



**Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
Tactics
Lesson 4: The “Suicide” Tactic**



I. Review

Previous lesson (Lesson 3) we reviewed:

A. Step One of the Columbo Tactic

Gather information; *“What do you mean by that?”*

B. The Second Step of the Columbo Tactic

Reversing the Burden of Proof; *“The One Who Makes the Claim, Bears the Burden”*

“How did you come to that conclusion?”

C. The Third Step of the Columbo Tactic

Using questions to make a point.

Using questions to lead somewhere.

You must have a target, and you use questions to get there (they are the arrows).

Questions are used to get the other person to provide the “pieces to the puzzle”.

You have to know the argument and the pieces that are needed to make the point.

D. We learned how to improve your Columbo skills.

1. Anticipate objections and think ahead of questions.
2. Reflect afterward of questions you could have asked.
3. Practice your skills. Practice makes perfect!

E. How to defend when the Columbo tactic is being used against you.

1. Stop the advance (*“I’d like to know what you think.”*)
2. Regain control (*“Why don’t you state your point clearly so I don’t misunderstand. Then I will think about it.”*)

II. The Suicide Tactic.

A. Takes advantage of the tendency of many erroneous points of view have, that is, to self-destruct

1. These self-destructive views are commonly called “self-refuting claims or statements”
2. These views defeat themselves all on their own.
3. Always use questions to get their help.
4. Examples:

Sally and Charlie Brown from *Peanuts*; Sally and the “no” to everything philosophy.

“I cannot speak a word of English.”

“You can’t know anything for sure.” Answer: “Are you sure about that.”

“You shouldn’t be pushing your morality on me.”

***** When a statement fails to satisfy its own criteria for validity, it is self-refuting.**

5. Identifying a suicidal statement:

If the exact same reasons used against your view are also the reasons that defeat the other person’s view.

B. Recognizing (identifying) points that commit suicide (self-refuting):

1. Identify the basic premise, conviction, or claim.
Not always obvious.
2. Does that claim apply to itself?
 - a. Does the statement satisfy its own argument?
 - b. Is there an internal contradiction?
 - c. Can the idea be stated in the form “X is the case” and “X is not the case” at the same time.

3. Examples:

“I never, never, never repeat myself.”

“There is no truth” Answer: “Is that true?”

“My brother is an only child”

“Always go to other people’s funerals or else they won’t come to yours”

4. Contradiction is entailed in the statement, yet not explicitly expressed.

You have to pay attention !!!

5. Example:

Radio caller: *“You shouldn’t be correcting Christian teachers on the radio”*. Answer: *“If that is what you believe, why did you call me? You just corrected me on the radio, and I am a Christian teacher.”*

“It’s wrong to judge people.” Answer: (1) *“What’s wrong with that?”*
(2) *“Then why are you judging me right now?”*

“You should not push your morality on other people” Answer: (1) *“Is that your own moral point of view?”* (2) *“Then why are you pushing your moral view on me?”*

*** Columbo questions (tactic #3) make the same point as a preaching-statement; however, it keeps the “ball in his court” where he has to provide the burden-of-proof.

6. Example:

Anthropology student wanted to be a missionary.

Professor responded *“It is wrong for you to try and change other people’s religious beliefs.”* Answer: (1) *“Is that your point of view?”*
(2) *“Are you now trying to change my religious viewpoint?”*

7. Example:

All religions are equally true and valid.

Response: *“Is that what you believe?”* *“Then Christianity is true, and Jesus is the only way. Then either Christianity is true and all others are wrong, or Christianity is wrong and the statement that ‘all religions are true’ is false.”*

*** If Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but through Him (**John 14:6**), then there is only one way to God, and it is through Jesus. It is either right, and He is the only way for all, or it is wrong and He is the way for no-one. If John 14:6 is right, then all other religions are wrong.

8. Example:

You can only know what has been proven by science.

This statement claims that knowledge can only be gained from science.

Answer: (1) *“What do you mean by that?”* (2) *“Now I am confused. You say that I can’t know anything for sure unless it has been proven by science, and that is what you believe is true. Where is the scientific evidence for the statement that you just made? Don’t you need scientific evidence to know it is true?”*

9. Example

God does not take sides.

This assumes that God agrees with the person making the statement. It is self-refuting.

Answer: (1) *“Is that your view?”* (2) *“Do you think it is God’s view that He does not take sides?”* (3) *“Then you are saying that God is on your side regarding this issue?”*

C. Sibling rivalry suicide.

It happens when objections come in pairs that are inconsistent with each other.

1. Example:

Moral relativism, there is no right and wrong.

Later in the conversation: *“If your God exists, why is there so much evil in the world?”*

Answers: (1) *“What did you mean by that?”* (2) *“How did you come to that conclusion?”* (3) *“There cannot be evil in the world if morals are relative. This requires objective morality. Therefore, there is a right and wrong.”*

2. Example:

Person who was an animal rights activist and atheist.

Sibling suicide.

This person was making up ‘rights’, which are preferences.

If animals have rights, they are transcendent, and that comes from the life-maker, right-make God.

Answer: (1) *“What is a right?”* (2) *“If rights are just-rights, then how could there be animal rights without a God?”*

DISCUSSION

1. How do you use questions to expose the suicidal tendencies of the following statements:
 - a. It’s wrong to condemn anybody for anything.
 - b. Everyone’s view is a product of his own prejudices.
 - c. God doesn’t take sides.

- d. You are what you eat.
- e. The world is an illusion and we're part of the illusion.
- f. God doesn't exist because there is so much evil in the world.

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