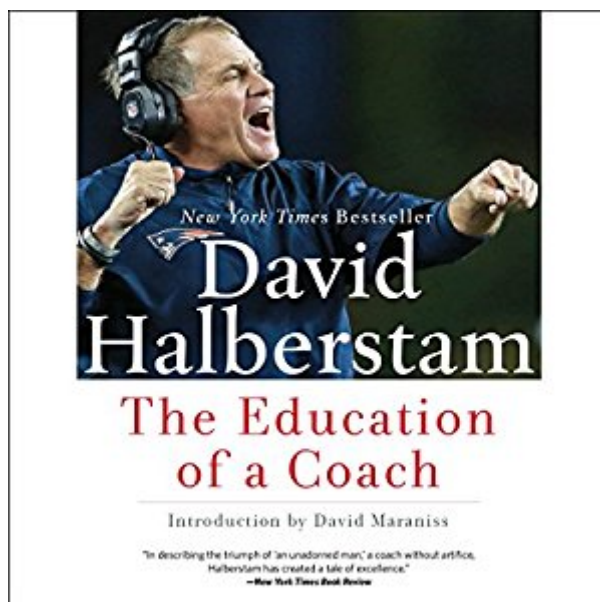


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# The Education Of A Coach



## Synopsis

More than six years after his death, David Halberstam remains one of this country's most respected journalists and revered authorities on American life and history in the years since WWII. A Pulitzer Prize winner for his groundbreaking reporting on the Vietnam War, Halberstam wrote more than 20 books, almost all of them best sellers. His work has stood the test of time and has become the standard by which all journalists measure themselves. Bill Belichick's 31 years in the NFL have been marked by amazing success - most recently with the New England Patriots. In this groundbreaking book, *The Education of a Coach*, David Halberstam explores the nuances of both the game and the man behind it. He uncovers what makes Bill Belichick tick both on and off the field.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of today's great authors, David Halberstam, has written a gem of a book detailing the 'process of becoming Bill Belichick,' one of the best football minds ever in the National Football League (NFL). Belichick is the head coach of the New England Patriots NFL team and the winner of three Super Bowls. Halberstam tells us that Belichick entered the world as the son of a lifer. He was the son of former Navy football coach and scout, Steve Belichick, who was once considered the preeminent football scout in the country. His father, however, never made much money and never enjoyed much fame outside the "hermetically sealed" world of coaching. And he lived (as did the family) with the special uncertainty of a coach - a world without guarantees. Steve felt the job of a

good coach was to encourage a boy's better self, to let his confidence grow and to do it ever so gently. Bill Belichick, well beyond his years in understanding football, went on to Wesleyan, a small college in New England. While he played football, he had difficulty, as his size and lack of speed worked against him. He also played lacrosse and enjoyed it immensely, mostly because he admired the coach. The coach had no real knowledge of the game but knew exactly how to handle his players and how to listen to them and use them well. He learned then that players respected coaches who could help them play better and who knew things they did not know. Respect did not flow from a loud and commanding voice, but rather knowledge. "The Education of a Coach" also details Belichick's early years in the NFL. When he entered the league, he had been a young man teaching older men.

David Halberstam is one of America's finest journalists. But he's not on top of his game here. A pity: The Bill Belichick story is amazing. The New England Patriots coach has defied the zeitgeist and put together a genuine team at a time when sports are dominated by superstar egos. He has built a dynasty in an era of tepid parity - when last season's Super Bowl contender is gutted by free-agency and misses this season's playoffs. He is bold and innovative in a sport where most coaches favor cover-your-butt tactics. As an Indianapolis Colts fan, heartbroken almost annually by Belichick's genius, I was looking forward to learning how he does it. And Halberstam (whose *The Breaks of the Game* is my favorite sports book) seemed the right choice to tell the story. But "The Education of a Coach" fell well short of my expectations. Halberstam skims the surface instead of digging deep and sometimes makes odd authorial decisions. In writing about Belichick's disastrous tenure as Cleveland Browns coach and his unpopular decision to bench QB Bernie Kosar, for instance, Halberstam neglects even to tell which quarterback replaced Kosar. And yet he feels it necessary earlier in the book to take a gratuitous swipe at a 1950s Nashville Tennessean sports columnist whose role in the Belichick saga is peripheral at best. He barely mentions key characters such as Belichick assistants Romeo Crennel and Charlie Weis - and touches only briefly on the young acolytes who are graduates of "Belichick University." Throughout part of the book, Halberstam cuts back and forth between the story of Bill Belichick and the story of his father, a legendary coach and scout in his own right. But the time-fractured narrative is confusing and repetitive. Sometimes you get the sense that Halberstam doesn't really understand football.

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