

A Changing Culture

by Brian Dodd, November 6, 2021

Can one person changed an organization's culture? More importantly, can you personally change your organization's culture? It is a rarity but in certain situations, I think it is absolutely possible.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers finished the 2019 NFL season with a 7-9 record. The Bucs were quite talented but inconsistency at the quarterback position severely limited the team's potential.

The team's general manager Jason Licht and head coach Bruce Arians felt the solution to their problem was a person, specifically legendary quarterback Tom Brady. On March 20, 2020, the team signed Brady to a two-year contract.

On that day, the culture throughout the entire organization changed. The results were obvious. But no one could really explain how Brady did it... until now.

Author Lars Anderson has just released an iconic book [*A Season in the Sun: The Inside Story of Bruce Arians, Tom Brady, and the Making of a Champion*](#). It gives a deep-dive into Tom Brady's impact on what would become a championship team. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the subject of leadership. You can pick up your copy by clicking [HERE](#) or on the image provided.

The following are 7 Areas Where Tom Brady Changed Tampa Bay's Culture (And How You Can Change Yours) I gleaned from Anderson's book:

Relationships/People Skills/Emotional Intelligence

Upon signing his contract on March 20, 2020, Tom began to promptly change the team's culture. In an unusual move, he got the cell numbers for ALL the players and reached out to each one individually.

He then immediately went to work and began organizing team workouts with the running backs and wide receivers. These were such must-attend events that lineman and defensive players began attending as well, many coming in from out of town.

As the team began working together, no one wanted to disappoint Tom. Lineman would apologize for missing blocks, receivers would apologize for not catching passes, and vowed to do better.

Tom also attracted skilled players like Rob Gronkowski, Leonard Fournette, and Antonio Brown throughout the course of the year.

But ultimately, Tom just wants to be one of the guys. His humility helped changed the team's culture. But that wasn't all...

Presence

Throughout the season and regardless of the circumstance, Tom never lost his cool. He never showed panic or confusion. Tom was consistent in his demeanor and approach. He brought a sense of calm to the entire team.

Most importantly, Tom's mere presence expanded the frontiers of what everyone thought was possible. They could dream about all possibilities, including winning the Super Bowl. I cannot overstate this enough, Tom gave confidence to this very talented team. They knew they could win any game or come back from any deficit because he was their quarterback.

Because Tom Brady is on your team, you always have hope.

Preparation

Let's start with the obvious, young leaders watched how he takes care of his body. They also watched how he took care of his mind. Players were sent home iPads to study. Their time online was tracked by the coaches. Tom studied more than anyone on the team.

Finally, they watched him in team meetings. Tom always sat in the front row and took notes like a rookie trying to impress the coach and make the team.

Practice

During practice Tom was very demanding of everyone. He was unforgiving with poor habits or execution. Everything had to be done 100% perfect or they would do it again.

Tom focused relentlessly on fundamentals and continually sought feedback on items such as his release points and footwork. Coaches and teammates felt he was the most detailed quarterback they had ever seen. Even as his age and with six Super Bowl championships, he still wanted to be coached and get better.

Tom also legitimized the coaches and staff. With his pedigree, if he bought in and performed every drill, everyone else was without excuse. Tom was the greatest pupil on the team.

Work Ethic

Everything was about hard work. He was always the first one to arrive in the building. Tom also had great self-awareness. He was acutely aware of his physical shortcomings. As a result, he could be very efficient and proficient with his actions.

Tom was always hyper-focused on football.

Mentoring

Tom basically operated as a player-coach and gave precise feedback to the players on what they needed to improve on. He was deeply committed to his teammates success and helping them improve, and that's all players want.

When Tom spoke, everyone listened. His words to his teammates were always firm and final. Because of who he was, his words meant something

Tom also modeled servant-leadership by continually making sacrifices, both physical and financial, so the team can be better.

Because of everything mentioned above, he led by example and his habits rubbed off on everyone.

Results

What ultimately legitimizes a leader and an organization's culture is results. On a personal level, the 44-year-old Brady finished the season with 40 touchdown passes and 4,633 yards, both third in the league. But the greatest sign of the culture Brady helped create was on February 7, 2021, when the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9 in Super Bowl LV.

Tom Brady helped create a championship culture. You can possibly do so as well if you his example.

