological impact of scarcity.
00:02:30	Ishita	And we learned that in terms of psychology, scarcity refers to a particular mindset, a feeling of not having enough. And it is not just about material resources. Research shows that scarcity can give you great focus and make you work hard towards goals, but it can lead to poor decision making.
00:02:53	Joseph	So in this episode we'll dig into the psychology of scarcity. We will see that scarcity has a powerful cognitive impact. It can even trap us and it can shape a society overall.
00:03:07	Ishita	We'll hear from people who move between different worlds of scarcity. And dig into cross cultural research into well-being and flourishing to understand what leads people to feel that their life is fulfilling. And the country rankings may surprise you.

00:03:23	Joseph	And that brings us to part one – The Psychology of Scarcity
Part One – The Psychology of Scarcity		
00:03:35	Joseph	So we've been using this word, scarcity, but let's be clear about what we mean.
00:03:46	Ishita	First of all, we are not simply talking about poverty.
00:03:50	Joseph	Poverty is a state of economic scarcity. But this episode isn't really about rich and poor. We're talking about scarcity in psychological and cultural terms.
00:04:02	Ishita	Basically, scarcity is a feeling of not having enough. Not just material things like money or food, but other things as well. A lack of time, for example, can trigger feelings of scarcity too, or a lack of deep relationships.
00:04:18	Joseph	And this feeling of scarcity triggers a psychological response. It kind of takes over our mind, but we're largely unconscious of it. We become focused on the problem, we want to take action. We calculate how to get from here to there. But cognitively speaking, what's going on here?
00:04:37	Ishita	The scarcity response is our body and mind revving up in a crisis to get geeky about it. It is an activation of the cognitive processes necessary to solve an immediate need.
00:04:49	Joseph	<p>And this response is a deep part of our evolutionary psychology. It's how humans have been able to survive.</p> <p>If there isn't enough food or we can't find water, you forget everything else. If there's a tiger nearby, that's a scarcity of safety and you're focused on that. And we can develop a deep sense of scarcity that never leaves us.</p>
00:05:12	Ishita	<p>You know, I think of my grandmother, my “thakuma”. She was a strong, smart woman.</p> <p>She grew up in a poor family in a small village, didn't have the chance to get much schooling, married a man from the village across the river. And she always felt this lack of opportunity.</p>

		<p>So she pushed her sons, including my father, to be independent, to study before anything else, to roll a roti or flatbread before going out to play.</p> <p>Her sons did well, went to the city from the small village, were professionally successful. Thanks to my <i>thakuma</i>, I had a life with more opportunity than she did.</p>
00:05:55	Joseph	Well, in the United States people love rags to riches stories. Abraham Lincoln growing up in a log cabin and going on to become president, or Steve Jobs dropping out of and starting Apple.
00:06:06	Ishita	And all this sounds great, but there's a catch.
00:06:12	Joseph	Yes, there are tradeoffs with scarcity. When you focus sharply on one thing, you lose sight of others. Psychologists call it tunneling.
00:06:22	Ishita	You can become impulsive. A focus on a particular goal can make you short sighted.
00:06:29	Joseph	So when you come home tired and hungry. You are feeling food scarcity. So you plop down in front of the TV and order a pizza. And the healthy food in the refrigerator goes to waste. Or maybe money is tight, but instead of putting a few dollars in savings, you buy lottery tickets or you do online shopping.
00:06:57	Ishita	And these impulses are largely unconscious. And this can lead to what is called the scarcity trap.
00:07:04	Joseph	We learned a lot about the scarcity trap from a book by Senthil Mullainathan, an economics professor at Harvard, and Eldar Shafir, a psychologist at Princeton. They've done extensive research on how scarcity affects decision making.
00:07:20	Ishita	It's a lot more subtle than you'd think. For example, one study found that the second leading cause of death among firefighters in the US was traffic accidents on the way to fight a fire.

