

Making Our Way



A McMAHON / CHEYNE PODCAST

Season 2 - Episode 21

2/19/25

Ethos, Logos, Pathos

Our Hosts

Janet Cheyne McMahon is a lover of family, dogs, nature, travel, books, and music. Born south of the Mason-Dixon line, she left after 9 months for parts north, landing eventually in Michigan, which will always be “where I’m from.”

Love of learning led Jan to a Bachelor of Arts (History, Political Science) at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (Go Blue), and a Master of Arts (Library and Information Science) at the University of South Florida. Amid all that, studied for a time with Rob at Colorado State University, a pivotal time in their lives.

Worked at the U of M-Dearborn Library, and then The Salvation Army Florida Divisional Headquarters, with the greatest reward being in serving as the Divisional Librarian. A librarian is who Jan is “in my soul.”

Jan and Rob have made our home in Florida since 1983, and live now in retirement with their dog, Skye, who makes it all the best adventure. They travel as much as possible, spending time in nature and in diverse places on this amazing planet. It has all been, and continues to be a fascinating journey, with hope of making a difference, in small ways, by being brave enough to speak and act on behalf of others.

Rob McMahon is a native Michigander, born in Saginaw and raised in the suburbs of Detroit. Rob attended Michigan State University, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He did graduate studies at the University of Michigan and the University of South Florida. Rob is retired, having spent 36 years in public education teaching both high school chemistry and biology and middle school science. He worked as a total quality management trainer for the Pinellas County School District and served four years as the president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. Rob cofounded a non-profit total quality management training center, The Learning Co-op, for Teacher Unions interested in applying the W. Edwards Deming continuous improvement principles to their day-to-day operations. He worked with teacher unions in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, North Dakota, Texas and Michigan. He also worked in a similar capacity with Jim Shipley & Associates. In retirement Rob has written a series of science related children’s books, and enjoys traveling with his wife, Jan, and their black Labrador Retriever, Skye.

Deanna Cheyne, born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Toronto (1996), studying with such luminaries as Elmer Eisler, Doreen Rao, Greta Kraus, Lois Marshall, and Rosemarie Landry.

Dee taught music at Mississauga Christian Academy, served as music director for Meadowvale Bible Baptist Church (Mississauga, Ontario), served as Assistant Divisional Music Director for The Salvation Army in Florida, is a former member of Tampa’s Master Chorale, and, for the past 18 years, has been a public school teacher.

Dee has visit 36 of the 50 U.S. states, and 12 countries. Her favorite destinations include France, Prague, New Orleans, National Parks, & Hawaii.

Dee & Jim live in Florida with Brigus (Golden Retriever) and Pip (Teacup Yorkie).

James Cheyne, born in Galesburg, Illinois, earned a Bachelor of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from Michigan State University (1978); and a Master of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign (1981), studying with David Liptak, Salvatore Martirano, and Ben Johnston.

Jim has served as music director for The Salvation Army in Central Illinois & Eastern Iowa, Orlando Area Command, and the Florida Division, served as a pastor with The Salvation Army, and was a public school teacher for 17 years.

In travel so far, Jim has visited 50 states and 27 countries. His favorite travel destinations include National Parks, New Orleans, Newfoundland, Argentina, Prague, & France.

Jim continues to write music and support Dee’s musical endeavors, and cooks whenever absolutely necessary. Jim & Dee live in Florida with their dogs Brigus & Pip.



L-R: Brigus, Jim, Deanna, Skye, Jan, Rob.
Inset: Pip

This transcript of the podcast, Making Our Way is housed at
cheynemusic.com/podcast/transcripts.
©2025 by James Cheyne, all materials, unless otherwise noted.
All rights reserved.

Ethos, Logos, Pathos

Season 2; Episode 21

2/19/2025

Hosts: Jan, Rob, Dee, & Jim.

Heresthetics. Shouting across an 8-lane highway. A bit of Jordan Klepper. The structure of effective rhetoric: ethos, logos, pathos, and kairos. A speech from British Prime Minister Hugh Grant. A speech from Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau.

[Music]

JAN: Heresthetic. It's "a political strategy by which a person or group sets or manipulates the context and structure of a decision-making process in order to win." The word was coined originally by U.S. political scientist William Riker."

DEE: It's Star Trek.

JIM: It's Will Riker.

DEE: [laughing] I know, I was like, I know that name. Number one.

JAN: Oh got it. Okay.

