

Keeping Our Promises

On Sept. 4, 2012, Alex Sheen's father died. Most people would describe Alex's father as an "average man."

"My father was nothing outstanding," Sheen said in a written tribute to his father, Wei Min "Al" Sheen, a Columbus (Ohio) hospital pharmacist.



"He wasn't an award-winning author. He never met the president. He never won a marathon. But what my dad did do was to keep a promise. If he said he was going to do it, it would certainly be done."

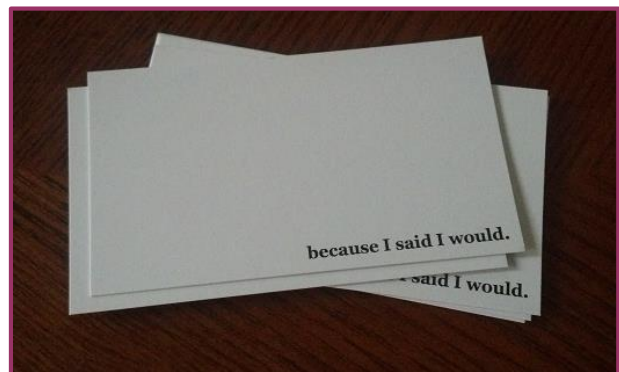
So Sheen decided to honor his father for all those kept promises by urging other people to keep their own: To fix a ceiling fan. To get their oil changed. To write a letter.

At his father's funeral, Sheen passed out small cards to everyone in attendance. He called them *Promise Cards*. At the bottom of each card were the words, *Because I said I would*. Sheen challenged those in attendance at the funeral to write a promise on their card and to make a steadfast commitment to keep that promise.

The people at the funeral were so inspired by Alex's *Promise Cards* that he began printing more and sending them for free to anyone who requested them. Today, Sheen runs a nonprofit that does character education programming in schools, colleges and prisons. He teaches about integrity and honor and character and, yes, keeping your promises. His organization has sent more than 11 million *Promise Cards* to people in more than 150 countries.

Sheen has a website, becauseisaidiwould.org, where people who have received a *Promise Card* can post their stories of the promises they have made and kept. Here is one example:

Elizabeth, a 26-year-old nurse in the United Kingdom, works at an assisted-living facility. She eats lunch every day with a particular patient who has dementia. Every day, at the end of their lunch, the woman would become afraid that Elizabeth wouldn't come back to visit her. So Elizabeth took a Promise Card and wrote on it, "I promise I will come and have lunch with you tomorrow." And at the bottom of the card were the words, "Because I said I would."



(more)

The next day, when Elizabeth showed up for lunch, she found her friend clutching the Promise Card. She looked up and smiled and said, "You remembered!"

See how important keeping our promises is to our credibility, as a measure of our integrity?

God will never forget His promises. God will never forget His people. Across every page of the Bible, God writes His promises and signs them with "Because I said so."

In the book of Ezekiel, God made promises to His people, who were dead and hopeless and cut off. He promised to give new life and new hope, that He would bring them back to their home again and put His Spirit within them. He would turn death into life.

As we move through the Easter season, remember that God is not done keeping His promises to His people. God is faithful, and God's plans are eternal.

And we, as God's people, can base our lives and our hope on the promises of God.

I'm reminded of that old hymn of the church, *Standing on the Promises*, written in 1886 by Russell Kelso Carter while teaching at the Pennsylvania Military Academy. Here is but one of its five verses:

*Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God.*

How can we depend on those promises? Because He said so.

– Beecher Hunter