00:07:33	Joseph	So let's imagine this scene. The emergency call comes in. You are highly trained for this moment. In less than a minute, you dress and get your gear into the fire truck and out of the station, totally focused on the challenge to come.
00:08:16	Ishita	But here's the thing. That single minded focus has a cost. Of the firefighters who died in traffic accidents on the way to a fire, almost 80% had neglected to fasten their seat belt.
00:08:36	Joseph	But why does that happen? Fighting a fire is potentially a life and death situation. Safety is scarce. Dealing with that requires your full attention. So the seat belt just doesn't feel quite so important.
00:08:52	Ishita	<p>But it's not just life and death situations. One study from India really hits close to home for me.</p> <p>The Koyambedu market in Chennai in Tamil Nadu, India is an incredible spot spectacle. A maze of passageways, sellers lining the roads. 3000 shops selling goods from all over the country. Customers jostle and haggle for clothes, vegetables, household products and especially flowers. Enormous piles in a riot of different colors, garlands of all sizes. In India, you find flowers everywhere. Temples, home altars, ceremonies.</p> <p>Many of the small flower sellers are women with few resources to survive. They buy, let's say, a thousand rupees of flowers from a wholesaler, that's around \$12, and then sell them from a stand or maybe just a blanket on the side of the road. By the end of the day, they may have earned a profit of 100 rupees, around \$2. But here's the catch. The majority of the sellers do not have thousand rupees of their own. So they borrow the money for a single day at a rate of 5%. That means that of their gross profit, 100 rupees, they are paying 50 rupees, one half in interest.</p> <p>In theory, they could escape this trap if they saved even 5 rupees a day, a bit more than 5 cents. By not buying a cup of tea, or maybe not giving a snack to their grandchildren. They could save a bit and borrow less. Every day, maybe 900. That leaves more profit then maybe only 800 and so on. The savings build quickly. Realistically, they could save a thousand rupees in less than two months. And</p>

		<p>every day without a loan means 50 extra rupees to invest in the future.</p> <p>But here's the tragedy. Many of these women feel unable to save. Their cognitive response to scarcity is short term thinking. Saving five rupees feels impossible. Buying the tea or the sweet feels real and inevitable. The future feels far away and uncertain.</p>
00:12:12	Joseph	Well, I have to say I was shocked by this research.
00:12:17	Ishita	<p>This frustrates me deeply to think about these women working hard. They are not irresponsible.</p> <p>But economic conditions beyond their control push them into a psychological box that's hard to get out of. And many of these sellers have been doing this for years.</p>
00:12:36	Joseph	I relate this to the United States also, which is a rich country.
00:12:41	Ishita	That's right. 40% of Americans do not have enough savings to handle an unexpected expense. 60% feel financially insecure. Almost half have credit card debt.
00:12:56	Joseph	The poorest Americans pay much of their income in rent. They pay high banking fees. They may need to use credit cards for necessities. A medical expense can put them deep into debt. Even with a full time job, it's hard to catch up or get ahead. And that scarcity does have an effect on problem solving.
00:13:19	Ishita	<p>One study amazed me. In a shopping mall, Americans were asked to imagine a situation and then solve cognitive tasks related to money.</p> <p>When the imagined situation involved small expenses, lower income and higher income Americans scored equally well.</p> <p>But when the imagined situation related to a more serious situation, like a big car repair bill, lower income Americans scored more poorly.</p>

00:13:49	Joseph	So this means that just imagining the financially stressful situation was enough to trigger a scarcity response. But so far we've only been talking about this at the individual level. But scarcity is a collective phenomenon as well.
00:14:07	Ishita	And that brings us to part two - The Culture of Scarcity.
Part Two – The Culture of Scarcity		
00:14:23	Joseph	So I've been really struck by how sensitive human psychology is to the environment that we're in. The flower seller's cognition, for example, is affected by their economic situation. But this is true collectively as well. Scarcity shapes cultural communities.
00:14:39	Ishita	This is very present for me as an Indian. India has a history of scarcity: multiple invasions over the centuries, famines.
00:14:48	Joseph	And has all that scarcity affected cultural values?
00:14:51	Ishita	Absolutely. For example, at mealtime in my family, especially at my grandparents' house, you ate what you were served, you did not ask for more. There was a kind of unspoken assumption that you never know if there's enough.
00:15:07	Joseph	But that's not because your family literally didn't have enough food. Right?
00:15:11	Ishita	That's true. In my family there was never a lack of food. But you simply don't take food for granted and you definitely don't leave food on your plate.
00:15:20	Joseph	So I guess there's a good side to that. You appreciate what you have.
00:15:24	Ishita	Yes. And there are benefits in other aspects of life as well. Indians are famous for finding creative solutions in the face of scarcity. We call it ' <i>jugaad</i> '. It refers to a hack or a workaround when resources are limited. Like repurposing the motorbike engine to run an irrigation pump.
00:15:44	Joseph	Well, I remember seeing a photo of someone who had turned a plastic milk case into a child carrier on the back of a bike.

