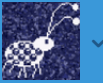




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Great ideas and great inspiration

Everything I know about managing designers I've learned from coaching youth sports by Albert Poon

by  Anne Gibson 6 months ago 9 Views



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@briancrumley

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bringing [#forgeconf](#) home! [@albertpoon](#) of [@odopod](#) takes the stage

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He comes from the land of \$10 ice cream and \$600 shoes, a digital design agency called Odopod [#ForgeConf](#)

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21 interaction and visual designers at an agency. They do human centered design. [#Forgeconf](#)

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More important than process in the long term is people - the teams they create and the teams they become [#Forgeconf](#)

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"People are weird, man." [#Forgeconf](#)

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Albert asked a few of the audience members who were UX managers to talk about what they love about managing.



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Best part of managing other designers is the collaboration
(audience member) - ideas you couldn't come up with yourself
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And also what they found challenging...



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Giving constructive and clear feedback, and not doing the work
yourself, is hard (audience member). Not being in the trenches
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Challenges after managing >5 years (audience member) are
managing specific tasks or clients to personalities . More
confident [#Forgeconf](#)

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Albert: I lead because I want to be part of something bigger than I can do myself, use design in a way that has impact,
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I love high-stakes design. The thrill of if we don't do this right we go out of business [#ForgeConf](#)

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"if you have a vision to do something big with design, you will have to lead a team" - [@albertpoon](#) [#forgeconf](#)

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You need to have a high performing team and be a good leader
[#ForgeConf](#)

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The first time designing: didn't want to give feedback, hurt feelings. Followed HR protocol w/o understanding [#ForgeConf](#)

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(The first time managing, even.)



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Second time: he learned how to manage not from another design team, but from being a youth coach of baseball [#Forgeconf](#)

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Leaders are completely responsible and you have no control. Never up to bat, never in the field [#Forgeconf](#)

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If you're working with kids who can't hit catch or throw you either go insane or you get good at coaching [#Forgeconf](#)

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@MandaLaceyS

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@albertpoon and you can either choose to be insane or inspired. #forgeconf

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You can't do everyone's job. Corollary: any success is theirs, and any failure is yours. #Forgeconf

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Your job is to build and nurture a team so they can do great design #Forgeconf

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"everyone knows what you're about" - @albertpoon #forgeconf

you can't hide anything and you can't fool anybody. your values are out there

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Everyone knows what you're about. Are you The Screamer?
Blaming everyone else when things don't go right. [#Forgeconf](#)

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How you deal with your least skilled players shows more about
your values than the superstars. Your values are transparent
[#Forgeconf](#)

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Are you on your phone in meetings? What do you reply to
immediately? What do you put off? How do you deal w/
success/failure? [#Forgeconf](#)

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If you don't like your values, change them - and not in a micro
way. [#Forgeconf](#)

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People don't need you to tell them your values. They need you to show them. [#Forgeconf](#)

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Set the standards that matter. Set the standards for the behavior & quality you want. Don't do it to everything [#ForgeConf](#)

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Follow instructions and support teammates - if that's more important than show up on time - say so and explain why & stick to it [#Forgeconf](#)

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Think about what's important to you and focus on those. Know what to care about and what to leave out. What actually matters? [#Forgeconf](#)

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“work with your team where they are” - @albertpoon #forgeconf

assess your teams current skills and determine the desired output

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Don't worry about situational hitting if your team can't hit the ball. Where is your team now and where are they going? #Forgeconf

