

Chardon Christian Fellowship Home Fellowship Lessons Tactics

Lesson 5: The “Taking-the-Roof-Off” Tactic



I. Review

Previous lesson (Lesson 4) we reviewed:

A. Uses of the Columbo Tactic

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

B. The Suicide Tactic

Contradictory, self-destructing concepts and views

Identify the basic contradiction

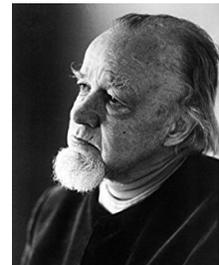
“Does the claim refute itself?”

C. Went over popular examples of self-refuting claims

D. Went over sibling rivalry suicide claims

Where statements are in contradiction with each other.

II. Taking-the-roof-off tactic



A. Taking-the-roof-off tactic was used by the late Francis Schaeffer

1. Briefly, you consider the other person’s viewpoint, and press the viewpoint to the to the absurd consequence or ending.

2. This tactic also is known as *reductio ad absurdum* which means reducing the argument to its absurd conclusion.

Consider **Matthew 12:22-32** where the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons because He was demonic.

B. How to take-the-roof-off

1. First, understand the argument in the midst of all the ‘words’, and hone in on the basic premise, assertion, principle or moral rule.

2. Take the idea on a test drive and see where it goes by asking:

a. If I follow the principle, what would be the result?

- b. When applied are their absurd consequences?
- c. Does the rule have other unintended consequences that seem counter-intuitive?
- 3. Point out the problem, that is, invite the person to think about the implications of his view if it were really true.

Example of the witch in Wisconsin talking about abortion (Lesson 1).
Good example of taking-the-roof-off !

C. Why it works?

Francis Schaeffer stated that since Christianity is true, then every human is made in the image of God. Every human being must live in the world God created. If a person denies God, or any truth about God's world, then that person is denying reality.

If you are denying reality, then the anti-Christian belief is denying reality, and there will be a collision between the false-world-view and the reality of God's world.

Schaeffer called this the "point of tension."

Richard Dawkin's point of view is an example of "point of tension."

Non-Christians build a "protective roof" over their position and ideas, and use it to explain or deflect God's world issues that are at a "point of tension".

D. How do we take-the-roof-off?

- 1. Create a situation that forces them to take-the-roof-off ... using questions.

E. Example

1. Naturalistic Darwinian evolution

If Darwinism is correct, then the only rule that matters is the "strong rule the weak". The moral position would be that the strong care for the weak; however, there are no moral forces in Darwinism.

Question: "Tell me your principle objection to genocide given your world view?" Stalin? Mao Tse-tung? This is taking-the-roof-off by going to the logical conclusion.

2. Sam Harris and determinism

Determinist view: The whole world and universe is just a complicated set of dominoes falling. All the choices we make and things we believe are determined by the physical circumstances that come before us. There is no free will since you can't get free will from a materialistic world.

Observation: If determinism is true, you cannot have any morality. You can't have people praised for the good things they do, or blamed for the bad things

they do, because blame or praise don't work in a world with no "good" and "bad." Everything was determined by the circumstances that preceded the event, so there are no choices to be made. Sam Harris cannot argue for Darwinism or determinism as a choice since "choice" is inconsistent with determinism – everything is dictated by the circumstances that preceded the event.

This is sibling rivalry.

3. Are you born a homosexual?

There is no genetic evidence for this.

Unspoken principle is that if I was born this way, then it is natural to me, and if it is natural to me, then it must be okay for me. Anything that is natural is moral.

Answer: *"How would you respond if I said that I have had a condition all my life, it is like I was born with this, my natural impulse is to beat up homosexuals when I meet them? What would you say if this were the case?"*
This was taking-the-roof-off.

Civilization is corporate restraint to doing what comes naturally.

4. Death penalty

Mother Teresa trying to get a commutation for a death row inmate because Jesus would forgive him.

Taking-the-roof-off: Her conclusion was that wherever Jesus would forgive, we should not punish. Since Jesus would forgive everything, then we should not punish for anything. This moved away from an argument against capital punishment to punishment of any kind.

5. Moral issue of "I'm not hurting anybody, therefore, my morality is okay."

This is a minimalist ethic.

Example of a doctor that molested a woman under sedation.

A peeping Tom – there is no hurt to the victim.

Morality is much more than "doing no harm." (point-of-tension)

6. There is no truth.

Self refuting. There is truth.

Take-the-roof-off: "If there is no truth, then why go to school?"

III. Discussion

A. What are the three steps to taking-the-roof-off?

B. Put *reductio ad absurdum* into layman's terms.

C. Can you recall any other statements that were self-contradicting and could have the roof-taken-off?

D. Be alert to points of view that would lead to absurd ending.

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