

## *This iBelieve Essays*

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### **The Man Who Saved the World**

by **Boris Slopac**

I believe in David Bowie. After all, he did many important things for the music industry, fashion world, and the LGBT+ community. With his recent passing, I realized the profound impact that he had on the world, our culture, and on me.

On January 10, pretty much everyone was shocked with David Bowie's death, considering that he just turned 69 and released a new album. The way he committed most of his life to making music and his ability to create an amazing sound with anything that he worked on changed the way I think about my work. I began to strive to do my best, instead of just accepting mediocre results. I pushed myself harder to succeed, and my grades and quality of work went up. I was proud of what I've made for once.

I was working on an essay at 2 AM when I finally decided to give up and go to bed. Not before checking my phone, however, as most teenagers do. When I first saw the news, I hoped for it to be a hoax, and I felt the pit in my stomach starting to grow. Seeing his representatives and family confirm that he had passed was what finally made it real for me. I spent the whole night crying, trying to understand how the greatest and most influential musician of all time was gone.

Not only was David Bowie my inspiration for success, but he also helped inspire possibly every musician I listen to. From Placebo to Marilyn Manson to Joan Jett, these icons would not be who they are today without Bowie.

Bowie played a huge role, perhaps even the biggest role, in the acceptance of my own identity as a gender non-conforming trans male. I struggled with understanding that I enjoyed "feminine" things, yet identified as male. The transgender community is forced to stick to the binary just to be accepted by society as the gender with which they identify. Discovering Bowie during a time in which I was depressed about my gender practically saved me. Bowie's characters—like Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane, the Goblin King, and multiple others—all wore makeup, but he didn't feel as if they were just characters. He was more comfortable being all out, rather than fitting in with society. In the 70s, doing what he did was extremely rare and unheard of, but he still managed to awe people with his unique sound and lyrical genius. He showed me that it's more than okay to like things such as makeup without having to identify as anything other than male. I was proud that I enjoyed being feminine, thanks to him.

Coming out was especially hard. I remember *The Next Day*, his twenty-fifth album, was released at the time I started to contemplate telling my friends and family. Listening to that album took a huge weight off my shoulders, and again I felt accepted. The music took me from feeling

depressed to wanting to sing and dance along to his hauntingly calming voice. Even after coming out to some—with mixed reactions—I went to his music for comfort. He had no idea what I was going through, but still it felt like he was with me and somehow went through what I did.

I believe in David Bowie because he believed in being himself.