1. Open Your Eyes

THE INVISIBLE ARGUMENT
A personal tale of unresisted persuasion

**Truth springs from argument among friends.** —DAVID HUME

It is early in the morning and my seventeen-year-old son eats breakfast, giving me a narrow window to use our sole bathroom. I wrap a towel around my waist and approach the sink, avoiding the grim sight in the mirror; as a writer, I don't have to shave every day. (Marketers despairingly call a consumer like me a "low self-monitor.") I do have my standards, though, and hygiene is one. I grab toothbrush and toothpaste. The tube is empty. The nearest replacement sits on a shelf in our freezing basement, and I'm not dressed for the part.

"George!" I yell. "Who used all the toothpaste?"

A sarcastic voice answers from the other side of the door. "That's not the point, is it, Dad?" George says. "The point is how we're going to keep this from happening again."

He has me. I have told him countless times how the most productive arguments use the future tense, the language of choices and decisions.

"You're right," I say. "You win. Now will you please get me some toothpaste?"

"Sure." George retrieves a tube, happy that he beat his father at an argument.

Or did he? Who got what he wanted? In reality, by conceding his point, I persuaded him. If I had simply said, "Don't be a jerk and get me some toothpaste," George might have stood there arguing. Instead I made him feel triumphant, triumph made him benevolent, and that got me exactly
what I wanted. I achieved the pinnacle of persuasion: not just an agreement, but one that gets an audience—a teenage one at that—to do my bidding.

No, George, I win.

The Matrix, Only Cooler

What kind of father manipulates his own son? Oh, let’s not call it manipulation. Call it instruction. Any parent should consider rhetoric, the art of argument, one of the essential R’s. Rhetoric is the art of influence, friendship, and eloquence, of ready wit and irrefutable logic. And it harnesses the most powerful of social forces, argument.

Whether you sense it or not, argument surrounds you. It plays with your emotions, changes your attitude, talks you into a decision, and goads you to buy things. Argument lies behind political labeling, advertising, jargon, voices, gestures, and guilt trips; it forms a real-life Matrix, the supreme software that drives our social lives. And rhetoric serves as argument’s decoder. By teaching the tricks we use to persuade one another, the art of persuasion reveals the Matrix in all its manipulative glory.

The ancients considered rhetoric the essential skill of leadership—knowledge so important that they placed it at the center of higher education. It taught them how to speak and write persuasively, produce something to say on every occasion, and make people like them when they spoke. After the ancient Greeks invented it, rhetoric helped create the world’s first democracies. It trained Roman orators such as Julius Caesar and Marcus Tullius Cicero and gave the Bible its finest language. It even inspired William Shakespeare. Every one of America’s founders
studied rhetoric, and they used its principles in writing the Constitution.

Rhetoric faded in academia during the 1800s, when social scientists dismissed the notion that an individual could stand up to the inexorable forces of history. Who wants to teach leadership when academia doesn’t believe in leaders? At the same time, English lit replaced the classics, and ancient thought fell out of vogue. Nonetheless, a few remarkable people continued to study the art. Daniel Webster picked up rhetoric at Dartmouth by joining a debating society, the United Fraternity, which had an impressive classical library and held weekly debates. Years later, the club changed its name to Alpha Delta and partied its way to immortality by inspiring the movie Animal House. To the brothers’ credit, they didn’t forget their classical heritage entirely; hence the toga party.

Scattered colleges and universities still teach rhetoric—in fact, the art is rapidly gaining popularity among undergraduates—but outside academia we forgot it almost entirely. What a thing to lose. Imagine stumbling upon Newton’s law of gravity and meeting face-to-face with the forces that drive the universe. Or imagine coming across Freud for the first time and suddenly becoming aware of the unconscious, where your Id, Ego, and Superego conduct their silent arguments.

I wrote this book for that reason: to lead you through this ill-known world of argument and welcome you to the Persuasive Elect. Along the way you’ll enhance your image with Aristotle’s three traits of credible leadership: virtue, disinterest, and practical wisdom. You’ll find yourself using logic as a convincing tool, smacking down fallacies and building airtight assertions. Aristotle’s principles will also help you decide which medium—email? phone? skywriting?—works best for each message. You
will discover a simple strategy to get an argument unstuck when it bogs down in accusation and anger.

