Lincoln for Today: Leadership Lessons for School Success

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The inspiration...

“Character is destiny.”

(Burlingame, A. *Lincoln: A Life*, Volume 1, 2008)
Defining leadership, especially great leadership is a difficult task. In their classic book, *Leaders* (1985) Bennis and Nanus state, “Multiple interpretations of leadership exist, each providing a sliver of insight but each remaining an incomplete and wholly inadequate explanation…It’s as if what Braque once said about art is also true of leadership: ‘The only thing that matters in art is the part that cannot be explained’” (pp. 4-5).

Yet, we all have opinions on effective leadership, can define leadership, and identify leaders we admire.
A Brief Reflection: After reading the comments on the previous slide, think about qualities, attributes and/or skills that you believe effective leaders possess. Please list 2-3 of your ideas below:

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Introduce yourself to a colleague. Share your responses. How do your ideas on leadership compare, contrast? What insights, new ideas, “ah-has” did you gain from sharing responses?
“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.”

Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, notes that Lincoln’s resolve to continue the war, after hearing of devastating casualties at the “victorious” Battle of Antietam in 1862, demonstrate qualities of *Level 5 Leadership*. These leaders are, “…ambitious first and foremost for the cause, the organization, the work—not themselves—and they have the fierce resolve to do whatever it takes to make good on that ambition…. [displaying] a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”

Compare the reflections in *Learning from Lincoln* and Collins’ notion of leadership, with the ideas you discussed with a colleague related to slide 4. What are the implications of your conversation for school leaders?
Agenda and Goals Map

- Opening Activity on Defining Leadership
- Welcome: Introductions and Agenda
- Reflecting on Lincoln’s Leadership Qualities and Practices (Skills): Lessons for Today’s Leaders
  - Analyzing Quotes that Describe Lincoln’s Leadership Qualities and Practices
  - Applying Your Quote Interpretations to Contemporary Leadership Situations
- Learning From Lincoln: Ten Qualities and Practices for Today’s School Leaders
- A Personal Journey: Reflecting on the Leadership Qualities and Practices Important to Your School Work
1860.........and.........1865.........
Reflecting On Lincoln’s Leadership Qualities and Practices: Lessons for Today’s Leaders

Pair and Share: All of the following quotes from slides 10-20, from Lincoln, his contemporaries, or historians, provide insights concerning how Lincoln’s ideas and behavior serve to educate us on the attributes and practices (skills) of effective—and in some cases great—leaders. First, read each assigned numbered quotes alone, then review with a colleague, discussing together the Lincoln leadership qualities, attributes and/or practices (skills) implicit in each quote. Second, consider the context of your own school leadership position, the position of a leader you “work” with, and/or present leadership on a larger stage (e.g. national or international). On reflection, what lessons could be applied to the present context based on the Lincoln leadership experiences you just discussed? Share insights and jot down a few ideas. Third, meet with another pair and exchange quotes and ideas.
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)

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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:
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)

After hearing that a Pennsylvania supporter painted and donated a picture of him for the party headquarters in Philadelphia, Lincoln said to the painter, Mr. Smiley, “I presume, sir, in painting your beautiful portrait, you took your idea of my form from my principles and not my person.” (The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, Ayres, p. 146)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
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. 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.”

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
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)

“Neither would he back down in the face of harsh accusations against his own beliefs. ‘It often requires more courage to dare to do right than to fear to do wrong,’ [Lincoln] once said. ‘He who has the right needs not to fear,’ he wrote to Gen. John McClernand. ‘…truth is generally the best vindication against slander,’ he told Horace Greeley.” (Lincoln On Leadership, Phillips, p. 72)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
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. 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)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
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)

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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. 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)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
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. 150)

a) Implicit leadership attributes and skills:

b) Present contextual application:
8. Lincoln wrote this letter on Dec. 23, 1862 after hearing about how a grieving daughter was suffering terribly following the loss of her father in the war. An excerpt:

“Dear Fanny,
It is with deep grief that I learn of the death of your kind and brave Father; and, especially, that it is affecting your young heart beyond what is common in such cases. In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all; and, to the young, it comes with bitterest agony, because it takes them unawares. The older have learned to ever expect it. I am anxious to afford some alleviation of your present distress. Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You can not now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say; and you need only to believe it, to feel better at once. The memory of your dear Father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer, and holier sort than you have known before. Please present my kind regards to your afflicted mother.
Your sincere friend, A. Lincoln (The Collected Works of A. L., Basler, Vol. 6, pp. 16-17)

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)

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“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)

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“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)*

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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)*

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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:

“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:
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices

1. Implementing and Sustaining a Mission and Vision with Focused and Profound Clarity

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….”

