Learning From Lincoln: Leadership Practices for School Success

“Character is Destiny.”

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Our Inspiration…

- The mystery of Lincoln: What qualities—inner strength—drove Lincoln to reach such heights?
- “His life and work evoke possibility, humility, hope, and moral leadership.” (p. 2)
- “Lincoln’s leadership helped a nation continue a journey toward equality—a journey that has not yet been completed.” (p. 2)

Reflections of Michael Burlingame:

“As I conduct research about [Lincoln] and write about him, I feel compelled to try to be a better historian and a better human being. I try and will continue to try.”

Credibility

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

People need to believe in us as leaders and must believe in the ideas that we represent in order to be motivated to implement and sustain change initiatives.

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

What we can all learn from Lincoln is that if change is to succeed, a key ingredient is personal example.

During the Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862, Lincoln stated:

“...Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for Union. The world will not forget that we say this....’’
The Question that Drives
Learning From Lincoln:

What can educational leaders—from administrators to teacher leaders—learn from an in-depth study of Lincoln’s leadership experiences to achieve success in today’s schools?

Consider the above question and your professional and personal work and responsibilities.

A Cautionary Note…

“It is important to note that the goal of [Learning From Lincoln] is not to have readers attempt to replicate Lincoln’s style and behavior. [Leaders] must learn from their own stories and discover why they have a passion for leadership. Each one of us, as leaders, must take a personal and distinctive journey if we are to succeed.”

(p. 5)

Defining Great Leadership: It is hard to define great leadership, but we know it when we see it!

During your lifetime you have seen examples of great and poor leadership. Based on your observations, what are the qualities of great leaders? What have you observed when leaders are unsuccessful?

Please share your ideas with colleagues.

Why this Session?

Agenda

Welcome, Reflections on Inspiration, Credibility, and Leadership; Reviewing Agenda

Overview of Lincoln’s Leadership Practices with Present Contextual Application

In-depth Examination and Action Implications of Key Leadership Practices: Focusing on the Mission, Communicating with Clarity, Using Emotional Intelligence and Behaving with Humility and Trust, Facilitating Change, and Fostering Hope

Reflections: A Personal Journey and Next Steps
~Our Approach~

Leadership attributes are often intangible. We sought to make these attributes tangible by invoking an example from history and illustrating its timeless application in the 21st century.

Ten Leadership Qualities and Practices

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

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

When Lincoln gave Stanton the Secretary of War post he showed that he did not hold a grudge because Stanton had stood him up many years earlier, “Lincoln’s choice of Stanton would reveal...a singular ability to transcend personal vendetta, humiliation, or bitterness. As for Stanton, despite his initial contempt for the ‘long armed Ape,’ he would not only accept the offer but come to respect and love Lincoln more than any person outside of his immediate family.” (Team of Rivals, Goodwin, p. 175)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:

1. Nicolay, Lincoln’s personal secretary, reflecting on Lincoln’s selection of Chase for Chief Justice:

“Nicolay was equally devoted. When Lincoln in December 1864 nominated Salmon P. Chase, his former Secretary of the Treasury, who had fought to win the 1864 Republican nomination for himself, for Chief Justice, Nicolay wrote his fiancée: ‘Probably no other man than Lincoln would have had...the degree of magnanimity to thus forgive and exalt a rival who had so deeply and so unjustifiably intrigued against him. It is...only another most marked illustration of the greatness of the President, in this age of little men.” (We Are Lincoln Men, Donald p. 203)
2. “As president, he [Lincoln] explained why he would pardon soldiers who deserted for cowardice: “It would frighten the poor devils to death to shoot them.” (Lincoln’s Melancholy, Shenk, p. 119)

A Story about Lincoln: “And [Lincoln] would mock those who would do wrong and then accuse others by comparing them to the ruffian who made an unprovoked assault in the street upon a quiet citizen. ‘The criminal drew his revolver, but the assaulted party made a sudden spring and wrested the weapon from the hands of the would-be assassin. Stop! said the attacker. Give me back that pistol; you have no right to my property!’” (Lincoln On Leadership, Phillips, p. 55)

3. Excerpts from the “With malice toward none” speech, (The Second Inaugural Address), March 4, 1865, Washington, D.C.:

“...Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came. One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war....Each [side] looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other... (continued on next slide)

