

# rB Indulgence of Leaders | Rod Brace

<http://rodbrace.com/article/indulgence>

Being a leader certainly has its challenges, but it's hard to ignore the benefits. In some respects, the "trappings of power" become expected and even deserved by one's own estimation. As a leader, we fall prey to believing that we are special and that our position should come with privileges not afforded those we lead. That distinction we make, of being better in some ways than others on our team, serves to separate us from our team and make our leadership less effective. Team members want to relate to their leader. They want to believe that he or she is looking out for their best interest. When a leader falls into the self-indulgent practice of expecting or demanding benefits over and above those afforded their team, they disconnect from those they are called to lead.

The corporate hall of fame is lined with big names, with big appetites for expressions of power. The leader's demands exceed those of a rock star insisting on only green jelly beans in his dressing room or that his expensive imported water be kept at precisely 68 degrees. I once worked for an organization led by a leader who expected crushed ice on his annual visit, in a particular granular size served in a heavy glass tumbler. Prior to his visit our "ice team" would go to a purveyor of ice who could crush at just the right consistency to be placed in a tumbler of just the right clarity and heft. When the leader arrived he cut his visit short, leaving the prized ice and tumbler untouched. The team members talked about the incident for years. An impression was made.

My personal belief holds that we have a moral obligation to lead those in our organization in a way that is uplifting and beneficial to them. Any "trappings of power" that I accept as a rightful indulgence separates me from my team and sends a message of superiority. I am in their presence to serve them, not myself. I am there to understand what they need, not indulge my own needs.

As leaders, we can quickly fall prey to thinking that every detail of our daily routine, every aspect of our life, is to be carefully fashioned around our whims and fancies with a disregard for the needs of others. It is a dangerous egotistical spiral in which we fall, placing us further from the center of understanding the needs of our team and the purpose of our efforts. It is not a healthy place from which to lead. Be alert to the "trappings" that you desire and be wary of your insistence that life be customized to your benefit. It is not a desire worthy of leadership.

"Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of expecting to get your own way. Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want." 1 Peter 4: 1,2 The Message