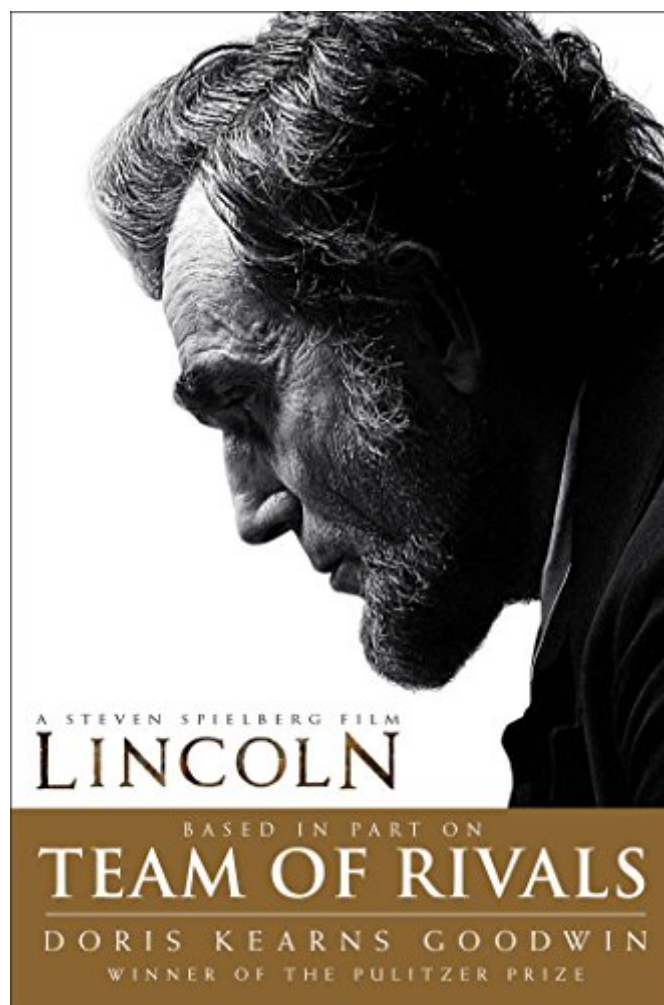


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# Team Of Rivals: The Political Genius Of Abraham Lincoln



## Synopsis

Winner of the Lincoln Prize Acclaimed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Abraham Lincoln's political genius in this highly original work, as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president. On May 18, 1860, William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, and Abraham Lincoln waited in their hometowns for the results from the Republican National Convention in Chicago. When Lincoln emerged as the victor, his rivals were dismayed and angry. Throughout the turbulent 1850s, each had energetically sought the presidency as the conflict over slavery was leading inexorably to secession and civil war. That Lincoln succeeded, Goodwin demonstrates, was the result of a character that had been forged by experiences that raised him above his more privileged and accomplished rivals. He won because he possessed an extraordinary ability to put himself in the place of other men, to experience what they were feeling, to understand their motives and desires. It was this capacity that enabled Lincoln as president to bring his disgruntled opponents together, create the most unusual cabinet in history, and marshal their talents to the task of preserving the Union and winning the war. We view the long, horrifying struggle from the vantage of the White House as Lincoln copes with incompetent generals, hostile congressmen, and his raucous cabinet. He overcomes these obstacles by winning the respect of his former competitors, and in the case of Seward, finds a loyal and crucial friend to see him through. This brilliant multiple biography is centered on Lincoln's mastery of men and how it shaped the most significant presidency in the nation's history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an excellent book my grandson is reading it now I'm happy to have recommended it to him and I hope that he will finish it I had a problem though with because I couldn't get them to send it directly to him you also to me and that I had to send it on I don't know what happened all I would have to research that not have that happen again when I order a book thank you see that

Doris Kearns Goodwin, thank you for these vivid, essential truths of our 16th president and his times. Abraham Lincoln? We all have heard of him, the great president. He really was great, in so many ways, as a leader and as a complete human. He loved children, people of all sorts, and they loved him back. Eleven year old Grace Bedell wrote in 1860 to advise he grow some whiskers and he complied, and thanked her in person, in Westfield, NY, with a kiss, on his way to his inauguration. Lincoln passionately loved his intelligent but high maintenance wife Mary Todd, and adored their children. Lincoln was a handshaker, hugger and a kisser, a man of body as well as mind. Lincoln loved his many friends, gathered over a lifetime. Lincoln loved Shakespeare, and poetry, and language, and letters, and humor, and stories and jokes, such as the outhouse joke featured in the Spielberg movie. Desperately poor in his youth, in rugged frontier country, he worked hard, laboring with his unusually large and strong body, just as he strenuously applied his powerful intellect to improve his mind at every opportunity. His difficult and adventurous life, with ample failures and tragedy, fostered much wisdom and empathy. When Frederick Douglass first visited the White House in 1863, he felt Lincoln's sincere warmth and respect. Lincoln had experienced plenty of bigotry and discrimination himself as an unlettered backwoodsman. Lincoln loved debate, and welcomed dissent. The seven Lincoln-Douglas debates of his 1958 senate campaign comprise a lasting testament to his intellectual and oratory power, and to the level of political discourse of the time. The format was three hours, 90 minutes each, divided 60/90/30. Transcripts were published and widely read. "Team of Rivals" refers to Lincoln's cabinet, some of whom were considered more

