




GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF APOLOGETICS 


1. "STONE IN THE SHOE"
 As Greg Koukl says in his book *Tactics*, our goal is not to convert anyone, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, if we can engage people in such a way that they walk away with a "stone in their shoes," or evidence that forces them to continue to engage the issue, then that's a win.

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2. PERSON OVER QUESTION
 Our primary goal is never to answer a question; it is to answer the person. A question is not asking questions, a person is, so canned responses are insufficient. Listening is essential.


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3. REAL ISSUE OVER SMOKE & MIRRORS
 The vast majority of the time a person's questions are masking complex issues that are pastoral in nature. Our goal is to use sound reasoning to remove the smoke and mirrors so we can engage the person with the love of God.


REAL ISSUE OVER SMOKE & MIRRORS 


Ask clarifying questions:

1. What do you mean by that?
2. How did you come to that conclusion?
3. Have you ever considered . . . ?


REAL ISSUE OVER SMOKE & MIRRORS 

Distinguish between the essentials and convictions / opinions / questions.




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4. GENTLENESS & RESPECT OVER ARGUMENTATIVE
 Being gentle and respectful is just as important as the right answer. We could give the right answer but do so in a manner that alienates the person from the gospel and thereby contribute to the person missing the whole point.

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5. JESUS OVER PERIPHERALS

Continue to push the conversation to the heart of Christianity: Jesus and his death and resurrection. Critics will do their best to avoid the center, so gently remind them that they must deal with Jesus and his resurrection first before it's even possible to substantively address subsequent questions.

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6. CONTINUALLY FALL BACK INTO CHRIST

"I have found that nothing is more dangerous to one's faith than the work of an apologist. No doctrine of that Faith seems to me so spectral, so unreal as one that I have just successfully defended in a public debate. For a moment, you see, it has seemed to rest on oneself; as a result, when you go away from that debate it seems no stronger than that weak pillar. That is why we apologists take our lives in our hands and can be saved only by falling back continually from the web of our own arguments, as from our intellectual counters, into the Reality - from Christian apologetics into Christ Himself. That also is why we need one another's continual help - *oremus pro invicem* (let us pray for each other)."

C. S. Lewis, "Christian Apologetics"
