



Keeping Our Word

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One of the things I learned as a Boy Scout when I was a member of Troop 20 in Myerstown, PA was that a Scout was trustworthy. And, as a Boy Scout, I should not only tell the truth, but keep my word. Of course, that was back in the day when all that was needed between two people was a promise and a handshake. Written contracts were largely foreign and unnecessary. In fact, if someone would insist on having a written contract, it would be an insult to the other person's integrity.

My, how times have changed! No longer is a man's word "his bond." In fact, it has become common place in politics, in business, and in everyday life, for people to say they will do something and then not follow through and keep their word. Regardless of what others do, we should be men and women of integrity. We should keep our word. When we say we are going to do something, we should follow through and do it.

Take for example, the words that are part of the Members Obligation found on pages 23-24 of the VFW Ritual. These words stand out to me because they are repeated each time our Post takes in a new member and holds an Initiation Ceremony. As part of that initiation ceremony, the new members have to recite the Member's Obligation. Just prior to taking that solemn obligation, as Chaplain, I have an opportunity to speak to the new members. During this time, I also say a word to the other VFW members who are at the meeting. I encourage each of our members to silently follow along and recite the Members Obligation with the new members. The words of the obligation that have struck me recently are the following:

That I will never wrong or defraud this organization – nor a member thereof

As Comrades I trust that we keep our word and will always be faithful to the obligation we took when we joined the VFW. Reinforce it and recommit to it the next time your Post takes in a new member. And each day:

- Be a person of your word. Honor the promises and agreements you make. It is essential to building a relationship of trust.
- Be trustworthy and a person of integrity. Your word should be your bond. If you say you'll do something – whether “important” or seemingly insignificant – make sure you remember it...and DO it.

Remember: Keeping your word is such a strong indicator of what kind of person you are.

Blessings as you serve.

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