

Creativity. The goal that was too interesting

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

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Some things stay with you don't they? You ever find that? A piece of film, a painting or some words that you think about over and over. Every couple of days it just pops into your head. Ok, maybe it's just me. Anyway, here is one of mine.

Above is a clip of the great George Best playing for Northern Ireland. He is facing the great English goalkeeper Gordon Banks. Gordon Banks wants to kick the ball. He throws it up into the air and the ball has left his hands. And before he can kick it, George Best in a flash kicks it first. He runs past the keeper and headers it into the net. The ball goes into the net. Goooooooooooooooooaaal.

Except it isn't. The referee disallows the goal. To this day, nobody knows why. Strangely, nobody really questioned it that much. Years later, in an interview they asked George Best about the goal and why the ref disallowed it. His answer was simple. The ref disallowed it because he had never seen anybody do it before.

Such a simple answer. No rules were broken. But, because it was a new way it's probably better to say there is something wrong with it. Rather not do it. It might be dangerous. Entire careers have been built on this philosophy. It's very easy to say why something is wrong. It's much riskier to fight for something that might be great. I have been in meetings where

something is 70% right and very interesting yet what is often chosen may be 99% correct but will go unnoticed. The 1% is that nobody will see it. And that is a very large 1%.

I remember reading about an initiative in Silicon Valley where in the first 5 minutes after an idea is presented you have to say why an idea is right rather than wrong. Whatever the thought you had to talk it up. I think that's brilliant. Anything that keeps an idea alive for a few more seconds. Because here's the thing, true creativity breaks patterns and makes new patterns. That is its job. Initially it will challenge or break the existing pattern. So, it might seem wrong if you only compare it to what you know. However, it also might change everything and give you a new way forward. Which is the true power of creative thought. So, take a breath and give it a minute. Fight for the idea rather than against it.

On a personal level, this happened to me as a kid at school in art class. I had this idea to mix two art styles together. Namely, cubism and pointillism. So, I did a painting. Granted, it might have been shit. But, it did have a thought that could have gone somewhere or at the very least discussed. The art teacher took one look at it and said you can't do that. I asked why. She said because it is not allowed. Apparently, even art has rules and unbreakable patterns.

George Best scored that interesting goal 50 years ago. Northern Ireland ended up losing the match to England 1-0. I doubt anybody remembers the other goal.

“ *Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist. - Pablo Picasso* ”

ABOUT DAMON STAPLETON

Damon is regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia. Before that, ECD at Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, before that, group ECD of TBWA Hunt Lascaris and global ECD of Standard Bank. He has won over 500 awards internationally, including a D&AD Black Pencil, Cannes Grand Prix, Grand Clio, ADC Black Cube and most effective ad in the world by Warc 100. Damon is now regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia...

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