

Who was Frederick Douglass?



Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was an escaped slave, fiery abolitionist, revolutionary journalist, dedicated defender of women's rights, spellbinding orator, prolific writer, trusted adviser to President Abraham Lincoln, esteemed public official, moral conscience of the nation and an American hero.

Frederick Douglass believed in three key elements for success in life:

- * Believe in yourself.
- * Take advantage of every opportunity.
- * Use the power of written and spoken language to effect positive change for yourself and society.

Douglass said, "What is possible for me is possible for you."

By taking these keys and making them his own, Frederick Douglass created a life of honor, respect and success that he could never have dreamed of when still a boy on Colonel Lloyd's plantation on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

So who was Frederick Douglass? A man who gave away his food to learn to read and write, a man who fought the horrifying conditions of slavery at risk of his own life, a man who became a trusted adviser to Abraham Lincoln, U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia, recorder of deeds for Washington, D.C., and minister-general to the Republic of Haiti. He also was a husband, a father and a living example to all people that permanent, positive change can be brought about through the power of the spoken and written word.

He lives on today through the work of the Frederick Douglass Institute at California University of Pennsylvania. Truly, what was possible for him is possible for us. Through his teachings, we can make a difference.