

The Monday Memo
from the desk of
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 31

I did it! Last week, I promised that this week I would have some additional articles to offer you through *The Monday Memo*. In spite of getting home last Wednesday night from England, leaving again on Friday for a weekend retreat, and speaking seven times from Friday night through Sunday morning, I was able to complete two articles totaling 28 pages of written material. Please check below for how to access these articles.

How was I able to finish these two projects? First of all, I made a commitment to you and to myself to have additional giveaways this week. That was an important step, because I value your time and the relationship we have. Second, it is important to me to model the productivity I am urging you to develop in your own life. So this project was related to a value, something that was important to me. Third, I made a plan last Sunday that involved every day of this past week. I had so many pages to write per day and I finished early enough in the week that I was able to have my wife edit what I wrote of one article.

I was analyzing the statistics from my website www.purposequest.com for the month of September. The site had 65,000 "hits" for the month and the report actually breaks down the number of hits per day. Guess which day has the highest number of visitors. You're right. The largest number is on Monday. Why is that?

The Monday Memo in front of you serves as a reminder to visit the site. Why do visits to the site drop off dramatically as the week progresses? Perhaps because you put off doing it on Monday, figuring you will be able to do this later in the week. When you do that with any activity, the chances of you doing what you put off are slim. Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

I asked you in last week's *Monday Memo* what you were willing to do this past week. Did you think of anything? But more importantly,

did you do it? If not, don't fret. It's a new week! But this week, don't put off what you said you would do later. Take steps right now to plan how you're going to do what you said you would.

First, get out your day planner or diary. If you don't have one, then take a sheet of paper and make seven columns on the page, one for each day of the coming week. At the top of the page, write down what you want to do this week. Now, before you are finished, write down what you must do each day of the coming week to have the project done by the time you receive next week's *Monday Memo*. It can't be that easy, you say. Well, it may not be that easy, but this is where all productivity begins. Where it ends depends on you.

I have been asking you to send a *Monday Memo* gift subscription to five people. Perhaps you haven't done it because you said, "I can do that later in the week." Have you? If not, don't wait until tomorrow. I'm not that interested in increasing *The Monday Memo* circulation. I am very interested in seeing you make a promise to yourself and keeping it.

There is no formula for success and productivity other than the one I shared with you above. Plan your work for the coming week and then work your plan. Do something every day that will add up to a finished project by the end of the week. Don't put off until "later" what you can do now. Armed with that advice, I know you'll have one of the most productive weeks that you've had in a long time. Enjoy the fruit of your labors.

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I did it last Tuesday at 1:10 am. While I was praying, I went ahead and did it. What did I do? At that very moment, I gave my business to the Lord; I turned it over to Him.

Jesus said, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Any time I feel like I'm carrying a heavy yoke, I know I'm not carrying Jesus's yoke. If I'm not carrying His yoke, then I am usually carrying a yoke I have picked up on my own. My yoke is always too heavy and makes me tired. That's where I was with my business. So, early in the morning last week I put down my burden and picked up His. I feel a whole lot better! You may even say that I am at rest.

When I say I gave my business to the Lord, I don't mean that I stopped working. When you are doing God's will and fulfilling your purpose in life, it is possible to rest **and** work. I still worked hard this past week, but I left the results in God's hands. I did what I could do and trusted the Lord for the results that only He can produce. I can work, but only God can bring in the money. I write, but only God can provide the audience. I speak, but the Lord is the one speaking through me.

I read an interesting quote in a book this past week. It is a book on finding your purpose that recommends relying on some sources of wisdom with which I disagree. But the author, Carol Adrienne, wrote,

"The first basic paradox of our lives is that nothing is fixed; and yet nothing is random or accidental, either. . . .We have free will, but we are not in control. The second paradox is that when we set our intention for what we desire, we achieve it usually only after we have released our need to have it. This is the paradox of intention

(personal desire and will) and surrender (letting God or the universe provide what is best for our highest good)."

What she wrote is true. It is only when we have released our need to achieve our dream, purpose or vision, that we become eligible to see it fulfilled. My desire for business success will only be accomplished when I no longer derive how I feel from how things are going. Success can't be my god; only God can be my God. I must learn to trust Him for the results.

