gdc producer bootcamp | mar 14

ethan levy | monetization design consultant | @FamousAspect

people management survival guide

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STAR WARS
BATTLEFRONT

DINER DASH
Hometown Hero

DRAGON AGE
LEGENDS
COMING SOON

Wedding Dash

Red Bull

TANKI
ONLINE

GUNS & ROBOTS

BATTLEFIELD
heroes
www.battlefield-heroes.com

JEWEL QUEST
MYSTERIES
CURSE of the EMERALD TIGER

I NEED A HERO

KINGS of the REALM
WE FLED.
NOW WE MUST FIGHT.

THE LAST STAND
DEAD ZONE

CRUSH CASTLE
ADVENTURES

DRAGON AGE
LEGENDS REMIX 01

MYSTERY OF
Shark Island

SIEGE HERO
AGE OF WIZARDS

TIC
TACTICS
XO

DEAD MAN'S DRAW

TINY
CASTLE

ARMOR GAMES PRESENTS
SEQUESTER
BEGIN
MORE GAMES

MIRROR'S
EDGE

Mlgaru90 ▸ Stephen Totilo 3

If any major publisher ever hires this man for "blockbuster" titles, I will quit gaming forever, or at least modern gaming.

Today 10:08am

kinetlcdamage ▸ Mlgaru90

Yeah, he's like ... the forbidden gamedesigner !

21 minutes ago

FULLFORCE098 / *NOVEMBER 7*

"When I compare Arkham Origins to Gods Among Us, my sense as a player and a game designer is that NetherRealms has made an undoubtedly better game, but a worse free-to-play product."

BURN. IN. HELL.

[redacted] ▸ Stephen T... 1

Ethan Levy - you are a *horrible* person.

YOU are what's wrong with video games.

Today 10:32am

Eight-Bit Generation ▸ Etha... 1

What annoys me about this article is that I agree with the general premise (that free-to-play videogames are not inherently bad and are a response to market pressure) but I really hate the condescending, offensive, effete, stereotypical San Francisco attitude

Everything written in this article, and its author, continue to jade me this industry more and more. I need alcohol. This made me want to vomit.

[–] **Yashakiden** 1 point 2 hours ago

You are exactly the sort of people who are ruining gaming. Pure, unadulterated evil.

[–] [redacted] [score hidden] 39 minutes ago

Get it through your thick skull that CONSUMERS HATE F2P PAY GATES, which seem to be an idea you spurt off about nonstop since developers and the marketing [redacted] like them. You are damaging this industry. Please stop it. Figure out a way to both get paid and keep your integrity.

permalink save parent report give gold reply

[–] [redacted] [score hidden] 26 minutes ago

Let's talk about Dragon Age Legends. I cannot believe ANYONE would hire you as a consultant after that [redacted] abomination of the ideas your seem to love so much for some reason. Great job "producing" it into the dumpster. You're such a failure and cancer to this industry. Just leave and go grub for money elsewhere, [redacted].

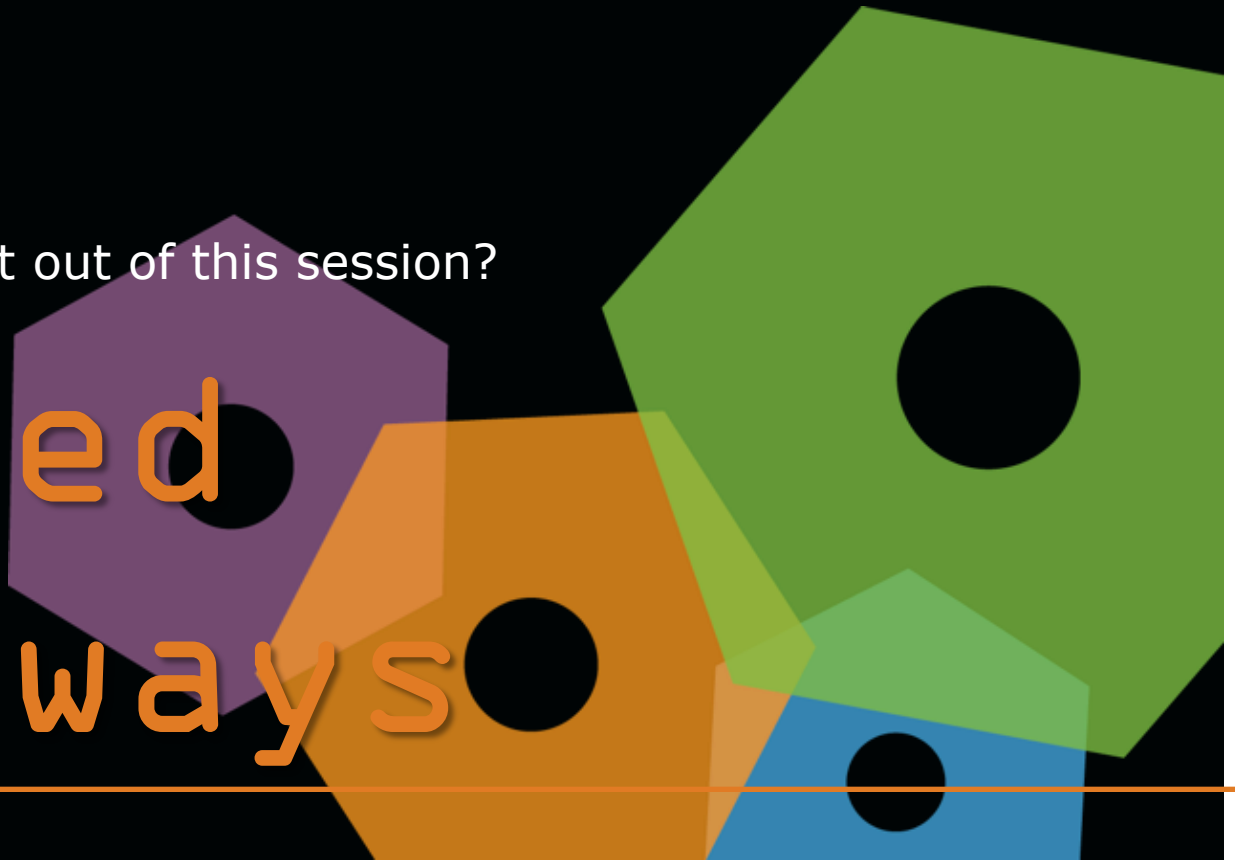
Cialis.

