

The Power of Personal Example: Abraham Lincoln and Successful 21st Century School Leadership



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“He is one of those giant figures, of whom there are very few in history, who lose their nationality in death.”

David Lloyd George

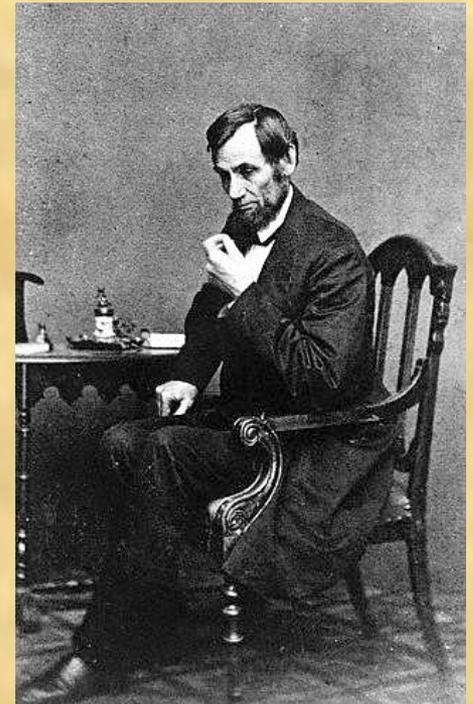
After Lincoln's election as president in Nov. 1860 the journalist, Henry Villard stated:

“The path he is about to walk on may lead to success, glory, immortality, but also to failure, humiliation and curses upon his memory. ”

(In Holzer's *Lincoln: President-Elect*, p. 294)

"Character Is Destiny."

(Burlingame, A. *Lincoln: A Life*, Volume 1, 2008)



Credibility

A foundational underpinning of leadership is **credibility... personal example**

People need to **trust** in us as **moral leaders** and believe in the **ideas and ideals** we share to promote change initiatives that foster student and teacher success.

Thus, the stature of the messenger is an incalculable variable.

In an 1855 letter to his lifelong friend, Joshua Speed, Lincoln expressed his vision of how each group suffers when one group is maligned. The letter relates to the hatred of the Know-Nothing Party for immigrants and blacks.

“I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that ‘all men are created equal.’ We now practically read it ‘all men are created equal, except for negroes.’ When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read ‘all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.’ ” (In *Learning From Lincoln*, pp. 10-11)

Opening Activity: Personal Example and Credibility

How does personal example and credibility play an important part in your daily work?

or

Consider a colleague with whom you have worked who exemplifies credibility, or one who does not.

What are the key qualities, practices, or behaviors that contribute to "credibility"?

Agenda

◆ Welcome, Introductions, Personal Example and Credibility

◆ Reflecting on Lincoln's Leadership Qualities and Practices: Lessons for Today's Leaders: Quote Analysis and Implications for Contemporary Leaders

