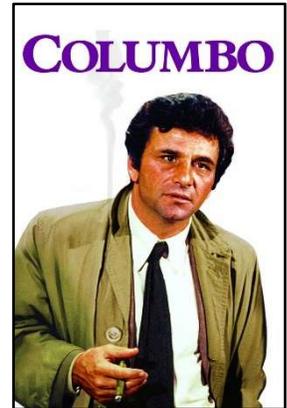


**Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
Tactics**
Lesson 3: Refining The Columbo Tactic



I. Review

Previous lesson we reviewed:

- A. Reversing the burden of proof (2nd step)
The one who makes the claim, bears the burden.
- B. Avoid the Professor's Ploy trap
Don't ever allow someone force you into disproving their point.
- C. What to do when you don't know what to do
You don't have to force it
- D. How to get out of the "hot seat"
Go into the "learner" mode; let them make the points

II. Third Step in Columbo Game Plan: Using Questions to Make a Point.

Columbo step 1 – gather information; *"What do you mean by that?"*

Columbo step 2 – when they make a claim, reverse the burden of proof;
"How did you come to that conclusion?"

- A. Third Use of Columbo; using questions to make a point
 - 1. First two questions are passive.
 - 2. Third use of Columbo is more active, going on the offensive in an inoffensive way
 - a. Make a point to advance your own view (Target 1)
 - b. Exploit a weakness or a flaw in the other person's view (Target 2)
 - 3. The first two Columbo questions do not require specific knowledge
 - 4. For the Third use of Columbo you need to know information about the claim you are going to make
 - a. You need to know the point you want to make (*e.g.* Jesus is the only Way)

b. Your point is like a target and the questions are the arrows to get you there (you need a game plan; you need to know how to get there; you need to have the pieces of the puzzle ready to lay out).

5. Get the other person to make the points that you want to make

Here's how:

a. First, determine the steps you need to make the point or arrive at your conclusions.

b. Second, ask questions to get your friend to put as many of those steps or parts (pieces) on the table for you so you can use them (when they do this, they cannot take them back).

The story of the interaction with the attorney in Barnes & Noble.

The story of "prove to me God exists" (Answer: what kind of evidence do you need? Also, I don't know what evidence is required to prove anything to you?) (requested clarity as to the proof) (Do you think things exist? Do you think that things that exist have always existed? What caused all the things that came into existence to come into existence? The obvious thing is that something out of the universe caused it to come into being, but "what is your alternative?").

The Columbo #3 target was 'God exists'

c. Third, use those pieces to make your point.

B. Finding the weakness, flaw, or contradiction in a person's point of view

Don't point out a flaw directly, use a question to have them clarify

1. There is no specific way to do this.

2. You will uncover weaknesses by listening carefully and thinking about what was said.

3. You need to study books, web sites, or lectures to gain information to help you find weaknesses in someone else's argument.

C. Pay close attention to the answer to the question

1. Are there any blatant weaknesses in the view?

2. Do the conclusion follow from the evidence?

3. Can you question any of the underlying assumptions?

4. Is there a misstep, a non sequitur, a fallacy, or a failing of some sort?

D. Address inconsistencies with a question, not a statement.

E. EXAMPLE: *“You are intolerant !”*

1. *“What do you mean by that?”*. Answer from person: *“you think you are right and I am wrong.”*
2. Answer: *“Yes I think I am right. But do you think you are right?”*
3. Question #3: *“Why is it that when I think I’m right, I am intolerant? However, when you think you are right, you are not intolerant?”* The person has resorted to name-calling, not explaining the issue. The person is attacking you, not the point you are trying to make.

F. Example: abortion and modified pro-choice opinion

Person: *“I believe personally that abortion is wrong, but I don’t think we should be forcing our opinion on others”* (modified-pro-choice position)

1. Columbo #1: *“Why are you personally against it?”* Answer, *“Abortion takes life of human.”*
2. Columbo #3 (explaining weakness): *“You believe abortion kills child? So you believe women should have the right to choose to kill the child?”* Immediately the flaw in the argument is apparent. Columbo #3 is to point out flaws, and lay burden of proof on them as to why that is correct.

IV. How to improve Columbo skill

Anticipate- reflect – practice (roll play)

- A. Initially, you will not be quick on your feet.
- B. Anticipate objections and think of questions in advance
- C. After you had an encounter reflect on how you might have done better
Example of woman who said she is a Christian, Buddhist and Pagan.
- D. When you think of a new idea or approach, practice the questions out loud.
Politicians and comedians also practice.

V. How to Defend against the Columbo tactic when it’s used against you.

- A. Sometimes you may have the Columbo used on you.
 1. You should not have a problem with Columbo #1.
 2. You should not have a problem with Columbo #2.
 3. Columbo #3 can be used to manipulate you into a trap.

B. Protect yourself with two steps

1. Stop the advance

- a. Don't be set up
- b. Politely say *"I'd rather not answer that right now. I want to know what you think."*

2. Regain control

- a. *"Are you trying to make a point? Why not just state your point."*
- b. Once you are clear on the point, use the "hot seat" maneuver; *"Let me think about that."*

DISCUSSION

1. Put into your own words the third application of Columbo tactic (Columbo #3).
2. What are three ways you can improve your Columbo skills?
3. List two skills to defend yourself against the Columbo tactic.
4. What is the key to finding a flaw in someone's position?
5. Find someone to teach Columbo #1, #2, and #3. Walk them through the basics. Do you have someone you can do this with?

This outline is provided to accompany the current version of the Tactics video by Gregory Koukl. It is not intended to replace, supplant, or modify the teaching by Gregory Koukl, rather, it was created by following point-by-point the current video lessons and creating an outline that follows the video. The intent is so the viewer can easily follow the video presentation.

You are encouraged to purchase a copy of Gregory Koukl's teaching materials on this subject of Tactics. The book and study guide and contain more information than shared on the video:

Tactics, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press; ISBN 978-0-310-28292-1

Tactics video, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press; ISBN 978-0-310-52907-1

Tactics Study Guide, by Gregory Koukl; Zondervan Press;
ISBN 978-0-310-52919-4