Look at the author's job title. Just look at it. That's not a career, that's a punishment for being an abusive prison guard in a past life.

Ben Kuchera, Senior Editor (on Penny Arcade Report)

what do you want to get out of this session?

desired takeaways



SundayReview | CONTRIBUTING OP-ED WRITER

What You Learn in Your 40s

FEB. 28, 2014

Pamela Druckerman

EMAIL
FACEBOOK
TWITTER
SAVE
MORE

PARIS — IF all goes according to plan, I'll turn 44 soon after this column appears. So far in my adult life, I've never managed to grasp a decade's main point until long after it was over. It turns out that I wasn't supposed to spend my 20s frantically looking for a husband; I should have been building my career and enjoying my last gasp of freedom. I then spent my 30s ruminating on grievances accumulated in my 20s.

This time around, I'd like to save time by figuring out the decade while I'm still in it. Entering middle age in Paris — the world's epicenter of existentialism — isn't terribly helpful. With their signature blend of subtlety and pessimism, the French carve up midlife into the "crisis of the 40s," the "crisis of the 50s" and the "noonday demon" (described by one French writer as "when a man in his 50s falls in love with the babysitter").

The modern 40s are so busy it's hard to assess them. Researchers describe the new "rush hour of life," when career and child-rearing peaks collide. Today's 40ish professionals are the DITT generation: double income, toddler twins.

“**There are no grown-ups.** We suspect this when we are younger, but can confirm it only once we are the ones writing books and attending parent-teacher conferences. **Everyone is winging it,** some just do it more confidently.”

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how did I get here

so you're a manager now

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hard skills

soft skills

from bro(ette) to boss

limited role models

the basics

- Approve PTO
- Sign time cards
- Annual reviews
- Approve expenses
- Hiring and firing
- Legal issues and company practices

father mother brother sister counselor teacher therapist manager

growing careers

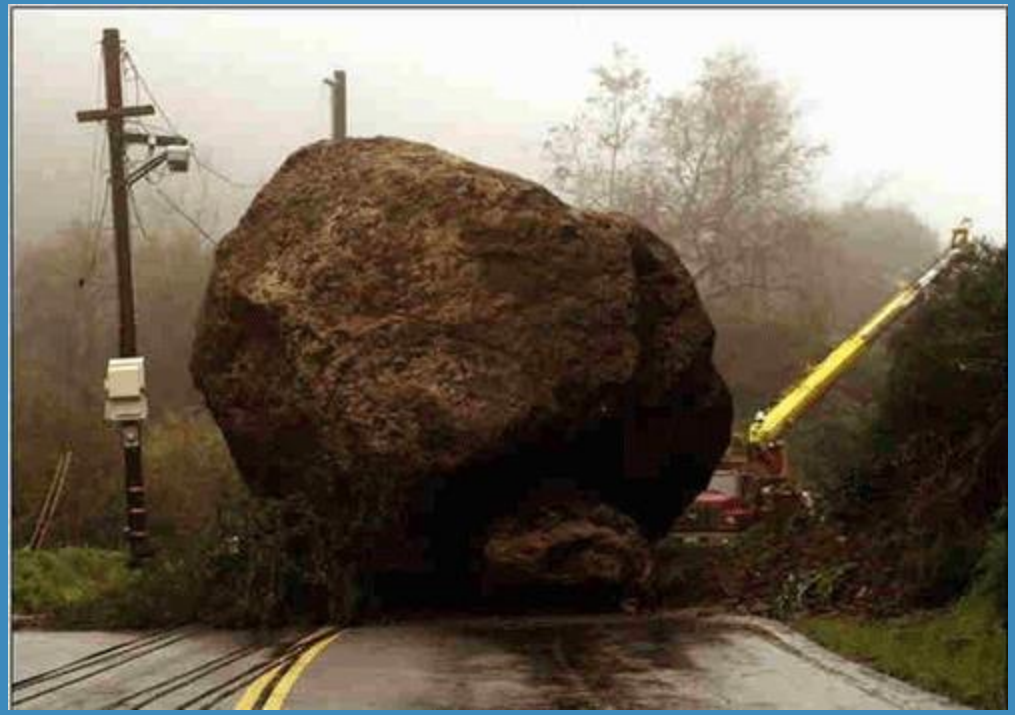
management is investing

one on ones

one on ones

one on ones

short term goals



assessment and feedback

long term goals

prepare and postmortem

- Track each employee with a standard worksheet
- Short and long term goals
- Major accomplishments
- Areas for improvement
- PTO days | last vacation | salary history
- Prepare an agenda for each session
- Review each session after it’s over