◆ Promoting Core Values: Mission and Vision

◆ Articulating and Communicating Ideas with Clarity

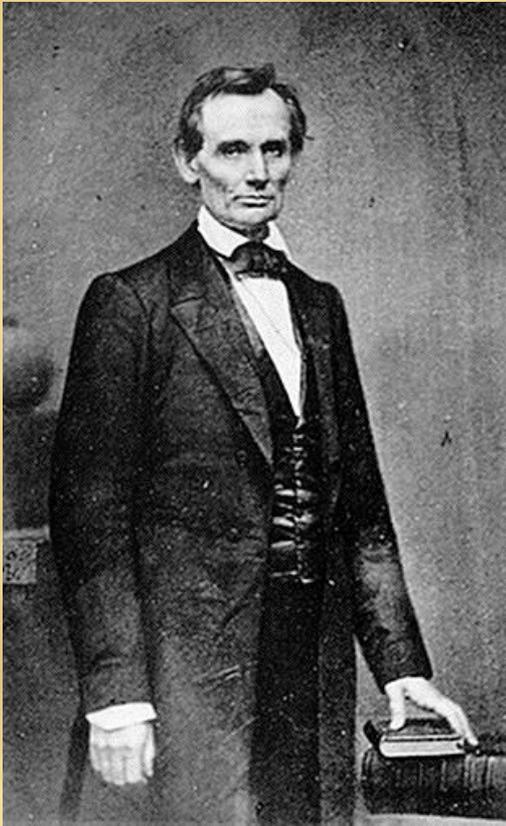
◆ Building a Diverse and Competent Team

◆ Displaying Humility, Courage, Resilience, and Fostering Trust

◆ Facilitating Change During Times of Crisis

◆ Gettysburg, The "Unfinished Work," and Closing Reflections

1860.....and.....1865.....



Ten Leadership Qualities and Practices

- Implementing and Sustaining a Mission and Vision with Focused and Profound Clarity
- Communicating Ideas Effectively with Precise and Straightforward Language
- Building a Diverse and Competent Team to Successfully Address the Mission
- Engendering Trust, Loyalty, and Respect through Humility, Humor, and Personal Example
- Leading and Serving with Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

Ten Leadership Qualities and Practices

- Exercising Situational Competence and Responding Appropriately to Implement Effective Change
- Rising Beyond Personal And Professional Trials Through Tenacity, Persistence, Resilience, and Courage
- Exercising Purposeful Visibility
- Demonstrating Personal Growth and Enhanced Competence as a Lifetime Learner, Willing to Reflect on and Expand Ideas
- Believing That Hope Can Become a Reality

Examining Lincoln's Leadership Qualities and Practices: Lessons for Today's Leaders

Leading With Purpose

“Despite the difficulty of coming to a consensus on how we can measure successful leadership, there is almost universal agreement that *success in carrying out the mission and vision of an endeavor—a cause—should be a primary gauge of successful leadership.*”

(Learning From Lincoln: Leadership Practices for School Success,
Alvy and Robbins, ASCD, 2010, p. 7)

Frederick Douglass's reflection on Lincoln's mission at a memorial event for the President, June 1, 1865:

“They [African Americans] viewed him *not in the light of separate individual acts, but in the light of his mission*, in his manifest relation to events and in the philosophy of his statesmanship. Viewing him thus, they trusted him as men are seldom trusted.”

I. Promoting Core Values: Mission and Vision

**“Where there is no vision,
the people perish.”**

(Proverbs 29:18)



President Lincoln's Mission and Vision: The Guiding Ideals

The mission:

- Preserving the Union; then Equality...Reshaping the National Consciousness, and the World

The vision expressed at Gettysburg:

- A new birth of freedom...
government of the people, by the people, for the people

At Gettysburg...the Power of Vision

“...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom —and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” (Nov. 19, 1863)

“I never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence....all should have an equal chance.”

(Abraham Lincoln as President-Elect, Independence Hall, Feb. 22, 1861)

A True North Core Belief

“I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel.”

(Abe Lincoln, 1864)

“Designing” the Core at Apple

“You have to deeply understand the essence of a product in order to be able to get rid of the parts that are not essential.”

(Jon Ive, quoted by Walter Isaacson in *Steve Jobs*, 2011, p. 343)

What are the implications of Ive’s point for your work as an international school leader?

True North

"True North is the internal compass that guides you successfully through life. It represents who you are as a human being at your deepest level. It is your orienting point—your fixed point in a spinning world—that helps you stay on track as a leader."

(Bill George, Harvard Business Professor, in *True North* (2007), p. xxiii.)

"It is under pressure—when your success, your career, or your life hangs in the balance—that you must decide what your values are...."

When you are forced to make trade-offs between your values under difficult circumstances, you learn what is most important in your life and what you are prepared to sacrifice for. Those who develop a clear sense of their values before they get into a crisis are better prepared to keep their bearings and navigate through difficult decisions and dilemmas when the pressure mounts." (p. 87)

(Bill George, *True North*, 2007).

