

**The Monday Memo
From the desk of
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 151**

Today I depart for England. While there, I will undoubtedly see my good friend Rose. Last year I wrote a **Monday Memo** about Rose and her PurposeQuest and thought it was worth writing about once again. I had been working with Rose for two years in an attempt to help her clarify her purpose. There were times when Rose didn't feel like she was making any progress, but she really was. We did three separate Purpose Assessments and traded emails back and forth. Then one day I got this email from Rose:

"My purpose is to bring more joy and happiness into the world. I do this through my sense of humor and sense of fun and also through dance and my own personal brand of drama and entertainment and much laughter. It is my desire that people should always feel happier and more uplifted for having been in my presence"

My two life-defining passages from the Bible are "The joy of the Lord is my strength" (Nehemiah 8:10) and "A merry heart does good, like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). And as an aside, I work as a legal secretary (but that is not my purpose). What do you think of that! I feel so much better now!

I have to be honest: This is one of the clearest statements I have ever received. Rose never gave up, even when she didn't think she was making any progress. Then God rewarded her efforts. Since I last wrote about her, Rose has changed jobs and I can't wait for the latest update when I see her next week.

So maybe it's time for you to start or renew your purpose journey. At <http://www.purposequest.com/purpose.htm> there are three documents that can help you begin or continue your PurposeQuest. One is a worksheet entitled "How to Write a Purpose Statement." The other two are sample purpose statements from **Monday Memo** readers and from the Bible. (If you never sent me your purpose statement, please do so this week and I will add yours to the list on my website). If you can't download these, then write me with the words "statement," "Bible list," and/or "list" and I will send them to you. Devote some time this week to looking these items over to see if they don't help you become a person of purpose.

I can't guarantee that you will clarify your purpose today or next week, but you may. And even if you don't, there's Rose's story to encourage you to hang in there and not to give up. If I can help you along the way, please let me know. Have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
From Cheltenham, England
Written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 152**

It is great to be back in England. I so enjoy the British countryside, but most of all I enjoy the people. They are so diverse, so reserved, so, well, so British! I return home next Saturday but then depart on April 24 for a nine-week tour of Africa. I need some

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assistance while I am in Africa, so please see the end of this Memo to find out how you can help.

I have been teaching about purpose for more than 12 years now. I am noticing a phenomenon among those who have clarified their purpose. I call that phenomenon the funnel affect. What is the funnel affect? I'm glad you asked.

To explain it, let's think about a funnel for a moment. A funnel is wide at the top and very narrow at the bottom so that liquids may pour into something with a small opening. When you begin your purposequest, you are at the top of the funnel. The whole world and all its options are available to you. But then something happens and it can unnerve you and make you uncomfortable. As you progress down the funnel of purpose, you may begin to feel restricted in your activity. Things you once did have no meaning or you lose your enthusiasm for things you once had energy to do. You also may find that you evaluate everything you do differently. As you go down the funnel, you find there is no room or time to do some of those things that are no longer related to your purpose.

Some are concerned that their lives will be less meaningful if they get to the bottom of the funnel. They can't see how God can use them when they seem to be doing so little. But to the contrary, the bottom of the funnel is your point of greatest effectiveness. It is at that point where you find what you do that no one else can do. While it seems restrictive, that point allows God to send you anywhere in the world that needs who you are and what you do. The narrow point is why the funnel exists; without it, there would be no purpose for the funnel.

Perhaps an example will help. History tells us that Mozart was a virtuoso violinist and pianist. Rarely in history has anyone been a world-class performer with two instruments. Mozart was so good at both that he gave up playing the violin! Mozart knew there weren't enough hours in the day to practice, so he decided to focus on what would serve him best as a composer. This is what I would call the funnel affect in Mozart's life.

How about you? Are you uncomfortable as you travel down your purpose funnel? Does the thought of restricting your activity according to your purpose scare or concern you? Well, don't worry. The bottom of my funnel is to bring order out of chaos. Armed with that knowledge, I know what I am supposed to do and I have eliminated many activities that are not related to my purpose. So spend some time this week thinking about where you are in your purpose funnel. You may need to abandon some activities, but that will give you more time to do the things that you do best. Have faith and continue down the funnel to your point of greatest effectiveness. And as you do, have a great week!

**The Monday Memo
From the desk of
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 153**

It is great to be back home after a wonderful visit to England. Over the last three weeks, I sat and talked individually with more than 90 people and spoke 12 times about purpose. What a joy that was! Now I am ready to do more this week in Columbus, Ohio and Baltimore, Maryland. Then I depart for nine weeks in Africa on April 24. As I stated last week, I need some assistance while I am in Africa. Please see the end of this **Memo** to find out how you can help.