how to turbo charge your management

additional tools

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team scorecard

- High level report for your boss
- Regularly update them on team health
- Highlight major accomplishments/issues/concerns
- Filter down to your reports who manage

team health survey

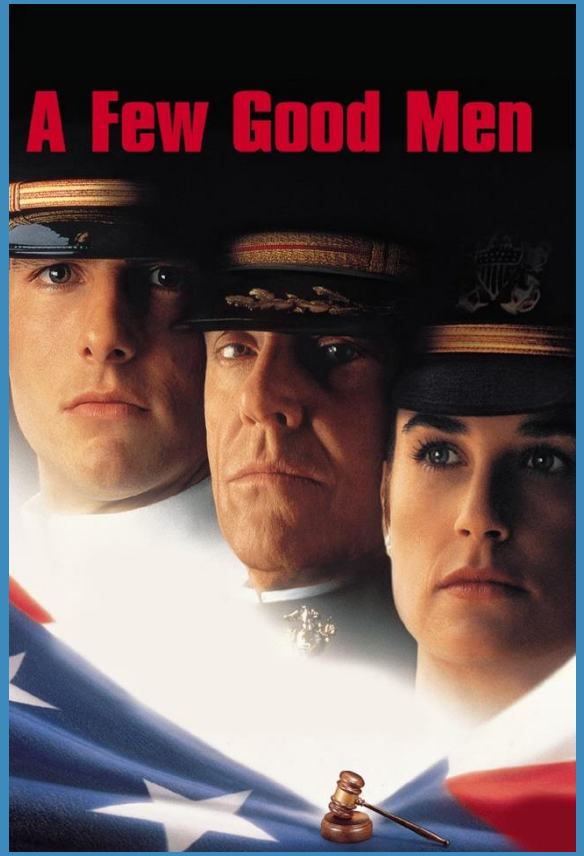
skip levels

game jams

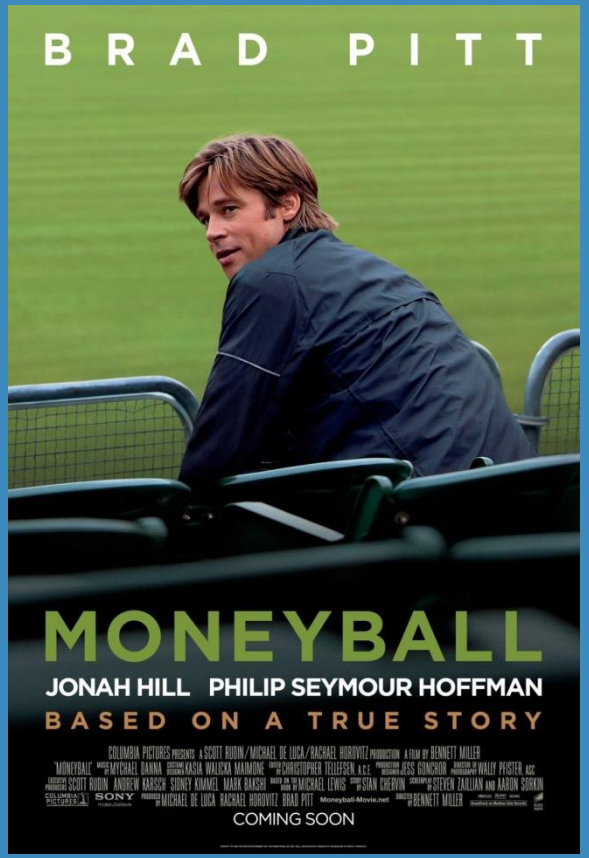
