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The Monday Memo

Sent from Johannesburg, South Africa By John W. Stanko Issue 236

I am off to Zimbabwe tomorrow and won't be able to send a **Monday Memo** for the next few weeks. In fact, I'm still unable to send to most of my list. When you receive this, you may want to forward it to your friends, who may be on a different list that doesn't get through. I am working on the problem and may or may not have it sorted out by the time I return home at the end of February. I will write and post my Monday Memo to my website every week, so you can check www.purposequest.com to see if there is a Memo there. You can also follow my trips and most recent insights on my blog at www.johnstanko.us.

Speaking of the blog (which always sounds like something out of a horror film to me), I wrote about something this week that got a lot of response. Therefore I thought I would write about it in this week's **Memo**. If you read this on my blog already, then read it through and do the assignment at the end of the **Memo**.

DRAW A PICTURE

Last week I helped facilitate a retreat for ministry workers in Florida. We had a beach house owned by Disney Vacations and the surroundings were great. What was even better was the work we were able to do with the team that came. I started the retreat by bringing out a giant box of crayons. I then gave each person a large sheet of paper from a flip chart and asked them to draw a picture of their life at that point in time. I was surprised how everyone jumped into the exercise once they were over the initial shock and usual questions of the "right way" to do it. We then took turns over the weekend sharing the pictures and what they meant.

When I had to do a similar exercise a few years ago, I panicked! I thought, "I can't draw. I won't show this to anyone! This is silly!" But I did it and, strange as it may sound, it was a liberating experience. It set me free from being so self-conscious, and it helped me be self-aware, to focus on and explain the current realities in my life. The results were the same for those at the retreat. Many said it was their favorite activity of the whole weekend. One woman pencil sketched hers first and then colored it in. It took her a few days to finish. Another man "hogged" the black crayon, needing it to describe many things going on in his life at that time. Most said that the exercise forced them to identify where they were in life. The times when they shared their picture with the group were important moments for them as a team.

The point of the exercise is to show what we can do if we aren't so self-conscious but we are more self-aware. We may think, "What's in me is no big deal." When we pay attention to what's in us, whether it's anger, joy, our favorite color, or our favorite activities, we can then use that to create something. When we aren't so self-conscious, we can do things without worrying about what someone else will think. Self-consciousness often leads to fear and paranoia. Self-awareness often leads to freedom and self-expression. When you are self-aware but not self-conscious, you are free to express who you are, which will in turn impact the lives of other people.

One woman read my blog entry and drew her own picture. This is what she wrote:

I actually tried this! I took my picture home to my husband and shared my feelings with him. It opened a wonderful conversation in which we shared our dreams and began making some plans to allow room for us to explore what we are both passionate about. As we were talking I realized that there are two kinds of people in the world, those that are living out their dreams (purpose) and those that are miserable because they feel "stuck." I say it's never too late to pursue that which we are passionate about. And I'm committing to do at least one thing every week this year that will help me fulfill my purpose!! Thanks for the great exercise John!!

I'M SERIOUS; DRAW A PICTURE

So your assignment is to take out a large piece of paper, find some colored markers or crayons and draw a picture that expresses your life right now. You may want to do this with your family, staff or ministry team. Once you finish, you need to share it with someone you trust. This picture doesn't have to be a Picasso, but take all the time you need to make it an accurate expression of the realities in your life and heart right now. The goal is simple: make you less self-conscious but more self-aware. When you make that transition, you will be well on your way to fulfilling your personal PurposeQuest. As you draw and share, have a great week!

The Monday Memo

Sent from Harare, Zimbabwe By John W. Stanko Issue 237

It's been a great first week here in Zimbabwe. Even though I can only send this Memo to a limited number on my total list, I thought I would stay in the "groove" and keep writing. I will then post it to my website and hope those who can't receive will look there. Perhaps you can forward this to a friend or two if you think it would be of interest to them. I hope to have my troubles sorted out in March when I return home, but one never knows with problems like this. Next week I am speaking here in Harare and then I am off for a few days to visit my friends in Kenya. Then I return to Zimbabwe before I come home to the States.

