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Powerful Prose

A father teaches his son that one's word is a compelling validation of integrity. When one gives his or her word, it should stand for righteousness and best intentions. Tracing back, this standard of human dignity held firmly on December 1st, 1862, an astounding climax to a tumultuous year. On this day, Abraham Lincoln stood before Congress and delivered his State of the Union address, the most resonating statement being "In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity." The President experienced the same rhetoric and disdain as earlier leaders endured, accompanied by political animosity. This statement holds validity in all aspects of human consciousness and refers to mankind on an internal and external level, meaning that your word reflects your personal character and has a profound effect on those who receive and believe it.

Parts of this quote may only pertain to the specific time period. Abraham's interpretation of "times like these" is exemplified through events such as The Battle of Shiloh, the attack on Fort Sumter, the Homestead Act, and the prohibition of slavery in U.S territories. Nonetheless, its meaning is obvious and comprehensible. Lincoln absorbed and reiterated these intentions, claiming that individuals should abide by their word and speak as if their statements are engraved in stone. What you say at the time will be ingrained in the minds and mold the morals

of future generations. You are unconditionally responsible for the words you utter and the consequences they incur. In the midst of pure unrest, crisis, and a chaotic civil war, the fate of the nation rested heavily upon the shoulders of 6'4" Kentucky native, Abraham. Born in a log cabin and grown from the roots of Sinking Springs Farm, Lincoln worked his way up the government ladder to become a prominent figure in the political atmosphere. With 180 electoral votes, Lincoln was officially elected as the nation's 16th president on November 6th, 1860.

Through his second annual message, Lincoln harps on the necessity of abolishing slavery, which would occur at a gradual pace. He asserted that slaves already liberated by Union armies would continue to roam the country as free people. It is noted that in Lincoln's time, the word "man" was often used to mean "person." The question is, does this include slaves? Were the oppressed regarded as people, and was their existence fully recognized? Abraham opposed slavery, but he disapproved of the abolitionists' activities because they divided the country. "Person" referred to a different demographic, the ones with a voice that was heard under the quietest of circumstances, who were appropriately represented in government. Despite the selective target audience, the ideas derived from this quote should be abided by all. Slaves directly spoke out and knew that they were eternally responsible for their sentiments, no matter who was listening.

As an American, and a citizen of the world, I agree with this statement because it holds true today and is found along the universal timeline. I wholeheartedly believe that in this day and age, you must think before you speak, because words have far-reaching consequences. People of all ages and backgrounds should vocalize with intention, to self-awareness, and to the good of society. Receding back almost two decades, during Lincoln's administration, tensions were high and lives were at stake. Pressing issues were at hand and the cards that leaders were dealt were

not favorable. There were two extreme sides of the spectrum, you were either A or B, to make a choice of black or white, without a grey area to rest upon. A person's value was composed of their political opinion. The historical figures that we idolize today were active during the period between 1844 and 1877. Their ideas and dogmas are unmistakably woven into the trailing cloth that lines the road to eternity. It is our duty to realize the path we are on and to consciously speak and move in the right direction.

Detectable or not, this quote is applied to a myriad of modern affairs. Nowadays it's brought to fruition with the rapid expansion of technology and daily advances towards a digital future, as what is verbally expressed is permanently documented on the internet. Social media is evolving and has engulfed the world in all its graphic glory. Our actions are replayed and interpreted differently, which indicates that we must be aware of our words because they are more substantial than ever. The exponential increase in connectivity has given rise to a relentless custom: "cancel culture." It means that "people who have said or done problematic things, either now or in the past, are decidedly 'canceled,' and people no longer support them or their endeavors." This has emerged from a wave of political correctness. Whether it's uneducated remarks or offensive behavior, celebrities and politicians are at risk of losing their jobs, tainting their credibility, and tarnishing their carefully crafted image. Although "cancel culture" can be excessive, intense and unforgiving, it will remain an everyday factor as long as social media is present. Not to mention, there are internal and external effects regarding the conditions of speech. Your sentiments affect your psyche but also influence others. What you release will ultimately stick with you and your society. To keep track of that powerful word and the immense energy that it contains aligns with the principles expressed by Abraham Lincoln. You are responsible for yourself, and what you emit is immortalized, so carefully make it known.

All things considered, the meaning of this quote is simple in its delivery but complex in its effect. Whether it's 1862 or 2019, similarities in political upheavals emphasize the validity and strength of Lincoln's statement. I align with these conceptions because thoughts turn into words. Consequently, words turn into actions. Our current culture reflects past sentiments and brings those voices full circle.