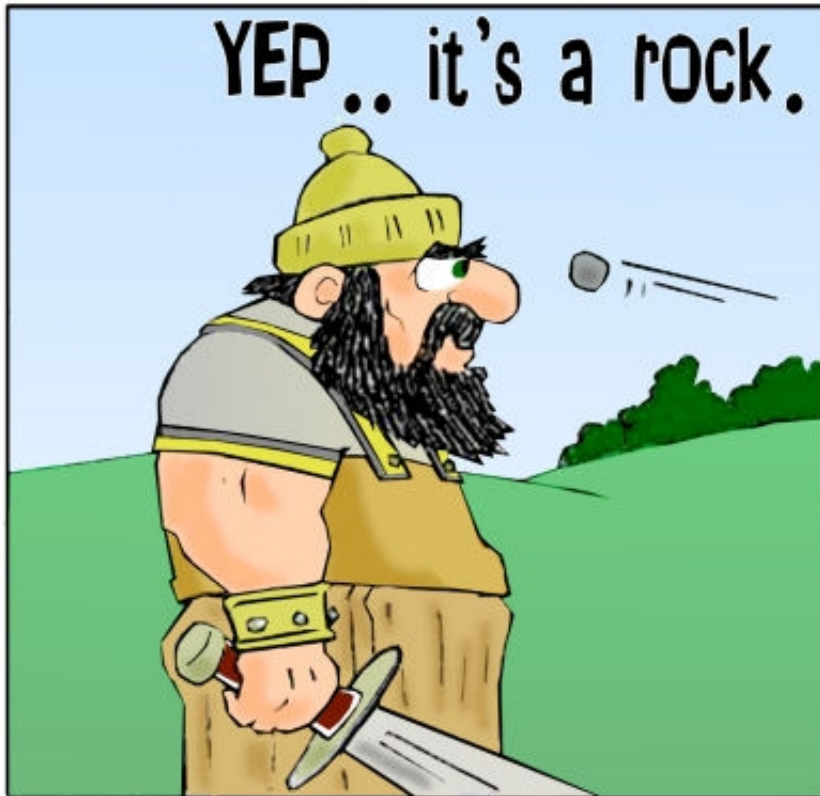


Big lessons can be learned in small settings

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



Goliath was always known for his keen eye for detail.

In the epic biblical story of David and Goliath, David was confident that he could kill the giant because, “Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them” (1 Samuel 17:36).

Young David was prepared for a large task because he had been successful in smaller ones (though one might argue that slaying a lion and a bear are not small tasks).

Often in life, we can learn important skills in small settings and then transfer them to larger ones. Learning is maximized when we realize that the small setting can be a training exercise.

I once read that a well-known management consultant (I can't remember the name) advised recent MBA graduates to work for one year at a big-box store (Home Depot, Staples) because they would be exposed to every aspect of a business (income, expenses, personnel, inventory, ordering and receiving products, marketing, customer relations, etc.). It would be a fast track to learn how to lead a large organization.

Leaders, if you learn how to properly manage a small team of people—perhaps four or five—you can use the same skills to supervise a large group. If you learn how to cast vision in a small organization, you can use the same principles in a large one. If you train yourself to be emotionally intelligent at home, the same skills will work in the marketplace. Learn leadership lessons in a small setting because they will transfer into a larger one, and the inevitable failures that occur while learning will be less consequential in a small setting.

Most skills, traits, and concepts are transferable; once you master them in a small environment they will scale up. But if you don't know how to utilize them in a small setting, you won't use them in a large one.

