



# Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

*Doris Kearns Goodwin*

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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 was the result of a character that had been forged by life 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.

This capacity enabled President Lincoln to bring his disgruntled opponents together, create the most unusual cabinet in history, and marshal their talents to preserve the Union and win the war.

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