

WHY DO SO MANY PRISON GUARDS (AND STAFF) LET THE PRISON BADGE GO TO THEIR HEADS?

Some prison guards/staff take pride in being public servants with integrity. But let's be real -- most seem to let the "badge" go straight to their already over-inflated ego.

Why? Power. These roles come with perceived authority, and if that "power" isn't balanced with accountability, it can inflate a person's sense of importance. Some start to see themselves as above the people they're meant to serve or supervise. There's also the "us v. them" idiocy taught to them in training. Guards and staff are taught to see the public -- or inmates -- as threats. Over time, this disturbed mindset can fuel arrogance and make empathy feel like a weakness.

To further exacerbate the problem, some prison systems like SCDC reward and promote toughness and mock and punish guards or staff who show humility. The egos of the cruel grow fast; and anyone and almost everyone knows that the loudest and meanest attitude masks the deepest insecurity -- and the badge and prison guard rank becomes a shield from personal struggles.

We can't ignore mental health.

Guards and staff showing cruelty towards prisoners, and seeming to take pride and award such deviant behavior -- obviously have deep rooted mental health issues and probable belong in a different line of work. A badge, be it an actual law enforcement badge, or even a prison guard or a mall security guard -- is a symbol of service, not superiority of any kind whatsoever. The public has every right to expect full professionalism, not childish power trips.

It's not about hating cops or prison guards or mall security -- it's about demanding better from those we have employed with our taxes, who work for us, to maintain dignity in the positions we allow them to hold. A badge only means what we let it; and, the moment its use becomes abusive or self-serving to its holder -- it's meaningless.

Unfortunately, many wearing them are ignorant to this fact.

Everyone sees right through their facade and have properly identified their inflated sense of self-worth as a coping mechanism to deal with their self-truths of inadequacy. Their internal reality beams out from behind the badge in spite of their efforts to hide it. The prison system, to fix this, must stop rewarding and teaching such totalitarian oppressive behaviors and embrace ways of rehabilitation.