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Switch: How To Change Things When Change Is Hard



Synopsis

Why is it so hard to make lasting changes in our companies, in our communities, and in our own lives? 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. In *Switch*, the Heaths show how everyday people—employees and managers, parents and nurses—have united both minds and, as a result, achieved dramatic results: The lowly medical interns who managed to defeat an entrenched, decades-old medical practice that was endangering patients. The home-organizing guru who developed a simple technique for overcoming the dread of housekeeping. The manager who transformed a lackadaisical customer-support team into service zealots by removing a standard tool of customer service. In a compelling, story-driven narrative, the Heaths bring together decades of counterintuitive research in psychology, sociology, and other fields to shed new light on how we can effect transformative change. *Switch* shows that successful changes follow a pattern, a pattern you can use to make the changes that matter to you, whether your interest is in changing the world or changing your waistline.

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Customer Reviews

Chip Heath and Dan Heath on *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* "Change is hard." "People hate change." Those were two of the most common quotes we heard when we began to study change. But it occurred to us that if people hate change, they have a funny way of showing it. Every iPhone sold serves as counter-evidence. So does every text message sent, every corporate merger finalized, every aluminum can recycled. And we haven't even mentioned the biggest changes: Getting married. Having kids. (If people hate change, then having a kid is an awfully dumb decision.) It puzzled us--why do some huge changes, like marriage, come joyously, while some trivial changes, like submitting an expense report on time, meet fierce resistance? We found the answer in the research of some brilliant psychologists who'd discovered that people have two separate "systems" in their brains—a rational system and an emotional system. The rational system is a thoughtful, logical planner. The emotional system is, well, emotional—and impulsive and instinctual. When these two systems are in alignment, change can come quickly and easily (as when a dreamy-eyed couple gets married). When they're not, change can be grueling (as anyone who has struggled with a diet can attest). In those situations where change is hard, is it possible to align the two systems? Is it possible to overcome our internal "schizophrenia" about change? We believe it is. In our research, we studied people trying to make difficult changes: People fighting to lose weight and keep it off. Managers trying to overhaul an entrenched bureaucracy. Activists combatting seemingly intractable problems such as child malnutrition. They succeeded--and, to our surprise, we found striking similarities in the strategies they used. They seemed to share a similar game plan. We wanted, in *Switch*, to make that game plan available to everyone, in hopes that we could show people how to make the hard changes in life a little bit easier. --Chip and Dan Heath (Photo © Amy Surdacki)

The Heath brothers (coauthors of *Made to Stick*) address motivating employees, family members, and ourselves in their analysis of why we too often fear change. Change is not inherently frightening, but our ability to alter our habits can be complicated by the disjunction between our rational and irrational minds: the self that wants to be swimsuit-season ready and the self that acquiesces to another slice of cake anyway. The trick is to find the balance between our powerful drives and our reason. The authors' lessons are backed up by anecdotes that deal with such things as new methods used to reform abusive parents, the revitalization of a dying South Dakota town, and the rebranding of megastore Target. Through these lively examples, the Heaths speak energetically and encouragingly on how to modify our behaviors and businesses. This clever

discussion is an entertaining and educational must-read for executives and for ordinary citizens looking to get out of a rut. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

I am by no means a big fan of "business books". Most feel like they're thrown together quickly and read like dirge. I was pleasantly surprised by Switch -- which both reads easily and is absolutely relevant to the problems we all face in our work (and personal) lives. It breaks down the process of change into three easily-remembered and compelling constructs, and gives lots of practical examples for each construct. I found myself incorporating the concepts from Switch into my daily activities immediately, and my zeal for the model hasn't diminished over the past couple of months (the typical half-life of a business book is days in my experience). If you deal with change in any aspect of your life -- this is an excellent book. If you think you *don't* deal with change -- you're probably not paying attention!

As a second-semester graduate student, Switch by Chip and Dan Heath has been one of the more informative, and enjoyable books I have read of the eight books we're read thus far. Switch describes three critical directives to implement change through clear examples. By directing the rider (our rational side), motivating the elephant (our emotional side) and shaping the path (change the situation), one can achieve real change. Graduate student comment. Switch was used as a required text in the graduate Design Management program at the Shintaro Akatsu School of Design at the University of Bridgeport

This is a very interesting books. This book gets you to think about different situations from different views you are learning about from this books. Switch provides people's experiences that can help shape your mind differently forever. It's fun to learn about your type of personality from this book and about our elephants and riders.

An enjoyable book to read. Switch is a hopeful look at how to go about making changes that actually move an organization. They have broken change into components that can guide a team to make change in an organization. Great stories show how to put theories into practice - and why change sometimes gets derailed.

The book Switch: How To Change Things When Change Is Hard, was a really good book! The book

has three main concepts that are addressed: Directing the Rider, Motivating the Elephant, and Shaping the Path. By addressing the following concepts, change should be easier to accomplish. The Rider refers to a person's logical side of thinking. This concept suggests that to encourage change, one needs to eliminate ambiguity. This concept is broken down into 3 sections: identify bright spots, scripting critical moves and pointing to the destination. Motivate the Elephant- The elephant refers to a person's emotional side. There are three concepts discussed to activate the elephant: Find the feeling, shrink the change, and grow your people. Shape the Path: What looks like the problem is often a situational problem. The path is the environment or situations that are involved with a change. This was a really good read with many excellent examples throughout. I highly recommend this book.

Ever want to lose weight and you're like me you love chocolate chip cookies? You love them so much that your 4 year old calls you the cookie monster. Are you responsible for some change in your company but don't really have the power to make that change? Maybe you're in charge but the entrenched ethic/patterns are totally contrary to the change that needs to be made? This is the book for you. Chip and Dan Heath explore how many organizations made the Rider (our thinking brain) and the Elephant (our feeling brain) both adopt a change. You'll see this 2 brain thinking explored in other books like Thinking, Fast and Slow. In Switch Chip and Dan assert that our Rider is going to generally go where the Elephant wants to. With great effort it can overpower the Elephant for a short time (like when I swear off cookies) but eventually the much more powerful Elephant will win as the Rider gets tired. Switch doesn't claim to give you all the answers to make effective change at your organization, it does give you lots of great stories and examples of how others made change and then pulls out practical application you can use to help make changes in your organization. One of the best takeaways is to make change easy. Don't give a big overarching change policy. Give clear concise easy to carry out directions. If you're looking to cut short term costs because you have no money maybe that direction is We'll always choose the cheapest option even if the long term cost is more. With that direction all purchasers have a clear direction when making any purchasing decision. There are many more great takeaways in Switch and I highly recommend you read it.

Recommended by my daughter to me, this is one of the best change management books I have ever listened too or read. As someone with a doctorate in business, I have learned a lot from this that I did not find in my studies or research. Very much a down to earth common sense book.

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