

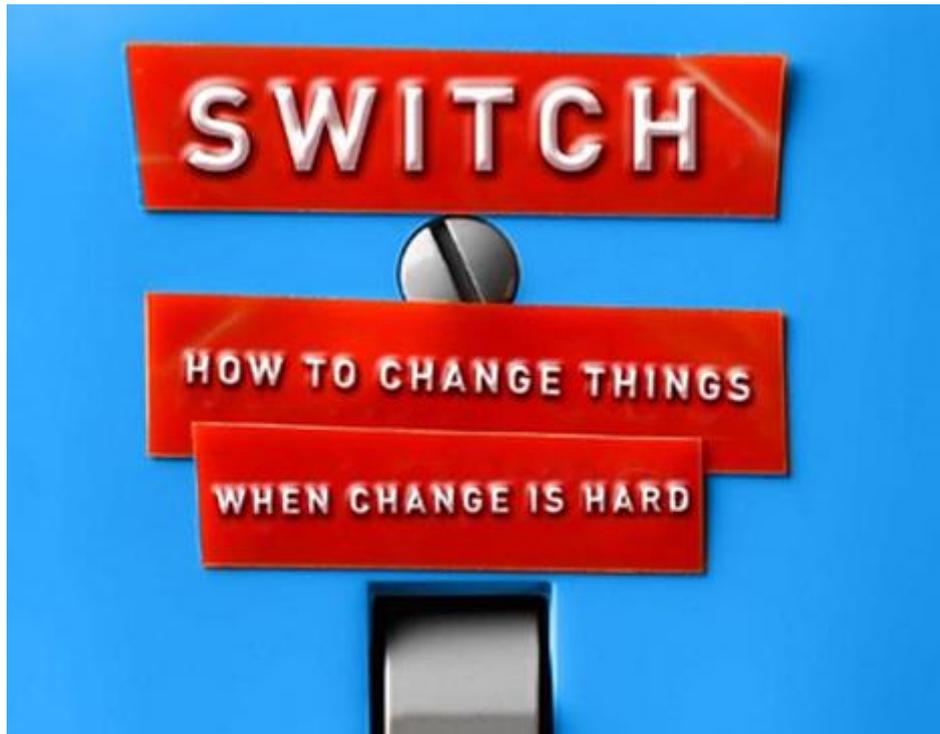
A summary of the book

# A whole new mind

How to change things when change is hard

By Chip & Dan Heath

Summary by Kim Hartman



*This is a summary of what I think is the most important and insightful parts of the book. I can't speak for anyone else and I strongly recommend you to read the book in order to fully grasp the concepts written here. My notes should only be seen as an addition that can be used to refresh your memory after you've read the book. Use the words in this summary as anchors to remember the vitals parts of the book.*

# Contents

- Description from amazon ..... 2
  - Introduction: Three surprises about change ..... 3
- Part 1: Direct the rider..... 4
  - Chapter 1: Find the bright spots..... 4
  - Chapter 2: Script the critical moves ..... 5
  - Chapter 3: Point to the destination..... 6
- Part 2: Motivate the elephant..... 7
  - Chapter 4: Find the feeling ..... 7
  - Chapter 5: Shrink the change ..... 8
  - Chapter 6: Grow your people ..... 9
- Part 3: Shape the path..... 10
  - Chapter 7: Tweak the environment ..... 10
  - Chapter 8: Build habits ..... 11
  - Chapter 9: Rally the herd..... 12
  - Chapter 10: Keep the switch going ..... 13
- Previous book summaries ..... 14

## **Description from amazon**

The primary obstacle is a conflict that's built into our brains, say Chip and Dan Heath, authors of the critically acclaimed bestseller *Made to Stick*. Psychologists have discovered that our minds are ruled by two different systems—the rational mind and the emotional mind—that compete for control. The rational mind wants a great beach body; the emotional mind wants that Oreo cookie. The rational mind wants to change something at work; the emotional mind loves the comfort of the existing routine. This tension can doom a change effort—but if it is overcome, change can come quickly.

## **Introduction: Three surprises about change**

What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem.