Developing a Personal Vision Guided by Your *True North*

Developing, refining or rekindling a **personal vision** helps clarify and galvanize thoughts and feelings:

What drives me and ignites my passion, and fuels the passions of others, creating a collective commitment to pursue a vision of student success and teacher growth?

What are those core values that underlie my fierce resolve to do whatever it takes to advance the organization's purpose and to ensure that every individual within the organization thrives?

My personal vision:

Learning From Lincoln:

A Matrix of Critical Ingredients for School Success

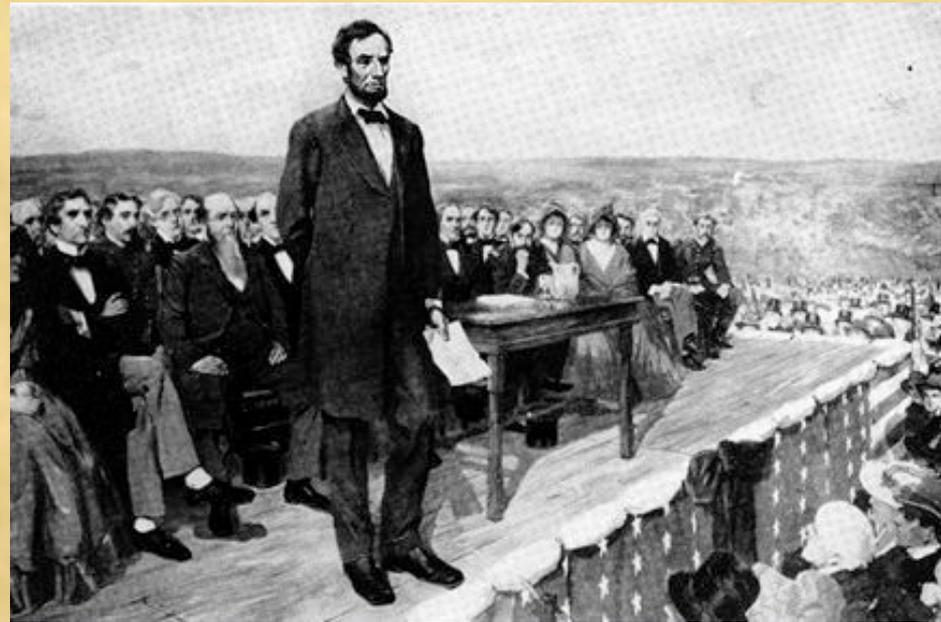
Leadership Practices	Lincoln's Example	Conceptual Implications for 21 st Century Leadership	Practical Application for School or Classroom Setting
Mission and Vision	First Inaugural and Gettysburg Address	Focusing on the School Mission and Core Values	
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II. Communicating the Mission Based on Core Values

“The value of possessing a few basic ideas that are genuine and workable is enormously enhanced if the leader can put them across with simplicity.”

(Lincoln as Hero, by Frank Williams, 2012, p. xiii)

How does an individual with only one year of formal schooling write the Gettysburg Address?



Lincoln's Power to Practice...Led to Lifelong Learning

“I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand.... I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got on such a hunt after an idea, until I caught it; and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over, till I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me” (Holzer, 2004, p. 200).

– A. Lincoln

Lincoln's Remarks to a Group of Ohio Soldiers on August 22, 1864:

"...It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember this, not merely for my sake, but for yours. I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has..."

Lincoln's Learning Journey



Lincoln experimented with language, metaphor, story, and intentional communication strategies to improve his speaking and writing abilities

- Reading aloud
- Writing as a way of ordering thoughts
- Asking for feedback

Lincoln's extraordinary ability to communicate with eloquence is characterized by:

- Crisp, concise writing
- An ability to use everyday language understood by the most and least educated
- A desire to receive feedback and refine his works
- Mastering the primary communication media of his age – the telegraph and the newspaper
- Patience to listen to all sides and make effective decisions.