And that's just the beginning. The pages to come contain more than a hundred "argument tools" borrowed from ancient texts and adapted to modern situations, along with suggestions for trying the techniques at home, school, work, or in your community. You will see when logic works best, and when you should lean on an emotional strategy. You'll acquire mind-molding figures of speech and ready-made tactics, including Aristotle's irresistible enthymeme, a neat bundle of logic that I find easier to use than pronounce. You'll see how to actually benefit from your own screw-ups. And you'll discover the most compelling tools of all in your audience's own self-identity.

By the end of the book you will have mastered the rhetorical tricks for making an audience eager to listen. People still love a well-delivered talk; the top professional speakers charge more per person than a Bruce Springsteen concert. I devote a whole chapter to Cicero's elegant five-step method for constructing a speech—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—a system that has served the greatest orators for the past two thousand years.

Great argument does not always mean elaborate speech, though. The most effective rhetoric disguises its art. And so I'll reveal a rhetorical device for implanting opinions in people's heads through sheer sleight of tongue.

Besides all these practical tools, rhetoric offers a grander, metaphysical payoff: it jolts you into a fresh new perspective on the human condition. After it awakens you to the argument all around, the world will never seem the same.

I myself am living proof.

Ooh, Baby, Stir Harder

To see just how pervasive argument is, I recently attempted a whole day without persuasion—free of advertising, politics, family squabbles, or any psychological manipulation whatsoever. No one would persuade me, and I would avoid persuading them. Heck, I wouldn't even let myself persuade myself. Nobody, not even I, would tell me what to do.
If anyone could consider himself qualified for the experiment, a confirmed hermit like me could. I work for myself; indeed, having dropped out of a career in journalism and publishing, I work by myself, in a cabin a considerable distance from my house. I live in a tiny village in northern New England, a region that boasts the most persuasion-resistant humans on the planet. Advertisers have nightmares about people like me: no TV, no smartphone, dial-up Internet. I'm commercial-free, a walking NPR, my own individual, persuasion-immune man.

As if.

My wristwatch alarm goes off at six. I normally use it to coax myself out of bed, but now I ignore it. I stare up at the ceiling, where the smoke detector blinks reassuringly. If the smoke alarm detected smoke, it would alarm, rousing the heaviest sleeper. The philosopher Aristotle would approve of the smoke detector's rhetoric; he understood the power of emotion as a motivator.

For the time being, the detector has nothing to say. But my cat does. She jumps on the bed and sticks her nose in my armpit. As reliable as my watch and twice as annoying, the cat persuades remarkably well for ten dumb pounds of fur. Instead of words she uses gesture and tone of voice—potent ingredients of argument.

I resist stoically. No cat is going to boss me around this morning.

The watch beeps again. I wear a Timex Ironman, whose name comes from a self-abusive athletic event; presumably, if the watch works for a masochist who subjects it to two miles of swimming, a hundred miles of biking, and 26.2 miles of running all in one day, it would work for someone like me who spends his lunch hour walking strenuously down to the brook to see if there are any fish. The ancient Romans would call the Ironman's brand appeal *argumentum a fortiori*, "argument from strength." Its logic goes like this: if something works the hard way, it's more likely to work the easy way. Advertisers favor the argument from strength. Years ago, Life cereal ran an ad with little Mikey the fussy eater. His two older brothers tested the cereal on him, figuring that if Mikey liked it, anybody
would. And he liked it! An *argumentum a fortiori* cereal ad. My Ironman watch’s own argument from strength does not affect me, however. I bought it because it was practical. Remember, I’m advertising-immune.

But its beeping is driving me crazy. Here I’m not even up yet and I already contemplate emotional appeals from a cat and a smoke detector along with a wristwatch argument from strength. Wrenching myself out of bed, I say to the mirror what I tell it every morning: “Don’t take any crap from anyone.”

The cat bites me on the heel. I grab my towel and go fix its breakfast. Five minutes later I’m out of toothpaste and arguing with my son. Not a good start to my experiment, but I’ll chalk it up to what scientists euphemistically call an “artifact” (translation: boneheaded mistake) and move on. I make coffee, grab a pen, and begin writing ostentatiously in a notebook. This does little good in the literary sense—I can barely read my own scribble before coffee—but it produces wonderful rhetorical results; when my wife sees me writing, she often brings me breakfast.

Did I just violate my own experiment? Shielding the notebook from view, I write a grocery list. There. That counts as writing.

Dorothy returned to full-time work after I quit my job. The deal was that I would take over the cooking, but she loves to see her husband as the inspired author and herself as the able enabler. My wife is a babe, and many babes go for inspired authors. Of course, *she* might be persuading *me*: by acting as the kind of babe who goes for inspired authors, she turns me on. Seduction underlies the most insidious, and enjoyable, forms of argument.