fantasies for how I should have acted

Sorkining

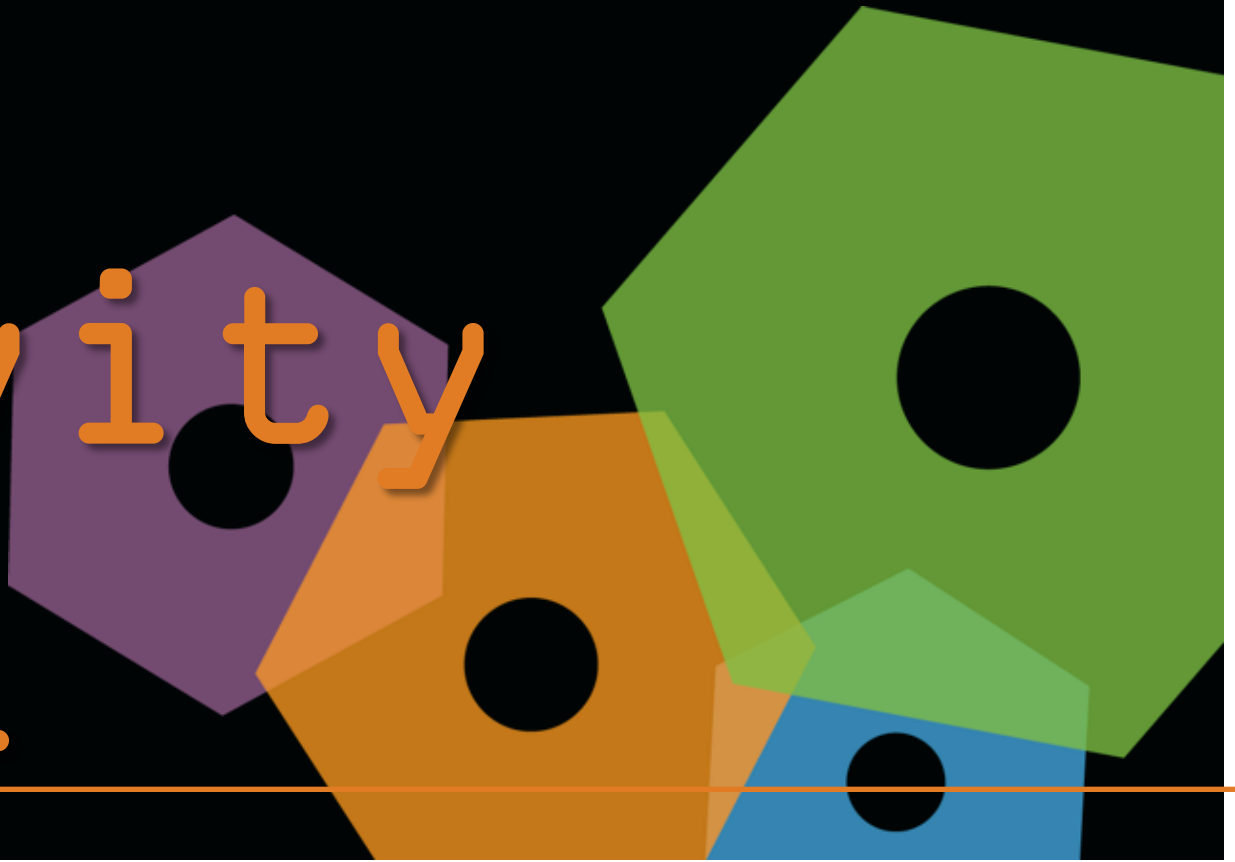
FamousAspect.com



the social network



gravity well



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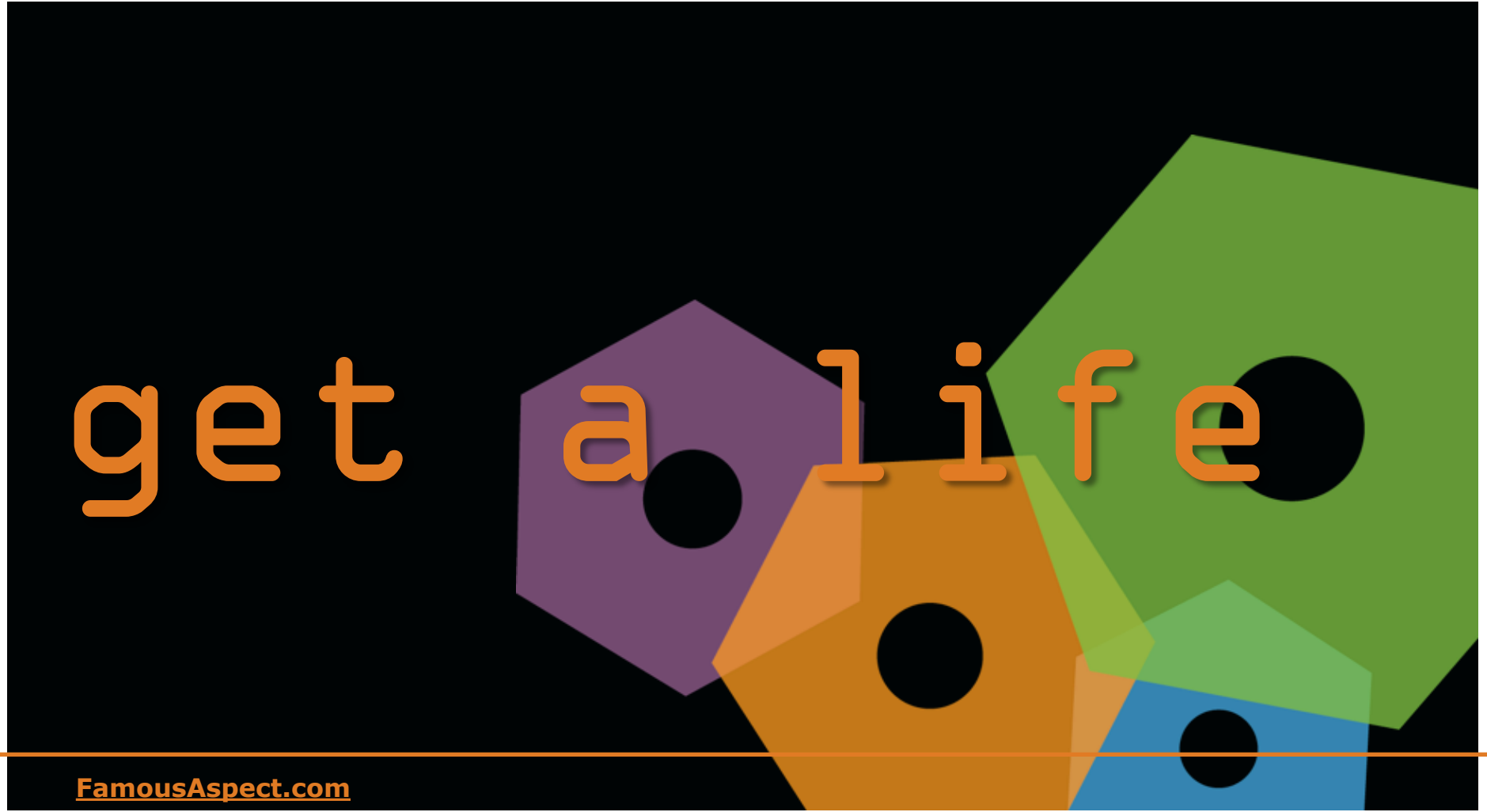
You need to stop working and go home.
But if I stop fixing things we will miss our milestone.
Maybe we need to miss our milestone this time.


