



## Group: Holiday Rationalizations

### Rationalization: Taking Things to Impress Someone Else

**State It:** The holidays can really bring out the best in people, to the point that sometimes people do things that they might not ordinarily do because the season brings out good will and generosity in all of us.

**Story It:** A colleague of mine works at a medical center, and he shared that recently they had learned that one of their best employees was in an unusual situation. This person – we'll call him Mike – had a neat job, kind of like an all-purpose coordinator or organizer. It was his job to make sure that the facility was ready for business each morning, and that every exam room was stocked with the proper materials. He was in charge of unpacking supplies when they arrived, stocking them in the right locations, and ensuring that supplies never ran low. It was a cool job with a lot of responsibility. Well, a point came last December when the office manager noticed that Mike was staying a little later than normal a few days per week – sometimes he would be the last one in the building, which was out of character for him. And on a couple of occasions, she noticed that he would leave in the middle of his shift to go have lunch, but he would take his backpack with him. Again, this was odd behavior on his part, because prior to that he would just eat lunch in the employee cafeteria with everyone else. Well, on one particular day close to Christmas, she asked him about the inventory for the coming week, and he had a really unusual reaction in that he raised his voice to her. It was so unlike him. It was loud, it was critical, and most of all, it was completely out of the norm for how he would typically interact. She gave him time to calm down, and when she went back to talk to him again, she asked him to help her understand why he had been acting so out of character. In the end, he opened his backpack and showed her that he had gotten some supplies from the shelves he was responsible for stocking – Kleenex, alcohol wipes, Q-tips, that kind of thing. He said that he had a new girlfriend who was having some health issues. He told his manager that against his better judgment, he had taken a few things here and there from the medical center to help his girlfriend out so that she would not have to buy the items at a drugstore. He mentioned a few supplies such as a special kind of bandage, a certain kind of medicated cream, some hand lotion, again mostly first aid items. He felt bad about it, but he was trying to help his friend. And there's a big difference between someone who is taking a few packages of tissues or some medicated cream to help a girlfriend who can't afford some of these things versus someone driving a truck through the front window of a CVS in the middle of the night and filling the truck with whatever they can get their hands on.

**Moral It:** It just goes to show you that in his attempt to be generous and to help her with her needs at the holidays, he may have ended up getting carried away, to the point where he was making decisions he would not typically make.

**Link It:** That's why people like me come around, because when someone starts doing things that are out of character for them, we always want to talk with them to learn why this is happening.