I've enjoyed rest all week because I've had faith in God. The writer of Hebrews wrote, "Now we who have believed enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:3). Whatever happens from this time forward, I am at peace that God is in control. I am determined to enjoy the journey no matter where it takes me.

Is there some goal, relationship or project that is too heavy for you? As you enter another week, why not make a decision to have faith, enter into rest and lighten your load? You aren't able to provide the breakthrough, change another person or work any harder than you already have to bring about the desired result. So determine this week to lighten up and have faith in God. You can make that decision to have faith **and** enter rest. May this week be a week of work **and** rest as you trust God for the results you seek.

The Monday Memo
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Issue 33

Yesterday I sat paralyzed at my desk. I had three big projects to work on and I couldn't make up my mind which one to work on first. So I didn't do anything for quite a while. I made a few phone calls, read the news from the Internet, sorted out some papers on my desk, but just couldn't get going. Finally, I forced myself to go to my daily to-do list and make a decision. But it was almost too painful to decide. Everything in me wanted to give up and go watch television.

That made me think about procrastination, something that plagues most people at one time or another, including me.

Why do we procrastinate? Sometimes we're lazy, pure and simple. If we aren't disciplined and no one is making us do something, we can choose to be lazy and do nothing. But that isn't the only reason we procrastinate. Let's look at some other reasons.

One reason may be fear of failure. We may be so afraid of doing the **wrong** thing that we choose to do nothing at all. If that is the case, a good project or idea goes undone because of fear.

We may also not know how to start; therefore, we put off starting. It is like standing at a fork in the road, not knowing which way is the correct one to take.

Finally, we may be convinced we don't have the time to finish the project, so we don't even start. Personally, that is how I can treat a writing project. I think it will take five hours. I don't know where I'll find five hours, so why start something I don't think I can finish?

You may have your own reasons, but what can you do this coming week to overcome procrastination?

First, you can do what I did yesterday. I cheated. I didn't work on the most important or urgent project first. I worked on one that I knew I

would enjoy. I promised myself when that was done I would move on to a more important but boring project. I created momentum and it carried me into something I wasn't putting off. It worked so well that I used this technique again on the same day.

After I did the first two items, I went on to a project that wasn't even on my list, taking time to rework some notes and presentation slides with which I was not happy. When I got those done, I was so energized that I moved on to one final project I was dreading and finished that around midnight. (I forgot to mention that I did take two breaks to watch American football on television.) By God's grace, I beat procrastination and got some important things done. Besides that, I felt great when it was all over.

This week, I want you to beat procrastination too! Sit down right now, no matter what day of the week you are reading this, and plan out the next five days. Write down things you've been putting off doing along with things you know you will enjoy doing. Plan a mix of fun things along with some that don't bring the same measure of joy. See if you can't use the momentum of finishing one enjoyable task to carry you into something for which you have less enthusiasm.

Can you have faith this week to get some things done that you've been putting off? I think you can. You can't go another week putting off some of the things that **must** be done, but you shouldn't go another week putting off what you would **like** to do. Armed with a plan for the next five days, I trust you'll be able to do some of both. Go for it and may the Lord help you have a productive week.

The Monday Memo
from the hotel room of
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 34

I just spent two enjoyable days with friends who lead a ministry a ministry in Florida. They have experienced almost four hundred percent growth in the last four years and more is on the way. Their staff has grown from one to seven during that time and they will soon hire a few more to handle the opportunities at hand. When I met with the staff last Friday, I talked to them about some common themes that can be applied to any operation or individual. I have found them to be true not only in the life of a company or ministry, but also in my own life as well.

1. **Face reality** -- As a career or business grows and develops, it is necessary to face reality on a regular basis and ask, "What is working and what isn't?" You need to apply that question to your own life, job or ministry. Are there new opportunities that you can't work on because you're too busy? Is there something that was flowing smoothly a few months or years ago that isn't going as well now? Have you lost your joy and enthusiasm? One year ago I had to face the reality that I wasn't happy. I didn't sense the joy of the Lord in what I was doing, although I was still capably performing my duties. Facing reality can be hard, but it can also be exciting to study the unexpected successes that can become greater with more attention and effort.