00:15:51	Ishita	Exactly. The point is that we are used to this idea that we make use of what we have rather than wishing for or even being stuck by what's absent.
00:16:02	Joseph	And so we wanted to explore the idea that scarcity affects cultural values. And we started by looking at data from the World Values Survey.
00:16:12	Ishita	The World Values Survey is an enormous cross-cultural survey carried out by social scientists in something like 120 societies. You can compare the answers across different countries. It's a great resource.
00:16:28	Joseph	And one major finding of all this research involves how cultural values are affected by existential security. This means the ability to take survival for granted. So if you have economic and physical security, your basic needs are met, your existence feels secure.
00:16:47	Ishita	The data shows that societies with low levels of existential security tend to emphasize what researchers call survival values which prioritize economic and physical security. These so-called survival values are related to a culture of scarcity.
00:17:15	Joseph	<p>Societies high in survival values are for example Egypt, Yemen, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Palestine.</p> <p>Survival values emphasize community loyalty to the group. But scarcity can lead to less social trust, intolerance for outsiders or behavior that is considered deviant.</p>
00:17:36	Ishita	<p>Well, that's true in India. Many Indians do feel a deep sense of connection to their family and community. But it can also be culturally harsh.</p> <p>Social competition can be fierce, which can mean that whole categories of people are seen as less worthy. Morality and purity are super important.</p>
00:17:57	Joseph	And societies that have high levels of existential security tend to put more emphasis on self-expression values. There's a higher

		priority on individual freedom and choice, greater emphasis on gender equality.
00:18:11	Ishita	Many societies that score High in self-expression values are in Northern Europe, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and also English-speaking countries like New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain. Places which overall have a high degree of material wealth.
00:18:30	Joseph	And the thing is, these values are not just abstractions. It's as though people are living in different moral universes. What might seem commonplace in one society can seem horrible in another.
00:18:43	Ishita	Before I went to France, I had relatives warn me about the immoral behavior in so called rich countries. They drink, they have open sexual relationships, they divorce.
00:18:55	Joseph	<p>We can really get a feel for these different moral universes in attitudes towards women and family. Something we talked about in the gender episode. In India, for example, 70% of respondents say that a woman has a duty to society to have children. In the Netherlands, it's 4%.</p> <p>So let's think about this from the perspective of people who move between these worlds of greater or lesser scarcity. Ishita, you grew up in India in modest surroundings, but you've lived in France, in Japan, so called rich countries, you got all this advice from relatives. How was all of that for you?</p>
00:19:35	Ishita	I was influenced by the stereotyped images I heard from people or from TV or movies that in rich countries life is easy. But ofcourse it's not that simple, right?
00:19:48	Joseph	Not everyone in a so-called rich country has economic abundance. And you can also have other kinds of scarcity of time, of relationships. You can feel isolated, you can have a scarcity of meaning in your life.
00:20:01	Ishita	And these are the things that cultural bridge people have to navigate. For example, immigrants who know scarcity and so single mindedly focus on improving their place in the world.

00:20:12	Joseph	And this is something that podcast team member Sanne Bosma is familiar with.
00:20:20	Sanne	<p>I have seen the psychological impact of scarcity with a number of people I got close to. As a teenager, I became friends with a girl from Bosnia. Her family had fled the former Yugoslavia due to the war. But even closer to home, my husband, Armèn. He and his family escaped political and economic instability in Armenia after the Soviet Union dissolved. And so did another Armenian friend with her family. Their parents lost everything. Career, titles, homeland, their network. Things they felt they could never get back. In some ways, they considered themselves a lost generation.</p> <p>One impact on these families was a constant focus on education. They saw their education as the recipe for security and for success for their children. I could feel the difference. I felt like I had the time and the freedom to decide my future, what I wanted to study, my career path. But my friends and Armèn, they felt more pressure to set goals and achieve.</p> <p>I have felt this in small ways too, even in everyday things, like attitudes towards food. One time when Armèn and I started to live together, I remember that he was appalled when I was about to throw away some bread because it was past its expiration date. When I grew up, I learned to have deep respect for the digits printed on each food package and followed them, no questions asked. There would always be another loaf at the store. For Armèn, there was something sacred about food and in the exceptional case that bread can no longer be preserved because, for example, it is molded, there is a custom to kiss it before you toss it in the garbage bin. I was surprised and perhaps laughed a little, but I was impressed by the respect shown to food and embarrassed by my casual attitude towards something so critical to life.</p> <p>Now, I've learned from Armèn and my in laws that I should use my nose and eyes when deciding about food. My new golden rule: only toss food away if there is something extra growing on it.</p>