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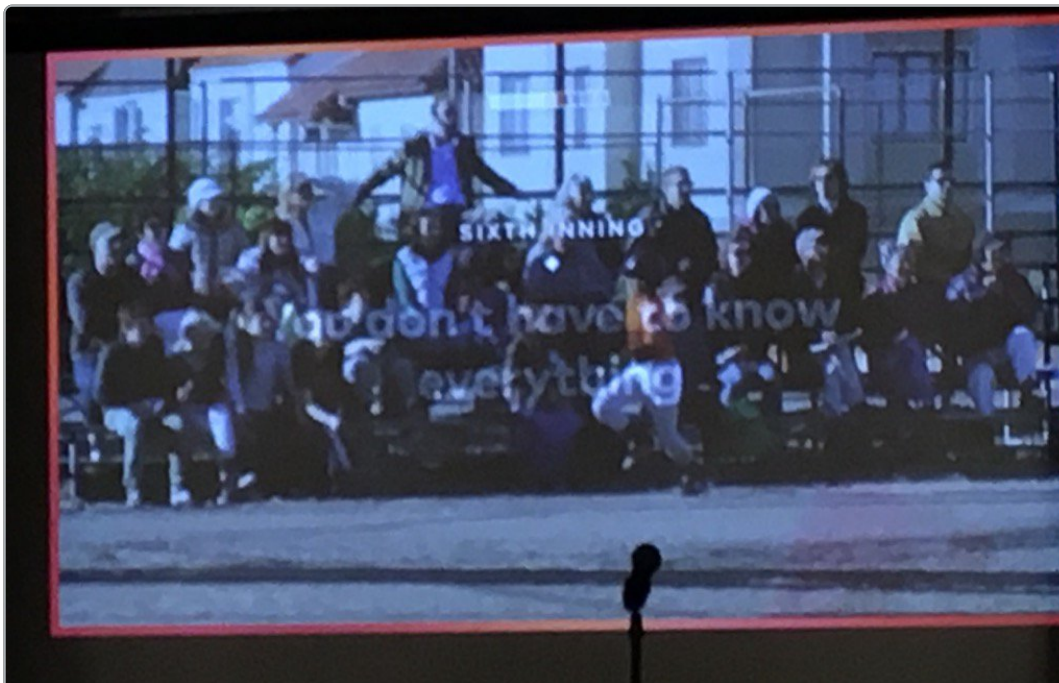
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Honestly assess your team's skills and what they need. Don't obsess on what they can't do, or compare them to other better teams #Forgeconf

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Amanda Stockwell

@MandaLaceyS

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'You don't have to know everything' thank god and amen

[@albertpoon](#) [#forgeconf](#)

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You don't have to know everything. If you know someone who knows something, get them to explain it instead [#Forgeconf](#)

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Ask the catcher what they think. As the hitter how they want to approach a problem. [#Forgeconf](#)

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If someone knows illustrator better than everyone else, will they teach? Sketch? Keynote? Get designers to teach each other [#Forgeconf](#)

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You gotta manage the “parents” too. Parents pay the fees. They drop off players on time (Or not). They encourage or discourage [#ForgeConf](#)

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What do your bosses / clients want out of the team by the end of the season? Set expectations [#Forgeconf](#)

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The better you meet clients needs the more valuable your team is. Understand what customer expects & their business objective [#ForgeConf](#)

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Make the play in front of you. It's a perfect metaphor for all decisions in life. [#Forgeconf](#)

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Teen umpires blow calls. Players blow plays. Imagine how they feel when it goes wrong. Wanted to be the hero! [#ForgeConf](#)

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Everyone wants to succeed. Yelling won't make a failure any better. [#ForgeConf](#)

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The only thing you need from your team right now is doing what is best right now [#ForgeConf](#)

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You need your team to perform right now regardless of what you planned. Fix the larger issues when you can [#Forgeconf](#)

