

How to make a Neo-Nazi sad

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

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When the tragedy of Charlottesville was only a couple of days old, I came across something from all that sadness that made me smile.

Some KKK members were marching down a street. On the sidewalk was a man keeping pace with them. In the video below, he has a large tuba. Perhaps, the most humorous of instruments in the brass section. He is playing musical themes from cartoons and films that are in time with their marching. I particularly like the *Star Wars Stormtrooper* theme.

So, there you have all these angry men with shaved heads trying to intimidate and look threatening, being rendered ridiculous and powerless by one man playing a cartoon theme tune. This is what creativity can do:

Here is another fantastic example of what creativity can do to change the game. A couple of years ago, I remember seeing a case study from Germany (Video below) about a town of around 10,000 people called Wunsiedel. The residents were fed up with Neo-Nazis marching through their town. You see, it was the birth place of Rudolf Hess, the deputy to Adolf Hitler. And because of this, the Neo-Nazis had been making an annual pilgrimage to the burial site for over 25 years.

The town's solution was ingenious. In 2014, Wunsiedel residents created Germany's most involuntary charity walk. The

idea of the walk, labeled “Nazis against Nazis,” was to make the neo-Nazis’ march the trigger for an anti-Nazi fundraiser. For every metre the Neo-Nazis walked, donors agreed to give €10 to an organisation that helps Neo-Nazis and other right-wing extremists escape radicalism. In essence, the Neo-Nazis were marching against themselves. So simple, so perfect.

This is why creativity is so powerful. Creativity is made up of many things, but at its core lies humour and humanity. This allows you to change the rules of the game without confrontation. In both examples, nobody asked the Neo-Nazis to do anything different. And there was no opposition or violence.

Creativity simply changed the context and the purpose. This mischief and alchemy gives you the ability to create the reality you want rather than one others want to impose on you. It lets you write the script, no matter what the circumstances.

This is the power creativity has. It loves difference and every reality. It laughs at life and uncertainty. It celebrates mischief and imperfection. It is made of freedom and the ability to change.

It is what those marchers will never understand and, if you look at history, it is what often becomes an authoritarian movements Achilles' heel.

A group of people with a narrow, dogmatic set of rules can and will always eventually be beaten by a single human being who can create his or her own.

And has a tuba.

“Are you a communist?” “No I am an anti-fascist.” “For a long time?” “Since I have understood fascism.” - Ernest Hemingway, *For whom the bell tolls*.

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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