

What inspires a man to succeed after a hundred failures? What motivates him to raise himself above the times and situation to see what is right and do it? What allows him, regardless of his upbringing and education, to become the greatest leader of the United States? Abraham Lincoln seemed to have the answers to all of these questions. He serves as a huge inspiration not only to me, but also to the rest of America.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I do the very best I know how -- the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end." This quote best exemplifies Abraham Lincoln's most inspiring characteristic-- the ability to pick himself up, dust himself off, and prepare for the future despite any setbacks. The inspiration of Abraham Lincoln lies not in his successes, but instead in his failures. With every failure Lincoln had, he managed to do what most of us refuse to do-- keep trying. In 1833, his business failed. However, within just one year, he was elected to the Illinois state Legislature. In 1843, he was defeated for nomination in Congress. Nevertheless, Lincoln didn't give up; just three years later he was elected to Congress. What makes this so inspirational is that failures didn't set him back; instead they just inspired him to keep on trying until he succeeded and this characteristic about Abraham Lincoln inspires me greatly. Sometimes when I feel sad when I do not achieve something I set out to do, I think about Lincoln's life and it gives me hope and strengthens my resolve to keep on trying till I succeed. Many things I have done successfully are directly as a result of the inspiration I have gotten from Lincoln's life. Had I not read about Lincoln's patience and persistence, I probably would have given up in many instances and not continued until I was successful.

Another inspiring trait of Abraham Lincoln was that he had the courage to do things that were unpopular during his time and may even have been dangerous to his life. During the time of Abraham Lincoln, slavery was common and many people accepted it! But not Abraham Lincoln. He was morally opposed to slavery and did everything he could to end it, including using force and issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. These things may have been unpopular but they were right. And that is what is so inspirational about Mr. Lincoln. His life and deeds teach me and inspire me to always do what is right, even though people or my friends may not like it at that time. Lincoln led countless rallies, protests, and assemblies for the opposition of slavery. He knew that he could be hurt or even killed for his views on slavery, but that did not stop him from expressing his displeasure about slavery. He knew what the right thing to do was and stood by his decision despite the consequences that he might have to face. And that is what I want to do-- always the right thing, no matter what the consequences are! It is always easy to do what is popular and follow the crowd, especially at the age I am at, and even during high school. Everyone wants to be popular and not do anything that other people may get upset about. However, Abraham Lincoln's life and leadership teach me to do the right thing and not just the popular thing.

Lincoln is an inspiration not just to me but to the rest of America. Lincoln has inspired me to believe that failure can be a great teacher and ultimately a path to success. His vision for the future helped carve the great nation that we are today. By overcoming all odds and standing up for what he believed in, he was able to inspire me and hopefully allow me to achieve my full potential, as he did. By learning and following the examples that Lincoln set forth, I can not only help myself but, I believe I can also help the entire world.