

The preachers and the busker

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

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A couple of days ago I was walking down a windy Queen Street, the main street in Auckland. It is a street every port city has.



Image © [Damon's Brain](#)

It is heady mix of high-end fashion stores, tourists that have just stumbled off a massive, impossibly white cruiseliner plus a few people from the streets that are so high, they are angrily arguing with a bus stop.

It was a Saturday afternoon and the street wasn't that busy. As I made my way through the shuffling shoppers, I began to notice different religious groups every hundred metres or so. They had many pamphlets and a variety of magnificent beards. Cheap megaphones were distorting the precious words coming from a strange combination of angry, smiling mouths just below unflinching, unfocused eyes. To me, the information did not match the delivery. The 'what' had nothing to do with the 'how'.

Each group was stridently espousing their beliefs. Strangely, there was even an anti-religious group doing exactly the same thing as the religious groups next to them. They even looked the same. The people passing by would noticeably increase their pace as they were verbally assaulted by each torrent of vital information. It became comical to watch. The speed of the walking would increase as the preachers' volume increased.

I kept walking and I noticed a small crowd. I thought perhaps it would be another preacher. It wasn't.

It was a young busker. He was singing and playing a bashed-up guitar and had his guitar case open. He was relaxed and looked pretty happy. He was having a good time. There were a couple of notes and coins from his playing. The difference was stark. Quite a few people stopped but even those who didn't, slowed down. And they listened. And they laughed. And they gave that busker their time.

In the space of a couple of hundred metres, I had seen a fantastic argument as to why creativity makes all the difference. In a single city block, I saw how it can take information and transform it into a gift. A gift, that makes you want to listen and understand.

The fire and brimstone preachers and remarkably similar anti-preachers incorrectly thought people would listen to their messages because they thought the message was important. They thought the very important information they had would be enough. If they spoke, everybody would listen. But they didn't. They walked faster.

On the other hand, the busker didn't say, 'you have to listen to me'. He said, 'would you like to feel something?' He said, 'can we share something together?' He said, 'would you like to dance?' And then, those windswept shoppers listened to every word.

The preachers were saying *what they felt* was important. The busker was saying that *what you felt* was important.

It might explain why you find so much music in churches.

"One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain." – Bob Marley

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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