

# Cassius: the persuader

Business



Have you ever felt pushed into doing something by your friends? Maybe they needed a favor, or wanted you to join their side of a situation? This fun little experience is something called persuasion where somebody/s uses their own opinions to change your mind about something.

If there's one guy that's experienced persuasion in his life, it would be Brutus from William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. In Shakespeare's play, there are a group of conspirators that are against a man becoming king named Julius Caesar. One of the conspirators named Cassius, attempts to convince his friend Brutus to join the conspiracy against Caesar even though he knows Brutus doesn't have anything against him. According to *Julius Caesar and Related Readings* "Cassius tries to turn Brutus against Caesar by using flattery, examples of Caesar's weaknesses, and sarcasm about Caesar's power" (Littell 13). After reading the play, it is obvious that by the end of *Julius Caesar*, Cassius has succeeded to persuade Brutus to turn against Caesar by reminding him that he is trustworthy, tearing down Caesar's character and strength, sending him fake letters of admiration, and building up his ego to make him feel popular. Firstly, Cassius is able to start winning Brutus over by using an ethos appeal to persuade him.

Cassius reminds Brutus that he should listen to him because of his credible character. It's clear that Cassius wants to earn his friends trust in order to persuade him to join the conspiracy: "And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus: / were I a common laughter, or did use / to stale with ordinary oaths my love / to every new protester, if you know/ that I do fawn on men and hug them hard, / and after scandal them; or if you know / that profess myself in banqueting / to all the rout, then hold me dangerous" (1. 2. 71-78). In these

few sentences Cassius tells Brutus that if he knows him to be a two-faced guy, then by all means don't listen to him.

But he knows that Brutus thinks highly of his character “ I have not from your eyes that gentleness /And show of love as I was wont to have” (1. 2. 33-34) and will listen to what he has to say. And if it wasn't enough to build up his own character, he decides to tear down Caesar's character. The picture on the right is an image from BBC's “ William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar” production where Cassius makes fun of Caesar's moaning during an illness “ alas, it cried, “ Give me some drink, Titinius,”/as a sick girl” (1.

2. 127-128). It would seem that Cassius knows what he's doing by using ethos appeals to prove to Brutus his own credible character, while also tearing down Caesar's. Another strategy Cassius tries is the use of a logos appeal by telling him how crazy it would be to make someone so weak as Caesar the king. He tells Brutus about a time when Caesar was sick, and how pathetically he handled the discomfort.

“ He had a fever when he was in Spain,/and when the fit was on him, I did mark/how he did shake;'tis true, this god did shake” (1. 2. 119-121). “ Ye gods! It doth amaze me,/ A man of such a feeble temper should get the start of the majestic world,” (1. 2. 128-130).

In this part of the play Cassius is saying that Caesar is weak, and how logical is it that a man so weak should be king? In the poster above, the artist refers to Cassius as being “ Politically savvy” which I think is a way of saying he is able to use pathos appeals because he understands the logical expectations for a leader. Cassius knows that Caesar has weaknesses that wouldn't be

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suitable for a leader, and he uses these weaknesses as pathos appeals to convince Brutus that it would be illogical to make Caesar king. Cassius also decides to persuade Brutus with fallacies by writing him fake letters. (Cinna) “ O Cassius, if you could/but win the noble Brutus to our party” (1. 3.

140-141) (Cassius) “ Be you content, good Cinna, take this paper/and look you lay it in the praetor’s chair,/where Brutus may but find it” ( 1. 3. 142-144). This is a part in the scene where another guy is asking Cassius if there’s any way that he can convince Brutus to join them. Then Cassius shows him the letters he wrote and tells him to put them on Brutus’s chair.

Writers from Shmoop say “ He sends Brutus some forged letters urging him to take down Caesar.” When they called the letters “ forged” it means that they are something fake that Cassius made up. They also mention that not only do they complement Brutus, but they also try to convince him to join the conspiracy to take down Caesar. Cassius lies to his friend just to get him to join his side. Finally, as I mentioned before, Cassius uses an pathos appeal on Brutus with those fake letters by them filling with flattery to boost his ego and play with his emotions. In the letters, the secret admirer talks about how great they think Brutus is, and how they don’t want Caesar to be king in order to make Brutus feel powerful.

(Brutus reading the letter) “ Brutus, thou sleep’st; awake, and see thyself. / Shall Rome,&c. Speak, strike, redress./Brutus, thou sleep’st; awake...

If the redress will follow, thou receivest/Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus”( 2. 1. 46-48, and 56-58). In this part of the scene, Brutus has received the fake letters from Cassius and is reading them. The writers from <https://assignbuster.com/cassius-the-persuader/>

“ Shmoop” acknowledge the way Cassius make Brutus feel powerful and popular “ How does Cassius “ seduce” Brutus? First he slyly suggests that the Roman people want Brutus to lead them” Here the writer’s point out the sly nature in which Cassius sent the letters, and how he hints that the “ writers” of the letters want Brutus to lead them, not Caesar. Cassius manages to make brutus feel more popular by filling those fake letters of admiration to boost his confidence, and make him believe he’s more popular than Caesar.

In Julius Caesar by WilliamShakespeare Cassius uses his cunning ways to persuade Brutus to join the conspiracy against Caesar even though Brutus didn’t have anything against him in the first place. To do this, first tears down Caesar’s character to convince Brutus that Caesar is not worthy of the crown, but then he also reminds Brutus of how credible his own character is. It looks like he thinks that making himself seem trustworthy will make Brutus believe he’s joining the right side. Next he shares stories about how weak Caesar is, like when he was sick or drowning in order to convince Brutus that it is illogical to make Caesar king. Then he lies to his friend by writing him fake letters from admirers trying to convince Brutus to join the conspiracy against Caesar. And just incase Brutus still isn’t persuaded, Cassius also fills the fake letters with flattery that talk about how much people want Brutus to be king, not Caesar.

So if you ever feel like your friends are trying to convince you to do something, be careful, because you may end up joining a gang you don’t want to be a part of. That sort of thing is exactly what happens in Julius Caesar. In the end, Cassius succeeds to persuade Brutus to turn against <https://assignbuster.com/cassius-the-persuader/>

Caesar by reminding him that he is trustworthy, tearing down Caesar's character and strength, by sending him fake letters, and using the letters to build up Brutus's ego and make him feel popular.