(Alvy and Robbins, 2010, p. 21)

A Powerful Story

Reflecting on Story

“...the artful creation and articulation of stories constitutes a fundamental part of the leader’s vocation. Stories speak to both parts of the human mind – its reason and emotion...it is stories of identity – narratives that help individuals think about and feel who they are, where they come from, and where they are headed – that constitute the single most powerful weapon in the leader’s literary arsenal” (p 43).

Gardner, H. (1995) *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*. New York: Basic Books.

Lincoln was a storyteller. He used this story to illustrate his steadfast belief in the viability of the union:

"When I was a young man in Illinois," he said, "I boarded for a time with a deacon of the Presbyterian church. One night I was aroused from my sleep by a rap on the door, and I heard the deacon's voice exclaiming, 'Arise Abraham! The day of judgment has come!' I sprang from my bed and rushed to the window and saw the stars falling in great showers; but looking back of them in the heavens I saw the grand old constellations, with which I was so well acquainted, fixed and true in their places. Gentlemen, the world did not come to an end then, nor will the Union now."

(Whitman, 1892/1964, Vol. II, p.537)

Celebrating Your Story and Leadership Voice

Write about your own personal story. How does your story influence your work, calling to lead, and distinctive voice? How does it influence your passion to make a difference?

Learning From Lincoln:

A Matrix of Critical Ingredients for School Success

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III. Building a Diverse and Competent Team

“He wanted a balanced cabinet that would reflect the breadth and diversity of Republicanism. He also recognized his own inexperience and the political qualities of those he had defeated for the Republican nomination: Seward, Chase, and Bates. It says much for Lincoln’s self-assurance that he was so ready to surround himself with some of the largest and most self-regarding talents in the party.”

(Richard Carwardine, Lincoln, 2007, pp. 152-54)

"Lincoln's genius was his ability to draw upon the talents of others, meld together diverse personalities who often did not trust one another, and then listen to their advice, recognizing that it was sometimes wiser than his own." (R. White, 2009, p.319)

Thinking about Lincoln's example, what strategies do you use to meld together diverse personalities to address a common goal?

Building Leadership Capacity

**“A central part
of being a
great leader
is cultivating
leadership in
others.”**

(“The School Principal as Leader,” Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 11)

The Different Faces of Perception

The Different Faces of Perception

Reflecting on Diverse Perceptions and the Power of Teaming

What did team members see?

How might diverse team perceptions be an asset?

How might the diverse perceptions of team members lead to conflict?

What are some steps we can take to be sure our team diversity is embraced in a positive way?

PLC Collaboration and Student Success

“Schools with strong professional learning communities were four times more likely to be improving academically than schools with weaker professional communities. We can no longer afford to be innocent of the fact that collaboration improves performance.”

(Ann Lewis in Schmoker, Mike, “Tipping Point: From Reckless Reform to Substantive Instructional Improvement,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2004.)

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IV. Displaying Humility, Courage Resilience, and Fostering Trust

In his prize winning book, *April, 1865*, Winik states,

“If [Lincoln] can be best described during this period, it is with two words: dogged tenacity...It is a simple explanation for greatness. But, in Lincoln’s case, also probably quite true.” (p. 245)

Humor with Purpose

While in Gettysburg on the night of November 18, 1863 the crowd wanted to hear a few words from President Lincoln.....

Lincoln said, “It is somewhat important in my position one should not say any foolish things if he can help it, and it very often happens, that the only way to help it, is to say nothing at all.”

