

The Columbo Tactic

Disarm, Gather, & Highlight Contradictions Through Polite Inquiry

Inspired by the TV detective, this strategy uses gentle, innocent questions to expose flaws in arguments and manage conversations—all while keeping the dialogue polite and low-risk.



The Core Philosophy

- **Play the Student:** Position yourself as a seeker of information, not an attacker.
- **Stay in the Driver's Seat:** Use questions to control the conversation instead of making direct assertions.
- **Shift the Burden:** Focus on gathering information rather than defending your own position.

Key Components

- **1. Gather Information**
 - *Goal:* Clarify and understand the other person's view.
 - *Ask:* **"What do you mean by that?"**
- **2. Reverse the Burden of Proof**
 - *Goal:* Prompt the speaker to justify their claims.
 - *Ask:* **"How did you come to that conclusion?"**
- **3. Make a Point**
 - *Goal:* Expose contradictions or guide the conversation.
 - *Ask:* **"What are your reasons for that?"**

Commonly Used Questions

1. "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"
2. "What do you mean by that?"
3. "How did you come to that conclusion?"
4. "What are your reasons for that?"
5. 🖐️ **"Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should have asked you?"**

💡 **Summary:** By appearing non-threatening and inquisitive, you encourage the other person to share more, ultimately highlighting their own contradictions.