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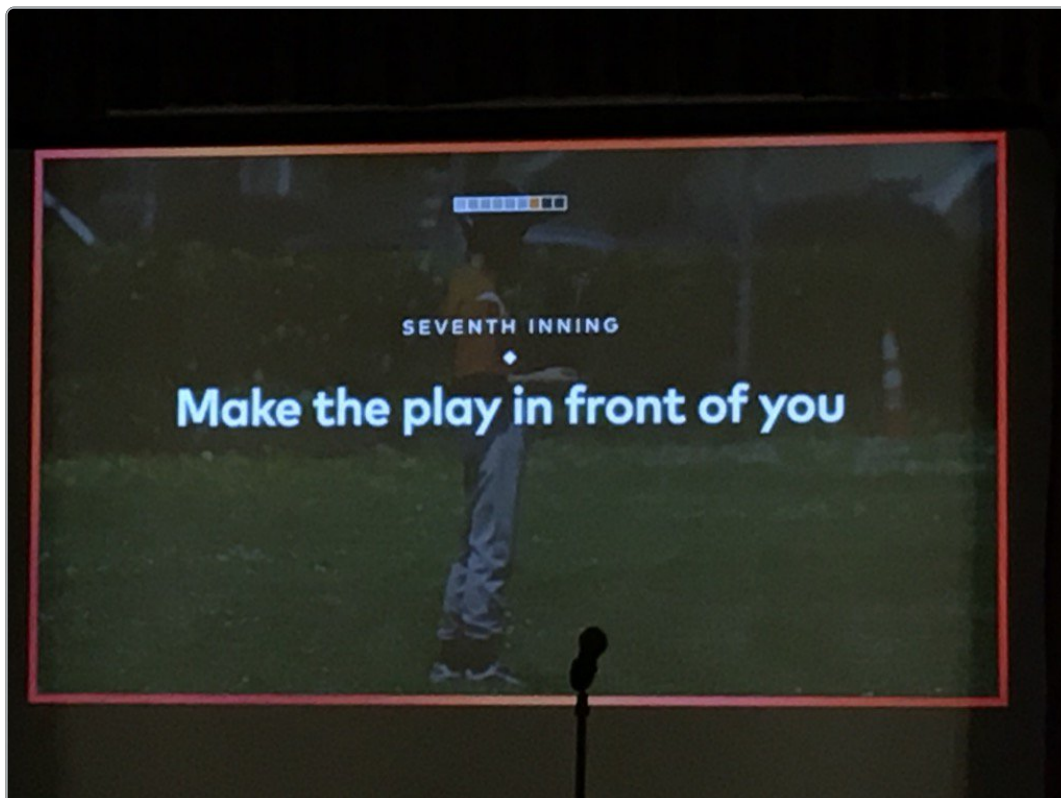
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You need to model how you want people to react to these things because they learn from you. Make the play in front of you [#Forgeconf](#)

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Amanda Stockwell

@MandaLaceyS

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Shit happens. Stuff doesn't work. Make the best of the here & now. [@albertpoon](#) [#forgeconf](#)

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The last player still bats. Everyone has to bat, and play the field, so you need to develop the least-skilled players [#ForgeConf](#)

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Fundamentals - give yourself and your team to have a chance.
[#Forgeconf](#)

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You have to improve fundamentals because everyone's going to play [#Forgeconf](#)

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You'll have slower designers, those who never think of edge cases, etc. You can't get rid of everyone who isn't a superstar
[#Forgeconf](#)

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Develop your weakest players so they can succeed. Give everyone a role. Help them where they are. Employ them to best effect [#Forgeconf](#)

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This doesn't mean you don't have standards or accept the unacceptable. It does mean you give everyone a fair shot.

[#Forgeconf](#)

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Keith Scandone

@keitho3world



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Great line from [@albertpoon](#) [#forgeconf](#)

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Win with the team you have. There's no right way to succeed.
One season might be better pitching, another hitting [#ForgeConf](#)

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Devise a strategy for the team that you have. Fit the process
and the work products to your team. Strengthen them too.
[#Forgeconf](#)

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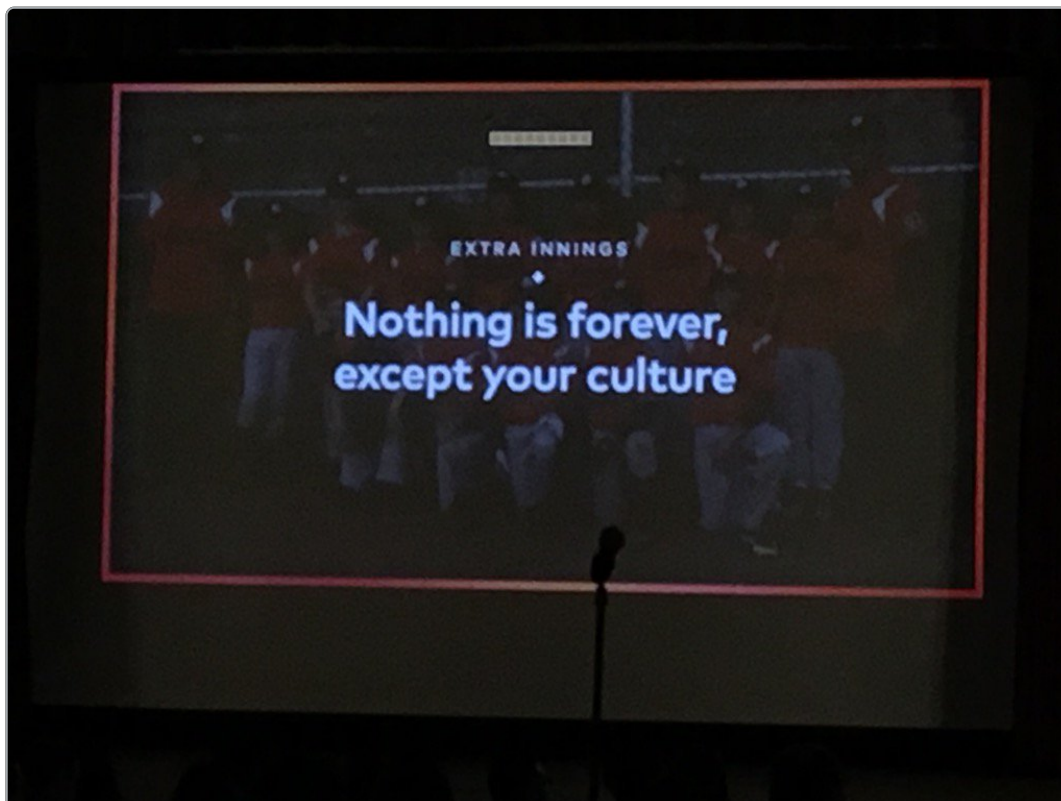
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Don't adopt strategies or practices your team isn't able to
execute [#ForgeConf](#)

