

The Monday Memo
From the desk of
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 111

What a pleasure it was to roll out of bed last Saturday, get in my car and conduct a Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest seminar here in Pittsburgh. I am in the middle of a ten-day stretch at home and it has been a nice break, although I have plenty of work to do. This coming Friday I depart for Zimbabwe and then I come home to do another Seven Steps seminar in Los Angeles on June 14. In fact, interest seems high in LA and we are planning two sessions on June 14. So you can sleep in and *still* catch the Seven Steps when I come to LA! (See below for more seminar information).

I have been reflecting on failure this past week and revisited an idea that my friend Francis Tay came up with in Singapore last November. At dinner one night, Francis suggested that there should be something called “Celebrate a Failure Day.” I think that is a great idea. When you think about it, failure is a great teacher. It teaches us what not to do and what we can do better the next time. Failure is our friend, but very often we treat it as an enemy, something to avoid and not discuss openly. I am learning so much from doing the Seven Steps seminars and much of what I’m learning is how *not* to do them. I have already made plenty of mis-steps as I seek to package and present this PurposeQuest teaching that has the power to change the way people view church, ministry and themselves.

There are many outstanding quotes about failure from great leaders. Perhaps you need to be reminded this week that your failures have been painful but not fatal to this point and that there is no way you can avoid more of them in the future, not if you’re serious about completing your PurposeQuest. Let’s look at some favorite failure quotes:

Sometimes we will fail more than we succeed, but if we fail to succeed due to fear of failure, then failure becomes our success (think about that one) – unknown.

Success is going from failure to failure with great enthusiasm – Winston Churchill.

Success is simply the exertion and utilization of an entire series of failures – Dr. Bruce Ogilvie, sports psychologist.

There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure – Colin Powell.

Failure is not the worst thing in the world; the very worst thing is not to try – unknown.

There are costs and risks to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs [failure?] of comfortable inaction – John F. Kennedy.

There is one more quote that I like from businessman, Nolan Bushnell. He said, “Everyone who’s ever taken a shower has an idea. It’s the person who gets out of the shower, dries off and does something about it who makes a difference.” Is it time this week to get out of your shower, dry off and get back in the game? Has failure, or the fear of it, caused you to take off your uniform, so to speak, and sit in the grandstands as a spectator? Maybe Francis was right. Perhaps we need to set a day soon and work at *celebrating* failure, when we can come to grips with its power and purpose. More on that next week. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
In transit to Zimbwe
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 112

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Excuse me for writing early, but if all goes well, I can write this in New York, have my wife edit it while I am flying and then send this to you from Johannesburg. If it doesn't work, you won't know since you won't get this Memo. If it works, well, I guess if you're reading this, the plan came together.

Last week we began talking about failure and the possibility of declaring "Celebrate a Failure" Day. I have set the date for this "celebration" to be Sunday, June 29. Here are some ideas I have for that Sunday and the following week:

1. If you are a pastor, talk about failure and its role in the life of the believer. Make sure you are clear that is spiritual to fail.
2. Spend some time talking with your family and especially your children about failure. You may want to focus on one particular failure in your own life and what you learned. This will free your children from the false sense that failure is to be avoided at all costs. Maybe you can have a family failure party! Make sure you laugh a lot, even at yourself.
3. If you are in a small group setting, spend some time talking about your failures, how you view failure and whether you are afraid of failure now.

These are just some of my ideas. Feel free to send me yours and I will pass them on to others. Perhaps you have a story about failure that you would like to share with the Monday Memo readers. If you send it, I will post it on purposequest.com for others to read.

Why am I doing this? Because one business leader said, "Make as many mistakes as you can as quickly as possible. In that way, you'll learn and stay ahead of your competition." When Thomas Watson, founder of IBM, was informed that one of his subordinates had just made a million-dollar mistake, he was asked whether he would terminate that employee. Watson replied, "Heavens no! I just invested \$1 million in his education."

I have been studying the books of Acts this week and I noticed that Paul preached one of his greatest sermons in Athens (see Acts 17:15-34). Yet he got very few results. Many feel he went on from there to Corinth a discouraged man. It was in Corinth that he experienced tremendous results and even had a visitation from the Lord, who told him, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent" (Acts 18:9 NAS). It occurred to me that the Lord often "appeared" to Paul when he was at his lowest and needed encouragement. It was because he was such a doer that he encountered so much failure and probable depression. It was at those points when God Himself undertook to encourage His man.

Perhaps you are discouraged or even depressed over some failure. If so, you are ripe for a visitation from God. God is not far from the downhearted and you qualify. Why not expect a miracle this week, a miracle that will encourage your heart and help you overcome your fear or sense of failure. If that happens, you won't need me to wish you a great week. You will have one.

The Monday Memo
From Harare, Zimbabwe
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 113

Greetings from Zimbabwe! I have had a busy but productive first week here and I will remain busy this coming week. But what a joy it is to be back here where the sun always shines and the people always smile. I enjoyed having Mike Davis with me from California for the Victory Business Forum. Mike has gone home and I will see him in two weeks when I come to Los Angeles to conduct a Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest seminar in Orange County. (If you would like to attend, please see the information at the end of this Memo.) Thanks, Mike, for a job well done!

The last several weeks, we have been discussing the topic of failure and its role in our lives. I have suggested that Sunday, June 29 be declared "Celebrate a Failure Day" worldwide. On that day and in the week following, we could all take time to reflect on some failure we have experienced and share the lessons

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we learned from that failure with family, friends and associates. You may also choose not to focus on a failure during that week, but rather on some difficult situation that was hard to understand at first, but has since turned into a blessing. Let me give you an example.

