

“Colleague, Comrade or Coach?”

“If we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.”

-Vince Lombardi

Peyton Manning, a 6' 5", 230 pound NFL quarterback, holds two Super Bowl rings and has earned a victory against all 32 NFL franchises. Drafted first overall in the 1998 NFL Draft by the Indianapolis Colts, he went on to achieve an illustrious 18-year career as the quarterback for the Colts (1998-2011) and the Denver Broncos (2012-15).¹

In all, Manning made four Super Bowl appearances, leading the charge to his first Super Bowl victory in 2007, defeating the Chicago Bears and being named the game's Most Valuable Player. Despite a severe neck injury that forced him to sit out the 2011 season, Manning soon became one of the most sought-after free agents in NFL history. At the time of his retirement in 2015, Manning held numerous major NFL records, including 200 career wins as a starting quarterback.¹

Several years ago, at our son's high school football camp in Colorado, I had the opportunity to hear a teammate of Manning's speak and share a story that has stayed with me for years. Each summer, friends and teammates would listen to Manning make a phone call and chat for some time. A few days later, Manning would be away for several days. Upon returning from that trip each year, Manning would be different - more confident, more comfortable, and very intentional in his practice.

Each year, that call went out from Manning to his high school football coach, Tony Reginelli.² They would schedule a visit, and Manning would fit the visit into his tight calendar.

But, why?

Did Manning reach out to Mr. Reginelli as a colleague in the sport or as a comrade to enjoy time with?

Likely both of those, but most importantly, Manning reached out to Coach Reginelli wanting a coach. He trusted his high school coach and knew Reginelli would push him to the next level. He knew Reginelli would challenge him to improve and then guide the way. Manning recognized as he aged that he would have to adjust accordingly, and he knew that Coach Reginelli would motivate him to do so. The two had a relationship - in friendship and in coach/coachee - that truly stood the test of time.

As professionals we have colleagues in the field that know our arena. We have comrades in the field that have our back and we have theirs. But as executive coaches, our roles shift. We are called to serve as a trusted partner, a strategic challenger, an intentional communicator who inspires others to action. We are called to draw out the best and highest from within people from the inside out.

Exactly like Coach Reginelli did for Manning.

Navigating these roles takes grace and discernment, with full transparency. Can't you hear Peyton on the phone with Coach Reginelli? "Coach, I need some coaching." What a tremendous honor to be the one a colleague, a comrade, or an executive reaches out to with the words, "Coach, I need some coaching." With transparency in roles, expectations clearly articulated, and a heart of serving others, we can become **"that coach."**

Let's accept the challenge today to prepare for that call.

*"Don't ever think, no matter how old you are,
that you don't need coached."*

-Peyton Manning

References:

1. <https://www.profootballhof.com/players/peyton-manning/>
2. https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/14718714/peyton-manning-denver-broncos-shares-lasting-bond-high-school-coach-tony-reginelli-nfl