Seduction is not just for sex, either. Writer Frederick Kaufman showed in *Harper’s Magazine* how the Food Network uses techniques identi-
cal to that of the porn industry—overmiked sound, very little plot, and
good-looking characters, along with lavish close-ups of firm flesh and flow­
ing juices.

RACHAEL RAY: Lentils poof up big when you cook 'em. They
just suck up all the liquid as they get nice and tender.
EMERIL LAGASSE: In go the bananas. Oh, yeah, babe. Get 'em
happy right now.

We live in a tangled, dark (I almost added “moist”) world of persuasion. A
used car salesman once seduced me out of fifteen grand. My family and I
had just moved to Connecticut, and I needed cheap transportation. It had
been a tough move; I was out of sorts. The man at the car lot had me pegged
before I said a word. He pointed to a humble-looking Ford Taurus sedan,
suggested a test drive, and as soon as I buckled in he said, “Want to see P. T.
Barnum’s grave?” Of course I did.

The place was awesome. We had to stop for peacocks, and brilliant-green
feral Peruvian parrots squawked in the branches of a huge fir tree. Opposite
Barnum’s impressive monument stood Tom Thumb’s marker with a
life-sized statue of the millionaire midget. Enthralled by our test drive, I did
everything else the salesman suggested, and he suggested I buy the Ford. It
was a lemon.

He sized me up and changed my mood; he seduced me, and to tell you
the truth, I enjoyed it. I had some misgivings the next morning, but no re­
grets. It was a consensual act.

Which leads us to argument’s grand prize: the consensus. It means
more than just an agreement, much more than a compromise. The con­
sensus represents an audience’s commonsense thinking. In fact, it is a
common sense, a shared faith in a choice—the decision or action you
want. And this is where seduction comes in. As St. Augustine knew, faith
requires emotion.

Seduction is manipulation, manipulation is half of argument, and
therefore many of us shy from it. But seduction offers more than just con­
sensual sex. It can bring you consensus. Even Aristotle, that logical old soul,
believed in the curative powers of seduction. Logic alone will rarely get
people to do anything. They have to desire the act. You may not like seduc­
tion’s manipulative aspects; still, it beats fighting, which is what we usually
mistake for an argument.
TRY THIS AT WORK
You can use seduction—the nonsexual kind—in a presentation. Will your plan increase efficiency? Get your audience to lust after it; paint a vision of actually taking lunch hours and seeing their families more.

Meanwhile, my experiment gets more dubious by the moment. I’m leaving the bathroom when Dorothy puts a plate of eggs on the table, shrugs into her suit jacket, and kisses me good-bye. “Don’t forget, I’ll be home late—I’m having heavy hors d’oeuvres at the reception tonight,” she says, and leaves for her fund-raising job at a law school. (Fund-raising and law. Could it get more rhetorical?)

I turn to George. “So, want to have dinner with me or on campus tonight?” George attends a boarding school as a day student. He hates the food there.

“I don’t know,” he says. “I’ll call you from school.”

I want to work late and don’t feel like cooking, but I’m loath to have George think my work takes priority over him. “Okay,” I say, adding with as much enthusiasm as I can fake, “we’ll have stew!”

“Ugh,” says George, right on cue. He hates my stew even more than school food. The odds of my cooking tonight have just gone way down.

Oops, as that fine rhetorician Britney Spears put it. I did it again. And so goes my day. In my cabin office, I email editors with flattering explanations for missing their deadlines. (I’m just trying to live up to their high standards!) I put off calling Sears to complain about a $147 bill for replacing a screw in our oven. When I do call eventually, I’ll take my time explaining the situation. Giving me a break on the bill will cost less than dealing with me any further.

At noon, I grab some lunch and head outside for a walk. A small pile of fox scat lies atop a large granite rock. Mine, the fox says with the scat. This spot belongs to me. Territorial creatures, such as foxes and suburbanites, use complicated signals to mark off terrain and discourage intruders—musk, fences, scat, marriage licenses, footprints, alarm systems . . . Argument is in our nature, literally.

A mockingbird sings a pretty little tune that warns rivals off its turf. Without a pause it does
the same thing in reverse, rendering a figure of speech called **chiasmus**. This crisscross figure repeats a phrase with its mirror image: “You can take a boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of a boy.” “I wasted time, and now time doth waste me.” Our culture underrates figures, but only because most of us lack the rhetorical savvy to wield them. They can yield surprising power. John F. Kennedy deployed a chiasmus during his inaugural address—“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country”—and thousands joined the Peace Corps. I fell in love with figures, and even launched a website, Figarospeech.com, devoted to them. Figures add polish to a memo or paper, and in day-to-day conversation they can supply ready wit to the most tedious conversations.