2. **Embrace change** -- When you get too busy or when some project has come to an end of its usefulness, then it's time to embrace, not resist, change. You may be ready for a new position or title, or you may need to face the fact that you can't do it all. You may need to give some of your responsibilities to someone else or phase out a role you've played for some time. Even in your family, you may need to embrace the changes that come when children mature. But you can't make any progress if you're holding onto the past too tightly. I had to embrace the change and resign from my jobs to start Gold Mine Development Co. It has been challenging and there were times I woke up in the night thinking, "What am I doing? I must be

crazy!" But it was time to face reality and embrace change. I didn't say to endure change, but rather to embrace it!

3. **Feed opportunities and starve problems** -- I am not advocating change for change sake. I don't want to simply do something different for the adrenaline rush it can bring. But you need to be honest with yourself and ask, "What is taking more energy than ever for me or us to do?" "What new opportunities await if we face the reality that something isn't working anymore?" "What could I do if I wasn't spending so much time trying to hold onto something whose end is near?" For example, I didn't develop *The Monday Memo* until I first created the time by resigning two salaried positions. Now I am writing to people all over the world. I am working on three books and have the chance to travel to help people who need my help. There were opportunities out there, but I didn't even know what they were because I was too busy with the past.

As you enter another week and come to the close of 2001, I urge you to apply these three principles to your work, family or business. Take a look at reality (both good and bad), embrace any changes that may need to occur, and look to feed your opportunities and starve your problems whenever possible. Stop wasting creative energy on maintaining the past and invest that energy in the future. Find the answers to the questions I have raised above and then develop strategies for 2002 that will renew your energy and bring you joy. It may not be easy, but it will bring rewards that will make 2002 a productive and meaningful year for you and yours.

The Monday Memo
from Los Angeles
Dr. John Stanko
Issue 35

I just got off a cruise ship where I spent the last week helping to coordinate a cruise featuring the dynamic Bishop T. D. Jakes. I am rested and excited to get back to my weekly routine. I am also excited that I am here in Los Angeles for the annual leadership conference sponsored by the Peter F. Drucker Foundation. It is a conference I try to attend every year.

Peter Drucker, who is 92 years young, is considered the father of modern management studies. He has impacted the world through his many books and articles on a wide variety of topics. I have read many of his books and Mr. Drucker has taught me many things.

One of the things Mr. Drucker emphasizes is to know where your time is going. He points out that we think we know where we are spending our time, but more often than not, we don't. Drucker recommends doing what he calls a time inventory once a year to see exactly where your time is going. Having taken his advice, I can tell you that every inventory is a most revealing exercise.

One year my time inventory revealed that I was spending 14 hours per week watching television! That shocked me. I regularly told people that I didn't watch much television but had to revise that statement after I did my time analysis. By better using some of that television time, I was able to become more productive by writing, reading or some other activity.

Maybe it's time for you to consider doing a time inventory. If you decide to do one, you should consider doing it for at least one week. Write down what you are doing in half hour increments. If you spend a half hour on the phone, then record that in your inventory log. If you spent two hours preparing dinner, then make a note of that. At the end of the week, you will have an accurate and revealing record of your time and where it goes.

Why is this important? Because to be productive, you must find ways to find blocks of time that can be put to creative use. You can't write, learn, study or build a relationship by investing minutes; you must find hours to do those things. So with that in mind, why not do an inventory this week?

Does the inventory sound too much or intimidating for you to do? Then how about tracking the time you spend on certain activities. Do an inventory to see how much time you spend watching television, sleeping, on the phone, commuting to work, preparing food, or some other specific activity. When you have your total at the end of this week, see if there is any way you can either reduce the time spent there or make that time more productive. For instance, I have been able to double the books I read by always having an audio book in the car with me. My driving time has now been converted to learning time and I am the better for it.

Let's make this week "time awareness" week to see if you can devote more time to things that you just can't seem to find the time to do. When you see where your time is going, you can make adjustments based on accurate information. I hope you will find time this week you didn't know you had. Happy hunting!