Made to Stick
by Chip Heath & Dan Heath - 2007

Book review video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX5V1EXVKTI

Book video 8:38:15 (no longer available online)

0:00:00 0. Introduction
urban legends like the Kidney Heist tale stick and spread
compared with a business presentation that cannot be remembered
theater popcorn has 37 grams saturated fat, from popping in coconut oil
visual comparison message with a large amount of equivalent unhealthy food
your ideas need to stand on their own merits
sticky ideas are understood and remembered, and have a lasting impact
they change your audience's opinions or behavior
big ideas are stick-worthy; new strategic direction and guidelines for behavior
the oldest class of naturally sticky ideas is the proverb
a nugget of wisdom that often endures over centuries and across cultures
The Tipping Point book examined forces that cause social phenomena to "tip"
or make the leap from small groups to big groups. three sections:
  1 the need to get the right people
  2 "the stickiness factor"; innovations are more likely to tip when sticky
  3 the need for the right context
the Halloween candy-tampering epidemic story is sticky and is false
six principles of sticky ideas; SUCCES
  1 Simplicity; strip an idea down to its core
  2 Unexpectedness; violate people's expectations
  3 Concreteness; explain in terms of human actions, sensory information
  4 Credibility; carry their own credentials for people to test for themselves
  5 Emotions; get people to care by making them feel something
  6 Stories; get people to act on ideas; mental simulation of critical situations
Curse of Knowledge psychological villain confounds ability to use principles
  + tappers and listeners study; fail to communicate but believe we are effective
  + once we know something, we cannot imagine what it was like not to know it
  becomes difficult for us to re-create our listeners' state of mind
systematic creativity can be learned

0:46:36 1. Simple
Commanders' Intent; goals; desired end state of an operation
lower levels are more concrete
CI aligns behavior at all levels without requiring instructions
simple = find the core of an idea
strip down to critical essence
challenge: weed out important ideas that are not the most important
singularity
achieved perfection when there is nothing left to take away

step 2: translate the core using SUCCES checklist
find the lead and avoid temptation to bury lead in the details
forced prioritization
decision paralysis: driven by unknown | uncertainty
  irrelevant uncertainty can influence outcome; irrational
  additional good options reduces probability to choose either option
idea clinics; how to make idea stickier

simple = core + compact
proverbs spread on their own; profound influences lifetime of behavior
sound bite = simple without core
avoid feature creep: what is + what is not
how to cram more information into a compact message
  remember raw data vs concepts
  pack a lot of meaning into a little bit of messaging
tap the existing terrain of the audience, use what is already there
create complexity from the artful use of simplicity; staged and layered
schema is an idea you already have; build upon schema
want higher level schema
message value to make accurate predictions or decisions
analogies derive power from schemas; X is like Y
invoke concepts you already know
generative metaphor; e.g. Disney calls employees "cast members"

2:04:55 2. Unexpected
  challenge of communication is to attract people's attention
  break a pattern; vs consistent stimulation makes us tune out
    brain is sensitive to changes
  how do I get people's attention? how do I keep it?
    we need to break through the clutter
  emotions: surprise + interest
  urban legends frequently contain plot twists
our schema guessing machine failed which causes us to be surprised
emotions generate heightened interest and conviction
surprise gets our attention to compare with expectations to input new info
anger gets our attention to focus on a known problem
we look for answers why we are surprised; big surprises call for big answers
avoid stepping over the line into gimmickry; surprise should be germane to core
sticky message needs surprise + postdictable
break someone's guessing machine and then fix it

process for making
  1. identify the message you wish to communicate; find the core
  2. figure out what is counterintuitive about the message
    what are the unexpected implications of your core message
    why isn't it already happening naturally
  3. communicate your message in a way that breaks your audience's
guessing machine along the critical counterintuitive dimension
then once their guessing machines have failed,
help them refine their machines
common sense is the enemy of sticky messages
expose your parts of the message that are uncommon sense
mystery story; begin with a puzzle; create a need for closure
first level unexpected: fleeting surprise
second level unexpected: enduring interest
generate curiosity
situational interest; knowledge gap theory of curiosity

3:16:45 3. Concrete
describe things that readers can visualize
Aesop's fables have persisted for centuries around the world
encoded truths to describe human nature
avoid abstract language
able to examine with senses; specific people doing specific things
case study has specific examples
velcro memory model; multiply idea with many hooks to stick to memory loops
path to abstraction, blueprint, machine
   experts can see abstraction = a higher level of insight
   novices see detail
Curse of Knowledge; abstract designers + physical implementers
expert lost knowledge what it's like to view as a non-expert
solve problems at the physical level that everyone understands
a universal language is concrete; allows coordination
concreteness makes targets transparent
concreteness focuses your brain
concreteness test; 15-second timer
   1. write down as many white things as you can think of
   2. write down as many white things in your refrigerator as you can think of
another concreteness test
   1. think of 5 silly things people have done in the world in the past 10 years
   2. think of 5 silly things your child has done in the past 10 years
find some way to invite people to the table to share their knowledge
what would the customer do if in the expert's shoes

what makes people believe ideas?
because our parents or friends believe
we have had experiences that led us to our beliefs
because of our religious faith
because we trust authorities
is challenging to affect what people believe
classes of authority: expert + celebrities & other aspirational figures
we care about what authorities believe because we want to be like them
we can tap the credibility of anti-authorities
stories from real people; living proof
messages must have internal credibility; vouch for themselves; principles:
+ has concrete details, even unrelated; seems more real and believable
+ details that support our core idea
how to use statistics in a way to make meaningful
is more important to remember a relationship
human scale: contextualize in terms that are more human, everyday
use statistics as input vs output, to make up your mind on an issue
don't make up your mind and then go looking the numbers to support yourself
Sinatra test; one example alone is enough to establish credibility
in a given domain; if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere
where's the beef