The phone is ringing when I get back to my cabin. It’s George calling to say he plans to eat at school. (**Yes!**) So I work late, rewarding myself now and then by playing computer pinball. I find I can sit still for longer stretches with game breaks. Is this persuasion? I suppose it is. My non-rhetorical day turned out to be pretty darn rhetorical, but nonetheless agreeable.

I finally knock off work and head back to the house for a shower and shave, even though this isn’t a shaving day. My wife deals with a lot of good-looking, well-dressed men, and now and then I like to make a territorial call, through grooming and clothing, to convince her she did not marry a bum. I pull on a cashmere sweater that Dorothy says makes my eyes look “bedroomy” and meet her at the door with a cold gin and tonic.

Let the seduction begin.
Audi partem alteram. *Hear the other side.* —ST. AUGUSTINE

At the age of seven, my son, George, insisted on wearing shorts to school in the middle of winter. We live in icy New Hampshire, where playground snow has all the fluffy goodness of ground glass. My wife launched the argument in the classic family manner: “You talk to him,” she said.

So I talked to him. Being a student of rhetoric, I employed Aristotle’s three most powerful tools of persuasion:

**Argument by character**
**Argument by logic**
**Argument by emotion**

In this chapter you will see how each of these tools works, and you’ll gain some techniques—the persuasive use of decorum, argument jujitsu, tactical sympathy—that will put you well on the way to becoming an argument adept.

The first thing I used on George was argument by character: I gave him my stern father act.

**ME:** You have to wear pants, and that’s final.
**GEORGE:** Why?
**ME:** Because I told you to, that’s why.

But he just looked at me with tears in his eyes. Next, I tried reasoning with him, using argument by logic.

**ME:** Pants will keep your legs from chapping. You’ll feel a lot better.
**GEORGE:** But I want to wear *shorts.*
So I resorted to manipulating his emotions. Following Cicero, who claimed that humor was one of the most persuasive of all rhetorical passions, I hiked up my pant legs and pranced around.

**ME:** Doh-de-doh, look at me, here I go off to work wearing shorts ... Don't I look stupid?

**GEORGE:** Yes. (*Continues to pull shorts on.*)

**ME:** So why do you insist on wearing shorts yourself?

**GEORGE:** Because I don't look stupid. And they're my legs. I don't mind if they get chaffed.

**ME:** Chapped.

Superior vocabulary and all, I seemed to be losing my case. Besides, George was making his first genuine attempt to argue instead of cry. So I decided to let him win this one.

**ME:** All right. You can wear shorts in school if your mother and I can clear it with the authorities. But you have to put your snow pants on when you go outside. Deal?

**GEORGE:** Deal.

He happily fetched his snow pants, and I called the school. A few weeks later the principal declared George's birthday Shorts Day; she even showed up in culottes herself. It was mid-February. Was that a good idea? For the sake of argument, and agreement, I believe it was.

**Aristotle's Big Three**

I used my best arguments by character, logic, and emotion. So, how did George still manage to beat me? By using the same tools. I did it on purpose, and he did it instinctively. Aristotle called them *logos, ethos,* and *pathos,* and so will I, because the meanings of the Greek versions are richer than those of the English versions. Together they form the three basic tools of rhetoric.

Logos is **argument by logic.** If arguments were children, *logos* would be the brainy one, the big
sister who gets top grades in high school. *Logos* isn’t just about following rules of logic; it’s a set of techniques that use what the audience is thinking.

**Ethos**, or argument by character, employs the persuader’s personality, reputation, and ability to look trustworthy. (While *logos* sweats over its GPA, *ethos* gets elected class president.) In rhetoric, a sterling reputation is more than just good; it’s persuasive. I taught my children that lying isn’t just wrong, it’s unpersuasive. An audience is more likely to believe a trustworthy persuader, and to accept his argument. “A person’s life persuades better than his word,” said one of Aristotle’s contemporaries. This remains true today. Rhetoric shows how to shine a flattering light on your life.

Then you have *pathos*, or argument by emotion, the sibling the others disrespect but who gets away with everything. Logicians and language snobs hate *pathos*, but Aristotle himself—the man who *invented* logic—recognized its usefulness. You can persuade someone logically, but as we saw in the last chapter, getting him out of his chair to act on it takes something more combustible.

*Logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* appeal to the brain, gut, and heart of your audience. While our brain tries to sort the facts, our gut tells us whether we can trust the other person, and our heart makes us want to do something about it. They form the essence of effective persuasion.

George instinctively used all three to counter my own arguments. His *ethos* put mine in check:

**Me:** You have to wear pants because I told you to.

**George:** They’re my legs.

His *logos* also canceled mine out, even if his medical terminology didn’t:

**Me:** Pants will make your legs feel better.

**George:** I don’t mind if they get chaffed.

Finally, I found his *pathos* irresistible. When he was little, the kid would actually stick his lower lip
out when he tried not to cry. Cicero loved this technique—not the lip part, but the appearance of struggling for self-control. It serves to amplify the mood in the room. Cicero also said a genuine emotion persuades more than a faked one, and George’s tears certainly were genuine. Trying not to cry just made his eyes well up more.

I wish I could say my pathos was as effective, but George failed to think it funny when I hiked my pants up. He just agreed that I looked stupid. I had been studying rhetoric pretty intensively at that point, and to be thrown to the mat by a seven-year-old was humiliating. So was facing my wife afterward.

DOROTHY: So did you talk to him?
ME: Yeah, I handled it.

George picked that moment to walk into the room with his shorts on.

DOROTHY: Then why is he wearing shorts?
GEORGE: We made a deal!
DOROTHY: A deal. Which somehow allows him to wear shorts to school.
ME: I told you, I handled it.

So what if his legs looked like stalks of rhubarb when he came home? While I was moderately concerned about the state of his skin, and more apprehensive about living up to Dorothy’s expectations, neither had much to do with my personal goal: to raise persuasive children. If George was willing to put all he had into an argument, I was willing to concede. That time, I like to think, we both won. (In high school he expressed his individuality in the opposite way: he wore ties to school, and even pants.)

Logos, pathos, and ethos usually work together to win an argument, debates with argumentative seven-year-olds excepted. By using your opponent’s logic and your audience’s emotion, you can win over your audience with greater ease. You make them happy to let you control the argument.

**Logos:** Use the Logic in the Room

Later on, we'll get into rhetoric's more dramatic logical tactics and show how to bowl your audience over with your eloquence. First, though, let's master the most powerful logos tool of all: concession. It seems more Jedi
knight than Rambo, involving more self-mastery than brute force, but it lies closer to the power center of *logos* than rhetoric's more grandiloquent methods. Even the most aggressive maneuvers allow room for the opponent's ideas and the audience's preconceptions. To persuade people—to make them desire your choice and commit to the action you want—you need all the assets in the room, and one of the best resources comes straight from your opponent's mouth.

In the comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*, Calvin concedes effectively when his dad tries to teach him to ride a bike:

**DAD:** Look, Calvin. You've got to relax a little. Your balance will be better if you're loose.

**CALVIN:** I can't help it! Imminent death makes me tense! I admit it!

Clever boy. Perched atop a homicidal bike, he still manages to gain control of the argument. By agreeing that he's tense, he shifts the issue from nerves to peril, where he has a better argument.

Salespeople love to use concession to sell you stuff. I once had a boss who came from a sales background. He proved that old habits die hard. The guy never disagreed with me, yet half the time he got me to do the opposite of what I proposed.

**ME:** Our research shows that readers love beautiful covers without a lot of type.

**BOSS:** Beautiful covers. Sure.

**ME:** I know that clean covers violate the usual rules for selling magazines on the newsstand, but we should test dual covers: half of them will be crammed with the usual headlines, and half of them with a big, bold image—very little type.

**BOSS:** Clean covers. Great idea. How'll that affect your budget?

**ME:** It'll cost a lot. I'm gambling on selling more magazines.

**BOSS:** So you haven't budgeted for it.

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**TRY THIS AT HOME**

Aristotle said that every point has its flip side. That's the trick to concession. When a spouse says, "We hardly ever go out anymore," the wise mate does not spew examples of recent dates; he says, "That's because I want you all to myself." This response will at least buy him time to think up a credible change in tense: "But as a matter of fact, I was going to ask if you wanted to go to that new Korean restaurant."
ME: Uh, no. But I tell you, boss, I’m pretty confident about this.

BOSS: Sure. I know you are. Well, it’s a great idea. Let’s circle back to it at budget time.