(Martin Johnson, *Writing the Gettysburg Address*, 2013, p. 92)

Lincoln endured criticism of character and practice. Consider these comments made about Lincoln while he was president:

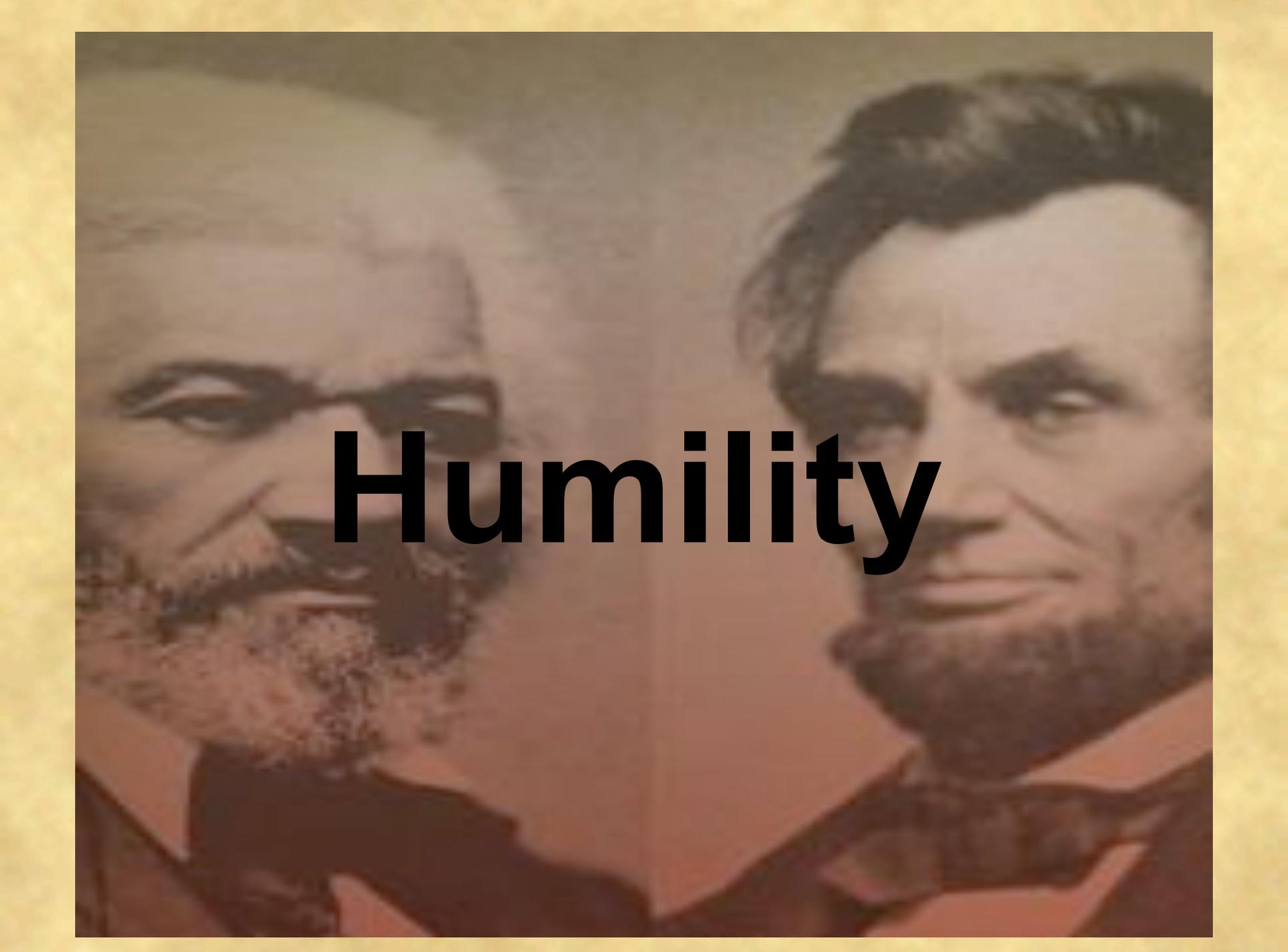
- "A first-rate second rate man [with] no mind whatsoever."
- "A rather slow intellect...he has no experience of men and events, and no knowledge of the past."
- "The president is an idiot...the original gorilla...a well-meaning baboon."

