

Are you a Mercy or Ruler Gift?

When I recorded the original teaching on the redemptive gift of Mercy, my illustration was a female, charismatic worshipper. A male, businessman with the gift of Mercy would be hard put to recognize himself in that teaching. Furthermore, a well-trained female businesswoman with the gift of Mercy might miss it too.

I have found a number of Mercy gift people in the marketplace who think they are Ruler gift, when they are not. Here are three tools for determining which gift is the core design, and which is a set of learned skills.

1) Look for the motive

The Prophet, Ruler and Mercy each make a fairly good administrator. They can each solve problems on a day-to-day basis and build systems that will facilitate future expansion. And if you had three managers, each with one of those gifts, looking at a given problem, it is entirely possible that they would come to exactly the same conclusion of how to fix it.

The difference lies in the logic trail and the reasoning. The Prophet would decide to do it this way because it is simply right! The Ruler would do it the same way because it would work. And the Mercy would make the same decision because it would keep people safe.

Both the immature Prophet and Ruler are known for creating a workplace where ideology and functionality comes before the needs of the people. While the Mercy manager knows that he or she needs to adhere to company values and enhance profitability, the default reasoning for most Mercy gifts is to find a solution for the problem that will be a win/win for all of the players. Often Mercy gifts will struggle with finalizing the obvious decision if they know someone will be negatively impacted by it. They will avoid the actual implementation of a hard decision as long as they can, to the detriment of the organization.

So if you wonder if you are Ruler or Mercy, look at the inner reasoning behind the management decisions you make and see if there is a clue there.

2. Look at savoring

The Ruler gift gets closure in a fairly solid way. A project was studied for months, discussed for weeks, argued over for hours and then a decision was made. The Ruler is



excited about getting it done and will usually shift his focus fairly quickly to the next thing on his To Do list.

By contrast, the Mercy gift craves a season of savoring, of talking through the process, after something that big was “finalized.” There is often not room for such savoring in the frantic environment of the marketplace, so the Mercy gift will go home and do the blow-by-blow of the day with his or her spouse, as a form of reliving and savoring the most salient points of the process.

3. Look at your early childhood

If you are a Mercy in the marketplace, you have had to learn a huge number of business skills which were not evident in childhood. Think of the large group activities you were a part of in childhood. Were you part of the 4th grade play on Parent Teacher night? Did you help at your best friend’s birthday party?

If so, what were the dynamics? Were you naturally sought out as the key player in that group project? That might suggest Ruler giftings which were flowing before you learned management theory. On the other hand, if you as a child defaulted to individual relationships, not group problem solving, that would suggest Mercy gift. Did you and your best friend seize a small task in the birthday preparation and enjoy your microcosm while leaving others to see the big picture? That sounds like a Mercy child in action before the MBA imposed a set of learned skills.

It is important to know which are our learned skills and which are the actions flowing from core design.

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