It is amazing to me that I am almost 56 years old, and I am still learning so much about myself, how I work best, where I have limited myself and what God has given me to do. I pulled out my journals the other night from the last three years, and it shows a tremendous journey of growth, struggle, questions and God's answers. At any rate, I digress. Let me share some of the things that I've learned this week.

ALL BOUND UP

A number of years ago, I served as an administrator, and a pretty effective one at that. So many people "saw" me as an administrator. To this day, some of them have never read anything I have written or ever heard me speak. In their minds, I suppose I will always be an administrator. That isn't the problem. The problem is that I bought into that image, and I still see myself as an administrator, when I know God has made me so much more.

I remembered this week when I was working as an administrator and told the pastor how much I enjoyed speaking. He told me, "I don't need speakers. I can bring them in from the outside. What I need is an administrator." He was correct in everything he said, and

I allowed myself to be restricted, wanting to be a loyal worker and submitted follower. A few years later, I felt like I was going to burst, so I had to resign my administrative positions to start PurposeQuest. While I completely walked away from my positions, I never totally walked away from the image I had of myself as an administrator.

A COUGHING LESSON

Earlier this week, I shared with some people that I had a persistent cough. A woman came up to me later, reminding me of a story I have told of my young daughter's persistent cough years ago and how God had spoken to me through that cough. The woman said, "I think God wants to show you something again through this cough." She was right.

I have faced over these last few days that I have been holding back, holding things in as it were. The trouble is, those things want to get out. What kind of things? Things like creativity, boldness, faith to do more and learning adventures that will expand my horizons and give me more to write and speak about. Just as my cough is trying to release things in my lungs, my creative side is activated and growing. It wants more purposeful expression. In other words, the real John Stanko is still emerging, still breaking out of old habits and patterns. A cough comes from within and wants to help something get out. That is what I have experienced in my personal journey this week.

So what am I prepared to do about this? Nothing right now. I am just journaling and meditating, coming to grips with my limitations. Well, I did do one thing today. I followed my heart and gave something in an offering, something big. Last week, I would have ignored that urging. Today I followed it and I feel good. By the way, I still have a little of my cough, but it is much improved. The sister was right. God did "speak" to me again through my constant hacking. Now what does He want to say to you this week? Whatever it is, I know it will make you more effective as you pursue your PurposeQuest. Have a great week!

SPECIAL NOTE: THERE WAS NO MEMO NUMBER 238 DUE TO A NUMBERING ERROR WHEN THE MEMO RESUMED OPERATION.

The Monday Memo is back!

Sent from the United States via Zimbabwe Issue 239

Hello once again. It's probably been a couple months since you've heard from me and perhaps you thought I had discontinued **The Monday Memo**. The last **Memo** I sent to my full list was on December 19, 2005. I proceeded to send a **Memo** the next week, but was greeted by error messages saying that all my lists had been rejected. I thought it was because I was away from home in Florida, so waited until I got home the following week, only to have the same messages appear. I spent countless hours on the phone with technical support and consulted many people who could give me some answers. No one, however, could explain what had changed that would suddenly not allow me to send a **Memo** after having done so successfully since 2001.

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I finally came to the conclusion that my list had simply grown too large. At that point, I began to "put out the word" for help. David in California, a faithful **Memo** reader, suggested that I try a software program that could alleviate the problem. He then volunteered to merge all my distribution lists into one massive list that was compatible with the software. Now I have forwarded this Memo to him and he is doing a test mail from the States, even though I am in Zimbabwe. Thanks, David, for your service and help above and beyond the call of duty. If this works, then we will also resume the weekly Bible studies this week using the same program.

(If you wrote to change your email address or to unsubscribe in the last few weeks, please re-send your request.)

THE LAST TWO MONTHS

So what have I been doing the last two months? First of all, I never stopped writing the **Monday Memo** (you will find the issues you may have missed at <http://www.purposequest.com/mmemo.htm>). I sent it almost every week to my smaller lists, totalling about 1,000 people. Then I put the whole thing into God's hands. I can honestly say that I didn't fret one minute about whether or not I could resume the **Monday Memo**. I felt that the God who had given me the idea to write would then take care of the problems that were keeping me from writing. Then I stopped being so stubborn about maintaining my own lists and released the process to an outside source. >From this point, I am going to make sure that this never happens again, which means that I will turn over the list maintenance to an outside agency. I will continue writing, but my list maintenance days are over.