get a life

What'd you do this weekend? I went hiking and learned to make pot roast..
I was here working on that unassigned task even though our sprint's on track.
I'm confiscating your computer. You need to live a life outside these walls.

the whammy jammers

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What are you so busy working on?
I'm just flib-flarbing the whammy jammers.
You have 6 hours to explain to me what it is you do here.

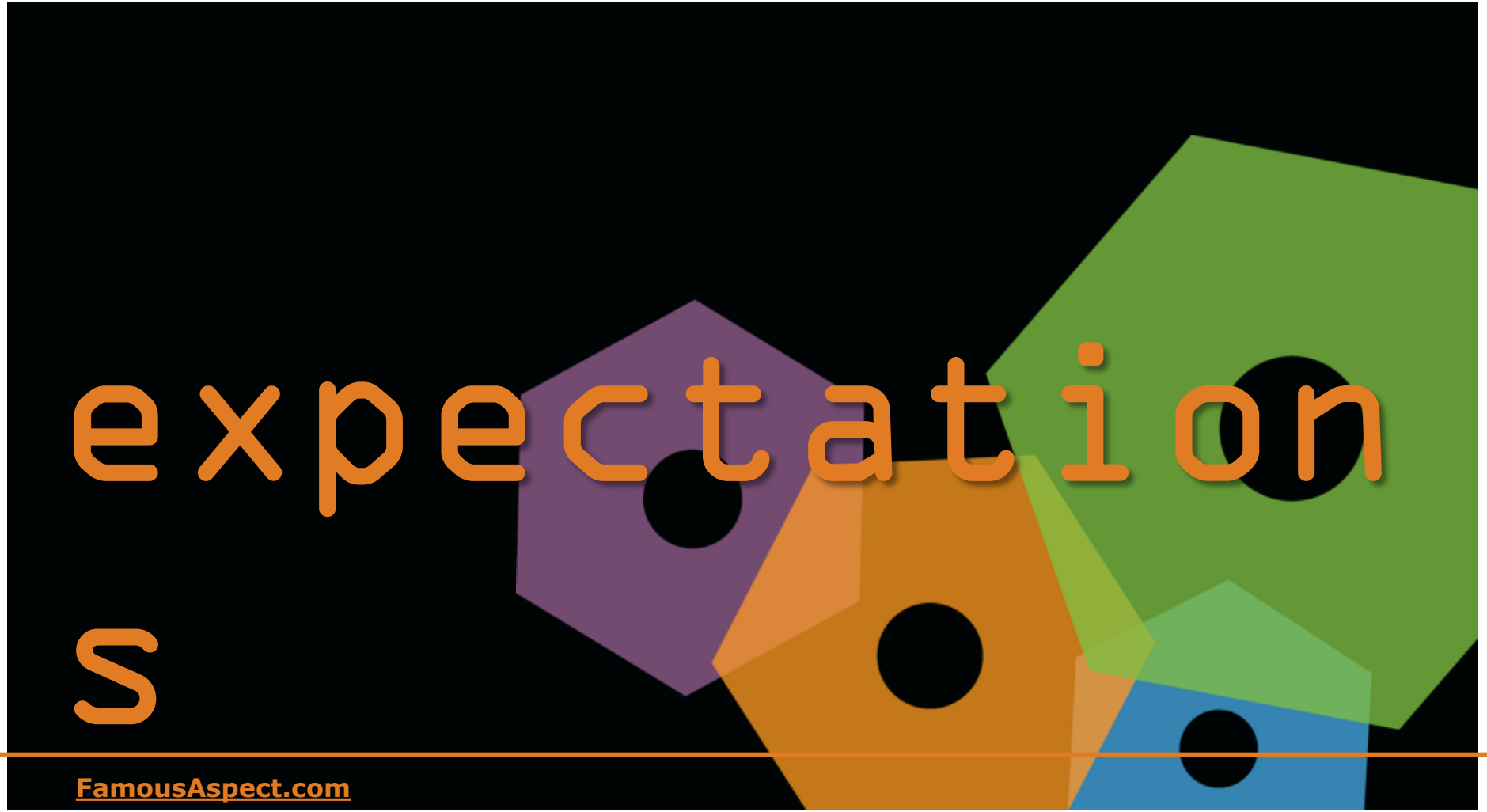
delegation

FamousAspect.com

How's that employee who you've been complaining about for months?
They are still doing sub par work and taking extended breaks.
Either you fire them or I will fire you.

hats

You’re the natural leader of this team, so I’m making you the Lead.
But I’m too young / inexperienced / unsure of myself.
You’re not getting a raise. Just a hat that says Lead. If you suck I’ll take it back.


expectation
s

I reviewed your latest task submissions.
…
Your work does not meet my expectations.

maturity

No one wants to work with you because of how you react to their ideas.
But their ideas are stupid and mine are right.
Their ideas aren't stupid. You're just immature.