4. “He was publicly called just about every name imaginable by the press of the day, including a grotesque baboon, a third-rate country lawyer who once split rails and now splits the union, a coarse vulgar joker, a dictator, an ape, a buffoon, and others.” (Lincoln On Leadership, Phillips, p. 66)
5. “No two men were ever more utterly and irreconcilably unlike,” [Secretary of War] Stanton’s private secretary, A. E. Johnson, observed. “The secretiveness which Lincoln wholly lacked, [Secretary of War] Stanton had in marked degree; the charity which Stanton could not feel, coursed from every pore in Lincoln. Lincoln was for giving a wayward subordinate seventy times seven chances to repair his errors; Stanton was for either forcing him to obey or cutting off his head without more ado. Lincoln was as calm and unruffled as the summer sea in moments of the gravest peril; Stanton would lash himself into a fury over the same condition of things…

25

…Stanton would take hardships with a groan; Lincoln would find a funny story to fit them. Stanton was all dignity and sternness, Lincoln all simplicity and good nature…yet no two men ever did or could work better in harness. They supplemented each other’s nature, and they fully recognized the fact that they were a necessity to each other.” (Team of Rivals, Goodwin, p. 560)

6. “Sometimes, if an individual had upset him [Lincoln] and he wanted to work out his feelings, he would write the man a letter that he never intended to mail. Noting this psychological tactic, the famed Civil War historian and novelist Shelby Foote concluded, ‘Lincoln was his own psychiatrist.’” (The Words Lincoln Lived By, Griessman, p. 41)

Recently, the historian William Miller reflected, “The dominant mode of expression of [Lincoln’s] mind was not quickness, speedy analysis, rapid-fire response….Lincoln’s mind instead cut deeply, perhaps slowly or at least with effort and concentrated attention, into a relatively few subjects…

27

…It was purposive—personally, politically, morally…. [To his lifelong friend Joshua Speed, Lincoln once said:] ‘I am slow to learn, and slow to forget that which I have learned. My mind is like a piece of steel—very hard to scratch anything on it, and almost impossible thereafter to rub it out.’ [And to Frederick Douglass, during a White House meeting on August 10, 1863] ‘Lincoln told Douglass that he objected to the public charge that Douglass had made that Lincoln was slow and vacillating. He did not make any objection to ‘slow’; but ‘vacillating’ was another matter. ‘Mr. Douglass I do not think the charge can be sustained; I think it cannot be shown that when I have once taken a position, I have ever retreated from it.’” (Lincoln’s Virtues, Miller, pp. 13-14)

7. “His success in dealing with the strong egos of the men in his cabinet suggests that in the hands of a truly great politician the qualities we generally associate with decency and morality—kindness, sensitivity, compassion, honesty, and empathy—can also be impressive political resources.” (Team of Rivals, Goodwin, xvii)

A reporter, Horace White, reflected during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, “Mr. Lincoln’s eloquence was of the higher type, which produced conviction in others because of the conviction of the speaker himself.” (Team of Rivals, Goodwin, p. 165)

Speaking to a Temperance Group (i.e., a political group against alcohol) on February 22, 1842, Lincoln “…explicitly rejected any claim of superiority on the part of nondrinkers (like himself) and of temperance advocates over those who were then called ‘drunkards.’…That radical rejection, separating the drunkard from the rest of us is ‘repugnant, ‘uncharitable, feelingless.’ But more: Lincoln explicitly said that those (like himself and some of his listeners) who ‘have never fallen victims’ to drink ‘have been spared more from absence of appetite, than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have.” (Lincoln’s Virtues, Miller, p. 159)
As Frederick Douglass said:

8. “Though high in position, the humblest could approach him and feel at home in his presence. Though deep, he was transparent; though strong, he was gentle; though decided and pronounced in his convictions, he was tolerant towards those who differed from him, and patient under reproaches… The hard condition of his early life, which would have depressed and broken down weaker men, only gave greater life, vigor, and buoyancy to the heroic spirit of Abraham Lincoln” (Oakes, 2007. pp. 270-271).