likely and deserving to become president than Lincoln, particularly Secretary of State William Seward. Yet he and Lincoln quickly formed a strong bond of professional cooperation and personal affection. Lincoln was kind, forgiving, gladly took blame, and generously shared credit. Among the many great men who recognized Lincoln's special qualities was Ulysses S. Grant, another close and personal bond. Lincoln loved the law, and the Constitution. He infuriated extremists on all sides, insisting on lawful and democratic change, "government of the people, by the people". In DKG's words, a political genius, understanding that politics is the art of the possible, but in his short time in power, drastically changing those possibilities. Lincoln suffered much with every bloody battle of the Civil War, but kept up his spirits and many others' with his supreme confidence. He mourned the terrible losses and visited with troops up close many times. He touched so many, in so many ways. He loved America, and all Americans, including the South: "with malice toward none, with charity for all". Thanks to DKG for inspiring me to write this love letter to Abe Lincoln, whom I now know so much better. At 6' 4", athletic, with long arms and big hands, he could easily dunk a basketball. Imagining a modern youthful Abe, he would be termed "at risk", underprivileged kid, so probably in one or more minority groups. Today the "backwoods" is either the inner city or maybe an Indian reservation. Today's Abe would probably get a scholarship to an elite college. But no Harvard Porcellian Club or Yale Skull and Bones, no spring breaks on exotic beaches. Probably a volunteer at the Boys Club instead. After he dunks on an opponent, he often offers to pick the guy up. When he finally runs for president, he respects his opponent and the intelligence of the voters, but his stories enable him to convey complex political and economic lessons. Whether he wins or not, the nation is educated and improved. Go Abe!

This is a great book if you want to understand the America of the mid 19th century, the issues behind the Civil War, western expansion of America, Lincoln's life and the politics of those times. But it is a bit too long. It would have been equally effective even if about 150 pages were edited out. Some things did not deserve the kind of repetition that they were given. For example, the discussions about Kate Chase's personal life go on and on and on. General McClellan's story was stretched beyond what is necessary to convey the point and the whole story. Because of these I lost interest in the second half of the book. I would have liked to see more about the 13th Amendment, General Sherman's march, surrender of the Southern Army and other much more important parts of the story. Also the book is a bit biased towards Lincoln and may not be the most objective book.

I loved this book. It was a pleasure to spend some time with Abraham Lincoln. So much has been

written about Abraham Lincoln, that you would think that there is nothing more to be said. With her usual talent, Doris Goodwin found a wonderful new angle to illuminate a great man. This book launched the concept, team of rivals, which has become part of our current political vocabulary. It is well worth reading this book to grasp the concept in all of its fantastic detail.

This an absolutely great book. It's really interesting study on Lincoln's leadership team & how he was able to build them into an effective team.

This an excellent book that should be required reading for all aspiring politicians. The author clearly demonstrates that Lincoln was an unequalled genius who succeeded in bringing together the best to carry out the war effort to ultimate victory. Not only the team he created combined individuals of exceptional qualities, but Lincoln managed to balance skilfully the representatives of important segments of public opinion, often antagonist to each other. By giving them a free hand in their actions, he was able to make the most of each one, subtly intervening to diffuse conflicts or in steering policy in the direction he wanted by decisive action superbly timed when he felt that the mood of the country had matured far enough. A master of emotional intelligence, his great sense of empathy gave him the uncanny ability to anticipate how people would react to his actions. In a way, Lincoln was the ultimate manipulator, but he did that with utmost sincerity for the common good of the country, as he saw it. Because he surrounded himself with a team of brilliant rivals, he was able to size the arguments made on all sides of any key issue he had to deal with, carefully listening to each one and coming in the end with his own solution, which often took everyone by surprised, but turned out in the end to be the best one. An other great quality of Lincoln is that he did not keep any grudge against anyone and he always tried to keep good relation with everyone. What a contrast with today's divisive politicians!

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