

Credibility of Chaplains and Leadership

Written from an email by Rev. Peter R. Hook, Eastern States Chaplain, in an email dated February 8, 2015

As you have heard Brian Williams was forced to take a leave of absence from his job at NBC Nightly News. Since he has lost his credibility, it is quite doubtful he will ever return as he is no longer believable and worthy of trust. And, most likely, he will never regain the public's trust. His work will always be held in question. Losing credibility is indeed devastating for any of us.

Credibility is really a perceived quality. It is something that we assign to another person, and others assign to us, based upon observation of a person's life and the interaction of a number of factors. For those of us in leadership positions, and especially for Chaplains, credibility is our most important asset. It determines our sphere of influence and effectiveness.

- One who is credible has **integrity**. There is congruency between beliefs and their actions. It is as simple as being what you say you are.
- One who is credible is **trustworthy**. They are honest and reliable. They tell the truth and keep their word.
- One who is credible **treats people with respect**.
- One who is credible **is not sinless**. When they make a mistake they admit it and accept responsibility for their actions.

The person involved in VFW leadership, and one who is the Chaplain, should be people who have an irreproachable character, no hidden agendas, or skeletons in their closet that eventually will come out and haunt them.

Whether the Chaplain is at the smallest of posts or is a large very active post, the chaplain must set the standard.