

Book Synopsis on  
“Made to Stick”  
‘Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die’

by Chip Heath & Dan Heath

(Synopsis by Gary Tomlinson)  
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Mark Twain once observed, “A lie can get halfway around the world before the truth can even get its boots on.” His observation rings true. Urban legends, historical myths, conspiracy theories and public-health scares circulate effortlessly. Whereas, people with important ideas – businesspeople, teachers, preachers, parents and others – struggle to make their ideas stick.

Why do some ideas survive and others die? And how do we make our ideas stick? Meaning that our ideas are understood and remembered and have a lasting impact. The answers to these questions can be found in Chip and Dan Heath’s book, *Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*.

Several years ago, brothers Chip and Dan Heath, realized that both of them had been studying how ideas stick for almost ten years. Their expertise came from very different fields, but both had zeroed in on the same question: “Why do some ideas succeed while others fail?” In their book, you’ll learn what they discovered – the six key qualities of an idea that is made to stick:

1. *Simplicity* – How do you strip an idea to its core without turning it into a silly sound bite? The answer is finding the core intent. Core messages help people avoid bad choices by reminding them of what’s important. Coming up with a short, compact phrase is easy. On the other hand, coming up with a profound compact phrase is incredibly difficult. In this chapter, Chip and Dan Heath will show you that the effort is worth it – that “finding the core,” and expressing it in the form of a compact idea, can be enduringly powerful.
2. *Unexpected* – How do you capture people’s attention...and hold it? The most basic way to get someone’s attention is to break a pattern – in other words to present the unexpected. This chapter focuses on two essential questions: “How do I get people’s attention?” And, just as crucially, “How do I keep it?” To understand the answers to these two questions, Chip and Dan Heath will teach you to understand two essential emotions – surprise and interest – that are commonly provoked by naturally sticky ideas. *Surprise* gets our attention and *Interest* keeps our attention.
3. *Concrete* – How do you help people understand your idea and remember it much later? Concrete language helps people understand new concepts. Concreteness is an indispensable component of sticky ideas. In this chapter,

Chip and Dan Heath will show you how concreteness creates a shared “turf” on which people can collaborate. Finding a “universal language,” one that everyone speaks fluently is essential for making your ideas stick.

4. *Credible* – How do you get people to believe your idea? In this chapter you’ll learn that the most obvious sources of credibility – external validation and statistics – aren’t always the best. A few vivid details might be more persuasive than a barrage of statistics. An antiauthority might work better than an authority. It’s the honesty and trustworthiness of your sources, not their status, which allows them to act as credible authorities.
5. *Emotional* – How do you get people to care about your ideas? Belief counts for a lot, but belief isn’t enough. For people to take action, they have to care. In this chapter, Chip and Dan Heath tackle the emotional component of stickiness. It’s not about pushing people’s emotional buttons, like some kind of movie tearjerker. Rather the goal of making messages “emotional” is to make people care. Feelings inspire people to act.
6. *Stories* – How do you get people to act on your idea? A credible idea makes people believe. An emotional idea makes people care. Stories have the amazing dual power to stimulate and to inspire. In this chapter you’ll see that the right stories make people act.

If you want to spread your ideas to other people, you should work within the confines of the rules that have allowed other ideas to succeed over time. You want to invent new ideas, not new rules. In their book, *Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, Chip and Dan Heath show you how a little focused effort can make almost any idea stickier, and a sticky idea is an idea that is more likely to make a difference. All you need to do is understand the six principles of powerful ideas.

Enjoy this month’s selection, *Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* and share it with others in your life because as Alvin Toffler says; “*The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*”