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**5 Stones For Slaying Giants - Critical Success Factors  
For Business and Life**

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## Chapter 1 - Slaying Giants, An Example

***Then, out from the armies of the Philistines came a champion named Goliath who stood over 9 feet tall...***

The sun rose over the valley of Elah on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of battle. The Israelite army occupied one hill, the Philistine army the other. The valley that separated the two hills served another purpose; it was the place where the two great armies met twice daily and drew their battle lines.

King Saul led the Israelite army. Saul was a seasoned battle hero who led his troops into many previous victories. The Israelites were a special group of people destined for greatness and hand picked by God. Their mission was to rid the land of these Philistines. Saul entered this battle 39 days ago, confident and committed to the mission. That was 39 long days in the past. "Would this be our day of victory?" Saul pondered, "Who among us will answer the challenge of these Philistines?"

On the opposite hill where the Philistine army camped the mood was different. There was energy and excitement in the air. For 39 days the Philistine army gathered in the valley to face the dreaded Israelites. Daily, the Philistines grew more confident when their challenge for battle was met with fear and no opposition. The Philistine army knew Saul was afraid of their champion.

Goliath of Gath was the hero and defender of the Philistine army. Goliath was career military. From his youth he dreamed of being a great warrior, one that legends would be written of. From his earliest age he trained to be a great warrior and soldier serving his commander. Goliath had a few advantages that made him a fierce contender. He stood over nine feet tall. Some estimate that he stood 9' 6". His

armor weighed 125 pounds, while the head of his spear weighed close to 15 pounds. He was fit, strong, and well versed in the art of war. Twice a day for the past 39 days Goliath would gather his troops in the Valley of Elah, and state this challenge to the Israelites:

***“Choose a man among you to fight me, if you have one. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will be your slaves. But if I overtake him and kill him, you and King Saul will be our slaves.”***

In the camp of the Israelites Saul was losing his confidence and the morale of his troops was low. Twice daily he'd tried his best motivational speeches. He reminded his men of past victories. He reminded his men of their rich heritage. They were the army of the living God, right? Saul added a bonus of his daughter in marriage and tax favor to anyone who took Goliath on and won. The men heard only the challenge of Goliath. And now, Goliath was ridiculing the Israelite army. He poked fun of their God, their king, and their women. The taunting was relentless. Still, not one person rose to Goliath's challenge.

On the 40<sup>th</sup> day of battle, the sun rose in the Bethlehem valley where a small boy named David who was serving his father by tending a flock of sheep. Early that morning, a messenger came to David and told him to go back home, his father needed him. When David returned home, his father Jesse asked him to go to the battlefield and deliver some bread to David's three older brothers and some cheese to the commander. The delivery of food was a reason check on his sons and to insure favor from the commander.

David arrived just in time. The army of God was gathering to put their battle weapons together, shouting the battle cry, and lining up in the valley for this day's verbal challenge. "This is exciting", David thought. Goliath came out and gave his daily challenge and added a heavy dose of sarcasm. This made the army of Israel

run away from him with great fear. The soldiers explained to David the challenge and the bounty that King Saul promised to the man who would fight. The king's daughter in marriage and tax exemption for him and their extended family was the hero's prize.

David could barely contain his anger. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" replied David. The soldiers repeated to him what the prize would be if someone fought Goliath and won. Word got back to Saul that a young boy was in the camp, asking about this Goliath soldier and the outcome of his defeat. Quickly David found himself before Saul explaining that he would like to challenge Goliath. "You are only a boy David, and Goliath has been a fighting warrior all his life. It would not be a fair fight," said Saul. David stood and defended his position. He told King Saul of the sheep his father trusted to him. Once, a bear came into his camp and seized one of his prized sheep. He wrestled the bear to the ground and killed him. Another time, a lion entered the camp, and took an animal in his mouth. David killed that lion without hurting the sheep. David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul was in no position to argue. Morale was low and he was losing the last of his own confidence. Could he entrust the destiny of his soldiers to a boy no older than twelve? This was a difficult decision for Saul to make. "Where were all the other warriors?" Saul thought. "Was there no other soldier in the camp willing to fight Goliath?" As Saul considered how David had spoken with such passion and confidence, Saul's hope was restored. David's battle with a lion and a bear was no match for Goliath, yet there was something in the character of David that Saul respected. He was regaining a vision of victory for this Philistine battle and the restoration of confidence in his men.

