

*The Monday Memo Returns (unedited)*  
**Written from Harare, Zimbabwe**  
**By Dr. John Stanko**  
**Issue 156**

I'm back! Did you miss me? I had a wonderful time in Uganda and Kenya the last few weeks and added 1,000 new names to the **Monday Memo**. If this is your first issue, welcome to **The Monday Memo** family. My objective in writing **The Monday Memo** is simple: I want to help you every week bring clarity to your purpose and order to your world. I hope that **The Memo** becomes an important part of your PurposeQuest. If you are a long-time subscriber, it's good to be back with you again.

The last few weeks have confirmed what I've known all along: Everyone, everywhere wants to know his or her purpose. And God is a God of purpose. If God wants you to do His will, He must reveal to you what His will is. Often we try to be who others think we should be, or even do what we *think* we should do. As I was thinking about this tendency this past week, I thought about the famous story of David and Goliath. As David was preparing to fight, he had this experience that is common to us all:

Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine (1 Samuel 17:38-40).

As David went out to fight, I think Saul had the best of intentions as he dressed David in his own tunic, armor and helmet. After all, David was going to fight Goliath, the champion of the Philistines. Saul thought that David would need what Saul himself wore. But remember that Saul was "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than any of the others" (1 Samuel 9:2). The armor that fit him well proved to be too big and clumsy for David. David tried, but could not function in someone else's armor, even though it belonged to the king. He took it off and decided to face Goliath with what he used best: his slingshot and five smooth stones, one for Goliath and each of his brothers.

Everywhere I go, I see people wearing armor that doesn't fit them. They have put on what they thought they should wear or what they saw someone else use. But it isn't them and often they aren't happy. If you want to be a person of purpose, you must be true to who you are, not to who someone else thinks you should be. At times, you can take on the armor of your culture, trying to be who others say is acceptable or respectable. You cannot dress in someone else's purpose and try to make it your own. David knew how he fought best and what worked for him. Armor may have worked for Saul, but not for David. David took it off and stayed true to who He was, who God created him to be. By doing so, David defeated a superior foe in the power of his own gifts and purpose.

How about you? Whose armor are you wearing? Are you having trouble moving around because you are weighed down by the expectations or good advice of some well-meaning person or persons close to you? Everywhere I go, I hear people “clanking around,” wearing the armor and tunic that belongs to another. The goal of your PurposeQuest is to find out who *you* are and see that as good enough for God to use. If you’re good enough for God, shouldn’t you also be good enough for yourself?

Spend some time this week reflecting on whether you’re wearing someone’s expectations and whether or not they are weighing you down, keeping you from being effective and happy. If you are, then do what David did—take them off! But don’t stop there. Put on the real you and go out to face life in the comfort of your own purpose and personality. You have your own Goliaths to face and God wants to give you victory against them. But first you must have confidence that you can be who God created you to be and still be a success. The world is waiting for the real you. May this be the week when you come out from under strange armor that you may be wearing. Have a great week

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**Issue 157**

I had a life-changing experience this week. When “it” happened, I was driving and almost had to pull over to the side of the road. I was actually trembling for the rest of the morning. What is this change, you may ask? I decided it is time to change one of the words in my purpose statement. That’s right, I am going to change the way my purpose reads! What word will change? For that, you will have to wait until next week. I don’t want to write about it until after I speak at the Action conference here in Harare this week. If you happen to attend the evening session when I speak, you will get a sneak preview of what I will write about next week. But for the rest of you, you will just have to wait. But I promise that it will be worth the wait.

The famous psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslov, described a life condition and identified it by using a name from the Bible. What name do you think he used? Moses? Joseph? Jesus? Paul? If you answered any of those, you are wrong. He used the name Jonah and the entire term is called “the Jonah Complex.” What did Maslov mean when he referred to “the Jonah Complex?”