All change effort has something in common: for anything to change, someone has to start acting differently. Ultimately, all change efforts boil down to the same mission: can you get people to start behaving in a new way?

Successful changes share a common pattern. They require the leader of the change to do three things at once. To change someone's behavior, you have got to change that person's situation. For individual's behavior to change, you have got to influence not only their environment but their hearts and minds. The problems are that the heart and mind often disagree.

**The elephant:** our emotional side

**The rider:** our rational side

The rider controls the elephant and seems to be the leader. But the rider is small compared to the elephant that at any time can disagree and go another way.

If you want to change things, you have to appeal both the rider and the elephant. The rider provides the planning and direction, and the elephant provides the energy.

Self-control is an exhaustible resource. It's like doing bench presses at the gym. Much of our daily behavior is more automatic than supervised, and that's good because the supervised behavior is the hard stuff. It's draining.

When people try to change things they are usually tinkering with behaviors that have become automatic, and changing these behaviors requires careful supervision by the rider. The bigger the change you are suggesting, the more it will sap people's self-control. They are exhausting precisely the mental muscles needed to make a big change.

Change is hard because people wear themselves out. What looks like laziness is often exhaustion.

If you reach someone's rider but not their elephant, they will have direction without motivation. Once you break through to feeling things change.

What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity.

If you don't want people to change, you don't ask them to act healthier. You say, "next time you are in the daily aisle of the grocery store, reach for a jug of 1% milk instead of whole milk".

### *The basic three-part framework of changing behavior:*

- 1. Direct the rider.** Provide crystal-clear direction.
- 2. Motivate the elephant.** The rider can't get his way by force for very long. Engage people's emotional side to get their elephant cooperative.
- 3. Shape the path.** What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem. We call the situation Path, and we should shape the path to make change easier.

## Part 1: Direct the rider

### Chapter 1: Find the bright spots

**Bright spots:** successful efforts worth emulating.

Bright spots solves the “not invented here” problem. Some people have a skeptical response to imported solutions.

In tough times, the rider sees problems everywhere and analysis paralysis often kicks in. The rider will spin his wheels indefinitely unless he is given clear direction. That’s why to make progress on change; you need ways to direct the rider. Show him where to go, how to act, what destination to pursue. And that’s why bright spots are so essential, because they are your best hope for directing the rider when you are trying to bring about change.

Solution-focused therapists learn to focus their patients on the first hints of the miracle – what’s the first small sign you would see that would make you think the problem was gone – because they want to avoid answers that are overly grand and unattainable. Once they’ve helped patients identify specific and vivid signs of progress, they pivot to a second question, the exception question: when was the last time you saw a little bit of the miracle, even just for a short time? What the therapist is trying to show in a subtle way is that the client is capable of solving her own problem.

There are some moments in an alcoholic’s life when he is sober despite the cravings. Those bright spots are gold to be mined. If you are trying to change things, there are going to be bright spots in your field of view, and if you learn to recognize them and understand them, you will solve one of the fundamental mysteries of change: what, exactly, needs to be done differently?

**The bright spot philosophy:** what is working and how can we do more of it? Usually we ask ourselves “ what’s broken and how can it be fixed?”, but that is wrong.

Big problems are rarely solved with big solutions. Instead, they are most often solved by a sequence of small solutions.

When the rider analyzes the problem, he seeks a solution that befits the scale of it. If the rider spots a hole, he wants to fill it, and if he has got a round hole with a 24 inch diameter, he is going to go looking for a 24 inch peg. But that mental model is wrong.

## Chapter 2: Script the critical moves

**Decision paralysis:** more options, even good ones, can freeze us and make us retreat to the default plan. The behavior is not rational but it's human.

**Barry Schwartz:** choice no longer liberates, it debilitates.

Change brings new choices that create uncertainty. It is not only options that yield decision paralysis – like picking one donut from 100 flavors. Ambiguity does, too. In times of change, you may not know what options are available. And this uncertainty leads to a decision paralysis as surely as a table with 24 jams.

Decision paralysis can be deadly for change, because the most familiar path is always status quo.