When I first came to Zimbabwe in 1995, I was going to stay for 24 hours. I was just passing through from South Africa on my way to London. But right before my departure, I visited a market where my briefcase was stolen! It was Friday afternoon and, try as we did, there was no way to replace my passport, which was in that briefcase. What made matters worse, I was on my way to London to meet my 17-year-old son. His mother and I had given him a trip to Europe for his high school graduation. Now I had to call him just hours before he was due to depart and tell him that the trip was off and I was “stuck” in Zimbabwe until I got a new passport.

Needless to say, I was disappointed, even devastated. I ended up staying three more days before I was able to replace my stolen passport. During that time, I was constantly reminded of an important truth in a verse of Scripture: “[And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose](#)” (Romans 8:28). I like this particular translation, for it doesn’t say “all things work together for good.” Rather it says, “God works for good in all things.” To me there is a big difference between those two translations. Do you agree?

God certainly worked some good from the loss of my briefcase. I have returned to Zimbabwe on numerous occasions and I consider the people here like family to me. What I thought was a 24-hour visit has turned into a love affair with a nation and its people. And from Zimbabwe, I have had many more doors of effective service open to me throughout Africa. (And one year later, I was able to take my son on an all-expense-paid trip to Israel and the Greek isles!)

On June 29, I hope you will have similar stories to share with others and the courage to share them. May the Lord continue to work good in all things for you. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
Written by a jetlagged
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 114

I got back home this afternoon from Zimbabwe. What a great visit I had! To all who helped make it special, I want to say a special thank you. I am home for a few days before I hit the road again. On June 14, I will be in Los Angeles for my next Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest seminar. For more information on that seminar, see the information listed at the end of this [Memo](#).

We have been discussing failure the last few weeks and the need to not just endure or tolerate failure, but to celebrate it! With that in mind, I have designated Sunday, June 29, to be “Celebrate a Failure Day.” I am trying to instill in all of us that there is no perfection this side of heaven, and that failure is a necessary albeit painful part of success. On June 29 I suggest that you discuss some failure with your family, church or any other group or person who will listen. When you do, I suggest that you especially outline what you learned from that failure and any way that it contributed to some future success.

I have found that failure causes me to be more open to new ways and other people. I can remember when I was working for Integrity Music’s ministry division, Worship International. We were in charge of organizing worship events and conferences and we had a conference planned for Dallas, Texas. It turned out to be one of the worst events I had ever planned, let alone attended! The post office lost 50,000 of our promotional brochures that we had mailed. During the event, the audio system failed, the projector used to show the words blew a bulb (and there was no replacement), the church ran out of copier toner, and we lost a lot of money. I was devastated. I was so embarrassed that I didn’t want to get up and take the offering.

We had three months until our next conference and our team sat down and reviewed everything that we were doing. We also instituted a new format that we unveiled three months later in San Diego. That new

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format, coupled with the other changes that came out of our review, launched us into 18 months of excellent and profitable conferences. But most of that success came from that one Dallas conference which was a total disaster.

We who are spiritual can sometimes think that we are exempt from failure, or that failure indicates sloppiness or doing something wrong or out of the will of God. I see it differently. The Apostle Paul wrote: “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears (1 Corinthians 13:9-10). Because we know in part, we operate in faith with partial knowledge and when that happens, things can and do go wrong.

Perhaps this week you need to forgive yourself for some failure or mistake. Maybe you need to give yourself permission to fail while trying to do something that is in your heart to do. Whatever you do this week, I trust you will do something to prepare for the “Celebrate a Failure Day” on June 29. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo
Written somewhere in the skies over Texas
Dr. John W. Stanko
Issue 115

This week I am writing *The Monday Memo* as I fly to Baltimore to carry out a sad duty. A good friend of mine passed away last Wednesday. Only 51 years young, Chris was a great brother and friend, and I am going to be part of his funeral celebration as we pay tribute to a man who loved the Lord and his family. Chris is survived by his wife, Susan, and his two teenage children. I am glad for Chris that he is in a place of peace and joy, but I will miss him.

Next weekend I will be in the Los Angeles/Orange County area for a Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest seminar. Today is the early registration deadline. For information on how to register, see the PurposeQuest News section below.

I am happy that so many of you have responded to the idea of observing “Celebrate a Failure Day” on June 29 and in the week following. One woman wrote that she is not quite to the point where she can celebrate failure; she has just now learned to live with it. Two men sent me excellent quotes this week, which I want to pass on to you:

“Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up”-Thomas Edison, 1847-1931, American Inventor, Entrepreneur, Founder of General Electric Corporation. We know, of course, that Edison failed hundreds of times trying to identify the proper substance for his electric light filament before he was successful.

"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed" - Michael Jordan, basketball player.

Perhaps my greatest failure was a business that I attempted to launch in 1981. It was a painful experience that forced me to work a second job to pay off the debt when the business failed. But when trying to make sense out of that blunder, I discovered my life purpose. Ten years later, I began to teach about purpose, drawing heavily on that failed business venture as I taught. Since then, I have shared the story of that business failure more than 600 times with thousands of people. My business failure didn't keep me from success; it was my gateway to success. I can celebrate that failure because I know it was my tutor that led me to a unique understanding of purpose.

What about you? Do you have a failure that you need to reexamine to discover its value? Or have you never failed because you are afraid to fail, thus forfeiting the valuable lessons that only failure can teach.

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Let's end this Memo with one more quote from Mr. Edison: "Failure is not the worst thing in the world, the very worst is not to try." Did you try something that didn't quite work out? Don't hide it in the basement of your mind. Bring it out into the open and on June 29 celebrate your failure for the great learning tool that it is. Then build on what you learned from that failure and try again. You'll be glad you did. Have a great week!

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