Oh yes, I also stayed faithful to my blog entries three or four times a week at www.johnstanko.us. You can subscribe for those updates just like you have for the **Memo** by going to my blog and entering your email in the upper right hand corner. In that way, you will automatically receive every entry. I must admit that I've written some pretty good stuff over the last few months.

THANK YOU

While I was at peace with the whole ordeal, I was not at peace not writing you every week. I missed you. If you wrote to ask me what was going on, thanks for missing me. If you missed but didn't write, I'm glad we're reunited! I hope that the **Memo** will resume a place in your life every week and I hope you will give a gift subscription to someone you know this week by registering their address at <http://www.purposequest.com/giftsub.htm>.

I won't end this week's **Memo** with the usual entries that help you connect to my world. I will remind you that the March installment of *A Daily Dose of Proverbs* is posted to http://www.purposequest.com/bible_studies.htm. If you can't download it, please write me with the word "proverbs" in the subject box.

I will be Stateside for March and April, with a visit to Seattle and Bentonville, Arkansas coming up next week when I return from Zimbabwe. I hope that your PurposeQuest is going well and I look forward to renewing our relationship that will help you clarify your purpose and bring order to your world.

The Monday Memo

Written and Sent from Seattle, Washington By John W. Stanko Issue 240

I got home last night at midnight from Africa. My flight was delayed out of Johannesburg, which turned my journey into a 40-hour adventure. Now twelve hours later I am packing to leave for Seattle to attend The Pacific Institute facilitator training this week. I wish I had more than one night in my own bed, but Kathryn is coming with me so at least we'll be together. Then we are off to Bentonville, Arkansas where we will be our good friends at First Assembly of God.

If you wrote last week to unsubscribe or change an address, we may not have gotten to it this week. I apologize for the inconvenience. Now that I am Stateside, it will be easier to coordinate those requests. No need to write again; we will catch up.

This week I want to talk about leadership, if that's alright. In the past, I have made the statement that quality questions lead to a quality life. During my past four weeks, I held one question uppermost in my mind and meditated on the possible answers. I would like to share the question with you this week and then give you what I believe is the answer.

THE QUESTION, PLEASE.

This question came when someone asked me to write a response to their blog entry about the lens through which I view leadership. I responded that I had two lens for leadership, just like a pair of glasses has two separate lens. My first lens is Jesus and my second is Paul. I think we can learn more from those two about leadership than from anyone else who ever lived. When we look at them, we get one view of leadership just like a pair of glasses gives us one image, even though each lens may be different.

So my question for the last four weeks has been: " What made Paul such a different leader than the rest of his peers?" Whenever you encounter Paul's contemporaries, they were for the most part legalistic, short-sighted and mean. Those were the only models that Paul ever had, so why didn't he turn out more like them? I know that Jesus was in Paul's life, but Jesus was in the life of many others who never lost their propensity for heavy-handed leadership.

THE ANSWER, PLEASE.

So what conclusion did I reach? I think the answer is found in Philippians 2. That chapter gives Paul's leadership philosophy that he then passed on his favorite church in Philippi:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8).

There are four principles that are contained in those three verses: making oneself nothing, service, humility and obedience. Those four were present in Jesus' leadership

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style and Paul adopted them in his. In the rest of the chapter, Paul gave four examples of those who had those four traits in their life and leadership: Jesus, Paul himself, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

When you know your purpose, you will lead. That is a given, for people follow others who know where they are going. It is therefore important not just to know your purpose but to know how to lead as a person of purpose. I am recommending that you spend some time this week reading and re-reading Philippians, for that is what I've been doing for several weeks. I urge you to keep a journal or notes of what you see and learn. Just don't learn, however, but take steps to apply what you see to your own life and leadership. I am now asking questions like, "Lord, how can I empty myself? What do you want me to do to obey You? Lord, where have I lorded it over others?" Develop your own questions from that lead question and see what you learn. Whatever you do, I hope that you will use Jesus and Paul as your models as you seek to be a person of purpose and productivity. Have a great week!