

As the police approached, the timing was too perfect for me to even realize it in the moment. I was already 50 or so into a stack of my mis-printed t-shirts without one that looked like something I would buy in a store. The nature of the crowd that had formed around me on the corner of Taylor and Golden Gate Avenue went from curious to cautious. Making the matter seem even a bit more strange, the police officer was wearing matching blue rubber gloves. "You cant sell stuff here." was the way he introduced himself, "I'm not, the shirts are free." his reply almost automatic, "Why?"

*I have to admit he'd asked a great question. **I could only say** something about art and giving he seemed too skeptical to really be listening with a look that seemed I had just started speaking in a language no one understood. As we all stood there in a circle with me at the center my then girlfriend arrived apprehensively setting down a box containing what I thought would be muffins we would add to the stack of mis printed t-shirts to give away. Although she'd gone to the store to buy muffins she felt would make everyone happy, I opened the box to offer the officer one, only to find she returned with a dozen donuts. Me offering him a donut might have been the biggest hit ever considering my audience, that had burst into laughter. As he walked away shaking his head, it truly began before I could see what it even was.*

"Could you paint me?" , no "Have him draw you for a shirt.", "Could you make a shirt of my friend, I haven't seen in seven years?", "What about of my cousin, he died, my whole family would love it and we'd all wear 'em?"

The project was being birthed, right in front of me, crowd sourced on the street, where the eventual vendors were building the idea of the platform on which they would operate. What proved to have a profound effect on the individuals life while also possessing incredible scalability. I began drawing the portraits of those I met on the street. They would come to sell and distribute their own shirt keeping 100% of the profit.

This would open a door I never knew existed, meeting people I'd only ever walked by, spending christmas in miniature tent cities under the freeway. Inevitably giving not only the homeless but myself a new sense of identity and the potential to create positive change for a single person while also possessing the level of scalability I dream of. The project created not just a new identity for the "vendors" but made them truly an entrepreneur selling a t-shirt that bore their own likeness. They carried not just the potential of keeping 100% of the profit but the possibility that every passerby could become a potential client.

The passerby though was not simply a potential client, but a supporter, a listener, and then a storyteller too. Supporting the vendor through purchase as well as absorbing some of his backstory which they would tell forward as well as wear themselves.

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