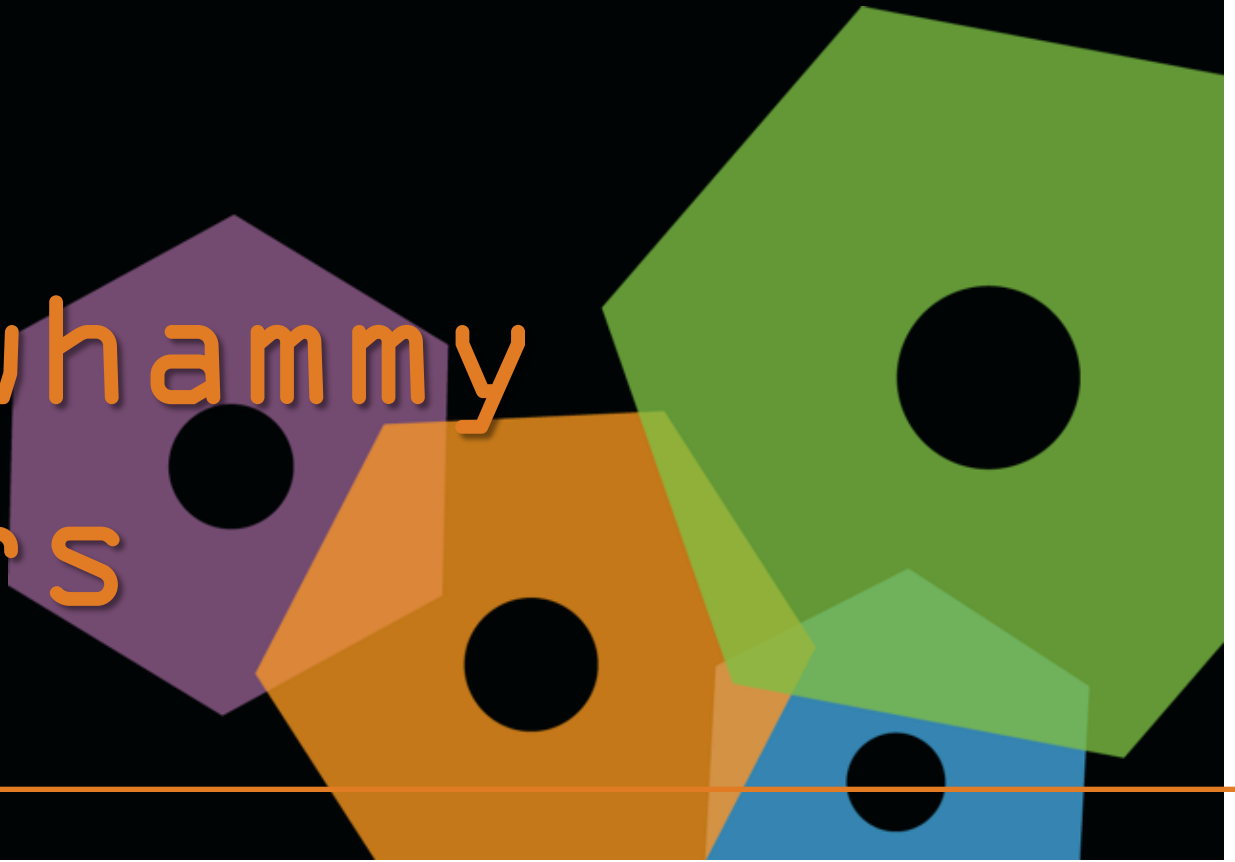
philosophy

I've been told from multiple sources that your code is difficult to work with.
Well I just follow a different code philosophy than other members of the team.
Then follow theirs.

toxic

You spend a lot of time at teammate's desks bad mouthing the project.
…
If you're this unhappy with the project then you need to leave it…