Ambiguity is the enemy. Any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behavior. In other words, you need to script the critical moves.

To spark movement in a new direction, you need to provide crystal clear guidance. That's why scripting is important – you have got to think about the specific behavior that you'd want to see in a tough moment.

You can't script every move – that would be like trying to foresee the seventeenth move in a chess game. It is the critical moves that count.

If you are leading a change effort, you need to remove the ambiguity from your vision of change. It means that you will need to understand how to script the critical moves, to translate aspirations into actions.

Until you can ladder your way down from a change idea to a specific behavior, you are not ready to lead a switch. To create a movement, you have got to be specific and concrete.

### Chapter 3: Point to the destination

**Destination postcard:** In creating change we are interested in goals that are close at hand, that can be tackled within months, not years. We want what we might call a destination postcard – a vivid picture from the near-term future that shows what could be possible. We have seen the importance of pursuing bright spots, and we have discussed ways of instructing the rider how to behave, but we haven't answered the very basic question: where are we headed in the end? What is the destination?

When you describe a compelling destination, you are helping to correct one rider's great weaknesses – the tendency to get lost in analysis.

When you point to an attractive destination, the rider starts applying his strengths to figuring out how to get there.

**SMART goals:** goals that is specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and timely. EX: my marketing campaign will generate 4500 qualified sales leads for the sales group by the end of Q3.

SMART goals are better for steady-state situations than for change situations, because the assumptions underlying them are that the goals are worthwhile. In looking for goals that reaches the elephant – that hit people in the gut – you can't bank on SMART goals.

In the 1980s, a major study of corporate change efforts found that financial goals inspired successful change less well than did more emotional goals, such as the goal to provide better service to customers or to make more useful products. Effective visions express values that allow employees to identify with the organization.

Destination postcards do double duty; they show the rider where you are headed, and they show the elephant why the journey is worthwhile.

You have to back up your destination postcard with a good behavioral script. That's a recipe for success.

When you are at the beginning, don't obsess about the middle, because the middle is going to look different once you get there. Just look for a strong beginning and a strong ending and get moving.

#### Game plan to appeal to the rider:

1. **Follow the bright spots.** As you analyze the situation, you are sure to find some things that are working better than others. Don't obsess about the failures. Instead, investigate and clone the successes.
2. **Give direction to the rider – both a start and a finish.** Send him a destination postcard (“you will be a third grader soon!”) and script his critical moves (“buy 1% milk”).

## **Part 2: Motivate the elephant**

### **Chapter 4: Find the feeling**

The core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people, and behavior change happens in highly successful situations mostly by speaking to people's feelings. In highly successful change efforts, people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in ways that influence emotions, not just thought.

In almost all successful change efforts, the sequence of change is not analyze-think-change, but rather see-feel-change. You are presented with evidence that makes you feel something.

Change is hard because people are reluctant to alter habits that have been successful in the past. If necessary, we need to create a crisis to convince people they are facing a catastrophe and have no choice but to move.

## Chapter 5: Shrink the change

People find it more motivating to be partly finished with a longer journey than to be at the starting gate of a shorter one.

One way to motivate action is to make people feel as they are already closer to the finish than they might have thought.

The sense of progress is critical, because the elephant in us is easily demoralized.

If you are leading a change effort, you better start looking for those two first stamps to put on your teams card. Rather than focusing solely on what's new and different about the change to come, make an effort to remind people what's already been conquered.

If you want a reluctant elephant to get moving, you need to shrink the change.

The elephant hat doing thing without immediate payoff. To get the elephant of its duff, you need to reassure it that the task won't be so bad.

One way to shrink the change is to limit the investment you are asking for – only 5 minutes of housecleaning, only one small debt. Another way to shrink the change is to think of small wins – milestones that are within reach.

When you engineer early successes, what you are really doing is engineering hope. Hope is precious to a change effort. Once people are on the path and making progress, it is important to make their advances visible.