School leaders also face criticism, and can learn from Lincoln's examples of:

- Courage
- "Dogged Tenacity"
- Persistence
- Desire to Make a Difference
- Focusing on the Work
- Camaraderie
- Storytelling
- Sharing the Burden and Vulnerability of Leadership
- Spiritual Strength

A Demonstration of Humility, Empathy, and Resilience

**“Letter to
Fanny McCullough”**

The image features a composite background of two men's faces. On the left is a man with a full white beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark tie. On the right is a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark bow tie. The word "Humility" is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font across the center of the image, overlapping both faces.

Humility

A Story of Humility

James Oakes tells a compelling story about the relationship between Lincoln and Frederick Douglass in his book, *The Radical and the Republican*. Oakes describes a wonderful encounter between the two men at the White House following the Second Inaugural on March 4, 1865:

Lincoln said, “I saw you in the crowd today, listening to my inaugural address; how did you like it?” “Mr. Lincoln,” Douglass replied, “I must not detain you with my poor opinion when there are thousands waiting to shake hands with you.” “No, No,” Lincoln said. “You must stop a little, Douglass; there is no man in the country whose opinion I value more than yours. I want to know what you think of it.” “Mr. Lincoln,” Douglass answered, “that was a sacred effort.” [Lincoln replied], “I am glad you liked it!” (p. 242)

Reflecting on Lincoln's “Letter to Fanny,” and “Meeting with Frederick Douglass.”

As you review the previous three slides, consider what particularly resonated with you about each action. How do these situations apply to your school leadership work—what are the implications for you? Discuss your ideas with colleagues.

Optimism Boy: Resilient (and Creative!)

Some of the Challenges (stressors) Faced by Today's International School Leaders

- **Always Maintaining High Standards and Expectations in a Very Competitive International Market**
- **Helping New Teachers and Their Families Transition to a New School and Nation**
- **Staying on the Cutting Edge Without Sacrificing What Works: Are These New Initiatives Going to Work? Are They Substantial?**
- **Addressing Security Issues**
- **Balancing the School's Identity with Host Country Expectations**
- **What Else?**

How do we as leaders help others deal with challenges, remain resilient, and persevere? How do we deal with challenges, remain resilient, and persevere?

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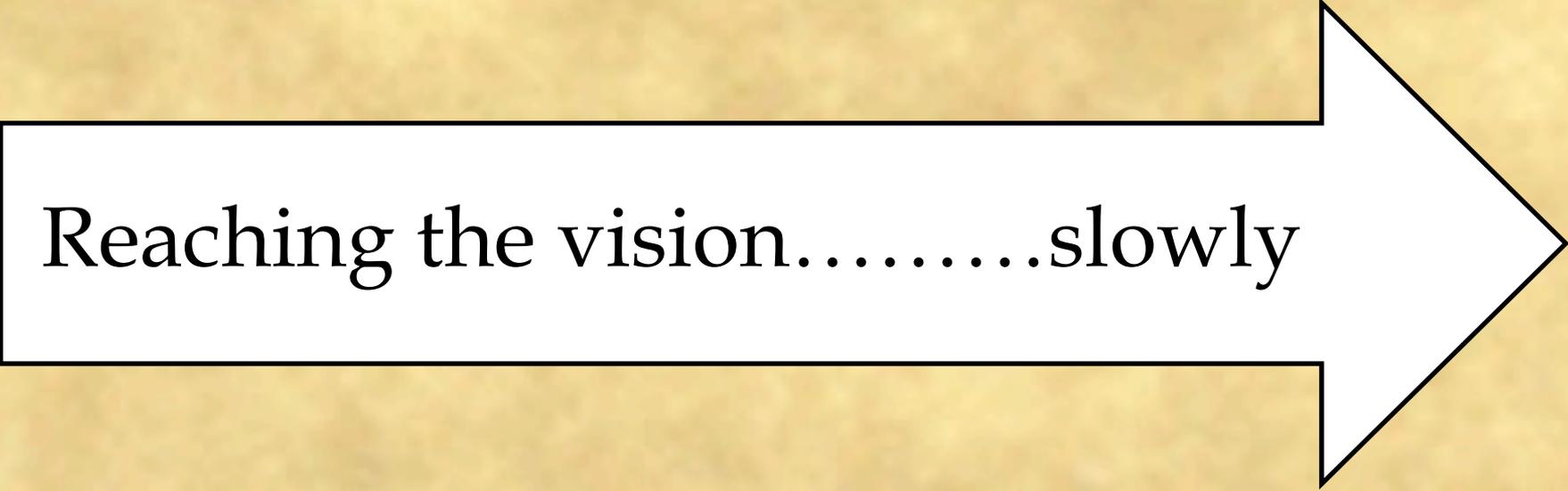
V. Facilitating Change During Times of Crisis...the Road to Emancipation