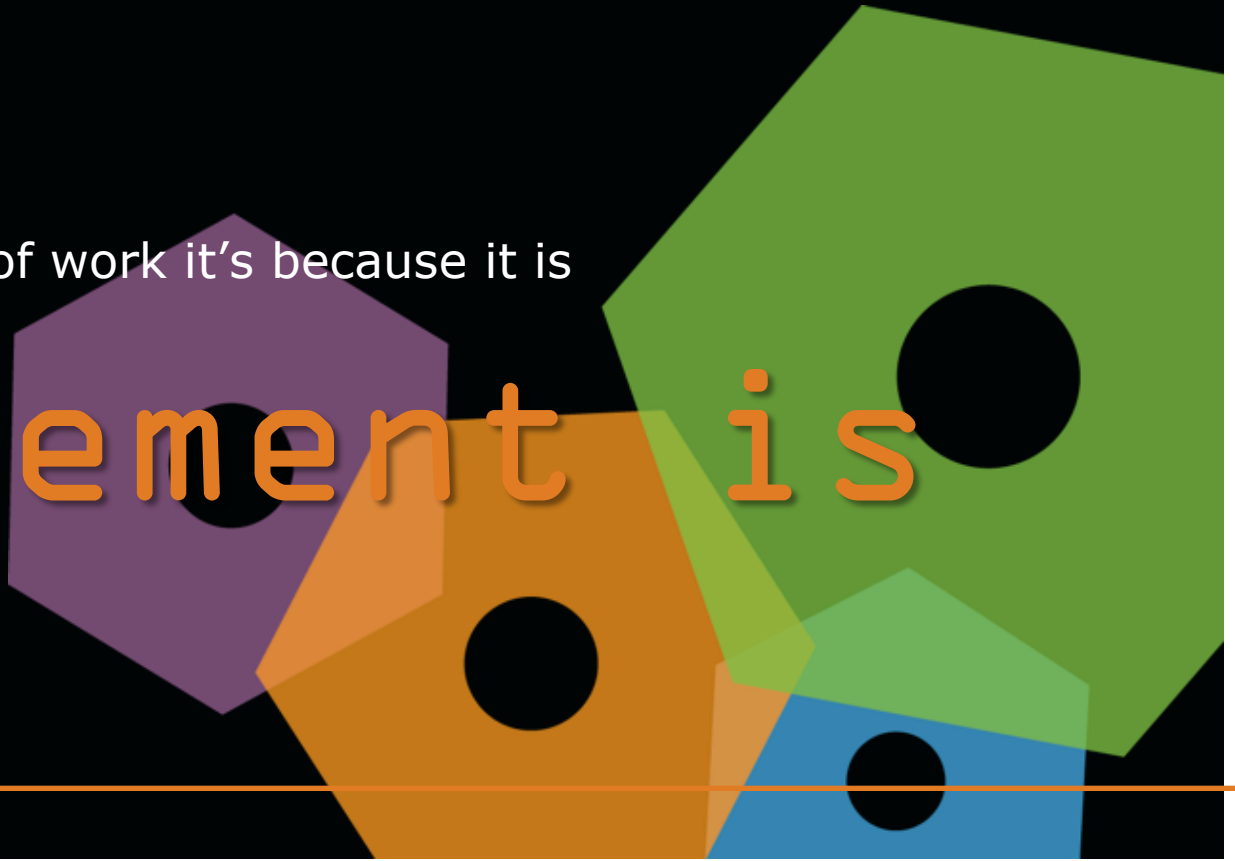
more whammy jammers

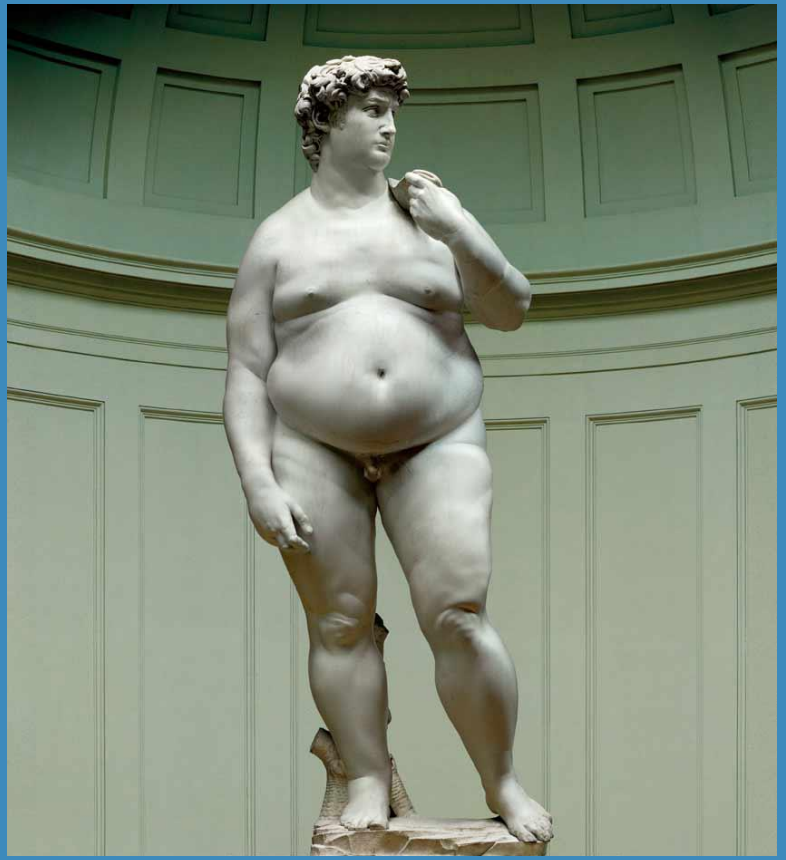


I need you to work on the whammy jammers.
But I don't like the whammy jammers.
We appear to have different definitions for what your job is.

if this sounds like a lot of work it’s because it is

management is hard





Request for PhD Program Applications Reference

Social Life x

Ben [redacted] 11/9/12

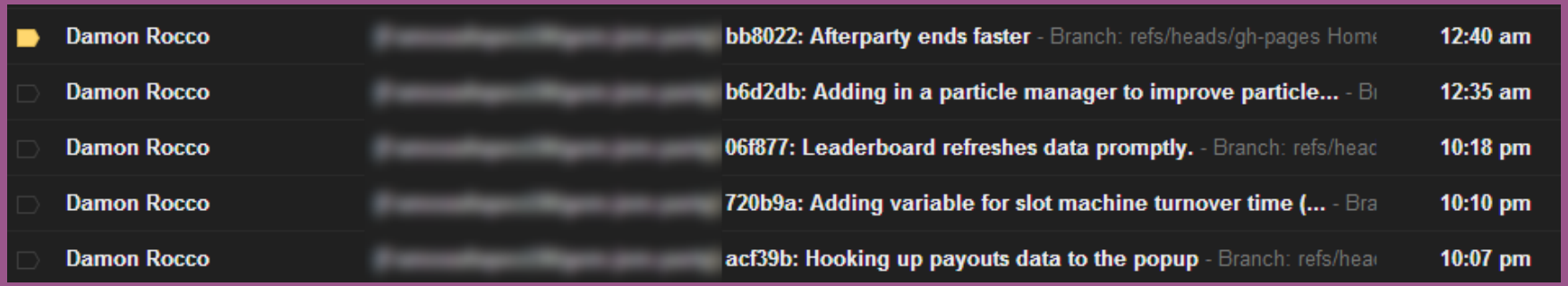
to me

Hi Ethan!

