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"Against the Flow"



The tall man looked across the crowd in front of him: they were upper class, well-educated people—so different from the many groups of country folk he was used to addressing. But Abe Lincoln knew he must say what was right, no matter what the crowd thought. He began, "Slavery is wrong. Silence will not be tolerated..."

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe was willing to stand alone, even though others might oppose him."

As he continued his speech, images came to his mind of the first time he saw slaves. He had taken a riverboat filled with goods down the Mississippi River to sell in

New Orleans. There he saw something that shocked him: a platform with rows of African men, women, and children shackled by iron chains. He was sickened when he was told that these people would be sold to the highest bidder.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe knew we should treat others the way we want to be treated.

He remembered seeing an elderly black man with scars and welts from many years of cruel beatings. He had thought, "How could anyone humiliate and damage the body of another human in this way?"

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe understood the value of each person and the importance of not damaging or polluting a person.

When Abe watched the auction, he resisted the tempting appeals to human desires for power, status or success being made by the auctioneer. Instead, he had a growing sense of compassion and personal responsibility to make a difference.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe guarded his mind from tempting thoughts.

Abe remembered that he had vowed at that time to wipe out slavery if he ever had the chance. He continued his speech with these images before him. He had been warned not to offend the many influential people who owned slaves. But he couldn't weaken his message, even though many family members and friends opposed him.

He made it clear in his speech that it was wrong to deny a human being their liberty, respect, and well-being. He finished his speech, "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."

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe did what was right and encouraged others to do the same.

His brave words eventually caused the nation to rise up to free the multitude of Africans bound in slavery

Concept by : Character First