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Amanda Stockwell

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The season always ends, people always move on, so make an environment where ppl can thrive [@albertpoon](#) [#forgeconf](#)

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It is right that the people who you nurture and develop leave for other challenges. Younger talent will come in. [#Forgeconf](#)

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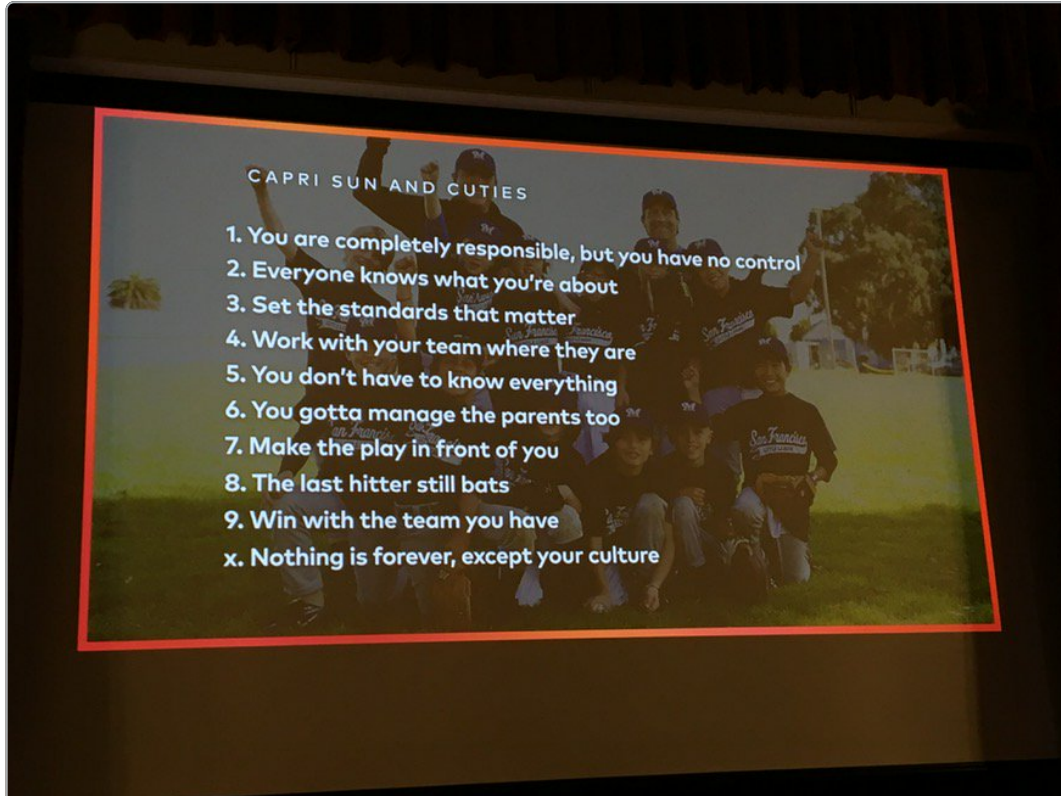