We know that Jonah was an Old Testament prophet and has a short book that relates part of his life story. Jonah was given an assignment by God to go and deliver a harsh message to a city and people he didn’t like. He didn’t want to do it, so he ran. He got on a ship and went in the opposite direction from where he was told to go.

A storm arose during the trip and it soon became clear to the sailors that Jonah was the cause of the storm. When they threw him overboard, the storm ceased and a whale swallowed Jonah. Jonah then spent three days and nights in the whale’s stomach. After

Jonah relented and agreed to go on God's mission, the whale spit him out and Jonah went on his way.

Maslov used "the Jonah Complex" to describe anyone who was running from his or her true life calling. He went on to say, "If you deliberately set out to be less than you are capable of, you will never truly be happy." This complex accurately describes the condition of many people with whom I have come in contact. They are avoiding or running from the greatness and creativity that is in them. They are afraid not of failure, but of success.

So what do these people do who are trapped in "the Jonah Complex?" According to my experience, they spend a lot of time trying to weather the storm. They try to stay on the ship where they are instead of jumping into the waves of life. They tell me they are "praying about it," whatever the "it" is for them. Yet day after day and sometimes year after year goes by and they do nothing. Their prayer is actually a delay tactic, waiting for God to do something that only they can do. They may not know what to do, but they don't seek advice from someone who could help them get started. They just hold on and hope that somehow things will change even if they don't do anything to help the change along. Of they are waiting for the "it" to happen all at once, instead of taking faith steps today that will lead them to their destiny.

So what about you? Are you suffering from "the Jonah Complex?" Are you running from your purpose or from some significant thing that God has for you to do? Is your ship being tossed by the waves of financial lack, unhappiness, and lack of productivity, yet you stubbornly cling to the ship's mast hoping that things will get better? I've found that many know their purpose but are afraid for whatever reason to speak it out. Perhaps it's time for you to face who you are and what God wants you to do. And perhaps it's time for you to take steps to get off your sinking ship and into the purpose of God. It may look more dangerous "out there," but the only danger lies in you avoiding the great things that God has for you to do. The Chinese say that the longest journey begins with the first step. Maybe it's time for you to take the first steps this week on an exciting journey—your PurposeQuest. I hope you have a great week

*The Monday Memo (unedited)*  
**Written from Harare, Zimbabwe**  
**By Dr. John Stanko**  
**Issue 158**

I just came from the last session of the annual Action conference here in Harare. My thanks to Hear the Word Ministries and my friends in Zimbabwe for their hospitality and receptivity to the purpose message. We had a great time. Now I am off to Kitwe, Zambia for the week and will return to Harare next Monday (the Monday Memo will probably be a day late next week). This week I have a lot of announcements so please read through to the end of this **Memo** to find out what's going on with PurposeQuest International.

Last week I promised to write about a change in my purpose statement. If you are familiar with my purpose, you know that it currently reads “to bring order out of chaos.” About a week ago, it occurred to me that this statement wasn’t accurate. I was driving a car when this realization came to me and I almost had to pull over to the side of the road! I realized that I don’t **bring** order out of chaos, nor do I **make** order out of chaos. Rather I **create** order out of chaos. It dawned on me that I am a creative person.

You may be disappointed with my change but for me it is a radical step. You see, I have always viewed myself as an organized, administrative-type person. I saw musicians, songwriters, and poets as the creative people, while I organized their creativity and order. But I began to see that my ability to bring order *is* in and of itself is a creative act.

A few weeks before I saw this change, I was heading to Uganda with a team from my home city. On the plane, the team leader asked me to fill out a form outlining my goals and objectives for the trip. Then she asked me to do something that would normally bring fear to my heart: She asked me to draw four pictures on the back of the paper to describe myself before, during and after the trip. I actually felt my body stiffen as she asked me to draw those pictures, because I can’t draw, or so I thought. Right there on the plane I decided to face my fear of being ridiculed or of not being very good, and proceeded to draw four pretty simple but effective pictures. They were the first four pictures I had ever drawn that I could remember.