“[Lincoln's] goals kept expanding as he tested how far he might go in his attempt to change history.”

(Richard Striner, *Father Abraham*, 2006, p. 3)

**From Lincoln's Annual Message to
Congress on December 1, 1862:**

"The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present...As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."



Reaching the vision.....slowly

**“We hope to have God on our
side but we must have
Kentucky.”**

A. Lincoln

The Emancipation Proclamation

January 1, 1863

Upon signing the document Lincoln stated,

“If my name ever goes into history it will be for this act, my whole soul is in it.”

(Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 2012, p. 81)

Implementing Significant Change

Heifetz and Linsky in *Leadership on the Line* (2002) describe **technical** and **adaptive** challenges:

"Technical challenges" refer to "implementation of change efforts based on problems we have faced before and solutions in which we have the necessary know-how and procedures" (p. 13).

"Adaptive challenges"...require experiments, new discoveries and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community." Thinking in new ways must occur and must include "changing attitudes, values, and behaviors" (p.13).

If I Only Knew....

With adaptive challenges, internalization of the problem must occur; that is, personal commitment to make the change is critical.

Heifetz and Linsky note, "the single most common source of leadership failure we've been able to identify...is that people, especially those in positions of authority, treat adaptive challenges like technical problems" (p. 14).

Reflecting on technical and adaptive challenges, think of an important change effort with which you have been involved. Was it a technical or adaptive challenge? What do you know now that would have been helpful when you were involved in the change effort? Please explain.

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From *The Gettysburg Gospel* (2006) by Gabor Boritt

When Lincoln said, “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.”

“... a captain in the crowd with an empty sleeve buried his face in his good arm, shaking and sobbing aloud. Then he raised his eyes high and exclaimed in a low, solemn voice: ‘God Almighty bless Abraham Lincoln!’ [A] reporter, noting the faces around the soldier, thought that people responded silently with ‘Amen.’ And all the while the crowd applauded Lincoln again.” (p. 118)

The Gettysburg Address



The Unfinished Work

Successful school leaders possess a strong sense of responsibility and **moral commitment** to a shared **mission and vision** aligned with deeply held **core values** that focus on

- Equity
- Social Justice issues related to: racism, elitism, poverty, various gaps, graduation rates, abuse, bullying, and giving voice to the voiceless
- Democracy and Equality—“all are created equal”
- Creating those conditions under which profound levels of human learning can flourish.

Reflections: A Leader's Voice

Effective school leaders are responsible for promoting team leadership and building the capacity of others— from administrators, to teacher leaders, to students and parents.

After reflecting on Lincoln's words at Gettysburg and our work today, to what **unfinished work** will you commit?

How will your leadership voice, stories, and actions guide and support **others** on this successful journey?

Leadership Attributes and “My” School, Classroom or Central Office Mission and Vision

Leadership Qualities, Traits and Skills Critical to My School Leadership Role	How These Qualities and Practices Connect to Accomplishing the Mission and Vision	Self-Assessment: My Strengths and Weaknesses
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

The Inspiration Continues.....

“The failure to recognize the *attributes of flexibility and the capacity for growth* in Lincoln and, instead, treat him as a static, stunted figure is to misuse the legacy that he has left for all of us.”

John Hope Franklin