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:

9. Speaking to a friend Lincoln once said, “They say I tell a great many stories. I reckon I do; but I have learned from long experience that plain people…are more easily influenced through the medium of a broad and humorous illustration than in an other way…” (Lincoln on Leadership, Phillips, p. 154)

“One of the great paradoxes about Abraham Lincoln is that he could tell an off-color joke to a group of farm hands and have them in hysterical laughter, and he could create and deliver the Gettysburg Address, one of the most magnificent works of American literature.” (Lincoln on Leadership, Phillips, p. 160)

“For admirers like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lincoln’s was the art that concealed art. By his careful avoidance of ‘fine writing,’ as conventionally understood, and his embrace of language that had ‘the relish and smack of the soil,’ he reached all classes, from the most sophisticated to ‘the lowest intellect.” (Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power, Carwardine, p. 266)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:

10. Quoting Lincoln: “Lawyers are not known for their brevity, and lawyers’ briefs are rarely brief. Remarking on a particularly long brief written by a wordy lawyer, Abraham Lincoln said ‘It’s like the lazy preacher who used to write long sermons, and the explanation was, he got to writin’ and was too lazy to stop.”’ (The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, Ayres, p. 33)

Recently, the historian William Miller reflected “As it is said that writers of great prose often start as writers of bad poetry…so it may be said that this writer [Lincoln] of great short speeches started by writing bad long ones.” (Lincoln’s Virtues, Miller, p. 146)

Excerpt from the closing section of the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863:

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:

11. In 1855, before serving as president, Lincoln wrote a letter to his best friend, Joshua Speed in relation to the popularity of the anti-immigration Know-Nothing Party. In the letter Lincoln shared his thoughts about the Know-Nothings:

“Myself 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 ‘all men are created equal.’ We now practically read it, ‘all men are created equal, except negroes.’ When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read ‘all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners; and Catholics.”’ (The Collected Works of A. L., Basler, Vol. II, p. 323.)
During the debates with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln said the following on Oct. 15th, 1858 in Alton, Illinois to refute Douglas’ comments about slavery:

“They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says: You work and toil and earn bread, and I’ll eat it.” (The Collected Works of A. L., Basler, Vol. III, p. 315.)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:

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**Bold Actions, Powerful Ideas, and School Success**

A Matrix of Critical Ingredients for School Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices</th>
<th>Lincoln’s Example</th>
<th>A Leadership Story</th>
<th>Bold Actions: Implications for School Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realizing a Vision and Mission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating with Clarity</td>
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“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 Practice for School Success, Alvy and Robbins, ASCD, 2010, p.7)

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**Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address**

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.” (March 4, 1861)
At Gettysburg…
“…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)

Impact of Vision on Life Paths
- Confronting reality with clarity
- Using vision to impact the lives of many
- Changing self concept/sense of worth

The Good with the Bad
Robert Moton, the son of slaves, eloquently described Lincoln’s achievement:

“The claim of greatness for Abraham Lincoln lies in this, that amid doubt and distrust, against the counsel of his chosen advisors, in the hour of the nation’s utter peril, he put his trust in God and spoke the word that gave freedom to a race, and vindicated the honor of a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

(Ferguson, 2007, p. 266)

Perhaps the best historical example of a mission statement, with a rationale and an aligned vision clearly noted is the Gettysburg Address.

The mission:
– Equality and Union

The vision:
– A new birth of freedom and a government of the people, by the people, for the people

Successful school leaders possess a strong sense of responsibility and a deep and unwavering commitment to carrying out a shared mission and vision aligned with deeply held values and beliefs that focus on
– Equity
– Social Justice
– Democracy
– Creating those conditions under which profound levels of human learning can flourish

School Leaders May Ponder…

• What do I want to perpetuate in our schools not merely for today but for all time to come?

• Though, as leader, my “temporary residence” may be the schoolhouse or the central office, what do I want future leaders who occupy the space to do or say to continue the work I have begun?

School Leaders May Ponder…

• What do we want any one of our children or children’s children to experience here?

• What personal leadership attributes do I possess that will help galvanize collective action toward the accomplishment of the vision?

• How will the vision and mission make the life and future of every child better and more promising?
Leadership Attributes and “My” School or District Mission and Vision

“Being able to accomplish great things as leaders requires specific character traits, qualities, and skills. Among the traits often mentioned as typifying Lincoln are empathy, humility, the ability to communicate, the capacity for growth, perspective taking, and a sense of humor. As a leader you may wish to reflect on your own character traits, leadership qualities and skills, strengths (and weaknesses) that will fuel (or diminish) your capacity to serve. Please use the [chart on the next page] to record your thoughts and perceptions.” (p. 17)

Reflecting on Chapter One

What ideas, new perspectives, or insights do you wish to add to your repertoire as a leader? Also, has the chapter reaffirmed important ideas for you? Has the chapter raised some concerns?

Chapter Two: Communicating Ideas Effectively with Precise and Straightforward Language

Effective leaders are able to articulate their most important ideas with clarity. Using language that emotionally connects with an audience helps develop meaning. Meaning is critical to school change.