00:22:59	Joseph	I love how Sanne talks about her deep respect for the digits printed on the food package, no questions asked. Like she says, there will always be another loaf at the store.
00:23:10	Ishita	I love this golden rule. Even now, I feel guilty if I have to throw food away.
00:23:16	Joseph	And moving between these different worlds of scarcity is also something that Mahel went through. Mahel is podcast team member Lia's husband and he shared his story, which is being read here by team member Rob Fritz.
00:23:33	Rob (on behalf of Mahel)	<p>I have experience with scarcity. I grew up in Lima, Peru, a city with squatter settlements and a big gap between rich and poor. I lived in a poor part of the city where fear of violence was an everyday companion.</p> <p>When you live with scarcity, you often must choose between very few paths. Or maybe you have only one option. Sometimes, you must make drastic choices and bet everything you have for a chance to move forward.</p> <p>I moved to Norway when I was in elementary school. It was a world with much more abundance. This might seem easier on the surface, but having so many choices can also be difficult, confusing. But at the same time you are less afraid of the future. You can afford to explore and make mistakes.</p> <p>Scarcity gives rise to strong values. You appreciate little things, you share. You offer hospitality and help others. You learn these values because survival depends on it.</p> <p>Scarcity pushes you to use your mind to overcome limitations, but you're often forced to make quick, short, short term decisions, often bad ones. You may concentrate so hard on survival that you lose time that could have been spent on more important things. In an abundant environment, these skills can become a strength. You know how to navigate using the resources you have. You stay frugal even when you have more.</p>

		But, it's better when you no longer need that limited focus. You can see further ahead. What used to be problems are now long gone. What feels small now, would have been huge before. Now, you can think about other things. Now, security is on your side. Finally.
00:25:43	Ishita	I find Mahel's story to be moving. So many people in the world risk so much for greater opportunity. They often leave behind many things they love with no guarantee that things will turn out well.
00:25:57	Joseph	And that brings us to part three – Are You Happy?
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00:26:10	Joseph	So we've been talking about navigating different worlds of scarcity, but I think we should explore a deeper question. How does scarcity affect wellbeing?
00:26:24	Ishita	Let's start with the obvious. You can't begin to talk about happiness or wellbeing until basic needs are met. And for many people in the world, science scarcity means a lack of food, shelter, safety. According to the World Health Organization, more than 700 million people in the world face hunger and are undernourished. A similar number live in extreme poverty.
00:26:50	Joseph	According to the UN World Migration Report, there are an estimated 280 million migrants in the world. Many of these are economic migrants from disadvantaged countries. But there are significant numbers fleeing violence.
00:27:04	Ishita	So roughly 1 billion people in the world cannot meet the basic needs of food and security in their home country. That is a horrific number.
00:27:15	Joseph	And scarcity pushes people to take drastic action. Migrants undertake risky journeys looking for security and opportunity. They borrow money to pay human traffickers. And there is very real danger.

		According to a report by the International Organization for Migration, in the last 10 years, 50,000 people have died while attempting to migrate.
00:27:40	Ishita	This is not just an economic or political issue. It is psychological as well. It is cultural, which is something that podcast team member Lia has experience with.
00:27:54	Lia	<p>I grew up in an average household in Norway, a country of great abundance. But that doesn't mean there's no scarcity. For example, children growing up in low income families can feel shame and be marginalized because they are unable to attend certain activities or they don't have the clothes that make them fit in.</p> <p>I have worked in poverty reduction in the Philippines. I learned that the psychology of scarcity is complex and must be understood in context. Scarcity does push people to extremes. For example, there were women who supported themselves by peeling garlic, but then sometimes sold their bodies to provide income for medical care for relatives. But this dynamic is not straightforward. We work to stop sexual abuse. There were mothers selling their children online. But others in the community denied that poverty was the driving force they took offense if we linked those choices to desperation. We were told of the importance of family, of integrity, and that it must be mental illness or other factors that drove people to do these things. Scarcity can strengthen our values even as it pushes us towards extreme solutions.</p> <p>You have to be extra careful with a poor person's time. As part of poverty reduction, we strengthen civil society, which means meetings, trainings and community consultation. But striving for daily income leaves little time to invest in these activities.</p> <p>There are naive assumptions about poor societies, for example, that it's best to focus on helping individuals, that poverty is a result of laziness, or that getting ahead simply requires making right decisions. It's also naive to think that poor people, especially children, have genuine joy because they're not materialistic. But it's equally naive to think that they feel miserable most of the time.</p>