**UCLA coach John Wooden:** “When you improve little every day, eventually big things occur. Don't look for the quick, big improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. That is the only way it happens – and when it happens, it last”

**Psychologist Karl Weick:** “A small win reduces importance (this is no big deal), reduces demands (that is all that needs to be done) and raises perceived skill levels (I can do at least that). All three of these factors will tend to make change easier and more self-sustaining.”

*You want to select small wins that have 2 traits:*

1. They are meaningful
2. They are within immediate reach

Big changes come from a succession of small changes. It is ok if the first changes seem almost trivial. The challenge is to get the elephant moving, even if the movement is slow at first.

## Chapter 6: Grow your people

When people make choices, they tend to rely on one of two basic models of decision-making – the consequences model or the identity model.

**The Consequences Model:** assumes that when we have a decision to make, we weigh the costs and benefits of our options and make the choice that maximizes our satisfaction.

**The Identity Model:** In the identity model of decision-making, we essentially ask ourselves three questions when we have a decision to make:

1. Who am I?
2. What kind of situation is this?
3. What would anyone like me do in this situation?

We are not just born with an identity; we adopt identities throughout our lives. So the question is: how can you make you change a matter of identity rather than a matter of consequences?

People are receptive to developing new identities; identities grow from small beginnings. Once you start seeing yourself as a concerned citizen, you will want to keep acting like one.

The elephant hate to fail. How do you keep the elephant motivated when it faces a long, though road? You need to create the expectation of failure – not the failure of the mission itself, but failure en route.

People with growth mindset – those who stretch themselves, take risks, accept feedback, and take the long-term view – can't help but progress in their lives and careers.

Businesspeople think in two stages: you plan, and then you execute. There is no learning stage or practice stage in the middle. But to create and sustain change you need to act more like a coach and less like a scorekeeper.

Real change, the kind that sticks, is often three steps forward and two steps back. If failure is a necessary part of change, then the way people understand failure is critical.

**The paradox of the growth mindset:** although the growth mindset seems to draw attention to failure, and in fact encourage us to seek out failure, it is unflinchingly optimistic. “We will struggle, we will fail, we will be knocked down – but throughout, we will get better and we will succeed in the end.”

People will persevere only if they perceive falling down as learning rather than as failing.

**Changing expectations:** if students do substandard work, the teacher could say “not yet”. That gives the students the mindset: my teacher thinks that I can do better.

Whereas the rider needs direction, the elephant needs motivation. Motivation come from feeling – knowledge isn't enough to motivate change. But motivation also comes from confidence. The elephant has to believe that it is capable of conquering the change. And there are two routed to building people's confidence so that they feel big relative to their challenge. You can shrink the change or grow your people, or both.

## Part 3: Shape the path

### Chapter 7: Tweak the environment

What looks like a person problem is often a situation problem.

**Stanford psychologist Lee Ross:** People have a systematic tendency to ignore the situational forces that shape other people's behavior. He called this deep-rooted tendency the "fundamental Attribution Error".

**Fundamental Attribution Error:** the error lies in our inclination to attribute people's behavior to the way they are rather than to the situation they are in.

If you want people to change, you can provide clear direction (rider) or boost their motivation and determination (elephant). Alternatively, you can simply make the journey easier. Create a steep downhill slope and give them a push – you can shape the path. If you change the path, you will change the behavior.

Tweaking the environment is about making the right behavior a little easier and the wrong behavior a little harder.

What's looks like a character problem is often correctible when you change the environment.

Simple tweaks of the path can lead to dramatic changes in behavior.

## Chapter 8: Build habits

People are incredibly sensitive to the environment and the culture - to the norms and expectations of the communities they are in. because we instinctively try to fit in with our peer group, behavior is contagious.

One of the subtle ways our environment acts on us is by reinforcing our habits. Habits are important because they are behavioral autopilot. They allow lots of good behavior to happen without the rider taking charge. The rider's self-control is exhaustible, so it is a huge plus if some positive things can happen "free" on autopilot.