JIM: I always wondered if on "The Next Generation" set, whenever the captain would tell the gunners "fire at will," if everyone just pulled out their phaser and shot Riker, "Fire at will."

[Music]

JAN: "Heresthetic is an approach to understanding how political actors manipulate the decision-making process so they can win. It is a positive political theory," and it's a political trick. You know, you can get people to agree with you if you set it upright or you can get them to take a different position if you set it up another way. Like if I want to talk about, let's just say, our National Parks. And I want to talk about not drilling in our National Parks. I'm not going to start with the price of oil. I'm going to start with a vision of the National Park, as what it is and what it does to protect and all the animals that are there. And then we're going to talk about maybe we can drill somewhere else. But if I want to convince people that it's worth it to drill in a National Park, I'm going to present that argument differently. So how you start the argument, where you start it, will lead to different conclusions with some people, with a lot of people, because of how they're prepared to hear you. It's a way to build a bridge with people. Find that thing. It's an emotional trick, though, too. It's an emotional trick to say - I'm saying trick.

JIM: It's a strategy.

JAN: It is a strategy. It's just downplayed or demonized a bit as being political in its explanation when you look it up.

ROB: Going back to Jan's "line," in today's day and age, that line for me has become an

eight-lane highway. There is a huge gulf between me and a lot of people in this country, in the world actually. And when I see something blatant, like you were talking about blatant racism or blatant sexism, I'm going to shout across that gulf, across that eight-lane highway, and I'm going to tell them.

DEE: You're racist.

ROB: In your face. That's not right. You can't say that. Or you shouldn't say that. Now there are people in the highway too, hopefully not going to get run over, but maybe in the second lane over, or the first lane over, that are more, that I know - Jim talked about, he said the word "relationship." That's important. You can't talk to somebody really, I don't think, unless you have a relationship or you're willing to establish a relationship. And those people that are close to the edge there, I probably can talk to. But there are a lot of people that have accepted a person and are okay, evidently, with things that he wants to do and wants to say and people that he doesn't like. And I don't know how to deal with those people. They get farther and farther across that highway until, at times, I just need to shout across and say, "Hey, you're wrong." And they can say the same thing about me, and I don't care. But I'm not going to change some people's minds. So I'm not going to waste my time in a conversation with somebody that I know isn't going to listen to me because what I think about them, they think the same thing about me.

JIM: And also, though, the way that comment lands has to do with, "Well, this is coming from Rob." Right? So what are my thoughts about Rob? And if it's been a long history of positive stuff and Rob calls me out on something, "Wow, I got that from Rob." There are other people who would say the exact same thing that you said, but it comes from the person and I realize I could dismiss it easily.

DEE: Yeah.

JIM: You know. So it has something to do with the history. It has something to do with the status of the person who's making the claim. There's an old rhetoric structure, ethos, which gives us our word ethic, has to do with the quality of the person making the presentation. When someone comes up to make a speech, they're introduced. Here's why. They're credentialed this way. They can talk about this topic because of this. And then the next thing that happens in the speech, if you're a good speech maker, the first thing you're going to do is take those credentials and then bring the audience onto your side with a story, an anecdote, a joke, some way to warm them up to, "Not only is she qualified, I actually like this person." So that's the ethos of it. Then the next thing is the logic of it, the logos, the reasoning of the argument they've made. "Let me take you through step by step by step. And this is the case I'm making. This is the point I want to get across." So that is the logos. And then the closing argument is usually the passion of it, the emotion of it, where some anecdote will come in to kind of seal what you've said. And that's the pathos. So it's this triad of the ethos, logos, and pathos. And you can't just rely on one of them because it'll fall flat. You can't just say ethos because that's authoritarian. Or it can't just be logical. That'll be too dry. And it can't just be a passionate argument. And we've all been under the tutelage of speakers who have relied too much on one or the other without a balance.

And then recently, people have been adding a fourth to this, which I like, and that is Kairos. And Kairos is a Greek word that has to do with time. It's the right time to do something.

And that has to do with the presentation, too, because of the phrase that we use now, "Boy, that didn't age well." At one time, O.J. Simpson was a really good spokesperson for Hertz. He's got the authority. He's got the charisma. Well, that hasn't aged well. Jared as a subway spokesman. Bill Cosby with Jell-O. Things that have not aged well. So those are the four elements that go into a convincing talk. So if someone like Rob were to come aboard and say, "What you're saying is racist," I can't dismiss that because of the ethos that Rob is, right? It also means that you can't always use logic as a way to convince someone. What's the saying? If someone has not thought their way logically to a conclusion? You can't convince them otherwise with logic?