This week I have been thinking about why we're not more productive in the will of God. Most people tell me that they don't have enough time to write, create, study, learn or develop new skills that will enable them to advance and grow. But the truth is, you have all the time there is in the world—24 hours every day. What you really mean is that you don't have large chunks of time to do what you must do. This week I was reading Julia Cameron's new book, ***The Sound of Paper: Starting from Scratch*** and she had this to say about the issues of time and productivity:

Most of us think, "If only I had more time, then I would work." We have a fantasy that there is such a thing as good creative time, an idyll of endless, seamless time unfolding invitingly for us to frolic in creatively. No such bolts of limitless time exist for most of us. Our days are chopped into segments, and if we are to be creative, we must learn to use the limited time that we have.

When ego is siphoned off creativity, when creativity becomes one more thing we do, like the laundry, then it takes far less time to do it. Much of our desire for creative time has to do with our trying to coax ourselves into being in the right mood to create. We want to "feel like it," and when we don't or don't quickly, we think the solution is more time. Actually, the solution is less attention to the vagaries of mood. In short, creativity needs to become daily, doable, and nonnegotiable, something as quotidian [everyday, commonplace, ordinary] as breathing. When we make a special occasion out of our art, we rob ourselves of the time we actually have.

Often I don't start doing something because I don't think I have enough time to complete it. When that is the case, I need more faith that God will help me use the time I have. At other times, I don't start something because I am afraid I don't have enough time to do it **well**. When that happens, I need more courage, not more time. Why aren't you doing more? Are you afraid you don't have enough time to finish it or afraid you don't have enough time to do it well?

I begin every morning by writing that day's installment for my weekly Bible study. Every day I use 20-30 minutes to create something that I want to do and that God has placed on my heart to do. I have promised 3,000 people that they will get a study every week. I discipline myself to sit down and write. I don't even edit what I write, and thirty minutes a day prove to be a blessing to many people around the world.

Are you ready to be more productive? Are you prepared to stop talking about what you will do one day and embrace the fact that **this** is the day that the Lord has made? What aren't you doing because you don't think you have enough time? I want you to think of one thing you have said you will do and spend 20 minutes (less than 2% of your day) doing it every day this week. It may be exercise, learning a new language, writing in your journal or answering your emails. Just 20 minutes a day will add up to 140 minutes this week, which is more than two hours. If you do that every day this month, that will add up to more than nine hours! Stop waiting for large chunks of time that will **never** come. Instead, seize the moments you **do** have and watch them add up over time. You will then find yourself not only talking about what you will do, but actually doing it! Have a great week.

**The Monday Memo
From Baltimore, Maryland
Written by Dr. John Stanko
Issue 154**

Happy birthday to me! Happy birthday to me! Yes, today is my 54th birthday. Surprised? You probably thought I was a lot younger! Well, I still think that I'm 39. At any rate, I have never felt better or had more energy. I think the purpose message has kept me young. This week will be a busy one as I prepare to depart next Saturday for a nine-week tour of Africa. As I stated last week, I need some assistance while I am in Africa. Please see the end of this **Memo** to find out how you can help.

Last week we talked about using the time we have to be creative, even if it's only a few minutes at a time. But if you are going to be creative and productive, you must not only learn how to manage the time that you have. You must also learn to deal with the little old man that lives inside you. You may respond that you don't have a little old man living in you, but I contend that you do.

This little old man has lived in you most of your adult life. He is very old and cranky. He has shriveled skin and wears a visor on his head, similar to the one worn by bookkeepers when they used adding machines instead of calculators and computers. This little old man has bony fingers and a scratchy voice that he uses to talk to you all the time. He doesn't have a name, but he has a role in your life that he plays to perfection. What is that role? It's the role of the critic, the censor, and the discourager.

When you write something, this little old man starts in: "You can't write. This is no good. I wouldn't show this to anyone. You'll never get this published!" If you try to take steps to improve yourself, the little man then says, "Who do you think you are? You're too old to try to do something like this?" If you have an idea for a business or ministry, he chimes in and says, "That will never work. Why don't you just stay where you are, even though you're unhappy?" Then when you become a Christian, that little old man takes on a whole new tone. "How do you know the Lord wants you to do that? Who do you think you are, Moses or Peter? There is nothing special about what you are thinking. Plus you don't have the time, money or spirituality to do it well. Just sit there and shut up. You know the mistakes you've made trying to do things in the past! All right, you did that once but you won't be able to do it again!"

