



## Group: Holiday Rationalizations

### Rationalization: Company Owes Me at the Holidays

**State It:** Sometimes at work a person experiences a situation that really isn't fair. This can be especially true at the holidays, when companies are deciding about whether to give bonuses or not, or how much time off to grant people, or whether to raise salaries for the coming year or not. And when a person sees a situation that isn't fair, it's logical that they would take steps to work it out.

**Story It:** It reminds me of my first job out of school. I moved from Kansas to Orlando, Florida and got a job working at a really nice hotel near the theme parks. The upside was that from time to time a celebrity would check in, and that was fun. The downside was that we were all making only a few cents above minimum wage. My job was at the front desk. The staff we interacted with most often were the bellmen. I remember in particular this one bellman named Jared. One day he saw me on a break. There was no one else around, but there were some employees nearby putting up holiday decorations. And even though it was Florida, it was a little chilly outside. In the pocket of his jacket, Jared showed me what looked to be these tiny liquor bottles, the kind you see on airplanes. I asked where he got them, and he told me he got them from one of the mini bars in one of the guest rooms in the hotel. Since he was a bellman, he could apparently get access to rooms in order to deliver luggage. He asked if I wanted drink them together. I didn't want to hurt his feelings, so I told him the truth, which was that I wasn't old enough to legally drink. A couple weeks later, he pulled me aside during a slow evening and showed me more bottles that he had gotten. I asked if they were from another mini bar, and he said yes. I said, "Jared, I don't understand. You are over the age of 21. You could go buy that stuff if you wanted to. I don't understand why you are taking it from the mini bars." And I will never forget what he said to me. He said, "You don't understand because you are new here. But this company is making so much money. The executives of these theme parks and hotels earn millions and millions of dollars, and we are making minimum wage. Many of the guests you just checked in are going to spend more money on their Christmas vacations here than you or I will earn in a year. Why not help myself to a little free alcohol here and there? It would take me an hour to earn enough to buy this, but it's right here... This company has plenty of money to cover it. They should be paying me more, especially when I am working Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. They owe this to us."

**Moral It:** I could see that Jared had developed this point of view over a long time. This company had really caused him to feel that he wasn't being treated fairly. He didn't start out with that mindset. It just evolved. Anybody can appreciate a situation when a company is being unfair, especially in terms of pay, because so many have walked down that same road.

**Link It:** But that's why I always like to sit down with someone when something like this has happened, because people always have good reasons for what they do, and I really want to understand what leads to a situation playing out the way it does.