### Action triggers:

- Effective on motivating action.
- Action triggers won't get you to do something you truly don't want to do. The value of action triggers resides in the fact that we are preloading a decision.
- By preloading the decision, we preserve the rider's self-control.
- When people predecide, they pass the control of their environment on to the environment.
- Action triggers protect goals from tempting distractions, bad habits, or competing goals.
- It is vital that action trigger is specific and visible enough to interrupt people's normal stream of consciousness.
- Action triggers setup up instant habits – behavioral autopilot.
- A study that analyzed 8155 participants found that the typical person who set an action trigger did better than 74% of people on the same task that didn't set one.

How can you create a habit that supports the change you are trying to make? There are only two things to think about:

1. The habit needs to advance the mission
2. The habit needs to be relatively easy to embrace.

A good change leader never thinks "why are these people acting so badly? They must be bad people". A change leader thinks "how can I setup a situation that brings out the good in these people?"

## **Chapter 9: Rally the herd**

In ambiguous situations, we all look to others for cues about how to behave.

You are doing things because you see your peers doing them. Behavior is contagious.

If you want to change things, you need to pay attention to social signals, because they can either guarantee a change effort or doom it. When you're leading an elephant on an unfamiliar path, chances are it's going to follow the herd. The elephant constantly looks to the herd for cues about how to behave.

In situations where your herd has embraced the right behavior, publicize it. For instance, if 80% of your team submits time sheets on time, make sure the other 20% knows the group norm. Those individuals almost certainly will correct themselves.

You want certain people to act differently, but they are resistant to the change. So you rally the support of others who in turn could influence those you hope to sway. In essence, it's an attempt to change the culture, and culture is often the linchpin of successful organizational change.

Free spaces – small scale meetings where reformers can gather and ready themselves for collective action without being observed by members from the dominant group. Free spaces often play a critical role in facilitating social change.

If you want to change the culture of your organization, you have got to get the reformers together. They need a free space. They need time to coordinate outside the gaze of the resisters. For a time, at least, you have got to permit an "us versus them" struggle to take place. It's not desirable, but necessary.

Every culture, whether nation or organizational, is shaped powerfully by its language.

## Chapter 10: Keep the switch going

A long journey starts with a single step, but a single step doesn't guarantee the long journey. How do you keep those coming?

The first thing to do is recognize and celebrate the first step. Something you have done has worked. You have directed the rider, motivated the elephant, shaped the path - and now your team is moving. When you spot movement, you've got to reinforce it.

Reinforcement is the secret to getting past the first steps on a long journey and on to the second, third, and hundredth step. Most of us are terrible reinforcers, though. We need to look for bright spots and reward them, even if they are tiny.

Our riders, by nature, focus on the negative. Problems are easy to spot; progress is harder - but precious.

Reinforcement requires you to have a clear view of the destination, and it requires you to be savvy enough to reinforce the bright spot behaviors when they happen.

Change isn't an event; it's a process.

**Mere exposure effect:** means that the more you are exposed to something, the more you like it. This principle assures us that a change effort that initially feels unwelcome and foreign will gradually be perceived more favorably as people grow accustomed to it. Also, cognitive dissonance works in your favor. People don't like to act in one way and think in another. So once a small step has been taken, and people have begun to act in a new way, it will be increasingly difficult for them to dislike the way they are acting. As people begin to act differently, they will start to think of themselves differently, and as their identity evolves, it will reinforce the new way of doing things.

When change works, it tends to follow a pattern. The people who change have clear direction, ample motivation, and a supportive environment. When change works, it is because the rider, the elephant and the path are all aligned in support of the switch.

More book summaries at [www.kimhartman.se](http://www.kimhartman.se)  
Contact me at [howdy@kimhartman.se](mailto:howdy@kimhartman.se)

## Previous book summaries

[A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future](#)

[The Element – How finding your passion changes everything by Ken Robinson](#)

[Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity by Josh Linkner](#)

[Bounce – The myth of talent and the power of practice by Matthew Syed](#)

[The Two-Second Advantage by Vivek Ranadive and Kevin Maney](#)

[The Idea Writers by Teresa Iezzi](#)

[Velocity – The seven new laws of a world gone digital](#)

[Start With Why by Simon Sinek](#)