

True Blue

Krysta Kavanaugh, 8 October 2025, 971 words, page 1

One of the all-time best things my dad taught me was how to be a true-blue fan. I learned it at Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs.

I am NOT a fair-weather fan, which would be an insult. I'm the fan the team actually wants sitting in the seats: loud, loyal, fully invested. We give them home field advantage. Do fans affect the game? Absolutely!

A writer once used the Cubs—my Cubs—to explain it: "Genuine fans stay with their team through the long droughts, the messy seasons, the heartbreaks. Cubs fans had decades of disappointment before the 2016 winner of the World Series. That's loyalty."

My dad understood that. He had four season tickets to the weekend and holiday games. I lived for those afternoons with him at Wrigley—some of my happiest memories with him.

I didn't even realize, at the time, that he was giving me something far bigger than baseball.

Here's what Dad taught me:

- We never left before the last out, regardless of the score.
- We rooted for our team, even when they played like they'd never seen a baseball before. We never booed them. Ever.
- We did occasionally have harmless teasing when an umpire call stung, calling out "Rabbit Ears!" (This was the 60s, when we had "rabbit ears" on our TVs.)

We also had fun as fans. My father played "Taps" on his trumpet when the opposing pitcher was pulled. If he wanted to fire up the crowd, he played "Charge." We weren't merely passive spectators, we were the fans that added energy, vitality and excitement to our players. If I was yelling, they could hear me!

I lived for those games. One day I even asked Dad, "Why don't you just take me? My brother doesn't like going. I love to go."

It was a true statement, but a naive question. At that age, I didn't yet understand the father/son dynamic. But Dad must've heard something in my voice, because from then on—he took me. Yes!

Those early years planted something deep in me: loyalty, civility, grace under losing (which, as a Cubs fan before 2016, was practically an obligation).

Changing Games and Changing States

When I moved to Minneapolis I still claimed the Cubbies as my team. But the Minnesota Twins were in the world series. I thought, "Well, this might be the closest I ever get to one." I watched them—and superimposed the Cubs over them in my mind.

It was a truly exciting, hard-fought series. It went to the 7th game—and the ninth inning—but the Twins won!

I was electrified. What else—who else—could I root for?

Enter: the Minnesota Vikings, a football team.

A few years later I had Vikings season tickets and a seat in the end zone. We had rituals there—standing and pointing on every first down, chanting, yelling, acting as if fan zeal alone could push the ball into the end zone. Maybe it did.

The Vikings would glance at us appreciatively when they took the field. The opposing team would try to ignore us.

One game changed everything.

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"Boooooomer... Boooooomer... Boooooomer..."

We chanted at Boomer Esiason, the visiting quarterback, so relentlessly that he actually got visibly irritated and lost his rhythm. Yay! It worked so well, the Vikings' mascot carried it to the other end zone. Boomer lost that game. After that, we used that tactic on every opposing quarterback.

The Day I Crossed the Line

But then I blew it—broke my own code—twice, and went over the True Blue Line, which includes courtesy to others.

The "fan" next to me was spewing venom: foul-mouthed, booing, and calling our team names because we were losing; he was incredibly annoying. Finally, I snapped. I turned to him and said, "Why don't you shut the f— up?"

Yelling profanity at someone for yelling profanity was absurd. I apologized.

Then moments later we scored a touchdown and he high-fived me so hard, I thought he hit me. My body reacted. I struck back—just once, on the shoulder. A defensive move. Instinctual. But it was still a hit—something I'd never done to anyone before.

I had become the kind of fan I didn't believe in. In my mind, I could see my dad shaking his head. In that moment, I realized loyalty isn't blind passion—it's how you carry yourself when the score, and your temper, are both against you.

My penance was simple and brutal: I stopped buying my season tickets.

But I continued being a die-hard fan. I once wrote sixty-five handwritten notes—one to each player and coach—when the Vikings made the playoffs for the first time in forever. I wanted them to know I believed in them.

That's loyalty. That's being true-blue.

True-Blue Everywhere

I believe the code of being a true-blue fan has followed me in other areas of my life. I'm fiercely loyal to the organizations I work with and the causes I believe in. I advocate for my friends like I'm cheering from the end zone: rooting for them, having their back, and standing up for them.

And I stayed true-blue to my father, too, even through the storms of his bipolar disorder—though I did learn to bury myself in "homework" when he was in "one of those moods."

That Cubs-born, Vikings-amplified, Dad-taught loyalty still shapes me.

True-blue isn't just about teams—it's the way I was taught to show up in the world: loud when it matters, steady when it's hard, and loyal all the way through.

Today, I just love being able to yell—LOUDLY—for my Vikings. It's a lifelong pleasure. Every time I do, I feel like a kid at Wrigley Field, sitting next to her father, yelling joyously for her team.

Thanks Dad.



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