

*The Monday Memo*  
From London, England  
Written by Dr. John Stanko  
Issue 171

I had the chance over the last few weeks to watch a lot of Olympic coverage on television, both here in England and back home. It's interesting to see the athletes from all around the world compete in their sport. Everyone cheers for their country's athletes, which creates a time of national pride and sadness, depending on how well the athletes perform.

I especially enjoyed the track competition and noticed one common trait among most of the winners this year. The commentators mentioned it whenever they showed replays of the winners and losers. What was that trait? It was how relaxed the winners were! They never panicked or broke form, while those trying to catch them showed all kinds of strain in their facial expressions and effort. Even this morning's paper showed the British woman winning the gold medal in the 1500 meters smiling, while everyone chasing her was straining and grimacing. So what has this got to do with you?

We've been discussing creativity the last several months and I've been learning as much as anyone about my own creativity. I'm coming to realize just how uptight I've been for much of my adult life. I've been afraid of failing, of looking foolish and not producing. In many ways, I've looked like the runners who were losing instead of someone who has victory in Jesus. Instead of trying to win, I try not to lose and that has greatly limited my effectiveness and creativity.

A few weeks ago I had a dream. I won't go into all the details, but I came to a conclusion as I meditated on the dream itself. The essence of the dream was this: I have not even begun to reach my creative potential. And one of the big issues I faced in the dream is that I never feel I have enough time. Because I feel that, I don't attempt to do things because I am too uptight, too concerned that I won't finish a project or that it won't be "very good." I allow myself to get under pressure and that causes me to "tighten up." In the dream, my creativity was actually pursuing me—I didn't have to go looking for it. That picture alone has caused me to relax and trust more—what I need will come, and it will be fresh and creative. I don't have to strain or make it happen. I just have to enjoy the race, and run with freedom.

How about you? Are you uptight? If you are, then you can't be creative, or as creative as you can be. This week, why not ask yourself why you're so uptight. What is it that is keeping you from your best performance? What are you afraid of? Do you have faith in your creativity or at least the God of your creativity? It's time you address the reasons for your stress and fears. Even tonight, I didn't feel very creative, but I started writing, trusting the Lord and I was able to produce this **Memo**. So there you have it. I don't know if this is a gold medal **Monday Memo**, but that's not important. What's important is that I had faith for time and creativity and they *both* were there when I needed them. With faith, you can have them too. Have a great week!

*The Monday Memo*  
From Harare, Zimbabwe  
Written by Dr. John Stanko  
Issue 172

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I greet you once again from Zimbabwe, my African home away from home. People ask me all the time, “What do you do in Zimbabwe that you go there so often?” While I’m busy here doing this and that, I come because of what I receive and not because of what I do. I always learn so much here, and what I learn I can then take and teach to other places around the world. What’s more, the people here are like family, which makes every visit special. By the way, this time I will visit Bulawayo from September 17-19; I will have more details on that next week in the Memo.

I have come to the conclusion this week that we can live life twice. That’s right, we can live two lives. I’m not talking about reincarnation or leading a double life, but rather experiencing your life events on at least two separate and distinct occasions. How is that possible? I’m glad you asked. I read something this week in Matthew Fox’s book, *Creativity*, that got me thinking along these lines:

Anais Nin once said: “We write to taste life twice.” I agree. I think we write to taste life twice, and we paint and dance and sing and compose and do all art to “taste life twice.” This opportunity to taste life twice is an invitation to go deeper, to miss nothing, to tell others, to experience the joy a second time in the telling and in handing on the depth and mystery of life. When we behold, we become so struck by what it is we want to share. We call that sharing “art.”

That quote got me thinking about what Stephen Covey wrote in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey said everything that is created is created twice: first in the mind or heart and then in reality. So when you create a business for example, you are living that business twice—once in the theoretical and then the practical. Finally, someone else said that our lives are being recorded and will be played back to us in eternity, where we will either weep with joy at the opportunities we took advantage of, or with grief when we see the opportunities we missed.

Since you will live your life twice, either in regret or joy, it is essential that you first focus your mind on what gives you joy and then make every effort to *do* it. I write The Monday Memo in my mind all week and then I sit down on Sunday to actually write it. So I enjoy The Monday Memo all week, and experience it twice. I dreamed about starting my business and ministry and now I get to conduct business all over the world. When I went to Afghanistan last year, I enjoyed the trip, then wrote and taught it about it everywhere I went.