From the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863:
“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.”
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

2. Communicating Ideas Effectively with Precise and Straightforward Language

Douglas Wilson notes, in *Lincoln’s Sword*, a book dedicated to analyzing Lincoln’s speeches and writings, that: “What is most astonishing about Lincoln’s performance in this regard is that he managed to bring his language within the range of ordinary vocabularies without cheapening his expression and, if anything, lending it even greater dignity” (p. 281).

To a regiment of Ohio soldiers returning home, Lincoln stated on August 22, 1864: “…I almost always feel inclined, when I happen to say anything to soldiers, to impress upon them in a few brief remarks the importance of success in this contest. 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 of 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 a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father’s child has…”
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

3. Building a Diverse and Competent Team to Successfully Address the Mission

In Team of Rivals, Goodwin stresses: “While several months would pass before the cabinet was assembled, subjecting Lincoln to intense pressures from all sides, he resolved [the day following his election] to surround himself with the strongest men from every faction of the new Republican Party—former Whigs, Free-Soilers, and antislavery Democrats” (p. 280).

In Lincoln, Carwardine observes: “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” (pp. 152-54).
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

4. Engendering Trust, Loyalty and Respect Through Humility, Humor, and Personal Example

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)

In *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime*, Cohen reflects that “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 other would be in vain” (p. 224).
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

4. Engendering Trust, Loyalty and Respect Through Humility, Humor, and Personal Example, cont’d.

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, 14, 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)

Wilson, in *Lincoln’s Sword* (2006), discussed a situation in which Lincoln wanted an audience to listen to a draft of his writing. A personal secretary, William O. Stoddard recalled that Lincoln said to him: “Sit down, I can always tell more about a thing after I’ve heard it read aloud, and know how it sounds. Just the reading of it to myself doesn’t answer as well, either.” Stoddard then stated, “I don’t know Mr. President, that I’d care to criticize anything you’d written.” The President replied, “Yes, you will. Everybody else will. It’s just what I want you to do. Sit still now, and you’ll make as much of an audience as I call for.” (pp. 182-83)
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

4. Engendering Trust, Loyalty and Respect Through Humility, Humor, and Personal Example, cont’d.

From Lincoln’s Farewell Address (February 11, 1861) to his Springfield friends upon leaving to serve as President,

“My friends—No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at the parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe every thing.”

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.”
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

5. Leading and Serving Through Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

Garry Wills (1992), states, in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, “Lincoln’s distinctive mark, one almost unique in the history of war leadership, was his refusal to indulge in triumphalism, righteousness, or vilification of the foe” (p. 183).

Doris Kearns Goodwin (2005), from *Team of Rivals*, “He 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” (p. 104).
5. Leading and Serving Through Emotional Intelligence and Empathy, cont’d.

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.”
6. Exercising Situational Competence and Responding Appropriately to Implement Effective Change

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.”

In *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime*, Cohen stresses that, “Lincoln’s insistence on turning the Army of the Potomac against Lee’s army rather than against the enemy’s capital is evidence of [an appreciation of the strategic conditions], as was his understanding—far earlier than most of his generals—that the war would become a revolutionary struggle which would require the shattering of the South’s will to resist, not merely the defeat of its forces in the field” (p. 213).
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

7. Rising Beyond Personal and Professional Trials Through Tenacity, Persistence, Resilience, and Courage

In *Lincoln’s Melancholy*, Shenk concludes, “The hope is not that suffering will go away, for with Lincoln it did not ever go away. The hope is that suffering, plainly acknowledged and endured, can fit us for the surprising challenges that await” (italics added, p. 216).

In his book, *April, 1865*, Winik states, Lincoln pressed on [with the failure of several generals], weathering his own mistakes, and equally weathering the brittle highs and deepening lows of the war. If he can be best described during this period, it is with two words: dogged tenacity. Dogged tenacity. It is a simple explanation for greatness. But, in Lincoln’s case, also probably quite true (p. 245).

