

## How to Use Your Gifts: Debunking the Gifts Myths

Every one of us wants to live a life of purpose. This desire breeds dreams about all the important things we could do. Things that will make us feel alive and impact the world. Believing that in our short lives we can do really big things!

I love this desire. It's God-given and part of our nature. So why is it so difficult to live out? Because too often our lives are filled with work that we weren't designed to do. Generally this happens for two reasons. First, our work is motivated by a desire to please someone else. Or second we settle on life-draining work because we're too afraid to take chances and fail.

Often, it's even simpler.

We work this way because we haven't been disciplined enough to consider closely our gifts – to quietly reflect or pray – and plan how to use them. When we do, we find that working out of our gifting is the *only way to produce meaningful, life-changing and joy-filled results*. Unfortunately, most of us are woefully unprepared to recognize, appreciate and grow our gifts.

If we want to begin using our gifts with greater effectiveness, it's important to debunk the common gift myths. Think about your own life. Chances are you've told yourself one of these three lies. Sadly, believing these lies causes your gifts to become unused, undeveloped and ignored.

### The 3 Lies About Gifts

#### 1. Other People Have All the Gifts

It's easy to spot gifts in other people. Why? Because when you see them use their gifts, they light up. They become infectious in their enthusiasm, accomplish tremendous work and positively impact people around them. But with ourselves, we've become stuck in habits that don't draw on our gifts. So to us, the new normal IS grinding, monotonous work. Ask the Lord, your mom, dad, spouse, pastor or best friend what gifts they see in you. Determine specifics, practice them habitually and watch your passions come alive.

#### 2. Ya, I'm good at sewing, but it's not like it's brain surgery

Comparing gifts is our mind's safety mechanism kicking in. Because there is hard work and uncertainty in using our gifts, the mind looks for a cop-out, an opportunity to get off the hook to act. If we can convince ourselves that our gifts are unimportant compared to someone else's, then we justify our staying put.

Consider this: "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." ~ Howard Thurman

The world doesn't need everyone to be a doctor, rocket-scientist or best-selling author. It needs authentic, inspiring and passionate people who care. Passion, more than money, education or privilege, motivates and makes things happen.

### 3. Humility = Downplaying our Gifts

Note the sarcasm here. Downplaying our gifts isn't humility. It's actually poor stewardship, one of the most subtle and damaging acts of pride. Generally our intentions are good; we don't want to be arrogant. But failing to see value in our skills, or being fearful to exercise them, epitomizes arrogance! God is a perfect creator. There is nothing accidental, unnecessary or excessive in his designs. Everything was created intentionally, with a specific purpose. When we downplay our gifts, we suggest otherwise.

**Question: What are your specific gifts? What one thing can you do today to begin working more out of your gifts?**

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