DISCUSSING DESIGN
THE ART OF CRITIQUE

A UIE VIRTUAL SEMINAR WITH
YOUR HOST **adam connor**
mad*pow @adamconnor

What is critique?

Critique is about *critical thinking*.

There are two facets to critique: *giving* and *receiving*.

At their foundation is *intent*.

Giving critique with the wrong intent is *selfish*.

Giving critique with the right intent is *selfless*.

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  Get in touch and ask to chat about the design.

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- **Don't assume.**
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- **Don't invite yourself.**
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- **Lead with questions.**
  Show an interest in their process.

Receiving critique with the right intent takes *humility* and *meekness*.

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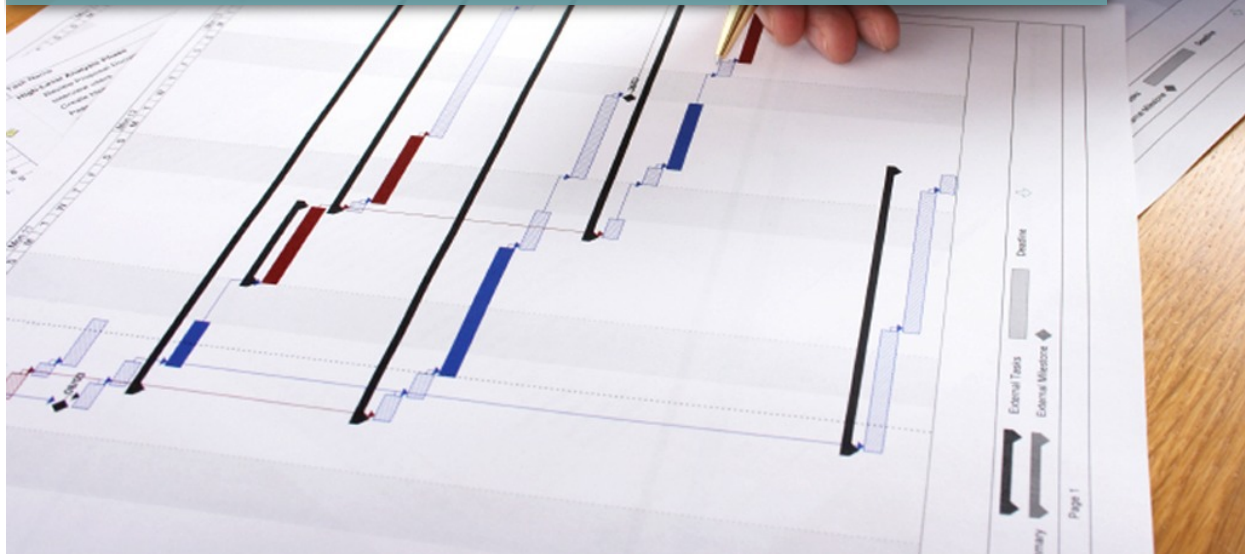 Is what you're hearing pertinent to the goals you're trying to achieve?

- **Participate.**
  Analyze your proposed solution with everyone else.

Critique is a *life* skill...

...not a *design* skill.

Making critique part of your process...

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- Standalone Critiques
- Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities
- Design "Reviews"

DISCUSSING DESIGN THE ART OF CRITIQUE

A few things to keep in mind...

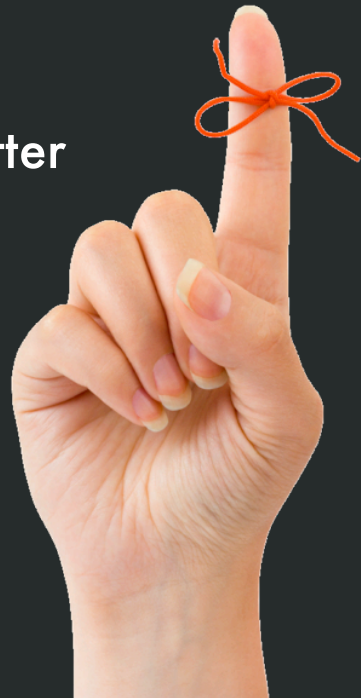- Critique is a skill. You only get better with practice
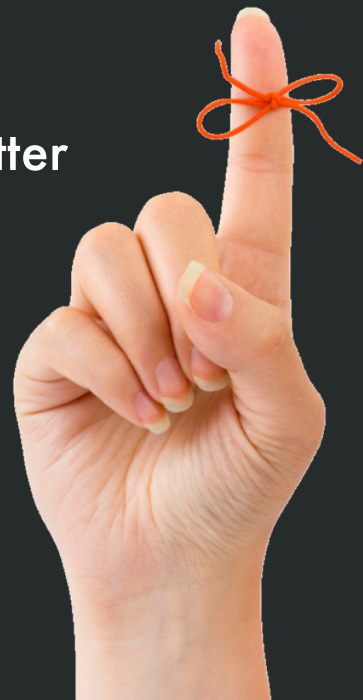
adam connor mad·pow @adamconnor

#uievs #critique

A few things to keep in mind...

