



**Group: Holiday Rationalizations**

**Rationalization: Peer Pressure at the Holidays**

**State It:** We have all had times in our lives where peer pressure has influenced us, and we did something we didn't really want to do.

**Story It:** I remember for me, it happened the day I turned 15. I don't know if it was this way for you where you grew up, but I grew up in Topeka, Kansas. In Kansas, in the 1980's, you could get a learner's permit at age 14, and then when you turned 15 you could get what they called a restricted license that would allow you to drive without a parent in the car to and from school or work, nowhere else. So, I turned 15 the Monday after Thanksgiving. On that day, my parents said I could borrow the Jeep just this one time to drive myself and my friend Rebecca to and from school. Now, I knew the rule, we could only go to school and back. But 3:15 came around, the bell rang, and Rebecca and I got into the jeep. Then all of a sudden she suggests that we drive through the Wendy's to get a chocolate Frosty. I was a rule follower as a child. I was a good student and did not ever get in trouble. I knew driving through Wendy's on a restricted license was not an option for me. And with the holidays coming up I did not want to jeopardize what I might see under the Christmas tree. But Rebecca was a persuasive person – you've probably known someone like this – she was extremely compelling. I won't say pushy, but she wouldn't let it go. For someone our age, the idea of driving to Wendy's was like having the freedom to drive across the entire country. It was extremely appealing. And after about 15 minutes of her trying to talk me into it, I caved. We took a quick detour to Wendy's, went through the drive through, and got our Frosty's. I took Rebecca home, drove down the block to my own house, pulled into the driveway, and I immediately realized that I had a problem. My mother was inside the house making dinner in the kitchen, and I had to go into the kitchen from the garage. I had not thought through what I would do with the empty Frosty cup. I only had a couple seconds to think, and I had two choices. I could either take the cup inside with me, knowing that she would see me before I could get to a trash can, or I could hide the cup in the back seat of the Jeep and try to come out later to retrieve it before she needed to drive the Jeep again. In the end, I chose the second option. I went inside, greeted my mother, and she said she needed to run to the store to get an ingredient for that night's dinner. Within three minutes she came back into the house with the empty Frosty cup, and I knew I was caught. The thing is, I knew better. I was a good kid, not someone who constantly deceived her parents. This was not the person I was. I was so embarrassed that I had let her down.

**Moral It:** So the moral of my story is that everyone can be influenced by other people, and any one of us can make a bad decision once in a while due to peer pressure. It doesn't mean that it is who we are at our core.

**Link It:** But that's why people like me come around in these kinds of situations, because we can understand that unusual circumstances may cause people to make a decision that they would not make in a million years, and the only way we can learn about it is to ask them why these things happened the way they did.