		This topic is unsettling to me. Solutions are hard to find. For me, the psychology of scarcity is not an abstraction. It's the lives of people I know and care about.
00:30:24	Ishita	Lia's experiences are moving to me and deeply disturbing. I grew up in India, where extreme scarcity is never far away and where you can see the messy complexity of issues like poverty and inequality.
00:30:40	Joseph	I really relate to the naive assumptions that she was talking about. I have heard or thought those things myself.
00:30:48	Ishita	Well, let's look a bit more deeply at some of those naive assumptions. That so called poor people are somehow happy living with less, or that they are miserable all the time.
00:31:01	Joseph	And there is a lot of research which looks into wellbeing across cultures. Maybe the most famous is the World Happiness Report, published by researchers at Oxford in cooperation with Gallup.
00:31:13	Ishita	And you will see headlines like the happiest country in the world is Finland. But let's back up a bit. There are basic questions we need to ask when looking at this. First of all, how is happiness being defined? How is it being measured?
00:31:32	Joseph	We spent some time digging into different studies and looking into the methodology, and to me anyway, it's clear that concepts like happiness or wellbeing are fuzzy. They're not easy to conceptualize, not easy to measure, and depending on how you do it, you come up with very different results.
00:31:51	Ishita	The World Happiness Report, for example, uses a single question. It asks people around the world to imagine an 11-rung ladder with the top rung being your best possible life and the bottom rung being your worst possible life. Then you are asked to place your life on one of those rungs.
00:32:13	Joseph	And in terms of outcomes, the World Happiness Report produces a pretty consistent picture. The Happiest people in the world are those living in economically developed, politically stable countries.

00:32:26	Ishita	But boiling everything down to a single question may miss the different ways we can have a meaningful life or the satisfaction that comes from being part of a community. I find a lot of research into happiness and wellbeing to be pretty individualistic.
00:32:43	Joseph	But there are other approaches. We also found the Global Flourishing Study. It was done in 22 countries by a team of nearly 50 researchers. It talks about flourishing rather than happiness or wellbeing.
00:32:56	Ishita	<p>The basic idea is that we have many aspects to our lives. Feeling healthy, that life has meaning, financial security, emotional health, good relationships, feeling in control of one's life. And we may feel more or less fulfilled in these different areas.</p> <p>There is one thing I like about this approach. In more collectivist societies, there's less focus on happiness as an individual achievement, more focus on connection. This is the way the researchers explain it. Flourishing includes the contexts in which a person lives. The community's wellbeing is a part of one's own flourishing. A person participates in the common good of the community.</p>
00:33:50	Joseph	<p>And wow, when you measure flourishing across all these dimensions, you get really different results.</p> <p>Let's compare. According to the World Happiness Report, the top five happiest countries in the world are all in Western Europe, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.</p>
00:34:08	Ishita	<p>But in the Global Flourishing Study, Indonesia tops the list as the most flourishing country across all dimensions, followed by Israel, the Philippines, Mexico and Poland.</p> <p>These are not the richest nor most politically stable countries, yet people report flourishing in these different domains.</p>
00:34:29	Joseph	And there's another study, the Global Happiness Study done by Ipsos, that asks a simple question. Taking all things together,

		<p>would you say you are very happy? Rather happy. Not very happy. Not happy at all.</p> <p>And the results are not so different from the Global Flourishing Study. The top five countries are the Netherlands, Mexico, Indonesia, India and Brazil.</p>
00:34:55	Ishita	So let's step back from all these rankings for a minute. What can we really learn from all this?
00:35:02	Joseph	Well, first of all, depending on what you measure and how you measure it, you get very different results. So we should take headlines like Country X is the happiest we with a big grain of salt.
00:35:13	Ishita	And economic abundance in a country does not mean that life is easy for everyone there. And the opposite is true. People in less economically abundant societies lead rich lives. Scarcity and flourishing are experienced in many ways.
00:35:31	Joseph	And I think that matches the experience of podcast team member Emre Seven. He found that moving to a so-called rich country got him material possessions and but he felt scarcity in other areas. Let's listen.
00:35:48	Emre	<p>When I went to the United States as a university student, I was exposed to a totally new world of material wealth. The things I considered a luxury, like a private car or single dwellings, were quite ordinary for the people in the States.</p> <p>I worked in a factory, but I made more money than a teacher in my own country. I lived in a better house. I drove a car of my own. I traveled, I bought more stuff.</p> <p>But I found other kinds of scarcity. Sometimes, I felt that people cared more about money than relationships. One day after shopping at Walmart, a car stopped and the driver asked me for help. He had a water container he wanted me to fill from the drinking water I had. I filled it and gave it back to him. Then he extended his hand to me. I thought he was gonna shake my hand, but he put money into my palm. I couldn't understand it. The water was free. I told him that I cannot accept payment. It wasn't</p>

