



SEVEN

DAVID

Just as the sculpture of David by Michelangelo is surely the most famous sculpture in the world, so is the biblical story of David versus Goliath the longest-lasting example of a triumph against all the odds.

David, along with his forefather Isaac, is one of the few figures in history who appears not only in the Old and New Testaments but is also a prophet of Islam, where he is known as Dawood: in the Qur'an Dawood slew Jalut (Goliath).

So how did David do it? What can we learn about winning from the young boy who later became one of the greatest of kings?

He believed in the fact that he was special. He knew he was different, born to do something out of the ordinary. Even before the encounter with Goliath, he had already been anointed by the prophet Samuel as the future king of Israel, giving him an inner security and the certitude that he could make an impact on his times and co-create his own destiny.

He surrounded himself with a positive and supportive environment. When his own brother angrily reproached him for insisting he could defeat Goliath, he simply asked, "What have I done now?" and without waiting for an answer, he turned away and continued talking with those who did take him seriously, who did believe in him, and

who encouraged him to pursue his goal. He ignored negative comments doubting his chances to succeed.

He focused on his strengths. He was a shepherd boy who had guarded his father's flock against the lions and bears by learning how to throw, with extreme accuracy, stones from his sling, a simple but highly effective weapon. So when they wanted to dress him in heavy armor, he rightfully refused to go into battle in equipment that would only weigh him down and that he was not used to; he knew he could rely on his ability with the sling, which he had been honing and developing for many years.

He prepared thoroughly and meticulously. He chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch; his sling was in his hand. He stuck to his own rhythm, his own habits, his own way of readying himself, and his own tried and tested winning ways. He refused to be rushed or hurried. There was no panic.

He was eager to reach his goal. When Goliath "arose and drew near, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine." There was no turning back, no hesitation, no doubt, no second thoughts, because he was ready and willing both physically and mentally. He knew he was at the right place at the right time; he was about to make history.

He stayed calm in the face of ridicule. Goliath "disdained him, for he was but a youth," and asked scornfully, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" David told him in reply what he intended to do with him, stating his mission clearly while communicating to him in a direct and forceful manner that which he not only believed, but was absolutely certain of.

He planned ahead and had a strategy. From his experience in protecting the sheep from wild animals, David knew that he had just one good shot from the sling to disable an opponent of this size and stature. He could not be sure, however, that the blow would kill him outright. The stone hit Goliath in the forehead, knocking him to the ground, but to make

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absolutely certain he was dead David quickly ran to him, drew the giant's sword from its sheath, and decapitated him. He gave himself enough time, being fleet of foot and possessing strength of hand, to complete the task.

He seized the moment and grasped the initiative. He saw an opportunity even when the odds were stacked against him and never swayed from his chosen path. Others had given up on the possibility of being victorious and were resigned to their apparent fate. David remained focused from the very first moment he understood what he could achieve: he saw his chance, grabbed it, hung on to it, embraced it, brought all his gifts, talents, and abilities to act upon it, and was willing to risk it all, even his life, in order to achieve it.

He succeeded, he won, and still today he can inspire us to become more than we are, to become winners!