5:36:50 5. Emotional
for people to take action, they have to care
feelings inspire people to act, more than analytical thinking
Mother Theresa effect; charities know that donors respond better
to individuals than to abstract causes
semantic stretch and the power of association
piggy back emotions associate with emotions that already exist
the most basic way to make people care is to form an association between
something they don't yet care about and something they do care about
over time, associations become overused and become diluted in value
what matters to people; people matter to themselves; invoking self-interest
measure mail-order advertising effectiveness; slightly different mail addresses
get into every ad: here is something they want; is fundamental
promise huge benefits for trivial costs
companies emphasize features when they should be emphasizing benefits
forget to tell us why we should buy
"What's In It For You" should be a central aspect of every speech
Have audience personally imagine the benefits
Maslow studied needs and desires that motivate people to try to fulfill
transcendence: help others realize their potential,
self-actualization: realize our own potential, self-fulfillment, peak experiences
aesthetic: symmetry, order, beauty, balance
learning: know, understand, mentally connect
esteem: achieve, be competent, gain approval, independence, status
belonging: love, family, friends, affection
security: protection, safety, stability
physical: hunger, thirst, bodily comfort
all needs are desired vs hierarchy
people care about higher levels but believe others care about lower levels
"What's in it for my group" trumps "What's in it for me"
we use two basic models to make decisions
+ calculating consequences; weigh alternatives; choose the most value
the standard view of decision making in economics classes
people are self-interested and rational
+ people make decisions based on identity
  1. who am I? 2. What kind of situation is this?
  3. What do people like me do in this kind of situation?
there are no calculations about consequences for themselves
only norms and principles

stories are told and retold because they contain wisdom
stories are effective teaching tools
they show how context can mislead people to make the wrong decision
stories illustrate causal relationships that people hadn't recognized before
and highlight unexpected resourceful ways in which people have solved problems
the story format has more drama and is interesting
  the audience can follow along and imagine how they would act
is part entertainment and part instruction
we create a simulation from the stories we hear
mental simulation stimulates the same parts of the brain as real action
mental simulation helps with problem solving
helps us think of things we might otherwise have neglected
mental simulations help us determine appropriate responses to future situations
mental rehearsal can prevent people from relapsing into bad habits
mental simulation can also build skills, 2/3 the benefit of real practice
stories are like flight simulators for the brain
a story provides the context missing from abstract prose
velcro theory of memory: the more hooks we put into our ideas,
  the better they will stick
builds in emotions, historical background, lesson can apply to future actions
stories are collected; how to spot stories that inspire to take action
need to consciously look for ideas; story templates
uplift, motivate, energize
+ Aristotle's four primary dramatic plots; simple tragic, simple fortunate,
  complex tragic, complex fortunate
+ screenplay-writer Robert McKee lists 25 types of stories
  modern epic, disillusionment plot, etc.
+ sorting concludes there are three basic plots; classifies 60-80% of stories:
  1 challenge; David and Goliath; inspire us to act
    a protagonist overcomes a formidable challenge and succeeds
    variations: underdog, rags-to-riches, triumph of will-power over adversity
    key element: obstacles seem daunting to the protagonist
  2 connection; good Samaritan; inspire in social ways; want to help others
    story about people who develop a relationship that bridges a gap
  3 creativity; apple falls on Newton's head inspiring theory of gravity
    someone makes a mental breakthrough, solving a longstanding puzzle,
    attacking a problem in an innovative way
make us want to do something different, be creative, experiment
+ springboard story lets people see how an existing problem might change
tell people about possibilities, combat skepticism and create buy-in
+ story engages the audience, involves them with the idea, asks to participate
compared with abstract directive: respond by fighting back, implicitlly asking to evaluate the argument and argue back.
+ work in harmony with "little voice" inside the head
springboard stories mobilize people to act, focus on potential solutions
visible goals and barriers shifts the audience into a problem-solving mode
mass customization: each audience member evaluates for themselves

8:07:35 Epilogue
Villains
+ bury the lead, to get lost in a sea of information; Curse of Knowledge
strip out information in order to focus on the core
+ focus on the presentation rather than the message
+ decision paralysis
  anxiety and irrationality from excessive choice or ambiguous situations
  find the core, share proverbs
+ Curse of Knowledge
  stages to get a message across: get the answer + tell others
  factors that work in the answer stage backfire in the telling others stage
  need expertise to get the answer, we mistakenly tell others as if they are us
communication framework is reserved until the end of the book because
Curse of Knowledge can easily render the framework useless
the SUCCES framework is more tangible and is less subject to Curse of Knowledge
communication framework to make an idea stick, to be useful and lasting
  1 audience pay attention; Unexpected
  2 understand and remember it; Concrete
  3 agree, believe; Credible
  4 care; Emotional
  5 be able to act on the idea; Story
x Simple is about the answer stage, honing in on the core of your message
  and making it as compact as possible
  simple messages help throughout the process for people to understand and act
problem symptoms and solutions