The Power of Practice

“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
“Desire and practice are attributes of extraordinary leaders.”
Zenger and Folkman (2002)

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)

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...”

“When I was a young man in Illinois,” [Lincoln] 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 and end then, nor will the Union now.” (Whitman, 1892/1964, Vol. II, p. 537)

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).

School leaders must mine the media of the day to maximize the flow of information from the school or district to the larger community – and in the other direction as well.

- Print
- Electronic communication
- Social networking

How do you use different forms of media to communicate with teachers, support staff, students, parents, and the greater community?

Tools to communicate with meaning include:

- Storytelling
- Metaphor
- Analogy
- Figurative language
- Example
- Active listening
- Perspective
- What else?

“Just as the language of story draws people in, fostering, in many contexts, a closeness, words also have the capacity to alienate. For example, when staff members use acronyms or jargon (e.g., RTI, IEP, CST, differentiated instruction, UBD,) unfamiliar to a parent, community member, or newcomer to the organization, it sends a strong message that ‘you’re not one of us.’ School leaders who are sensitive to the subtle messages of language are careful to avoid jargon and issues that may be offensive in multicultural settings. They are able to communicate in a way that is informed by a perspective of what the listener may be perceiving.” (p. 32)
Applying Lincoln’s Example

Examine a recent communication you have written, or try creating a communication that you would send out to a particular group of constituents (parents, students, staff, community members). Examine your effort to determine if it reflects:

– Clear and concise language
– Use of language understood by everyone
– Use of metaphor or story to enhance understanding

Ask a colleague to listen to the communication as you read it aloud. Ask for and use your colleague’s feedback.

73

In *The Leadership Challenge* (2002), Kouzes and Posner make a compelling argument for storytelling as a leadership tool. Their reflections include:

- “...lead by storytelling” and “put storytelling on your meeting agenda.” (pp. 98-100)

- “Think of yourself as the chief historian of your team.” (p. 100)

- “Telling great stories is one of the most effective ways leaders can model the values and beliefs essential to organizational success.” (p. 381)

- “Indeed, much about the culture of a company can be learned as a result of listening to and understanding the stories it tells about itself.” (p. 359)

74

Stories: Both Powerful and Persuasive

**The Legacy of Storytelling: an ancient tradition, still with us: Homer… Native Americans… African Stories… in today’s classrooms… and schools**

“We value good storytellers with reason: A good story both enlightens and engages. A clear and compelling narrative helps us find meaning, not just scattered facts and abstract ideas. Stories help us remember and make sense of our lives and the lives around us. The deepest, most transcendent meanings are found, of course, in the stories, parables, and myths that anchor all religions. A story is not a diversion; the best stories make our lives more understandable and focused.”


75

Powerful Stories Can Shape the School Culture

**Using Data and Grouping Students Appropriately**

Disaggregating data helps principals, teachers, and parents examine whether schools are succeeding with their various populations. Unfortunately, the history of standardized testing, going back to the 1920s and the original intelligence testing movement, is filled with prejudicial use and abuse of data results to classify students that led to limiting school and career opportunities for both indigenous and immigrant populations. For example, Julian Nava, raised in a Mexican American family in California during World War II, tells the story of how he was able to “select” college prep courses in high school. The classes became available only because his older brother, in a sparkling naval uniform, insisted in the school guidance counselor’s office that the counselor let his brother take an academic program. Julian went on to receive a doctorate in history from Harvard and later was elected to the Los Angeles Board of Education and became U. S. Ambassador to Mexico. Nava states with sadness that as a result of classifying students, “It has been an enormous loss to our country. We will never know how many Doctor Salks or Pablo Casals or Picasso’s have been lost because children from minority groups were not inspired or challenged and given the chance to show what they’ve got” (quote from Mondale and Patton (2001), *School: The Story of American Public Education*, in *The New Principal’s Fieldbook*).

76

Pair and Share:

We all have powerful stories to tell about our schools and districts. After reading the story on the previous slide, consider your own school or district. Share a story with a colleague, maybe about resilience, that expresses the power of the human spirit in your workplace. After sharing, meet with another pair and exchange stories.

77

Reflecting on Communication and Its Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lincoln’s Example</th>
<th>Evidence If Example is Successfully Modeled</th>
<th>Current Assessment of My Performance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisp and concise writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of language understood by everyone, use of metaphors, stories to enhance understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking and using feedback</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering various forms of media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient listening</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions aligning with words</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reflecting on Chapter Two
What ideas, new perspectives, or insights do you wish to add to your repertoire as a leader? Also, has the chapter reaffirmed important ideas for you? Has the chapter raised some concerns?