Then I took out a sheet of paper and listed all the areas in which I could be considered creative. Here is how my list read: humor, consulting, conference and event coordination, **The Monday Memo**, the weekly Bible studies, my books, public speaking, my daily to-do list, my website, the seminars that I teach and the two businesses that I have started. These are all creative acts, so therefore I am creative! I **create** order out of chaos.

I write this to you because you are creative too. The Creator made you in His image and part of that image is to create. You may not see yourself as creative but you are. You may not have any original ideas (who does?), but you probably have ideas of how to creatively apply concepts that already exist in new ways. Why not do what I did? Take out a piece of paper and write down all the ways that you are creative. Don’t overlook activities like cooking, baking, gardening, floral design, letter writing, teaching, cleaning, repair work, interior design, and makeup and hair styling.

I also write this to help you overcome any bias that you may have against your creativity. Stop comparing yourself to others and don’t compare what you create with what others create. This week let your creativity flow, just like I did with my four pictures I drew. Your creativity may hold a key to help you clarify your purpose. Facing the fact that you are creative may set you free to do things that have been in you to do all along. I am enjoying my new awareness of my creative expression and from now on, I will tell everyone and anyone that my purpose is to **create**, not bring, order out of chaos. I hope this week will bring you a renewed sense of who you are and what you were created to create. Have a great week!

*The Monday Memo (unedited)*  
**Written from Lusaka, Zambia**  
**By Dr. John Stanko**  
**Issue 159**

I'm writing this week's Memo sitting in the airport in Lusaka, Zambia, and I'll send it when it get back to Zimbabwe. I had a wonderful time in Kitwe, Zambia and want to welcome all the new **Memo** readers from the Copperbelt Region. If you wrote me this week with a gift subscription or address change, I didn't have a chance to make any changes while I was away. I also found out that I will be in Johannesburg this week for two days and will have some time on Friday morning, June 11, if anyone would like to meet to do a PurposeQuest Assessment. Write and let me know if you are interested.

Last week I announced a major change in my purpose statement. I no longer say that I **bring** order out of chaos, but I came to realize that I **create** order out of chaos. That change seemed to touch something in many people who wrote me during the past week. I'm also preparing for a creativity seminar in Birmingham, England on July 24 and I've found a wealth of material to use. I haven't had this kind of "flow" since I began to teach on purpose. I would expect that I'll be doing more creativity seminars in the coming months.

During the Action Conference in Harare last week, Tom Deuschle made a statement in our business seminar that has stayed in my mind. Tom said, "An oppressed people lose their creativity." I began to think of Israel in Egypt, where they were oppressed and enslaved by the Egyptians. Tom's right; their creativity was gone. Or perhaps we could even say that their creativity was directed toward daily survival as they tried to eke out an existence under the oppression of slavery.

But then it occurred to me that there's another form of oppression that also saps creativity. The Jews were under external oppression, but I've known people who are under a far worse creative limitation—they are under **internal** oppression. There are at least three factors that can oppress you from within and keep you from being the creative person that God wants you to be. They are:

1. **Fear.** I've written about fear in past **Memos**. But how many fears can you think of that could prevent you from being creative? I can think of fear of failure, poverty, ridicule, family, culture, authority, inadequacy, and success. Can you think of any others? If you can, write me and let me know. But if you are going to release your creativity, you must face and overcome the oppression of fear. They will paralyze your efforts and cause you to procrastinate, hoping for a more opportune time. Remember what Paul to his disciple Timothy: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). If you have fear, what are you prepared to do about it this week?
2. **Comparison.** When you look at what you do and compare it to what others do, it can cause you to stop being creative because, in your opinion, it isn't as good.

