

Ideas are like goldfish... easy to kill

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

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Ideas are truly the most beautiful things. They have such power and at the same time they are completely fragile...

I have seen ideas born because the right people were in the room. I have also seen them happen because the wrong people were in the room. They can come from an argument or two people laughing their ass off. I have seen them happen instantly and over months and years. Some days they are impossible to find, the next day it is so obvious and they were there all along.

I have seen them change lives and the world. And yet, we don't often value them.



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I don't know where ideas come from but I have worked with a few great creatives that have taught me a few things you need to do to find them.

The greatest creatives work with what's in the room. They don't judge the ideas at first, they play with them. That creates trust and a space where all things are possible.

You cannot underestimate trust. My worst creative sessions are when ego comes into play or everybody thinks their idea is the best.

Fear and creativity cannot exist in the same space. If there is fear, nobody has so called stupid ideas. And stupid ideas are

the key to everything. They are the doorways to greatness. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard the words, I know this is dumb or wrong but... And moments later, we have cracked it.

If you work in an agency where you can't have stupid ideas, resign. Today. You will never do anything great there.

Trust creates flow. And flow is another way you get somewhere special. When you see a great creative team working together their understanding verges on telepathic. They finish each other's sentences. It creates so much energy. And this creates a feeling where the ideas you have had have to be made at all costs. Those are the days that make being a creative special.

Lastly, listening. Great creatives have taught me to listen. Sometimes the idea is in bits. One person's words. Another person's joke. A drawing. What somebody said when they were making tea. It is there, you just have to create the space for it to appear.

And once you have them, you have to protect them. There are many who will tell you why an idea is wrong. And sometimes they are right. There are many who will encourage you when you have an idea that is a piece of shit. And then there is what's going on in your head. Keeping an idea alive takes bravery, judgement and probably some madness. In the end though, belief is what will get it across the line.

And belief is not something anybody else can have for you.

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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