		a job. In Turkey, helping someone out like this would be the most normal thing. He was surprised and thanked me a lot. But I was left wondering, what is a rich country?
00:37:16	Joseph	I really relate to this. I'm American, but I have spent a lot of time in both Mexico and Indonesia, which rank high in flourishing. And I do feel this emphasis on community and connection.
00:37:30	Ishita	<p>And that's the thing. You can have economic abundance, but scarcity in other parts of our lives. Which reminds me of the story that Sanne's husband Armèn tells in episode 49.</p> <p>Growing up in Armenia, he may not have had a lot of economic abundance, but you can feel that life was rich in other ways.</p> <p>Let's listen. Back.</p>
00:37:55	Armèn	<p>In my community, I was living in a village nearby a big city. And it was a very informal community, that we looked out after each other.</p> <p>So for example, when I made an appointment with my friends to go to his house to study or to play, then I will make an appointment. So when I start traveling to the place of my friends, during your walking to the house of your friends and you will meet an acquaintance or a family or a friend. Especially when it's an elderly one, and that person will stop and ask you something, then you are not allowed to say: "I'm sorry, I have no time. I will have to go to my friend's house because I have an appointment." It's not okay.</p> <p>I start 9 o' clock, walking. I was to be there on 9:30. I was on time. But if that person starts asking me some things, and they will always ask you, how are you? How is school? Are you okay? How are your parents? And it goes on to the seventh generation asking how they are. You must be respectful and stay on your place and you have to ask also them how are you, what I can help you with and when at the time they have a grocery with them or something, then you have to help them bring them to their house so the plans can change.</p>

		So I will be there at 11 o' clock. It's okay, it's still on time and I help that people.
00:39:38	Ishita	I love the part about the questions going on to the seventh generation. I totally relate to this, growing up in India.
00:39:46	Joseph	I relate to this in a different way. I grew up in a rich country but did not have extended family, didn't really know the neighbors. My mom was working all the time to support us. It was in other countries that I found different kinds of abundance.
00:40:01	Ishita	So where does this leave us?
00:40:04	Joseph	I've been struck by how unaware we are of our scarcity response, both in everyday life, like when we have a deadline, but also in how it shapes a society.
00:40:15	Ishita	Well, learning about the psychology of scarcity has had a big impact on me. It's a new lens to look at culture and the mind, but also makes me reflect on how different areas of life contribute to flourishing.
00:40:31	Joseph	<p>And I think that's about all we have time for today. But let's mention some of our sources. A lot of what we talked about today came from the book <i>Scarcity</i> by Senthil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir. Also check out the World Values Survey. You will find the Inglehart-Welzel map of the world indicating country rankings for survival and self-expression values.</p> <p>The Deep Culture Podcast is sponsored by the Japan Intercultural Institute, an NPO dedicated to intercultural education and research. I'm the director of JII.</p>
00:41:05	Ishita	And did you know that you can use the Deep Culture Podcast in the classroom? We now have free educational materials available for multiple episodes thanks to the team of more than 20 amazing educators who have created these for anyone to use. All free, ready to take to the classroom. Just do a web search for Japan Intercultural Institute and click on 'Resources'.

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00:41:49	Joseph	A very special thanks to Lia Torhild Liane Harr Skårnes and her husband Mahel Rolando Caballero Ramirez for sharing their experiences with us. Thanks also to Sanne Bosma and her husband, Armèn; Emre Seven and our sound engineer Robinson Fritz, who was also the voice of Mahel and thanks to JII's administrator, Ikumi Fritz and every everyone at JII. And thanks to Josh Unit for the audio of the fire truck. And of course, thanks to you Ishita for exploring this cool stuff with me.