Greetings from the far north outpost of Vancouver! Hope you're having a fine week. I've been enjoying watching the various paths of EA 2D folks in the past couple years, so I was happy to hear about the new Quarter Spiral collaboration between you and Alex. I follow your blog posts with far more fervor than is suitable for somebody who isn't an active member of the game development community :).

As you may recall, I've been having a grand time working on my MSc degree at the University of British Columbia since I left EA 2D, and I've lately been debating whether to continue on in academia for a PhD in computer science or to return to commercial game development. After a not insignificant chunk of time considering the issue, I've decided to go the academic route and begin applications for PhD programs beginning in Fall 2013. My interests have focused even more sharply on the topics that most interested me when I first started grad school: realistic and responsive character control/animation and interactive environments. Following completion of my PhD (which should take ~5 years), I intend to return to either the games industry proper or a related middleware company (eg: NaturalMotion) to do cutting-edge character animation work.

A critical part of these applications are letters of reference from past faculty and employers. Based on my time working on the *Dragon Age* projects while you acted as producer/project lead, I believe that you have by far the most comprehensive view on my productive capabilities as a software engineer in industry. As such, I wanted to ask whether you would be willing to write a letter of reference on my behalf for inclusion with my PhD applications.



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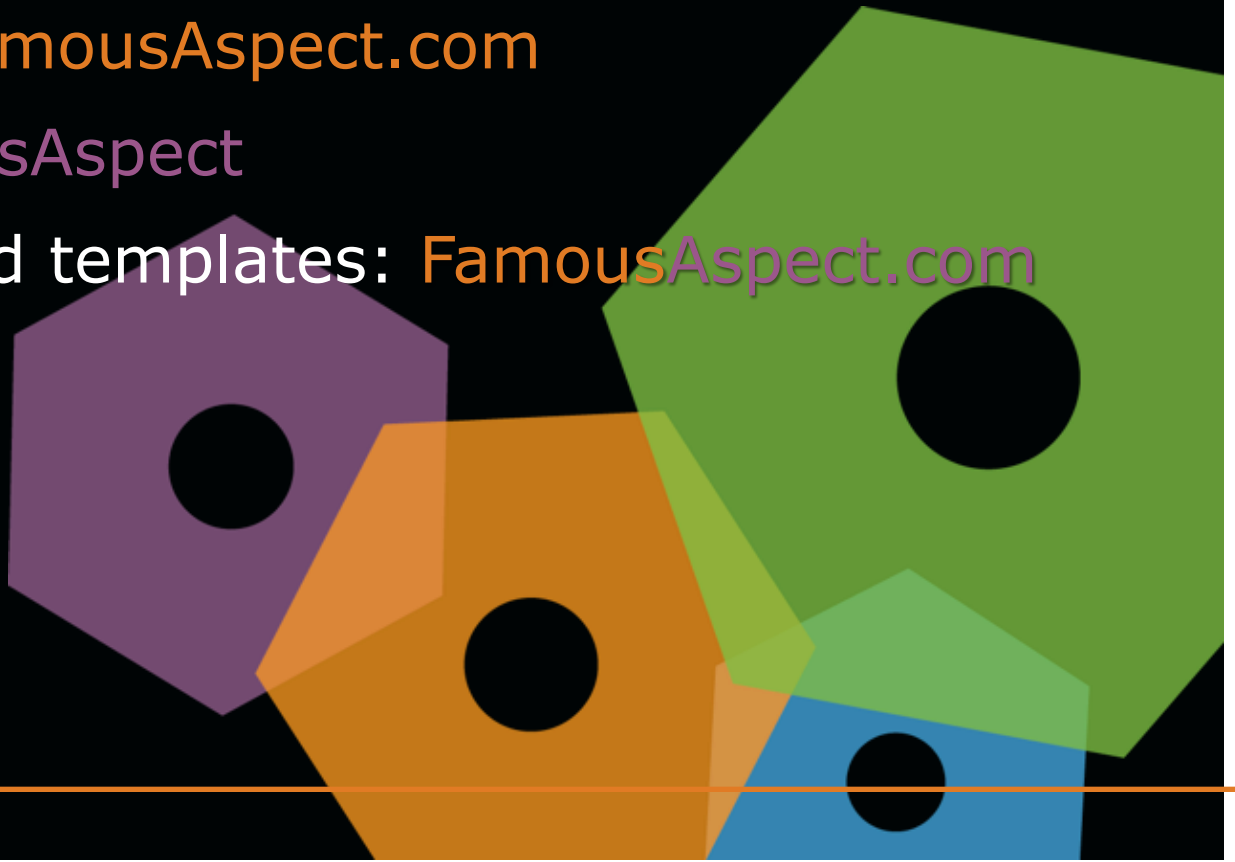
“…calling yourself a 'professional jew' isn't a step up. Ditch that, and knock it off. **If you're going to use humor, make fun of yourself.**”

continue the conversation

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