

Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

By Chip Heath, Dan Heath

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BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Chip Heath and Dan Heath's *Switch*.

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, conspiracy theories, and bogus public-health scares circulate effortlessly. Meanwhile, people with important ideas–business people, teachers, politicians, journalists, and others– struggle to make their ideas “stick.”

Why do some ideas thrive while others die? And how do we improve the chances of worthy ideas? In *Made to Stick*, accomplished educators and idea collectors Chip and Dan Heath tackle head-on these vexing questions. Inside, the brothers Heath reveal the anatomy of ideas that stick and explain ways to make ideas stickier, such as applying the “human scale principle,” using the “Velcro Theory of Memory,” and creating “curiosity gaps.”

In this indispensable guide, we discover that sticky messages of all kinds–from the infamous “kidney theft ring” hoax to a coach’s lessons on sportsmanship to a vision for a new product at Sony– draw their power from the same six traits.

Made to Stick is a book that will transform the way you communicate ideas. It’s a fast-paced tour of success stories (and failures)– the Nobel Prize-winning scientist who drank a glass of bacteria to prove a point about stomach ulcers; the charities who make use of “the Mother Teresa Effect”; the elementary-school teacher whose simulation actually prevented racial prejudice. Provocative, eye-opening, and often surprisingly funny, *Made to Stick* shows us the vital principles of winning ideas–and tells us how we can apply these rules to making our own messages stick.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Starred Review. Unabashedly inspired by Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling *The Tipping Point,* the brothers Heath—Chip a professor at Stanford's business school, Dan a teacher and textbook publisher—offer an entertaining, practical guide to effective communication. Drawing extensively on psychosocial studies on memory, emotion and motivation, their study is couched in terms of "stickiness"—that is, the art of making ideas unforgettable. They start by relating the gruesome urban legend about a man who succumbs to a barroom flirtation only to wake up in a tub of ice, victim of an organ-harvesting ring. What makes such stories memorable and ensures their spread around the globe? The authors credit six key principles: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions and stories. (The initial letters spell out "success"—well, almost.) They illustrate these principles with a host of stories, some familiar (Kennedy's stirring call to "land a man on the moon and return him safely to the earth" within a decade) and others very funny (Nora Ephron's anecdote of how her high school journalism teacher used a simple, embarrassing trick to teach her how not to "bury the lead"). Throughout the book, sidebars show how bland messages can be made intriguing. Fun to read and solidly researched, this book deserves a wide readership. *(Jan. 16)*
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From School Library Journal
Adult/High School—While at first glance this volume might resemble the latest in a series of trendy business advice books, ultimately it is about storytelling, and it is a how-to for crafting a compelling narrative. Employing a lighthearted tone, the Heaths apply those selfsame techniques to create an enjoyable read. They analyze such narratives as urban legends and advertisements to discover what makes them memorable. The authors provide a simple mnemonic to remember their stickiness formula, and the basic principles may be applied in any situation where persuasiveness is an asset. The book is a fast read peppered with exercises to test the techniques proposed. Some examples act as pop quizzes and engage readers in moments of self-reflection. The book draws on examples from teachers, scientists, and soldiers who have been successful at crafting memorable ideas, from the well-known blue eye/brown eye exercise conducted by an Iowa elementary school teacher as an experiential lesson in prejudice following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., to conversations among Xerox repairmen. Readers who enjoyed Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* (2005) and *The Tipping Point* (2000, both Little, Brown) will appreciate this clever take on contemporary culture.—*Heidi Dolamore, San Mateo County Library, CA*
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From Bookmarks Magazine
Chip and Dan Heath—a Stanford professor and an education entrepreneur, respectively—attempt to determine why one idea succeeds while another fails. What could have been a dry marketing textbook is, instead, a generally engaging narrative generously endowed with anecdotes and instructive sidebars. The *Wall Street Journal* expressed annoyance at the profusion of personal stories, while the *Washington Post* cited some problems with the overall framework. Overall, however, *Made to Stick* is a worthy addition to the spate of recent books that explain why we do the things we do and how this self-knowledge can be used more effectively. "Anyone interested in influencing others—to buy, to vote, to learn, to diet, to give to charity or to start a revolution—can learn from this book" (*Washington Post*).
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