Saul suited David in his personal armor, a special cut made for the king. David looked silly in Saul's armor dressed for battle. He tried to walk around the tent. His steps were awkward and this armor was very heavy. The armor prevented movement for the small boy. He removed Saul's armor and settled for something simple, his own clothes and his sling.

Grabbing his staff, David walked down to a small brook. Bending down, he gathered five smooth stones. These were stones for slaying giants. "Let me see," thought David, "one stone for Goliath, and one for each of his brothers, just in case they get angry when I kill their brother." David placed these five stones for slaying giants in his pouch and entered the battlefield.

Meanwhile, Goliath heard that the Israelites had finally found a soldier, a brave warrior to fight him. "It's about time," thought Goliath. "This will be over quickly." When Goliath first saw this small boy standing his ground on the battlefield, he thought it was a joke. "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" shouted Goliath. Then Goliath began to really curse the Israelite army, King Saul, David, and the God they served. Goliath began to burn with anger and rage. "They sent this boy out here to mock me," thought Goliath.

As Goliath settled down, David spoke up. "You come against me with sword and spear. You mock my people, my king, and my God. I come against you in the name of my God, the Lord Almighty. Today, He will hand you over to me. Today, I will strike you down and cut off your head. Today, I will feed your dead body and the bodies of all your soldiers to the animals. Today, the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. Goliath, prepare to die!"

Goliath shouted a battle cry that could be heard across both camps. He began to charge David, ready to grab him by the hands and tear him in two. David moved quicker. Reaching into his pouch, he grabbed one of his smooth stones, just right for

slaying giants, and placed it in his sling. With one fluid motion of running and placing the stone in the sling, David whipped it around twice and launched the stone.

David's stone found the mark, the center of Goliath's massive forehead. The stone sank deep into his forehead and Goliath fell facedown into the dirt. David did not stop there, still running toward Goliath, he grabbed the sword of this dead Philistine and cut off his head.

Silence surrounded both camps. It was the silence of amazement. The silence of true disbelief. Then the reality set in. Saul's army, the army of the living God, had won. Against all odds, a young boy rose to the challenge and won. Saul knew the battle had just turned around. No longer was the Israelite army weak and cowardly. No longer were they afraid to fight. Victory was in front of them as David, a boy of 12, defeated Goliath at his own game.

Across the Philistine camp, another reality set in. They had lost. Against all odds, some kid had bested their hero, their champion, and their master warrior. And it was not over. What they saw in the eyes of their enemy was a renewed confidence, a passion burning inside, a vision of extended victory, and the value of exterminating the rest of the Philistine army. It took a split second for them to feel the impact. They turned and ran; yet it was too late. They met their death in the Valley of Elah.

When David stopped at the stream to pick up his five stones, he selected weapons you can use to slay the giants in your life. The five stones represent Passion, Excellence, Vision, Value, and Confidence. With these, you can defeat the giants that create battles in your professional and personal life. With these stones you can win.

## Chapter 2 - Stone #1 – Passion

***“Whatever your life’s work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better”*** Martin Luther King

For David to have faced Goliath, he needed passion. Passion can imply a strong emotion that has an overpowering or compelling effect. When David saw the faces of the troops and heard the taunting of Goliath, his passion began to burn. Something inside him answered the call. Call it passion, fervor, ardor, enthusiasm, or zeal, I think David had each of these burning hot; so hot that he answered the call to fight Goliath without hesitation or doubt.

What makes winners win? Regardless of what they are winning, something fuels them. I’ve seen this in athletes, business leaders, sales professionals, teachers, and ministers. One of the winning ingredients fueling them is passion. Mother Teresa was passionate for the poor and helpless. She spent her whole life helping others. Jack Welch, the former head of General Electric was passionate about his people and GE’s impact on worldwide business. He grew GE into a powerhouse that has impacted our global economy. Phil Jackson is passionate about coaching winning basketball teams like the Chicago Bulls and the Los Angeles Lakers. Phil has taken both teams to heights previously unseen. For you and I to slay the giants in our lives, we need that emotion which drives us, which pushes us forward, demanding our energy and our attention. We need passion!

After speaking to a large group of professionals on this subject, a woman came up to me and asked a simple question, “Where do I get this passion?” That question drew me back to an event, which ignited my passion for my profession.

