Krista Thomason: Tell me about your first day on the job?

Sam Sussman: Great, so, I said the question ... Did it say, can I change it a little bit? Because, I think it said first day on your first job, and I was really-[crosstalk 00:13:33]

Thomason: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize, you are correct, it is first day on the first job. But yeah, I kind of want to know, not about your first job, I wanna know about this job.

Sussman: Okay, alright, I'll do both if that's okay. And if one is really boring you can, you know, cut it out. So, when I was, this is the first day on the first job, when I was 14, someone offered me 15 bucks to umpire baseball game.

Thomason: What?

Sussman: And I'd been playing baseball all my life, loved baseball, and I was just getting to the age where it was really apparent that I wasn't very good at baseball. I had sort of strung along ... You know, until 14, no ones that good.

Thomason: Right.

Sussman: So, you know, if you can kind of aim the ball, even if you throw it, you know like 45 miles an hour, you might even get to pitch a few innings.

Thomason: There you go.

Sussman: You know, by 12 I'd reached the peak of my career, by 14, things were kind of on the down and out.

So, I was excited, alright, here's a new way to play baseball. And, then I showed up to the ballpark, and I crouched behind home plate, and the kids came out onto the field, and the pitcher had the ball, and he was looking, staring down the batter, and these kids were maybe 11 or 12 years old.

So, I probably could have played competitively in that game. And, then there was just this long pause, and the coaches stared at me, and the players stared at me, and I was thinking, why aren't they playing? What's happening? And then I realized, oh, I have to say, play ball.

Thomason: That's right.

Sussman: So I said, "Play ball." And then the kids started playing baseball. And, you know, I think there's actually, for me, there's been an important parable in that experience, I've chosen to pursue career paths that rely a lot on self-initiative, and for which there's no exact path going forward.

And, you know, sometimes you just realize the only thing that people are waiting to happen is for you to say, "Play ball."

Thomason: Right, right, I like that. I like that. There's some things sort of, I mean, there's the sort of ritual of baseball, right, and that sort of element of it. But then, yeah, there are these times when you're oftentimes sort of looking around waiting for someone else to tell you what to do, or waiting for someone else to say, "Go." And, actually it turns out that you're the one who has to do it right?

Sussman: Yeah, yeah, you've got to say, "Play ball."