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The best teams are the product of a great culture. Your reputation can replenish your team. Great cultures make great design [#Forgeconf](#)

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Managing teams in 9 innings [#Forgeconf](#)

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There are no hacks or tricks to leading great design teams. This is just a starting point. It's humbling, challenging, satisfying
[#ForgeConf](#)

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Mostly it's listening, learning, trying, failing, and adapting
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Sports teaches you that you can have fun and achieve something with people. Same with drama, lots of other things
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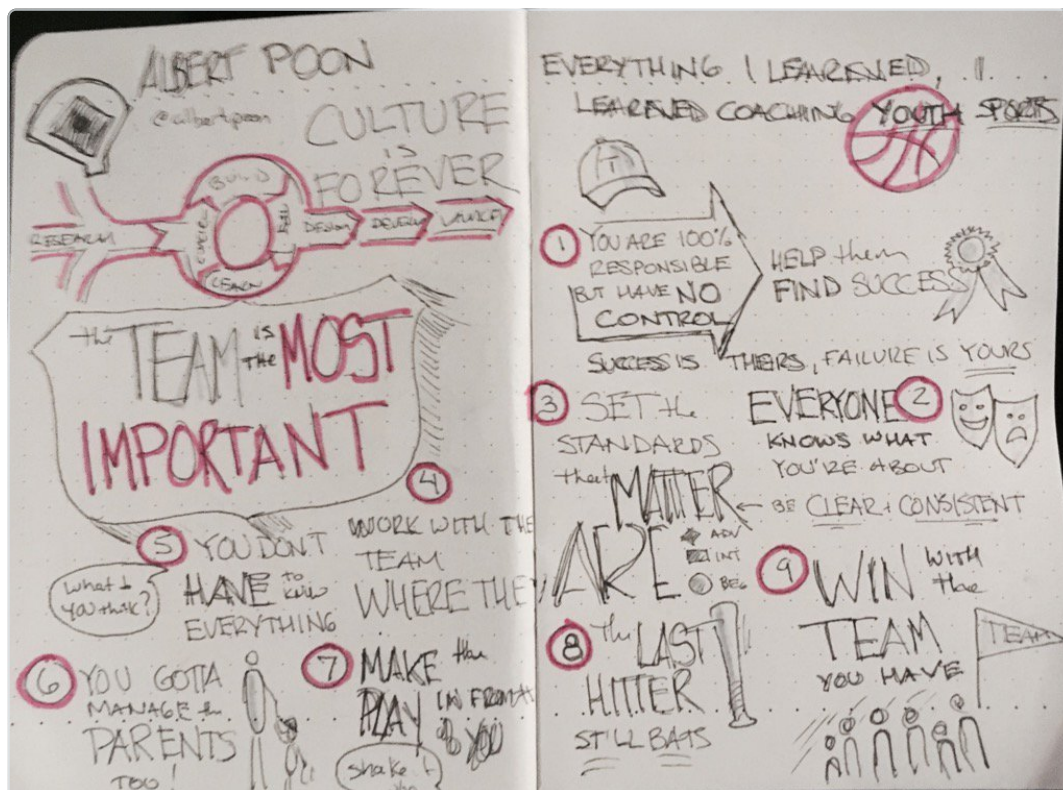
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Any advice of identifying the rules for each project? What's in front of me? Stuff will always get weird, finish anyway.
[#Forgeconf](#)

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C Todd Lombardo
@iamctodd

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"You are responsible, but have no control" - [@albertpoon](#) on [#design](#) leadership at [#forgeconf](#)

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What if I don't know enough to know what's wrong? Ask the people who know, or the designers themselves [#Forgeconf](#)

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In the end we're trying to achieve this: how can you help us do that? [#Forgeconf](#)

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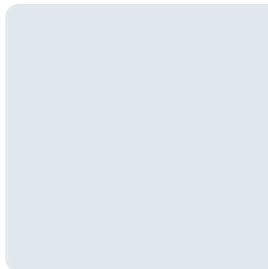
Albert Poon
@albertpoon

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For those who wanted to relive my [#ForgeConf](#) presentation, now you can. With the magic of PDF. ;)

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