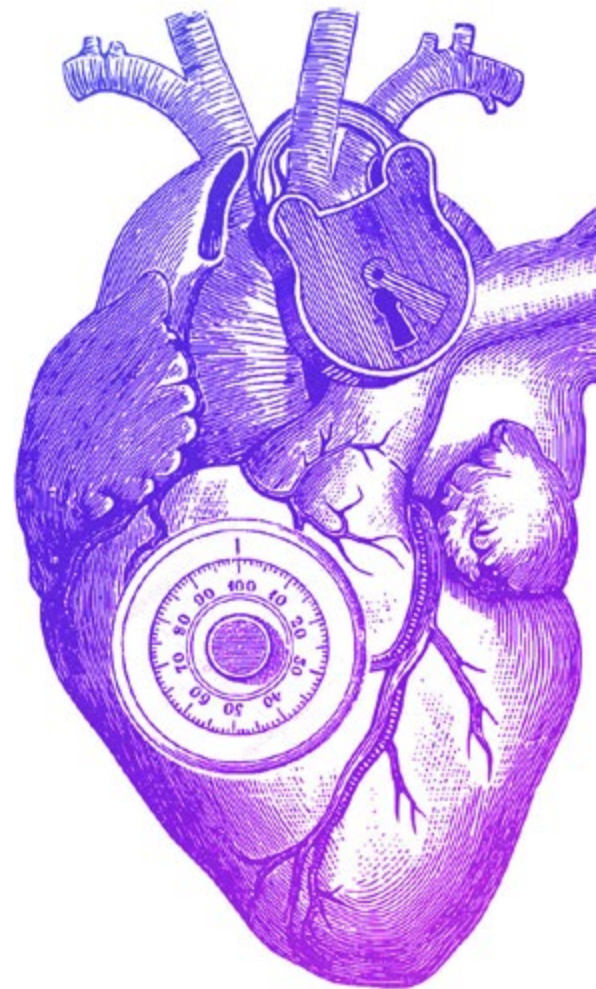


Character and the power of persuasion

When we seek the counsel of other to guide our decisions, we look for the telltale qualities of intelligence, conviction, humility and empathy. When any one of these predominates, we experience that person as a kind of master, prophet, disciple or lover, respectively.



When the balance of those four qualities strikes us as appropriate to the issue, to the occasion, to the medium and to our own situation, we allow ourselves to trust and be persuaded. Therefore, because character and not fact is the foundation of persuasion, ensure that the four qualities of character are present to the right degree and balance in any public address or document must be the first duty of those who wish to have deep influence.

The Master:
Paragon of Intelligence

Once a disciple and seeker of wisdom, the Master is now an erudite and acknowledged source of learning and wisdom. Having spent a lifetime in the pursuit of knowledge, a Master can observe the way things are and deduce the way things word, helping us by making relevant connections between what before may have appeared to us as isolated elements.

Message to the reader: I am educated, informed, thoughtful and, therefore, likely to draw sound conclusions. When I display my intelligence, I prove that my conclusions are rooted in reason, not emotion.

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The Prophet: Paragon of Conviction

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The Prophet penetrates the darkness of ignorance and records for us what has been glimpsed. The prophet dreams and we listen. When the Prophet tells us what is seen, we can see too, if only through the eyes of another. Because the Prophet believes, we believe too. The Prophet's unwavering conviction is all the proof we need.

Message to the reader: I believe my proposal is achievable, beneficial and worthy of endorsement. When I display my conviction, I prove that my conclusions are wholehearted, not philosophical.

The Disciple: Paragon of Humility

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While the Disciple is hardly a persuasive character in isolation, the humility of the Disciple is a quality we look for when we choose to submit to the authority of others. Arrogance repels us, but the honesty, gratitude and curiosity of the Disciple draw us in, leaving us confident that nothing is being hidden from us.

Message to the reader: I am aware of my own limitations, appreciate of the wisdom of other and open-minded. When I display humility, I prove that my conclusions are sincere, not arrogant.

The Lover: Paragon of Empathy

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To be loved and cherished for who we truly are rather than reviled for who we seem to be is a saving grace. Sometimes, when we are confused and inarticulate, the truth lies more in our feelings than our thoughts. The Lover senses those feelings, allows them, appreciates them, affirms them and stands by us as we muddle through.

Message to the reader: I am aware of your situation, understand your feelings and, therefore, want the best for you. When I display my empathy, I prove that I am motivated by our bond, not self-interest.



Each character bolsters—or undermines—its values through writing habits and techniques. [Get in touch](#) with Stiff to learn more.