



Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement

Marshall Ganz

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Why David Sometimes Wins tells the story of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers' groundbreaking victory, drawing important lessons from this dramatic tale. Since the 1900s, large-scale agricultural enterprises relied on migrant labor—a cheap, unorganized, and powerless workforce. In 1965, when some 800 Filipino grape workers began to strike under the aegis of the AFL-CIO, the UFW soon joined the action with 2,000 Mexican workers and turned the strike into a civil rights struggle. They engaged in civil disobedience, mobilized support from churches and students, boycotted growers, and transformed their struggle into *La Causa*, a farm workers' movement that eventually triumphed over the grape industry's Goliath. Why did they succeed? How can the powerless challenge the powerful successfully? Offering insight from a longtime movement organizer and scholar, Ganz illustrates how they had the ability and resourcefulness to devise good strategy and turn short-term advantages into long-term gains. Authoritative in scholarship and magisterial in scope, this book constitutes a seminal contribution to learning from the movement's struggles, set-backs, and successes.

"A brilliant new book."—Peter Dreier, *The Nation*

"Why David Sometimes Wins is an exceptional book that will be of widespread interest to scholars and activists alike."—Howard Kimeldorf, *American Journal of Sociology*

"This book is a must read for organizers. The analysis of how a small and poor, but motivated, group of workers triggered a social movement provides invaluable lessons on what to do and not do as we struggle with the challenges of the 21st century."—Andy Stern, President, Service Employees International Union

"How does David defeat Goliath and, equally important, avoid becoming Goliath? The answer is to develop strategic capacity, an ongoing interactive process of experimentation, learning, and adapting.

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