While attending college, I was the youth pastor for a small church in Southern California. After one Sunday service, our senior pastor gave me a flyer about an event to be held in a few months. The event called “College Briefing” would be held in August at Forest Home, a camp tucked in the hills of Southern California. The legacy of Forest Home is rich and deep. Passionate Christian leaders such as Billy Graham and Bill Bright (Campus Crusade For Christ) have had their passion ignited at Forest Home. The idea behind College Briefing was to prepare students for college by exposing them to strong Biblical teaching and encouragement. I was already interested from what I had seen and heard of this event. Then my eyes fell on the name of the guest speaker; Dr. Tony Campolo! I’d been listening to one of his tapes and really wanted the chance to meet him and hear him in person.

Since our youth group was very small, the church agreed to send my wife and me to attend College Briefing as leaders, sharing a cabin with the college students and leading the small group discussions after Dr. Campolo finished the main sessions. During one of these his lectures, Tony Campolo said,

**“Human Existence is just the meaningless passage of time, between all too few moments of genuine aliveness.”**

I heard it, wrote it down, and read it again. He said it twice. I knew, at that moment, I would become passionate about the things that fueled me. Campolo continued driving his point home that the world is full of “dead” people. People, who claim to be alive, but are really dead on the inside. The lights are on, yet nobody is home! These people lead quiet lives of desperation, never really living to their full potential, and yet, not really dead, they just merely exist. He challenged us to lead lives of genuine aliveness, fully engaged in the essence of life. To engage with people is to transfer energy and passion between each other, and not continue to suck the life out of each other. As we debriefed these sessions with the college students, I could see they were impacted as well. I could see how they related to



what was said and wanted to become more alive to what really mattered. When I returned to my job, after College Briefing, I saw Dr. Campolo's analogy at work, where employees were physically present and far away mentally. Later, I also saw this at the University, with professors who lost their passion for teaching, yet continued teaching based on status and duty. I knew I would never be the same.

The woman who stopped me after that meeting continued to listen. As I explained this lengthy answer to her question "Where do I get this passion?" she now understood after hearing my story. She realized that passion had to come from and burn inside, not just glow. It must grow strong enough to be compelling and overpowering. It must drive you forward, to action.

Passion has a way of reducing or removing fear of failure. When Goliath fired up his troops by ridiculing the Israelite army, it made David even more resolved to fight and win. Let's face it; if you were 12 years old and asked to fight a 9-foot giant, who has trained all his life in the art of combat, would you take the challenge? You, a logical thinker, would quickly determine that the odds are stacked against you. Fear of failure and certain death would overtake your thought and action process! King Saul offered David some armor as protection. David quickly determined this was not going to work and stayed with his original plan. David was fearless in his zeal to slay Goliath. Are you fearless in slaying the giants that block your path?

Passion has a way of building confidence (see stone #5). Coaches draw upon the player's passion before the big football game. The locker room speech is designed to fire up the team, to ignite zeal, enthusiasm, and fervor for the pending victory. Passion is what Michael Jordan had when he'd practice shooting free throws two hours before each basketball game. Passion is what fuels golf legend Tiger Woods to work on his game after the tournament is over. Tiger Woods will continue to practice his putting long after the crowds have left. He is driven to perfection and it shows in his game. Passion drives the business owner to come early and stay late.

It sparks the entrepreneur to risk everything on a new business idea. Passion fuels the leader to invest in his people and his team. Passion drives the sales professional to ask a few more questions, probe a little deeper, and seek more understanding before offering a solution. Selling is a profession where rejection is frequent, yet passion continues to move you forward, past the rejection and onto the next sale. Passion is what causes parents to sacrifice their personal needs and desires for the needs of their children.

How can passion slay the giants in your life? Arnold Glasow said it best,

*“Nothing splendid was ever created in cold blood. Heat is required to forge anything. Every great accomplishment is the story of a flaming heart.”*

When discussing passion, you need to determine if you have it at all. Gordon MacDonald in his book, *Restoring Your Spiritual Passion*, concludes that restoration contains three critical elements; Safe Places, Still Times, and Special Friends.

