

## OPINION

# Want to be a better you? Look to the Green and Gold.

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Saturday's Green Bay Packers' [season-ending playoff loss](#) to the San Francisco 49ers was, of course, deeply disappointing to us Cheeseheads, who had dreams — and even expectations — of a Packers' Super Bowl victory this season.

I'd like to suggest, however, that fellow Packers fans should take away more from the season than just disappointment. At a time when the pandemic has led many people to take a fresh look at their lives, the Packers this year offer at least three useful strategies and lessons for living a more meaningful, successful and virtuous life.

Life lessons from the Green and Gold? You betcha.

## **Strategy 1: Adopt 'self-scout' as an everyday practice**

Something you'll hear Coach Matt LaFleur say in practically every press conference is the importance of "self-scout." Scouting, of course, means observing players on other teams to see if they'd be good candidates to recruit. Self-scout, on the other hand, means looking at one's own team — and at oneself — to see what's working and, especially, what's not. It means being open and honest about problems since that's an essential step to fixing them.

Applying the concept of self-scout to everyday life could be as simple as taking a minute at the end of one's day to consider: How did my day go? In which ways did I, or didn't I, live up to my values? What things could I have handled better?

It's an approach that has long been advocated elsewhere. The [Jewish "Mussar" movement](#), which started in 19th century Europe, focuses on how to become a better person in everyday life — how to be a "mensch," in other words. It advocates writing a

few notes every day in a diary about how well one is doing in living out one's values. Mussar teachers don't use the term "self-scout," but it's the same idea.

## **Strategy 2: Share credit broadly, but focus accountability on oneself**

To help create an organizational culture for the Packers that emphasized selflessness and personal accountability, Coach LaFleur modeled that behavior in all his public remarks. He always shared credit broadly with the players, coaches and staff, while consistently taking responsibility for problems. When asked about special teams blunders in the playoff loss to the 49ers, for example, [he was clear](#): "That's on me."

LaFleur explained his focus on personal accountability by [noting](#): "As the head football coach, you always got to look at yourself first and foremost. ... I can't expect anybody else, whether a player, coach or whoever it may be, to look at themselves critically if I can't do that myself."

Applying this strategy to everyday life means overcoming the very human tendency to want to take credit and avoid the pain and embarrassment of blame. It takes fighting against the need to feed our egos which, as the anthropologist Alan Morinis has noted, "is a force as strong as gravity for us to overcome." That, in turn, requires humility. Humility doesn't mean being meek or accepting all the blame for something that is a shared responsibility, but rather cultivating a healthy sense of esteem that has no need for arrogance.

## **Strategy 3: Don't let problems fester in your life**

This third strategy is different from the first two, since it's a lesson learned the hard way by the Packers this season. The team never fixed its special-teams unit, which was [ranked last in the NFL](#). That led to a meltdown in the playoff game last weekend, including a blocked field goal and a blocked punt.

The lesson for everyday life is to be as proactive as possible with your life challenges, since if you don't address them, life will address them for you. As David Brooks wrote in ["The Road to Character,"](#) "If you don't have some inner integrity, eventually your Watergate, your scandal, your betrayal, will happen."

That process requires taking time for self-reflection to ask: How's my life going? What's holding me back from achieving deeper happiness and fulfillment? And how can I close the gap between my values and my actions? It also means making a plan to address your challenges and having the humility to ask for help in doing so.

As Coach LaFleur has emphasized in his remarks since the playoff loss, every game is an opportunity to learn and grow. The team will be using that “growth mindset,” as he called it, to help it become better next year. Meanwhile, the lessons from the Packers this season can help us become better family members, friends and co-workers — a Lambeau Leap, one might say, toward becoming a better person.

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