Takeaway on the concept of character, logic, and emotion in argument (Chapter 4):

The main point the author is trying to make in Chapter 4 is that there are three primary tools that persuaders can use when trying to win arguments. Those tools, according to Aristotle, are argument by character, argument by logic, and argument by emotion (38). Using logic in argument is called “logos” (39), using character in argument is called “ethos” (40), and using emotion in argument is called “pathos” (40). Logos appeals to the audience’s brain and uses what the audience is already thinking to persuade them (40). Ethos appeals to the gut feelings of the audience and uses the persuader’s character, reputation, and personality to build trust with the audience and to convince them (40). Pathos appeals to the audience’s heart and builds emotion within the audience which increases their likelihood of agreement (40). The author provides an example of his use of the three tools of argument when he tries to persuade his son, George, not to wear shorts to school on a cold winter day (40-41). First, the author tries to use pathos, or argument by character, to show his position of authority and trustworthiness as George’s father. The author then uses logos to explain to George the negative effects that wearing shorts would have on his legs. Finally, the author uses pathos to illustrate to George how silly a person might look playing outside in shorts while there is snow on the ground. Parents often use the tools of character, logic, and emotion when trying to persuade their children to do things like eat their vegetables, do their homework, or clean their room. When children ask why they have to clean their room, parents may employ ethos and tell their children to do it “because I said so.” Parents may employ logos to convince their children that eating will help them grow up to be big and strong, or they may employ pathos to get their children to feel bad about wasting food when there are starving children in other countries. Following is a video that shows a funny example of two entertainers using logic, character, and emotion to get children to eat broccoli. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUvGxChu0YA>

Takeaway on the concept of using decorum to get the audience to like you (Chapter 5):

The main point the author is trying to make in Chapter 5 is that persuaders increase their chances of getting the audience to agree with them if they are liked by the audience and if they use proper decorum. Ethos is related to a person’s ability to fit in and to meet the expectations of the group (47). Part of employing ethos in persuasion involves meeting the tone, appearance and manners that the audience expects (47). Decorum is an argument tool that says that meeting the audience’s expectations will make the persuader seem more agreeable (47). By trying to fit in, the persuader shows the audience, “Do as I say and as I do” (47). Showing proper decorum means that the persuader must act in the way the audience expects them to act versus the way the rest of the audience acts. For example, students are more likely to listen to a teacher who shows proper decorum in the classroom. Students have a certain decorum for the classroom, while the teacher is expected to have a different decorum. Teachers are held to different standards for appearance, manners, and behavior than students. By using the proper decorum, the teacher will fit into the group in a leadership position. When the teacher uses proper decorum, students are more likely to do what the teacher asks of them. Decorum follows the audience’s rules (49). The author gave an example of a newly hired employee with a bumper sticker on her car that offended some of her coworkers (50-51). When asked to remove the bumper sticker, she said that “freedom of speech” allowed her to keep the sticker on her car and she refused to take it off. She was advised by her boss to remove the bumper sticker so that she would better fit in with her coworkers. When she failed to take the sticker off her car, one of her coworkers removed it for her. In this example, the newly hired employee failed to meet the expectations required to fit in with the rest of the employees. The new hire did not follow the proper decorum for that work environment. Sometimes people need to adapt their decorum to the circumstance (51). Different decorum is required in different environments, and persuaders must learn to be flexible. Following is a video on decorum in the workplace that shows viewers some things not to do in the workplace if you want to fit in. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3ds-7-EU00>

Takeaway on the concept of using character to get the audience to listen to you (Chapter 6):

The main point the author is trying to make in Chapter 6 is that persuaders want their audience to listen to them by being receptive, attentive, and well disposed towards the persuader (57). Before an audience will agree with the persuader, they must think that person is honorable and will want to do the right thing in all instances (57). According to Aristotle, three qualities of a persuasive ethos are virtue, practical wisdom, and disinterest (57). Virtue means that the persuader shares the same values as the audience (57). Practical wisdom, also known as craft, is the appearance that the persuader knows the right thing to do in every circumstance (57). Disinterest means that the persuader is not biased and cares about the audience’s interests versus his or her own interests. The author provides an example of how Abraham Lincoln was able to get his audience to listen to him and eventually agree with him about emancipation (61). Lincoln was able to get his audience well disposed toward him by convincing them that he was a good person and was not self-serving. Instead of trying to talk his audience out of their own prejudice, Lincoln was able to convince them that emancipation was the right thing to do because of the harmful results of slavery (61). If persuaders want the attention of their audience, they must prove that they have the same values as the larger group. For example, students will vote for the class president who they think has similar values as their own. Oftentimes, when running for class president, candidates will state what their values are and how those values are the same as those of the larger group. Additionally, classmates will support a president who they believe will make good decisions in all circumstances and who is concerned only about the interests of the larger group instead of his or her own interests. Persuaders can use their ethos to influence others to agree with them. This just shows that character does count. People are more likely to follow leaders of good character. Following is a video that discusses the skills and character traits that can be used to convince others of an idea. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHtvsCzt0bA>