Chapters Four and Five: Engendering Humility, Trust & Personal Example; Serving with Emotional Intelligence

“He (Lincoln) possessed extraordinary empathy – the gift or curse of putting himself in the place of another, to experience what they were feeling, to understand their motives or desires.”

– Doris Kearns Goodwin, Team of Rivals, p. 104

About 80 percent of adult success can be attributed to Emotional Intelligence.

Daniel Goleman

Benjamin Thomas states, in his classic 1952 biography, Lincoln:

“His life story proved that democracy gives the humblest man his chance; his exercise of power showed government of, by, and for the people working at its best. The notion that the people were incapable of governing themselves could scarcely be defended in the face of such a fact as Lincoln’s life” (p. 498)

From the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863:

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

Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

From the Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865: “Both [sides in the war] read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces; but let us judge not that we be judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes....With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”

“though strong, he was gentle”
James Oakes in his compelling story on the relationship between Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, in *The Radical and the Republican*, tells of this encounter 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)

"Humility will make you approachable."


Think of a situation in your school, where demonstrating empathy or an understanding of others’ feelings proved to be transformational, or at least enhanced communication.

Leaders As Builders of Dreams

A principal from a high school with a large population of at-risk youth reflected, “Sometimes leaders, are ‘keepers of the dream’ when it comes to students’ aspirations. But sometimes, the leader encounters students who are dreamless. They are beaten down, and have a sense of hopelessness. In this case, the leader must help construct dreams for, and with, students. Last year, I took on the role of ‘builder of the dream’. I shared this idea with teachers and asked them to collaborate as ‘builders of the dream’. During the first week of school, we called in every senior. We shared our collaborative vision of graduation day. We asked the seniors to put themselves in the picture; specifically the lineup to receive a diploma. Then we said, ‘to make this vision closer to reality, put on a cap and graduation robe. And, we’ll take your picture’. Students seemed surprised, but pleased. We photographed every one of them in a cap and gown, approaching a podium where they would be handed a diploma. That picture served as a magnet for many of the kids—it pulled them through the year, despite, tough times. As a staff, we are convinced many more graduated because of this approach. We’ll plan to do this again every year.”

Demonstrating Restraint

The ability to use your emotions wisely includes the capacity to “restrain impulsivity”.

When Lincoln was angry or disappointed with someone’s action, he wrote a heated letter…but did not send it

Emotionally intelligent leaders understand that power has limits. “The irony is that the more power one accumulates, the less it should be used. Viewed another way, by exerting your power, you are taking away the powers of others.”

(Bill George, *True North*, 2007, p. 195)
The Work of School Leaders usually has an emotional dimension as well...

Talk with your table group colleagues about the role of emotions in your own work as a leader.

Daniel Goleman says, “‘Soft skills’ matter even more for success in ‘hard fields’!” (pp. 19 – 20)

School Leaders may look to “Five Domains of Emotional Intelligence” to fuel their work...

5 Domains of Emotional Intelligence

- Self Awareness
- Managing Emotions
- Motivating Oneself and Delaying Gratification
- Empathy
- Handling Relationships

Reflecting upon EQ in Action

Think about a communication (written or verbal) you have recently had with a parent or student. Which of the five domains of emotional intelligence did you model?

Emotional Intelligence in Action

Please take a few minutes to read pages 75-80 in Learning From Lincoln:

- The Second Inaugural
- The Temperance Address
- Letter to Fanny McCullough

How would you summarize the content of these pages? How might Lincoln’s life experiences inform our practices as leaders?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Five Domains: Assessing Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
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<td>Self-Regulation</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
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<td>Social Skills</td>
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Reflecting on Chapters Four and Five

What ideas, new perspectives, or insights do you wish to add to your repertoire as a leader? Also, has the chapter reaffirmed important ideas for you? Has the chapter raised some concerns?

Chapter Six: Exercising Situational Competence and Responding Appropriately to Implement Effective Change

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

(Richard Striner, Father Abraham, p. 206)

Striner, in Father Abraham, concludes:

“...Lincoln was a rare man indeed; a fervent idealist endowed with a remarkable gift for strategy” (p. 2). “His goals kept expanding as he tested how far he might go in his attempt to change history” (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. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall our selves, and then we shall save our country

Certainly a major reason for Lincoln’s success was “thinking and acting anew.” But character, credibility, and personal example were also critical, as was his ability to persist, making wise decisions while also suffering under the burden of leadership.

