

# The Monti Navigator

Be Greater than the Average



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## Leadership Matters: What do great coaches do?

Hello Monticello:

Football season is up and running. I apologize to those who haven't yet been able to face the fact that the Steelers ROCK! It's ok. Eventually you will come to terms with it. For now, let's chat about why I love the Steelers, and why any of this has anything to do with our schools:

I became a Steelers fan by accident. When I met my husband, he spent most days wandering around in Lemieux and Jager jerseys. I was not a hockey fan, but I liked the penguin on the front, and the guy wearing the jersey, so I decided that I liked hockey.

When I married that jersey-wearing fellow ten years later, my parents, who have no idea that a hat trick has nothing to do with a first down, but understood our dedication to visiting Pittsburgh to "see a game" throughout the late fall and into winter, decided that there would be no better gift than to buy us a gigantic, personalized sports decal for the back of our car proudly proclaiming that: The Mangus Clan loves THE STEELERS! This was followed by gut-crushing guilt and a dire need to never intimate that I did not like the gift, or that they had gotten the team (and the entire sport) wrong....following that, I immediately began to pay attention to football again (that "again" is an entirely different story), specifically paying attention to the Steelers.

As I began to pay attention to the team, I also began to pay attention to the longstanding head coach, Bill Cowher. Under his leadership, the team amassed multiple division titles and was a frequent flyer in the playoffs, but they could never get the BIG WIN....which the team didn't clinch until his 14th year. However, folks should recognize what he did do, why he was a great coach, and what we can replicate to be great coaches too. Here are three basics I learned from Cowher:

- He believed in his players and knew, despite their previous record (having come in 4th out of 4 teams or 3rd out of 4th for six out of the seven seasons preceding his takeover), that they could be winners....and expected them to win. Cowher was known for his emotionally charged speeches, BOLD goals and love for his team. They knew that he expected them to win, expected each person to do an impeccable job at their job, and that each player had value.....No one position was more important than another. P.S. They did win, coming in 1st out of 4 teams in the division his first year year as coach.
- He expected his team to keep on keeping on and to demonstrate progressive growth toward the big win through BOLD GOALS year after year, despite the overall lack of the BIG WIN, because everyone watches the BIG GAME, but.....EVERY game counts when it comes to getting there! In his 15 years as head coach, the Steelers appeared in the playoffs a whopping ten times. Only one of those ten seasons led finally to a Super Bowl win, but neither the team nor its coach EVER stopped "keeping on" in their quest for the big one, and their overall playoff appearance rate as a result of this is at 67%. The previous coach for the team recognized for four Super Bowl wins and who sits in the Hall of Fame has a playoff appearance rate of only 52%.....PS: I am not diminishing his excellence, just stating the rate.

- He believed that he, at the heart of it all, was really a teacher.....Hired not because he was the best player, but because he was a GREAT LEADER! He didn't need to be the most right person in the room.....he needed to be the person to bring together the ideas and actions necessary to grow all of his players, despite their role, weaknesses and strengths, and to set BOLD GOALS for each player's outcome expectations and the outcome expectations for the entire team. Check out this interview with him from 2014 for some really great insight into this by [clicking here](#).

Like Cowher, we can be great coaches, and therefore, great leaders. We only need to embody his key traits: believe in our team, set bold goals and make sure that we make every day count! Let's do this, team!

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Can we? Can our Kiddos? Yes, indeed!!

P.S. I have no idea to this date if my parents actually know that we like football but LOVE hockey.