I have even relived my most painful memories by counseling and teaching people about what I learned from those experiences. They were hard to live through, but I have used those failures to make them (and me) into something that could help others.

This means that you need to choose what you will create wisely. Since you have many creative ideas, you want to act on those that will provide the greatest benefit for you and others as they are experienced over and over again. I have chosen writing and teaching as my main creative expressions. My books can live longer than I and my teaching can help shape lives and destinies. What about you? The choice is yours. You can go through life experiencing things only once or you can get in touch with your creativity and live them at least twice. I hope you will choose the creative path that, even though more difficult, produces greater rewards and benefits for you and others. Have a great week!

*The Monday Memo*  
From Harare, Zimbabwe  
Written by Dr. John Stanko

I trust that you are well and prospering in your PurposeQuest. I'm off for a surprise one-day visit to Botswana today and I'll be back tomorrow. I'm sorry I won't have time to visit with my purpose friends there, but I hope to be back soon. In the meantime, I'm enjoying my stay in Zimbabwe, where there's always plenty of productive projects in which I can get involved.

I would like to return to the creativity topic this week and go back to the beginning—the book of Genesis that is. The book begins with the words “God created,” so you can be sure that we have much to learn about creativity from there. Let's focus on chapter two, from which I want to make three points about creativity.

1. “Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field (Genesis 2:19-20). I have made this point before, but our father Adam was a creative genius. After God had created the animals, He brought them to Adam to name. Since we are Adam's children, doesn't it follow that we have the same creative potential that Adam had? God can bring you into new things and you can define and name them, based on your ability to study and create.
2. “Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:22). God used Adam to create Eve by opening Adam's side and borrowing a rib. There was no pain, nor did Adam miss the rib. There were also no scars from this creative operation; God's creation through Adam was a blessing to Adam. When you create, it doesn't have to be a painful process. And what you create is really a part of you that you won't miss. God will replenish anything that you use. That is why rest is so important to the creative process. You need downtime to recharge your creative potential.
3. “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25). Adam and Eve originally felt no shame. Yet something happened when they sinned. They became self-conscious instead of God-conscious and they were afraid. Doesn't it follow that if they felt no shame before sin, that shame came after sin? And shame is one of the main stumbling blocks to your creative expressions.

Why don't you show your art or share your dreams with someone else? Isn't it because you feel shame? Why don't you rejoice in your failures and what they have taught you? Isn't it due to the shame you feel over those failures? Why don't you learn to play the piano? Are you ashamed of how old you are and what others will say? Why don't you try and start that business? Isn't it because you feel naked and vulnerable, which is what caused Adam and Eve to sew together leaves to cover their nakedness? And what parts of their anatomy did they cover? Probably their most creative parts! So we cover our creativity because of shame.

But now that you know this, you can do something about it. Determine this week to not let shame rule your creativity any longer. So what if you can't paint a masterpiece? How many “masters” of art have there been through history? Should that stop you from creating? I think not. I urge you to press through your shame this week to get in touch with your creative power.

And then forget about what others will say and ignore what your own inner critic is saying. Do something this week you've always wanted to do and then keep on doing it. Before long, the creative power that was given to you by your original parents will finally blossom and grow. Have a great week!

*The Monday Memo*  
(Circulation 10,000 and growing!)  
From Harare, Zimbabwe  
Written by Dr. John Stanko  
Issue 174

This week I want to return to the topic of purpose. I've enjoyed this three-month stretch when we've discussed creativity, and I'm sure that I'll return to that topic again soon. But today, I feel like a purpose message is in me. Plus, it's my **Memo**, so I can write whatever I want. Just kidding, just kidding.