I've got something that someone said. Can you set this up for us, Jan?

JAN: This is Jordan Klepper.

JIM: Daily show Jordan Klepper"?

JAN: Yes. Okay. And you know, he goes around interviewing people, MAGA voters. And frequently it's to mock and point out the extremes. But he's actually engaging this woman in why she thinks a certain thing. And maybe if the situation was different or if the evidence was different, maybe she would change her mind. That's really...

JIM: I would add one thing in. I don't think he goes out to mock. I think he provides the opportunities for MAGA voters to mock themselves.

ROB: And they do.

JIM: And then some editing happens. There's more to it. But let's listen to this clip that he did from - Is this from the Daily Show?

JAN: Yes.

JIM: Okay.

Audio clip: *I was talking to this woman and she said, like, "He's innocent. He's completely innocent. He didn't do anything wrong. If he was trying to do - If he did something wrong, he'd be trying to hide it." I was like, "Well, if he was stopping people from testifying, that would be an admission of guilt, right?" And she said, "Of course, of course." And then I told her, I was like, "He is blocking people from testifying." And she takes this very long beat. She thinks about it. And she says, "I don't care." [laughter] She was being completely honest in that moment. And she's right. Like, so much of this, we're like, "Oh, but maybe I could convince that person that they could care if there was that one thing." And I read something recently that said, like, you know, "We can have debates about what you want. That's politics. I want this. I want that. Let's meet somewhere in the middle. That's politics. When your politics becomes who you are, we can't debate that."*

JIM: See, that's the thing. And it has to do with, it's not the idea that I hold, it's the person that I am that any detractors are attacking and so I will defend. And that's where the conversation closes down.

DEE: Right.

JIM: It's just, then it's just power.

DEE: Yeah.

JIM: And when everything's reduced to power, we can fight, we can believe in the ultimate victory of goodness, but boy, there's a lot of unnecessary loss along the way.

DEE: Well, and that individual who said, "I don't care," they do not want to come to a true understanding or they don't want to have a conversation. And that's what I would argue most of the Republican elected officials are. Because like, I mean, we just saw it this week in with who they are approving or voting for. Who's the doctor, the Republican doctor who really took...

JAN: Oh, yeah. Kennedy.

DEE: ...Kennedy to task? And everyone was thinking, "He's not going to support Kennedy. He's not going to vote for Kennedy." He votes for Kennedy. Even though it goes against everything he is against, you know, because he challenged Kennedy on his position on vaccines, on all these important issues where this senator said, you know, "Your history is wrong on this," but he decided to vote for him anyway. I would say that's, he's the woman saying, "I don't care."

JAN: This is what is very, I'm just going to say personally, this is one of the most difficult things for me to grasp and to try to come to terms with. Because, we've said this a million times, I'm going to work from information. And I fail a lot when I work from information. Because, go to pathos, Jim. What I - if people are emotionally tied to something, whatever information you bring to them may not move them, at least not in the moment. Because they've got too much invested. That woman probably had too much invested in her position on Trump. So anything you would say would not counter that. And that's, um - we've run into that in debates about faith. You know, "How do you know what you know about the book of Genesis?" And I can point to all the scientific evidence in the world that shows that this didn't happen six thousand years ago, but at a certain point there's going to be a block. And it's going to say, "I don't care what you say, it's not the same as what I've - doesn't have the same value as what I'm looking at." And that's what happens there.

JIM: Well, let's come at it from a different point of view. Perhaps they're responsive to the authority of the person they're listening to, or that. Or maybe it is something they have to think about more about. "Well, here are some consequences." Or maybe it's a matter of switching it around. "Okay, if you were in the minority on this, how would you feel if someone said this?" That's one of the things I used to say about religious freedom, is I don't want a theocracy because I might be lucky right now that the theocracy proposed is very close to mine. At least it carries the name Christian. Suppose I were in a country where the majority was Muslim. And then someone's proposing that we have, like, a national religion. I would say, "You know, I'd really like that first amendment to be useful right here." And then people will feel comfortable saying, "But we're not in a majority Muslim country, so it doesn't hurt us." At a certain point, you want them to realize what they've just said, how far they've gone with their line of argument, and just find a way to have them step aside and say, "Look at where you're standing right now." Let's take an example. Let's find - which would be a pathos sort of thing. Suppose this were to happen to someone they care about, you know, give them a perspective other than, "I'm being attacked right now by this

person," whether you're attending a attack or not. It has that that look, doesn't it? Like I know, Jan, often when you have confrontations on Facebook, you will then slip it into a private conversation.