- Critique is a skill. You only get better with practice

- Start small

- Think before you speak

- Choose who you critique with carefully

The Rules of Critique

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- Avoid problem solving and design decisions.

- The designer is responsible for follow up and decisions.

- Everyone is equal.

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- The designer is responsible for follow up and decisions.

- Everyone is equal.

- Everyone is a critic.

Goals are critical for successful critique.

Making critique part of your process...

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- Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities

- Design "Reviews"

Making critique part of your process...

Standalone Critiques

Why they're awesome:

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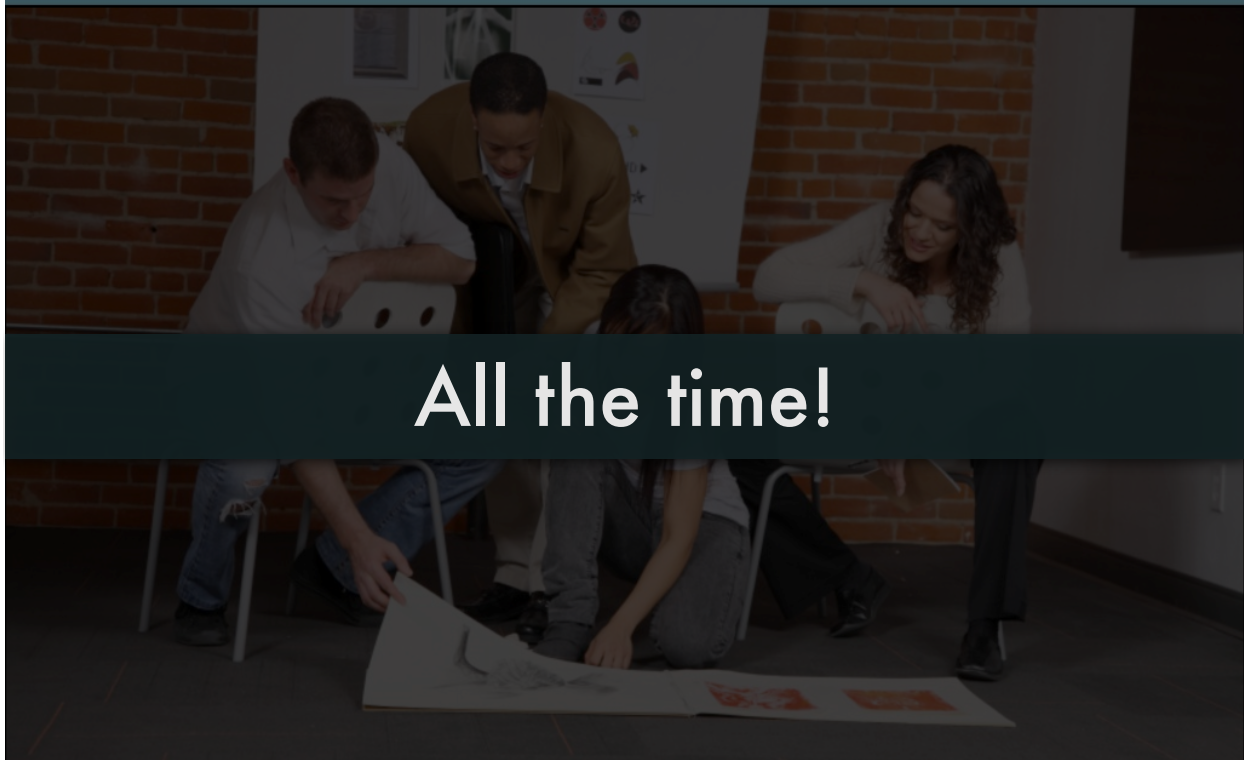## Standalone Critiques

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- Safe(r) place to practice giving and receiving feedback
- Focus feedback on specific goals/topics/etc.

Two approaches: Impromptu and Scheduled

Who should you invite?

When should you have critiques?

All the time!

When and what should you be critiquing?

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- Explore the design of competing products

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What You Might Look At
- Competitors products
- Conceptual models/sketches/flows

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What You Might Look At
- Screen-flow diagrams
- Wireframes / Prototypes

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Example Goals
- Analyze design details and the product's full impact
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What You Might Look At
- High Fidelity Prototypes
- Beta/Pilot Systems

Preparation and Kickoff

Tools & Techniques

Dealing with *difficult* people...

Tips for "dealing with" difficult people...

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- Laddering / The 5 Whys

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- Laddering / The 5 Whys

- Critique with people individually ahead of time

Following Up

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Design "Reviews"

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Making critique part of your process...

Design "Reviews"

Challenges:

- Used to get approval or some kind of "blessing"

- Timing determined by project timeline

- Often too large of an audience and many have the wrong intent

- Output, if not approval, is typically a list of specified changes

Making critique part of your process...

Design "Reviews"

What can you do about it?

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- Don't rely on them for critique. Be prepared to schedule a more focused session.

