

Seven Gifts

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

We are different now, your fans. Permanently better. For the city, the region, all of Eagles Nation, here are seven gifts you gave us that we will never forget:

1

GRATITUDE

We are forever grateful . . . for the Super Bowl, for the grace you displayed this week, and for the magical season that was. But also for celebrating who we have been . . . for embracing who we are . . . and for embodying who we aspire to be. Being the best versions of yourselves was your goal all along.

Just like ours.

2

GRIT

Nothing is more apt for this town. You overcame injuries. "Next man up" will always have a specific and (Philly) special meaning for us. Long before the schedule began, you stuck with Howie. You hired Doug. You brought back Nick. And on, and on, and on. Widening the aperture more . . . to Jeffrey, to Richard, to ownership . . . you had a vision. A dream. You didn't succumb to impatience. You stuck with your conviction . . .

for months . . . for years . . . for decades.

Your resilience was unflappable.

Just like ours.

3

MANHOOD

You were strong. You had tattoos and piercings (the players, not the owners). You sported hip-hugger pants and hipster beards. But you hugged and you cried. The toughest of the tough among us have shed tears this week. Lots and lots of them. Because you showed us that this is what real men do.

Your emotions were unfettered, your personalities

on full display. Just like ours.

4

HUMILITY

You were called underdogs. You didn't get defensive. You didn't explain it away. You owned it. You fed off of it. Lane, Jason, all of you . . . you were . . . and are . . . and always will be . . .

f'g selfless. Men for others. You looked in the mirror to assign blame and you looked around you to give credit. Your place was among your teammates, not above them. Just like ours.

5

INCLUSION

Sure, your roster was diverse—racially, ethnically, religiously, and geographically. Most professional teams are. But you harnessed the seldom tapped yet unrivaled power of diversity. Everyone knew his strengths, and each of you played to them. And you took a stand for what you believed, even in the face of

national scrutiny. Malcolm, Chris, all of you . . . you were thoughtful in your reasoning, and you respected us enough to explain what you were doing. And then when you saw the

needle move, you moved. Your conviction was strong and it was authentic. Just like ours.

6

FAMILY

Fifty-three players, plus or minus more along the way.

Coaching staff. Training staff. Front office. Back office.

Your brother-from-another-mother ethos was a huge reason why Lombardi's sterling silver will forever reside in South Philadelphia. Better yet, you lauded and prioritized your loved ones. Your spouses and your fiancés. Your sons and your daughters (including those with protective headphones).

Your moms and your dads. You shared this journey with them, and you shared them with us. Your relatives were with you, whether still on this earth or looking down from above.

Just like ours.

7

FAITH

You made Jesus cool. Carson, Nick, Doug, all of you . . . you thanked the Lord, not as cliché, but from your souls. It was unmistakably real. You sparked a conversation and lit a curiosity whose flames won't be easily extinguished. You related to us, and we loved you for it. You showed us that football means

everything, and it means (next to) nothing. Your aspirations were bigger than what was visible. Just like ours.

For these gifts, we are eternally yours.

When you knocked that final pass to the turf,

your lives were forever changed.

Just. Like. Ours