



Being a Trustworthy Person

Rev. Peter R. Hook, State Chaplain

PeterHook@verizon.net

Recently, two very similar things happened that stimulated my thinking about what it means to be a trustworthy person.

1. The first incident involved arrangements being made for the CEO of an organization that operates a ministry for homeless veterans to present the ministry to a group. It was stated upfront that the group was planning to donate to the cause and would like to have a briefing. Detailed arrangements were made, and a follow-up call was made to confirm the details and to ensure that the person had directions, phone contact information, etc. Well, the meeting date arrived, and the CEO was a no-show. There was no phone call from the person cancelling the meeting or stating that they would not be able to keep the appointment. The CEO just decided to do something else and did not show up for the presentation, and no apology was ever given.
2. In the second incident, I contracted with an individual to come to my home on a Saturday morning to do a small landscaping project. A date and time was set, and the young man assured me that he would be glad to do the project, and I agreed to pay him well. The day came and he was a no-show. Again, no phone call. When I saw the young man about a week later, he just said, "Pastor, I am sorry I didn't come to do that work." No reason was given. He just decided not to show up and follow through on what he said he would do!

As Comrades, and particularly as Chaplains, we need to be trustworthy. That is, we need to do what we say we are going to do. We need to be people who keep their word. This seems to be how most people gauge whether or not a person is trustworthy.

Therefore, I encourage you to write down all promises and agreements you make . . . and then make sure you honor them! For trustworthy people, their word is their bond. When they say they'll do something, whether "important" or "seemingly insignificant," they make sure they remember it . . . and then do it! If an emergency arises, and they can't keep their commitment, they call to alert those who are waiting for them.

In addition to keeping their word, trustworthy people don't lie, steal, or cheat. They are honest – even in little things. As comrades we should seek to be people who are trustworthy. Recently, I was made aware that some post leaders take in members they know have not served in a conflict, on the Korean peninsula, or received special hazardous duty pay, and are not qualified to be a member of the VFW. That is a blatant violation of the Bylaws and a misrepresentation of the truth. Also, trustees and commanders must sign the audit report statement at the bottom of the

form certifying that they have done the following: *“Audited the books and records of the Adjutant and Quartermaster . . . in accordance with the National By-Laws and that this report is a true and correct statement thereof to the best of our knowledge and belief. All Vouchers and Checks have been examined and found to be properly approved and checks properly countersigned.”* Signing that statement without looking at the books and examining the records is equivalent to lying and filing a false report. A trustworthy person won't do that.

Unfortunately, in our great organization posts have had to be put under suspension because of such actions. And, periodically we hear or read about someone who has stolen money and violated the oath they took when they joined the VFW. When we joined this great organization, we took an oath in which we stated, “I will never wrong or defraud this organization” We hear those words repeated each time we induct a new member. As one of our ritual prayers states, *“We should live such lives of stainless integrity as shall reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify His great and Holy Name.”*

Resources for Chaplains: Check out my Chaplain's Page at the PA Department Web Site - vfwpahq.org Just look under District/Post Tools and you will see Chaplain's Guide. I have posted a number of items you may find helpful as you continue to serve those who serve.

Blessings as you serve,

Rev. Peter R. Hook
PA State Chaplain
Veterans of Foreign Wars
534 Parkvale Ave.
Langhorne, PA 19047
267-229-7722
Fax: 215-750-1511
PeterHook@verizon.net

