



Chardon Christian Fellowship  
Home Fellowship Lessons  
**Tactics**  
*Lesson 6: The “Steamroller” Tactic*

10/16



## **I. Review**

Previous lesson (Lesson 5) we reviewed:

### A. Taking-the-roof-off tactic

Adopt the other persons point of view for the sake of the argument.

### B. Three steps to employ this tactic

1. Reduce the point of view to its basic premise.
2. Give the idea a test drive to see if there are absurd consequences.
3. Invite the person to consider the implications that follow the logical end of their “truth”, *reductio ad absurdum*.

### C. Why does this work?

1. Humans are made in the image of God and must live in the world that God created.
2. Every person who denies this lives in a contradiction to reality, and this creates a point-of-tension.
3. To protect themselves, human erect “roofs” of self-deception to shield themselves from the logical implication of their beliefs. We lovingly remove the roof using questions.

## **II. The steamroller and a defensive tactic.**

### A. What is a steamroller?

1. Steamrollers are people who overwhelm you.
2. Steamrollers have strong opinions and strong personalities.
3. They keep you off balance and on the defensive by overwhelming you with a lot of attitude, and a lot of noise.
4. Their words come fast and furious, keeping you off balance, keeping you from collecting your wits, and keep you from giving a thoughtful answer.

### B. How do steamrollers operate?

1. One defining characteristic is they interrupt you constantly.

- a. They cut you off before you can respond to the challenge.
- b. When they don't like your answer, they interrupt.
- c. They pile on more challenges, never giving you time to respond.
- d. Before you can answer they sometimes change the subject.
- e. They do not listen to what you have to say.

2. Steamrollers are insincere.

- a. They know it is easier to ask hard questions than to listen to hard answers.
- b. They are not interested in answers, but winning through intimidation, and sometimes making you look foolish.

3. Benevolent steamroller

- a. They not mean or nasty, they are very excited and just can't wait to get into play.
- b. Usually not listening, just formulating ideas.

C. How to deal with steamrollers

1. Step #1. Stop the interruptions graciously but firmly.

- a. Hold up you hand and say *"Wait just a minute. I'm not finished yet. I want to finish. Is that alright? I'll let you talk is a second."*
- b. You have to keep your cool ! Don't be defensive or aggressive.
- c. You appeal for courtesy and them give them a turn.
- d. Sometimes you stop talking and wait for a clear opening.
- e. Don't talk over them. Be patient.

f. Be courteous with statements/questions such as:

*"Is it okay with you if I take a few moments to answer your concerns before you ask another question?"*

*"I know you have a lot of questions, but I need a moment to give you one. Is that okay?"*

*"Let me respond to your first challenge. When I am don't you can jump in again. Is that okay"*

*"That's a good question, and deserves a decent answer. I need a moment to give you one. Is that okay?"*

- g. By asking for permission you are negotiating an agreement how to discuss the issues.

- h. You can ask if the point you made answers the question. Move progressively from first to second to third ...
- i. Don't take advantage of the time you negotiate. Make your point then get the steamroller back into the conversation.
- j. Do not become a steamroller yourself !!! Give the other side a chance to create a self-refuting statement.

2. Step #2. Shame the steamroller.

- a. You address the impolite behavior in a more direct fashion.
- b. Ask very explicitly for more courtesy in the conversation.
  - i. Do not be angry.
  - ii. Do not condescend.
  - iii. Take a deep breath.
- c. Don't follow new challenges, don't follow the rabbit trails.
  - i. *"I need to know if you really want an answer from me?"*
  - ii. *"Could I ask you a favor and let me respond to your question?"*
  - iii. *"Do you want me to answer, or do you just want to talk?"*  
Monologue rather than dialogue.

Other example statements:

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- d. Return the steamrollers original challenge and deal with it: Columbo tactic; *"Now, your challenge as I understand it is \_\_\_\_\_ . Here is how I'd like to respond."*
- e. Don't be snippy or smug. Stay focused, pleasant, and gracious.

3. Step #3. When all else fails, you leave them.

- a. If the steamroller won't let you answer, listen politely until finished, then drop it.
- b. So what if the steamroller gets the last word.
- c. Wisdom dictates not wasting time with this kind of person.
- d. Sometimes we have to consider **Matthew 7:6**

- i. Time to realize this person is not taking seriously your counsel is  
“Lest they turn and tear you to pieces.”

### **III. Reflections from Gregory Koukl**

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### **IV. DISCUSSION**

- A. Define a steamroller.
- B. What are the three steps of dealing with a steamroller?
- C. Have you ever been steamrolled? *be sensitive !*
- D. Have you ever “lost your cool” with a steamroller?
- E. This week, identify someone with this same training, and review the Tactics and Columbo technique. **2 Timothy 2:15**

*“The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle.”*

- Marine Corps

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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