When running for the legislature in 1832, at the age of 23, Lincoln stated the following:

“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young and unknown to many of you. I was born and have ever remained in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relations to recommend me.” (Basler, 1953-1955, Vol. I, pp. 5-9, emphasis added)

Cohen (2002) states:

“In war to see things as they are, and not as one would like them to be, to persevere despite disappointments, to know of numerous opportunities lost and of perils still ahead, to lead knowing that one’s subordinates and colleagues are in some cases inadequate, in others hostile, is a courage of a rarer kind than a willingness to expose oneself to the unlucky bullet or shell. Without it, all others would be in vain.”
Distinguishing Technical from Adaptive Challenges

Heifetz and Linsky (Leadership on the Line, 2002) state that technical challenges are those for which we “have the necessary know-how and procedures….But there is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization, or community.” (p. 13)

Crucial Insights to Implement School Change

For successful change to occur leaders must, working with others:

- Support “classic,” innovative, coherent, and meaningful ideas of substance
- Understand the importance of building trust and sustaining relationships
- Help to develop individual and group capacity—in a culture that affirms lifetime learning
- Thoroughly understand and navigate the change process

Lincoln’s Journey of Change on Emancipation: From His Election (November, 1860) to Gettysburg (November, 1863)

Examining How Lincoln changed his thinking on Emancipation…. “As his train moved from Washington to Pennsylvania [on November 19th], did he consider how much his views had changed since November of 1860?” ( p. 95)


A Reflective Group Activity on the Change Process

Based on Lincoln’s leadership behavior and Fullan’s insights on school change, write down a few brief thoughts on the following three questions. As noted in number four, please share your insights with colleagues.

1. What does successful change look like?
2. What does poorly conceived/implemented change look like?
3. What do you see as the two or three easiest traps that school leaders can fall into when trying to implement change? How can these traps be avoided?
4. Finally, discuss the change ideas (“ahas”) that you find to be most important for you, your school, and/or district. (Consider posting the insights on a bulletin board near your desk or in a more prominent place.)

Reflecting on Chapter Six

What ideas, new perspectives, or insights do you wish to add to your repertoire as a leader? Also, has the chapter reaffirmed important ideas for you? Has the chapter raised some concerns?

Chapter Ten: Believing That Hope Can Become a Reality

“Of all the factors vital to improving schools, none is more essential – or vulnerable – than hope.”

(Evans, The Human Side of School Change, 1996)
The Power of Hope and Implementing the Mission

Evans (1996) describes hope as a “balancing” act between realism and reach: “It means not expanding the horizon of goals faster than dedicated people can advance.”

Historian Mark Neeley maintains that the essence of Lincoln’s statesmanship was his “ability to balance short-term practicality and long-term ideals.”


Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address in February, 1860 catapulted him on to the national stage. The speech ended with an expression of hope—and faith—to preserve the Union:

“Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

(Basler, 1953-1955, Vol III, p.550)

The Unfinished Work…

Jeff Daniels Recites the Gettysburg Address

The Gettysburg Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. (continued)

The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- 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.

Abraham Lincoln - November 19, 1863
A message of hope for the future still echoes from Gettysburg:

“It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us.”

“School goals related to social justice –
  ~ Closing the achievement gap
  ~ Academic excellence for all
  ~ Educating worthy citizens
  ~ Pressing for gender equity
  ~ Tackling the high school dropout crisis
  ~ Reducing school bullying
  ~ Educating the whole child

must be pursued by school leaders because the goals, the hopes, are worthy, regardless of the hurdles.”

(Learning from Lincoln, p.150)

School Leaders May Ponder...

Our actions as school leaders influence the optimism, hope, and success of our students.

[Thus,] “encouragement, hope, authentic stories and examples of success must be emphasized by [administrators] and teachers each day if students are to believe in a better future.”

(Alvy and Robbins, 2010, p.158)

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
(In Learning From Lincoln, p. 164)

Reflections: A Personal Journey and Next Steps

Take a moment to browse through this handout. Also, please review page 175 in Learning From Lincoln related to 10 leadership qualities, characteristics, and attributes for which Lincoln is known. Considering your “capacity for growth,” what “unfinished work” will you be dedicated to in order to make a difference for students, teachers and your school, or district? Please jot down your ideas.

Thank You!