But think about it: What is good where creativity is concerned? Is creativity a process and can your simple efforts today lead to stellar creativity tomorrow? Is it wise to compare your initial efforts to what someone else may have spent a lot of time developing? Paul described an important principle that he used when he looked at his work: “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12-13). Why not do something creative this week and discipline yourself not to compare it to what others have done. Is it the best that you can do now? If it is, then I would say that your creativity is good in and of itself.

3. **Perfectionism**. We discussed this in **Monday Memo** 154 when I described the little old man that lives inside you, waiting to criticize and disqualify whatever you create because it isn’t “good enough.” I know only One who is perfect and He is God. You’re not (God or perfect). While you should strive for excellence and your best performance, you can never expect it to be perfect. The pursuit of perfection is unrealistic (and oppressive) and will hinder you from doing something great just because it isn’t perfect. I can’t find a Bible verse that talks about perfectionism, but I can find one that speaks to excellence: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23). Distinguish between excellence and perfection and be liberated to create.

Are you living under any internal, self-imposed oppression that is stifling your creativity? Which of the three oppressors are you under? When you can answer that question, your liberation is near! God wants you to be creative and next week we will look at some of the common creative expressions that we all share. But before then, I urge you this week to free yourself from any external or internal force that is working to hinder your creativity. Have a great week!

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**Issue 160**

Greetings once again from southern Africa. I’ve been away from home for seven weeks now, with two more to go. When I return home, I will attend the release of my new book, *Unlocking the Power of Your Purpose*. This book is an edited collection of 60 of the most effective **Monday Memos**. I will let you know how to order a copy next week. In the meantime, I will be busy here until I come back to the States. Thank you for all your prayers during this trip.

Last week I wrote about internal oppression that can stifle your creativity. We looked at three “oppressors,” namely fear, comparison to others and perfectionism. I was going to write about various ways to express your creativity this week, but I received an email from a woman in Zimbabwe that I just have to share with you. She responded to the **Memo** two weeks ago after I announced the change to my own purpose statement that I

*create* order out of chaos, and I think what she wrote will help you as we look for ways to release your creativity.

My name is B and I am a recipient of your Monday Memo. I am also a member of Hear the Word Church. Although I was not able to attend your day sessions at the Action conference last week, I did hear you preach on Friday. Your message entitled “God's Zoo” really opened my eyes to a lot about myself.

When I was in school I loved Art, all forms of Art, painting drawing, sculpture, and I was really good at it. I also loved the performing arts, the stage was where it all lit up for me, I was drama leader in my final year of high school and I even directed my very first play when I was 18. When I finished school, I studied law. I became a “typical” law student—very conservative, always with books in hand and not at all artistic. The arts students at University were always so distinct from everyone else, they stuck out with their brightness and 'weirdness'! I was secretly jealous.

I came back to Zimbabwe with my law degree and a wardrobe of black, gray and brown suits. I hadn't touched a paintbrush since high school and basically buried my “talent” for the last six years. Anyway to cut a very long story short, your message about creativity really inspired me this weekend. I AM A CREATIVE PERSON! I went out and bought some paintbrushes, paints and a sketchbook on Saturday. Part of me was thinking, “This is a little too enthusiastic. You're not going to find the time to do any of this and you don't have it in you any more.” But another part of me thought, “Well hey, you know what, maybe this is very impulsive but at least I have my tools now and I am going to try!”

Thank you so much for your message. I am sitting here in my black suit, but I know that there is so much color on the inside of me. Thank you and God bless.

Like the woman who wrote this letter, you may be sitting in a black suit, or in some other wardrobe of your trade or occupation. But don't let that uniform become restrictive or oppressive. Break out of the mold this week and release your creativity! Why not plant a garden, sew a dress, cook a meal for friends or go out and purchase some materials that will enable you to release the *real* you that is trapped inside of you? Maybe you can write your business plan or take your spouse on a creative date. Do *something* this week to break out of the rut that is holding back the creative you. And remember to not let fear, comparison to others or perfection limit oppress and limit what you can do and be. Have a great week!