There is no way I can describe all that this little man says or does in your life, but I think you get the idea. If you are going to clarify your purpose and be productive, you are going to have to deal with this little old man. I have found that you cannot reason with him, for he is too persuasive and persistent for that. The critic and censor in you will urge you to dismiss an idea within five minutes of when you first receive it. The critic in you will cause you not to talk about yourself and to hide your art and ideas. He will prey on your fears and cause you to compare yourself to those who are supremely successful, causing you to cower in despair as you behold your comparative lack of talent. So how do you deal with this little old man?

Jesus said, "[The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it](#)" (Matthew 11:12-13). There is no nice way to deal with this little old man. You cannot have pity on him or listen to anything he says. What do I recommend? I recommend that you poke this little old man in the eye whenever he talks to you! That's

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right, you must deal ruthlessly with him on every occasion that he decides to offer his two cents. You must say to him, “Thank you but you don’t know what you are talking about.” And if he doesn’t shut up, then you must occupy him by poking him in the eye. Just picture him holding his eye and bending over in pain. (Don’t worry. He’ll recover to speak again.) Then proceed to carry out the idea that you have while he is preoccupied, free from his annoying voice and tired accusations.

When you were young, that little old man didn’t exist. You were free then to create, to be yourself, to have fun and experiment with life. You did things just for the sake of doing them, and you learned and had fun. But as you got older, the old man took up residence to keep you fearful, bound-up and failure-free. But that little old man has taken something from you and you must take it back, with violence if necessary. He took your youthful zeal for life, and with it he took your ability to create with freedom. As I enter my 55th year today, I am determined to deal with this little man that lives in me, too. Won’t you join me this week as together we poke our inner critic in the eye, thus freeing us to be who God created us to be and do what He wants us to do? I hope you will. Have a great week!

The Monday Memo – Early Edition
From the desk of Dr. John Stanko
Issue 155

My bags are packed and I’m ready to go! I leave this evening for Africa and I will be gone for nine weeks. Since I won’t have computer access until May 13, I thought I would send this edition out a few days early. But then you won’t hear from me again until Monday, May 17, if I can get access in Zimbabwe. This week has been hectic, complicated by my decision to publish another book this year. I had to finish the manuscript by today, but I am glad to announce that, with God’s help, I finished! The title of the new book is *Finding Your Purpose; Meditations to Help You **Know** What You Were Created to Do* and it will be released July 1. I still need some help as I go to Africa. If you can be of assistance, please see the end of this Memo.

Have you ever noticed how some people struggle to receive a compliment? I’ve found it is especially difficult for creative people, who seem to be so aware of all the faults their creations seem to have. “Oh, that’s such a lovely picture!” someone may say. But then the response often goes something like this: “Oh, it’s terrible! The colors are all wrong and I felt so rushed and it just didn’t turn out like I wanted!” If that exchange takes place, then one of three things just happened. First, the person who gave the compliment was lying. Second, the person who gave the compliment is an idiot and doesn’t know what he or she is talking about. Third, the person who received the compliment is missing an opportunity to receive encouragement and direction.

Why is this important enough to write about in **The Monday Memo**? It is my theory that God has been sending you messengers for most of your life—prophets, if you will—to encourage and give you clues about your areas of purpose and productivity. Your inability to receive them, due to low creative self-esteem or your desire not to appear proud or boastful, has caused you to miss a major source of direction where your PurposeQuest is concerned.

There is an old saying, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” That means that when you cook something, it is for others to eat and enjoy. And if they eat and enjoy it,

you should enjoy the fact that they enjoy it. Your purpose and your goals, while they give you a great deal of satisfaction as you carry them out, aren't really for you. Your purpose and goals are for others to eat. If they are blessed, satisfied, or encouraged, then whether or not what you've created is perfectly suited to your specifications really doesn't matter that much.

How do you handle compliments? Do you work hard to defer them, trying to convince the giver that you're not that nice, talented, spiritual or gifted? If you do, then please, stop doing that! I know this may be part of your culture to be humble when you receive a compliment, but you need to hear what that person is saying, for God may be trying to get your attention. Instead try another approach. Next time you receive a compliment, simply say, "Thank you." Then take that compliment to God and ask, "What are you trying to tell me here? What do they see that I can't? Lord, what do **You** see that I can't or won't?" The answers to this prayer may unlock the mystery of what you were created to do. It may also show you that you have been spending a lot of time and energy trying to refute the very messengers that God has been sending to direct and encourage you. You may just see that your purpose was there in front of you all along.

Listen carefully this week to what others say about you. If you are feeling very brave, ask others what they think about your ministry, work or creativity. Then work hard not to deflect their positive comments; instead work hard to receive and learn from them.