JAN: Yeah.

JIM: Because out in front, the person to whom you're talking and you yourself are subject to other people watching. And so you have to kind of pose yourself for those people. When you get into a private conversation, there's more of a chance of - you don't have to work to save face. You can just be saying, "Well, no, I meant this." "Oh, I understood it this way." "Did you mean this when you said that?" And no one has to come back with, "Well, of course I meant that," because you're asking for the votes of everyone around you to say - and then they say, "Oh, Jan said this, so let's all gang up on Jan." Or, "This person said this, so let's all attack them this way." And suddenly all of Jan's friends will line up and all of the other person's friends will line up and the thread goes on, you know, 40 deep.

[Music begins]

JIM: So I think that's a very good strategy of changing the circumstances of the conversation, the setting of it, for instance.

DEE: The environment.

JIM: Thank you. The environment of it so that the conversation can actually move forward without the constraints of, you know, whatever, face saving or whatever.

JIM (voice-over): Some material in this podcast falls within the fair use provision of Title 17 of the US Code Section 107 and is presented for the purpose of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. This material may be edited for content. And with that out of the way, during our recording, someone phoned in the following clip, which has made the rounds recently in reaction to Canada's response to President Trump's overtures of friendship/conquest.

Audio clip: *I love that word relationship. It covers all manner of sins, doesn't it? I fear that this has become a bad relationship, a relationship based on the president taking exactly what he wants and casually ignoring all those things that really matter to Britain. We may be a small country, but we're a great one too. We have Shakespeare, Churchill, the Beatles, Sean Connery, Harry Potter, David Beckham's right foot. David Beckham's left foot, come to that. A friend who bullies us is no longer a friend. And since bullies only respond to strength, now onward, I will be prepared to be much stronger, and the president should be prepared for that.*

DEE: Okay. So it is from love actually. And it's when Hugh Grant's character, who's the prime minister, is addressing the president in that movie. But the video is actually Canada...

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: ...and it's Canadian things in the video, but it's the same sort of idea of the president of the United States is bullying Canada and Canadians will not take it. And I can tell you they are united.

[Music ends]

JIM: I thought Trudeau did an excellent job of this and said, "Look at what we have, look at how much Canada has come to your side and that's what we can build on and we don't have to do this sort of thing." It's a very rational thing, which won't land yet for some, but look at what we've done together seriously. And he was, it was his authority, his ethos. He's the prime minister of Canada, right? And it's the pathos and he calls up the world wars. He calls up 9/11. He calls up the sacrifices Canadians have made to help their friends south of the border. And when you hear that, it's just like, this is actually soothing to hear this kind of rationality in defense of one's country rather than an attack in defense of one's country.

All I've got is persuasive rhetoric. There's got to be another way of talking about things that is because we have such a strong vestige of humanity in us that we want to say, "I don't want tomorrow to be ashamed of what I've done today." And you want to be able to say something more than, "I survived." "I did this and I'm proud of the way I did it." What's the outcome I'm going for here really? Is it just to make this person feel bad? Is it to make me feel good? Is it I've been attacked, so I'm going to attack back? What do I really want right now? And I was very pleased with Trudeau...

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

JIM: ...when I saw that because it was articulate, it was calm, it was correct. It was right on point. And it was a bit of a, oh, you know, we should reconsider the way we addressed them.

Audio clip: [Trudeau] *But it doesn't have to be this way. From the beaches of Normandy to the mountains of the Korean peninsula, from the fields of Flanders to the streets of Kandahar, we have fought and died alongside you. During your darkest hours; during the Iranian hostage crisis, those 444 days we worked around the clock from our embassy to get your innocent compatriots home; during the summer of 2005 when Hurricane Katrina ravaged your great city of New Orleans; or mere weeks ago, when we sent water bombers to tackle the wildfires in California; during the day the world stood still, September 11th, 2001, when we provided refuge to stranded passengers and planes; we were always there, standing with you, grieving with you, the American people.*

[Music begins]

Audio clip: *Together, we've built the most successful economic, military, and security partnership the world has ever seen, a relationship that has been the envy of the world. As I've said before, if President Trump wants to usher in a new golden age for the United States, the better path is to partner with Canada, not to punish us. Canada has the ingredients necessary to build a booming and secure partnership for the North American economy, and we stand at the ready to work together.*

[Music ends]