

Foundations for Life Essay Contest 2005

**DuPage Character Development Coalition
The Abraham Lincoln Center for Character Development**

RUNNER-UP, 9th Grade

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“What you are thunders so loudly that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.” These words were spoken centuries ago, yet they will remain true for eternity. Words are near meaningless. So comes the reality of lies. Everything said is questionable. There is no person without the capability of deceit. Trust is a rare thing. There are few worthy of it, and when lost, it is almost impossible to regain. Trust is earned by fulfillment of promise, never by promise alone. What we have proved ourselves of is what we will be known for. Every move we make is under silent scrutiny.

Words have the ability to taunt us, to carry us to far off places, to make us fall in love. Words have ever been praised for their power. We fail to realize the more powerful. With one misstep, one indiscretion, millions of beautiful words are rendered meaningless. In one selfless gesture or loving outreach, negative suppositions are altered. We are walking declarations of ourselves. A day in and day out account of our behavior, would leave a distinctive impression of who we are, what we value, who we love, and the places life has carried us. If verbalization were stripped from us, we would still exhibit our flaws. We would lose only the proficiency of covering them.

Our doings are our impact on this world. With the few exceptions of the Shakespeares and Hemingways of tomorrow, our memories will not live on in our words. The cup of cold water we extended to those without, the bed we opened to a stranger in need, the few dollars we gave, never knowing the lives it changed, that is our legacy. One day, all those who speak of our glory will be gone. The good we bestowed upon one in need or the love we showed is of greater magnitude than a quote in the pages of some history book.

I want to thunder loudly. I want to be known for good. I will commit to not hiding behind my words. I will be known for who I am. Ralph Waldo Emerson understood the true validity of humanity. These immortal words reflect pure truth. Our identities lie not in what we say. They lie in what we have and have yet to do.