In yesterday's daily Proverb, I came across a familiar verse, which reads in the Amplified Version: "Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand" (Proverbs 19:21). I've been thinking about this verse all day and applying it to the work I've done over the years to help people manage their PurposeQuest. Here are some random thoughts on this verse:

1. **Don't** just look for a job and **don't** study something in school because someone told you that there are jobs available in that field of study. Study and do something that you love, whenever and wherever possible. You do something you enjoy because "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Without joy, you don't have God's strength to be purposeful and productive.
2. If God wants you to do His will, He **must** reveal to you what His will is. God is motivated to reveal it to you; are you motivated to find it? The key step is to do what Jesus recommended in John 7:17: "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." Commit to do God's will and purpose **before** you know what it is, and you will find it for sure.
3. Don't put your faith in your ability to hear God's voice; put your faith in God's ability to speak to you. While you are the recipient of a purpose, you can't be the focus in your search or fulfillment. You should keep your eyes on Him, even if you are confused or frustrated in your quest. You have the promise in today's verse that His purpose for you will stand. It's not about you—it's about Him.
4. Tony Robbins said, "Quality questions lead to a quality life." I would adjust that and say, "Quality questions lead you to a quality purpose." If you don't know your purpose, you aren't asking the right questions. What are the right questions, you may ask? Well, that is a quality question in itself! You are on the right path if you are willing to challenge all the plans that you have had in your mind as the verse today stated.
5. God is more motivated for you to fulfill His purpose than you are. He has something for you to do that only you can do; something for you to be that only you can be. Don't give up the quest. And even when you clarify your purpose, don't ever stop refining and seeking how to better fulfill it. Earlier this year, I adjusted my purpose statement to read

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“to *create* order out of chaos” instead of “to *bring* order out of chaos.” That has led me to new vistas of creativity and productivity.

Your PurposeQuest is dynamic and exhilarating. If you’ve been frustrated, make up your mind this week to enjoy your search. Armed with the promise of Proverbs 19:21, remind God that you have a purpose. Thank Him for it even before you know what it is. And determine to make the most of it once God reveals your purpose to you. This week determine to put aside the plans in your own mind to find the mind of God where your purpose is concerned. Have a great week!

*The Monday Memo*  
**(Circulation 10,000 and growing!)**  
**From Johannesburg, South Africa**  
**Written by Dr. John Stanko**  
**Issue 175**

I think I have come up with a way to combine creativity and purpose in this week’s **Memo**. A few weeks ago we added excuse-making to our list of life’s creative expressions (that updated list is available by going to <http://www.purposequest.com/misc.htm>). This week I’ve added “being the person you were never meant to be” to our list of life’s creative expressions. What does that mean? I’m glad you asked.

It takes a lot of creative energy to become who you aren’t, who you were never intended to be. This week I came in contact with several well-trained professionals who were unhappy. Why? Because they had worked so hard to become something and someone that they were never created to be. They just didn’t become unhappy; they’ve been unhappy since the day they began their highly-regarded work. But they have worked to cover their unhappiness, daily donning an alter personality to maintain the charade.

When you express your creativity by becoming someone else, you expend a lot of energy to create, express and maintain that identity. And that creates stress. When you are young, you have extra creative energy to burn, so you can pretend to be happy or fulfilled. As you get older, you don’t have any desire or energy to continue the masquerade.

This week I ran into a great comment by Daniel Goleman, who has written extensively on the topic of emotional intelligence. Goleman said:

“In school—or in the workplace—emotional agitation intrudes on working memory, the brain’s ability to focus and pay attention. In short, stress makes people stupid because it leaves them with less attention to bring to the moment. That is why a leader’s ability to manage emotions is crucial. One study of a large retail chain, for example, showed that store managers who could best handle stress and manage emotions had the highest profitability per square foot of stores. When the Center for Creative Leadership updated its study of leaders who lost their jobs or started to stagnate, they found two main reasons: the failure to adapt to change and the failure to lead a team. Both relate to emotional intelligence and the ability to manage stress.”

Are you forgetting things? Tired at the end of the day, even though you aren’t working any harder than usual? Stagnating at work or at home? One reason may be stress—the stress that comes from managing two separate lives. One life is the person you want to be or think you should be; the other person is who you are. The latter is a matter of purpose—who God created you to be. The former is only a product of your creativity.

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So where do you want to express your creativity? In fulfilling your purpose or creating a professional image? I hope you vote for purpose! If you do, then give some serious thought this week to where you are investing your creativity. I hope that, as you do, you will see that your creativity is directed in the right direction. If not, then take some steps this week to redirect your creativity toward making yourself the person you were intended to be in the first place. Have a great week!