ME: But that’s nine months from—

BOSS: So what else is on your agenda?

My covers never got tested. If a circle in hell is reserved for this kind of salesman, it’s a pretty darn pleasant one. And despite myself, I never stopped liking the guy. Arguments with him never felt like arguments; I would leave his office in a good mood after losing every point, and he was the one who did all the conceding.

You’ll find much the same technique if you take a class in improv. Your teachers will almost certainly school you in the practice of “Yes, and . . .” This entails accepting what the other person says and building on it. Imagine yourself onstage with a partner. She starts.

PARTNER: Look, the penguins are taking off from our roof!

So how do you respond? Sensibly?

YOU: They can’t be penguins. Penguins can’t fly. Plus we live in Florida. Did you mean pelicans?

You can just hear the brakes squealing on that little dialogue. Let’s try a “Yes, and . . .” instead.

YOU: Yes, and it makes me so glad we built that catapult on top of our igloo.

The cool thing about this improvisational method is that it lets you nudge the conversation in a direction you want. Suppose you disagree that penguins are flying off your roof. Instead of pointing out that penguins don’t fly, simply assume a catapult.

Aren’t we being agreeable? While your conversations probably won’t take such avian flights of fancy, the same approach can work in a political argument. Politics makes an excellent test of concession, in part because
the tactic is so refreshing. See if you can go through an entire discussion without overtly disagreeing with your opponent.

SHE: I’m willing to give up a little privacy so the government can keep me safe.
YOU: Safety’s important.
SHE: Not that they’re going to tap my phone.
YOU: No, you’d never rock the boat.
SHE: Of course, I’ll speak up if I disagree with what’s going on.
YOU: I know you will. And let the government keep a file on you.

You may see a little smoke come out of your friend’s ears at this point. Do not be alarmed; it’s simply a natural sign of mental gears being thrown in reverse. The Greeks loved local concession for this very reason: it lets opponents talk their way right into your corner.

**Pathos: Start with the Audience’s Mood**

Sympathize—align yourself with your listener’s *pathos*. Don’t contradict or deny the mood; instead, rhetorical sympathy shows its concern, proving, as George H. W. Bush put it, “I care.” So when you face that angry man, look stern and concerned; do not shout, “Whoa, decaf!” When a little girl looks sad, sympathy means looking sad, too; it does not mean chirping, “Cheer up!”

This reaction to the audience’s feelings can serve as a baseline, letting them see your own emotions change as you make your point. Cicero hinted that the great orator transforms himself into an emotional role model, showing the audience how it should feel.

LITTLE GIRL: I lost my balloon!
YOU: Awww, did you?
[Little girl cries louder.]
YOU (still trying to look sad while yelling over the crying): What’s that you’re holding?
LITTLE GIRL: My mom gave me a dinosaur.
YOU (cheering up): A dinosaur!
Being a naturally sympathetic type, my wife is especially good at conceding moods. She has a way of playing my emotion back so intensely that I’m embarrassed I felt that way. I once returned home from work angry that my employer had done nothing to recognize an award my magazine had won.

**DOROTHY:** Not a thing? Not even a group email congratulating you?
**ME:** No . . .
**DOROTHY:** They have no idea what a good thing they have in you.
**ME:** Well . . .
**DOROTHY:** An email wouldn’t be enough! They should give you a bonus.
**ME:** It wasn’t *that* big an award.

She agreed with me so much that I found myself siding with my lousy employer. I believe her sympathy was genuine, but its effect was the same as if she had applied all her rhetorical skill to make me feel better. And I did feel better, if a bit sheepish.

And then there’s the concession side of *ethos*, called *decorum*. This is the most important jujitsu of all, which is why the whole next chapter is devoted to it.

**The Tools**

"Thus use your frog," Izaak Walton says in *The Compleat Angler*. "Put your hook through his mouth, and out at his gills . . . and in so doing use him as though you loved him." That pretty much sums up this chapter, which teaches you to use your audience as though you loved it. All of these tools require understanding your opponent and sympathizing with your audience.

- **Logos.** Argument by *logic*. The first logical tactic we covered was *concession*, using the opponent’s argument to your own advantage.
• **Pathos.** Argument by *emotion.* The most important pathetic tactic is *sympathy,* registering concern for your audience’s emotions and then changing the mood to suit your argument.

• **Ethos.** Argument by *character.* Aristotle called this the most important appeal of all—even more than *logos.*

Logic, emotion, and character are the megatools of rhetoric. You’re about to learn specific ways to wield each one. Read on.