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Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities

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The problem

- Lack focus

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- Progress too quickly into a "group think" mentality
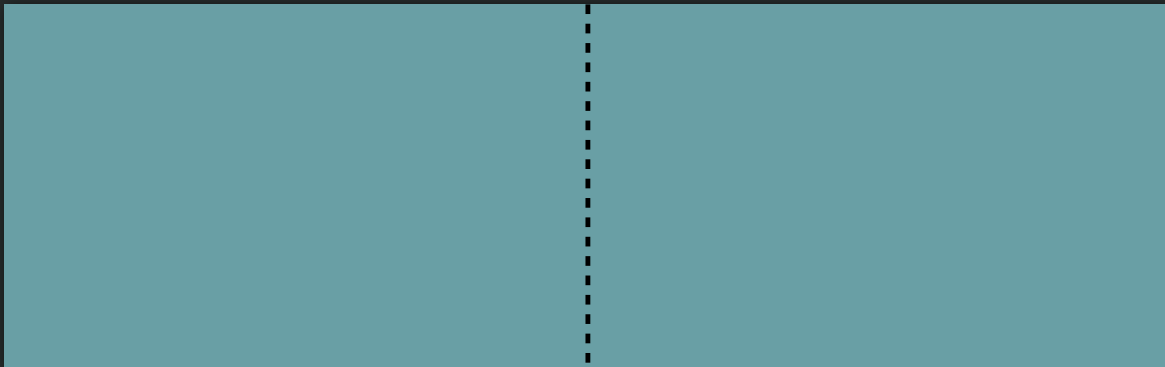
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Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities

Your Super Innovative Brainstorm Session

Making critique part of your process...

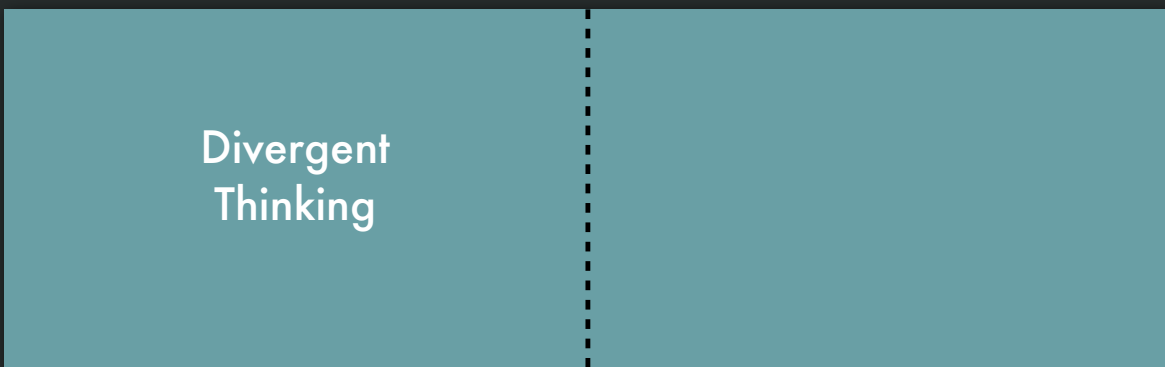# Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities

Your Super Innovative Brainstorm Session

Making critique part of your process...

Brainstorms and Collaborative Activities

Divergent
Thinking

Your Super Innovative Brainstorm Session

In Summary

- Critique is a life skill, not a design skill and only improves with practice.

- Critique focuses on what works, what doesn't and why. It's analysis.

- Intent is critical to the success of a critique, both in giving and receiving.

In Summary

- Learning to critique improves our ability to communicate with teams, clients and others.

- Critique can be done both internally and with clients. Use 3-6 people for about 1 hour.

- Clearly communicate the goals of a critique session and ground rules to all participants.

Additional Resources

- The Art of the Design Critique (Aarron Walter - Think Vitamin)
  http://thinkvitamin.com/design/the-art-of-the-design-critique/

- Dealing with Design Critiques (Jacob Gube - Design Instruct)
  http://designinstruct.com/articles/project-management/dealing-with-design-critiques/

- Design Criticism and the Creative Process (Cassie McDaniel - A List Apart)
  http://www.alistapart.com/articles/design-criticism-creative-process/

- Everything I've Ever Learned About Giving Design Critiques I Learned from Tim Gunn (Dan Saffer - Kicker Studio)
  http://www.kickerstudio.com/blog/2010/11/everything-ive-ever-learned-about-giving-design-critiques-i-learned-from-tim-gunn/

- What Goes into a Well-Done Critique (Jared Spool - UIE)
  http://www.uie.com/articles/critique/

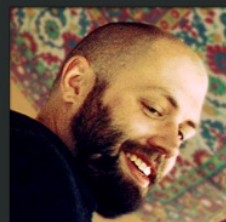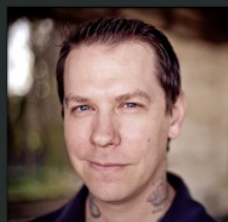adam connor mad★pow @adamconnor   #uievs #critique

THANK YOU

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