In March of 1832, Lincoln presented his first political message when running for the state legislature, “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…”
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

8. Exercising Personal Visibility: Leading and Learning By Wandering Around

In, *With Malice Toward None*, Stephen B. Oates writes, “On July 12 [1864] Lincoln stood on the parapet at Fort Stevens, watching as Union and rebel forces fired away at one another. He saw a body of Union soldiers move across shimmering summer fields and drive the rebels from a house and an orchard with muskets smoking. By now rebel sharpshooters were sniping at Fort Stevens, but Lincoln stood there oblivious to the bullets whizzing around him, and a soldier fell at his side. Finally, an officer made the President get down before he was killed” (p. 394).

Phillips, in *Lincoln On Leadership* states, “John Nicolay and John Hay, his personal secretaries, reported that Lincoln spent 75% of his time meeting with people.”

In *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, Cohen notes, “Next door to [War Secretary] Stanton’s office, the telegraph room was a refuge for Lincoln, who would pay almost daily visits to read dispatches from the front and to compose replies” (p. 28).
9. **Demonstrating Personal Growth and Enhanced Competence as a Lifetime Learner Willing to Reflect and Expand Ideas**

Miller, in *Lincoln’s Virtues*, states, “It is not every president who would get books on military science from the Library of Congress, studying the subject in order to deal with the generals. Lincoln would develop rare powers of concentration, and he would use them all of his life. He developed a confidence that he could dig into books for what he wanted, and would do so repeatedly in the years ahead” (p. 53).

In Thomas’s biography, *Abraham Lincoln*, the historian shares an excerpt from a letter to Grant following the July, 1863 victory at Vicksburg: “When you got below, and took Port-Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join Gen. Banks, and when you turned Northward, East of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgement that you were right and I was wrong” (p. 388).
Lincoln’s Greatest Leadership Qualities and Practices, cont’d.

10. Believing that Hope Can Become Reality

From Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address, February 27, 1860, “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.”

From the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863: “It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us…that these honored 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.

President Obama discussing Lincoln's significance in The Audacity of Hope (2006): “his capacity to overcome personal loss and remain determined in the face of repeated defeat—in all of this, we see a fundamental element of the American character, a belief that we can constantly remake ourselves to fit our larger dreams” (p. 122, italics added).
Reflecting on Lincoln’s Leadership Qualities and Practices

1. Please review the ten leadership qualities and practices identified with President Lincoln’s life on slides 21-33. What particularly resonated with you? According to your leadership beliefs and values, from the list of ten, which items would you prioritize as the three or four most important qualities and skills?

2. What insights can be gained about school leadership from Lincoln’s life? After jotting down a few ideas, share your thoughts with a couple of colleagues.
A Personal Journey: Reflecting On Leadership Qualities and Practices Important To You

Today we’ve had the opportunity to examine leadership, by considering the life of an extraordinary U. S. President, Abraham Lincoln. Although it is a tall order to compare oneself to “greatness,” we should all aim to achieve outstanding success. Thus, it is now your turn to consider leadership qualities and skills most important to your role.

Please follow these directions:

1. Take a moment to browse through this handout. Then, on the next slide, jot down a few notes concerning 3-5 leadership qualities and practices (skills) that are critical to your school role. List your selected leadership attributes and practices in the left hand column below.

2. In the middle column note how (connect theory and practice) each selected quality and practice is critical to your leadership role as related to the school’s “goals” (i.e., connect qualities and practices with important goals, mission, vision, or just daily experiences).

3. In the right hand column write a private and brief, reflective, self-assessment, related to your selected qualities, practices and goals. (Which qualities and practices are particular strengths? What areas could be improved upon?) Don’t be too tough on yourself; it may be the first time that you have identified these qualities and practices!
### Leadership Qualities and Practices Critical to My School Leadership Role

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<th>Leadership Qualities and Practices Critical to My School Leadership Role</th>
<th>How These Qualities and Practices Connect to Accomplishing Important School Goals</th>
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“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
“Lincoln’s leadership helped a nation continue a journey toward equality—a journey that has not yet been completed. As school leaders, we, to, are embarked upon an unfinished journey, a journey characterized by possibility and guided by the sacred proposition that ‘all men are created equal.’”

*(Learning From Lincoln, p.1)*