## **Safe Places**

Safe places allow you to lower your defenses and relax. This clears the mind of anxious thoughts, giving room for clear thinking. Finding a place to get away can flame the heart with the required heat to forge your passion. A safe place is also free of defense mechanisms that prevent you from relaxing. One of my safe places is at the beach, watching the waves rolling in. This calming scene allows me to take a deep breath and get ready to ignite the passions in my life. While living in San Diego, California, I was transferred to Portland, Oregon. I knew this would be a stressful transition for my family. Leaving friends and family and starting with a new company would cause unwanted stress for everyone. I went to the beach to gather my thoughts and prepare for this new chapter in my career. There would be stress and new demands, yet I knew why I was taking the transfer and how my family

would benefit from this. I used this safe place to gain the passion required to make the transition from San Diego to Portland. It really helped as we arrived in Portland. The first major change was the weather. San Diego is famous for perfect weather, lots of sunshine, coastal breezes and romantic beaches. Portland is known for having 7-9 months of rain with occasional interruptions of sunshine. That was a major challenge for us. Yet, we reveled in the times when the sun was shining and really enjoyed the Pacific Northwest by hiking and exploring all the wonders of this glorious and beautiful mountainous location.

### **Still Times**

Still times are blocks of time where clear thinking can create or ignite passions that have been suppressed. 'Still times' allow reflection of goals and desires, creation of plans, hopes, and dreams. When you feel safe and still, you can build on the reflection and creation of your dreams and plans. During these still times, bring something to write on. I recommend a blank notebook or journal. Use the empty pages as an opportunity to fill them with your clear thinking. Write a list of what you need to make things happen in different area of your life. Make sure you write as much as you can, so you can capture all your ideas and thoughts. Pour out your ideas and creative dreams so that you can assemble them later into the prioritized list for impact and purpose. When I started Brick Wall Motivation, I had many ideas and goals for this new company. My thoughts raced so quickly, I felt like I was jumping from one thought to another with no logical direction. As I wrote my thoughts and ideas down, I began to see the bigger picture and design for Brick Wall Motivation. I saw what was required then and what could be postponed for a few months, perhaps a few years. I wrote down what I wanted Brick Wall Motivation to represent for my clients and me. I began to fill the empty pages of my journal with the ideas for the foundation of my new company. Still times give you clarity and focus. Treasure them.

## Special Friends

Special friends are there to encourage you and hold you accountable. It's easy to find people that wish you well. It is difficult to find special friends who will hold you accountable on your journey to slay the giants. There are people in your life that wish you success and those who wish you failure. Make sure you align yourself with the right ones, those who build you up. Special friends know you and know your motives. They offer a listening ear, advice, counsel, and sometimes a shoulder to lean on. By nature, I tend to take on too many commitments. This frustrates the people in my life that are counting on me to fulfill these commitments. During my Youth Ministry days, I was a leader in Young Life, a great ministry to high school students. Taking on this ministry, a full college schedule, and a part-time job, I was in my element of over-commitment. A group of leaders from our Young Life staff came and helped me work out all my priorities and helped me determine the cause of this need to over-commit. They were very special friends who took their own time to help me make time. In fact, with their advice and counsel, I decided to leave the Young Life ministry to focus on my college work. That was a tough decision, and could only be made with the help of friends who cared enough to help me focus my passion.

Once you have safe places, still times, and special friends, get to the task. As Robert Schuller put it, "I'd rather attempt to do something great and fail than to attempt to do nothing and succeed." You must create action. David accepted the challenge from Goliath and fought. He did not hang around the soldiers asking their opinion. He just did it.

*"Flaming enthusiasm, backed up by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most frequently makes for success."* – Dale Carnegie

A few years ago, I worked with a group of sales professionals in the software industry. At the end of a two-day sales training class, I gave them a challenge. Each attendee was to take two new ideas and begin to integrate them into their daily lives. Some of the sales professionals even committed to try these new ideas the next business day. They were passionate about these new ideas and felt sure they would help them close more business. I checked back with the group 3 months later to review the progress and to answer additional questions. Each one returned to their old habits, expecting different results. They failed to take their passion to the next level. They took no action. Passion requires action. You must take action.

## Putting Stone #1 (Passion) Into Action

- When you think of passion, what comes to mind? Write down some of your thoughts and experiences with passion.
- What is your fear of failure? How can passion reduce or remove the fear?
- Write down all the passionate people in your life who have influenced you. How have they influenced you?
- Where are your safe places? When was the last time you retreated there? What could you do at your safe place to restore your passion?
- Still Times? Invest in a journal and begin writing down your passionate thoughts, your dreams, hopes, goals, and desires. What will it take for you to move toward them?
- Who are your special friends that can help you slay your giants? How can they help you slay your giants?
- What three things can you do today to place your passion into action? Who will be impacted?

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