

# Book Review

## **A review of *David and Goliath: Underdogs, misfits, and the art of battling giants.* presented by Mr. Mark Davenport, Department of Doctrine and Strategy, U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College**

Written by Malcolm Gladwell. Published by Little Brown Company, Hachette Book Group, New York, N.Y. 2013. 305 pages.

After reading the book, *David and Goliath, Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*, by Malcolm Gladwell, I started thinking about the David and Goliath events throughout in my reading experiences and experiences throughout my lifetime. Events like the New York Giants defeating the undefeated New England Patriots in Superbowl XLII, Isreal defeating its three Arab neighbors in six days in the 1967, The success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, and President Carter's presidential election victory in 1976. The question most asked by experts and lay persons alike after each of these events was how did we get this so wrong? What did we miss? This book allowed me to see some of my faulty ways of thinking. They all boiled down to critical thinking or more precisely the lack of critical thinking.

When I look up the term critical thinking on the internet, I came across a great definition. It states that critical thinking, "...is the ability to effectively analyze information and form a judgement. To think critically, you must be aware of your own biases and assumption when encountering information and apply consistent standards when evaluating sources." Malcolm Gladwell, in this book, looks at nine situations from history (some of them obscure history) and begins to take apart the stories told in history to find the assumptions and misconceptions we used to construct the stories in the first place and really explain how in each case the Davids of the world really defeated the Goliaths.

We all have heard the biblical story of David and Goliath; how David overcame the enormous odds to defeat the superior Goliath in battle. Was David truly the underdog or were our assumptions incorrect? Looking at this narrative with critical eyes may reveal new insight into why David had an advantage over Goliath.

How can a twelve-year-old girls basketball team, from California, with no real basketball skills and a coach who never coached, let alone played basketball before, end up in the national championship game of the Junior Basketball League? Again, Malcolm Gladwell weaves together an interesting story to help explain how our assumptions mislead us to think this team had a major disadvantage.

Is going to a top tier college provide a student with the best possible chance to succeed or again is this a disadvantage? If having dyslexia is a bad thing, then why did some of its victims succeed so spectacularly?

These are some of the stories the author uses to challenge the reader to apply critical thinking to everyday topics. Malcolm Gladwell's ability to tell a great story will have you reading this book for the sheer enjoyment of it; the facts and logic that unravel our tightly held beliefs and assumptions will just be a bonus. Once you read this book, you will find yourself constantly challenging your assumptions in your military profession and in everyday life. I recommend this book.