

Switch - How to Change Things When Change Is Hard  
by Chip Heath & Dan Heath - 2010

Book review video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmmwWxVzSsw>

Book video 7:44:00 (no longer available online)

0:00:00 chapter 1

popcorn study; people with bigger bucket ate more

subjects refused to believe the results

tendency to jump to conclusions

simple solution: serve in smaller container; vs

change people's behavior

something that looks like a people problem is often  
a situation problem

for anything to change, someone has to start acting  
differently

successful changes share a common pattern

they require the leader of the change to do three things at once

change the situation-environment, heart, mind

often the heart and mind fervently disagree

rational side + emotional side = two independent systems

emotional side: is instinctive, that feels pain and pleasure

rational side: reflective or conscious system

deliberates and analyzes and looks into the future

happiness hypothesis; Jonathan Hight

emotional side = elephant, rational side = its rider

small rider seems to be the leader, but control is precarious

any time the elephant and rider disagree, the rider is going to lose

when change efforts fail, it's usually the elephant's fault

requires short-term sacrifices for long-term payoffs

elephant hunger for instant gratification; emotion

love, compassion, sympathy, loyalty, energy to get things done

rider strength: ability to think long term; plan, think beyond the moment

weakness: overanalyze

if you want to change things, you've got to appeal to both.

the rider provides the planning and direction, and the elephant provides the energy.

so if you reach the riders of your team but not the elephants,

team members will have understanding without motivation.

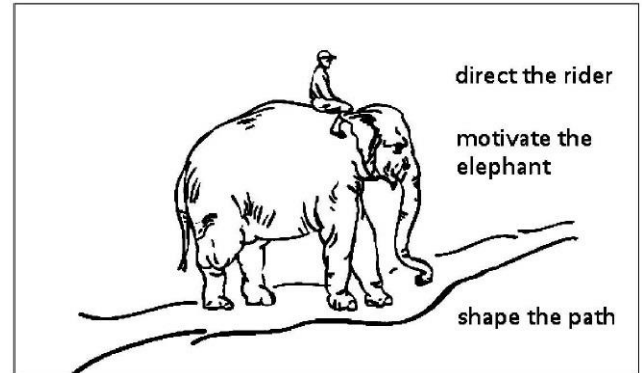
if you reach their elephants but not their riders, they'll have passion

without direction.

in both cases, the flaws can be paralyzing.

a reluctant elephant and a wheel-spinning rider can both ensure that nothing changes.

but when elephants and riders move together, change can come easily.



when rider and elephant disagree about which way to move, you've got a problem  
the rider can get his way temporarily; he can tug on the reins hard enough  
to get the elephant to submit; will power.  
the rider cannot win a tug-o-war with a huge animal for long;  
he simply gets exhausted.

broader self-control is an exhaustible resource

much of our daily behavior is more automatic than supervised  
when people try to change things, they are tinkering with behaviors that have become automatic  
changing behaviors requires careful supervision by the rider.  
the bigger the change you're suggesting, the more it will sap self-control  
the mental muscles needed to think creatively, to focus, inhibit impulses,  
to persist in the face of frustration or failure.  
they're exhausting the mental muscles needed to make a big change.  
what looks like laziness is often exhaustion  
we need to break through to feeling in order to motivate a change  
and what looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity  
procedure: direct the rider, motivate the elephant, shape the path  
for people who lack authority or resources

0:43:58 chapter 2. find the bright spots

search the community for bright spots; examples worth emulating  
eliminate bright spots that cannot be replicated  
synthesize the conventional wisdom, compare with the norms  
a native solution is inherently realistic and sustainable  
knowledge does not change behavior; need to practice  
act our way into a new way of thinking  
our change; something that arose from the local wisdom  
catalyst role is to make us see that they could do it on their own  
path = social pressure to go along; changing culture  
bright spots solve the "not invented here" problem; skeptical import solution  
rider analysis is directed at problems vs bright spots to direct rider  
miracle question? how to know the problem is gone  
what would you be doing differently?  
when was the last time you saw a little bit of the miracle?  
proof that we have already solved the problem in certain circumstances  
what exactly needs to be done differently?  
after we have defined a bright spot, try to clone it.  
spend 80 percent of time: what's working and how can we do more of it?  
help to spread innovation  
successes can be interpreted as problems to an overactive rider  
identify metrics in order to measure effectiveness of actions  
look for a big problem to be solved with a sequence of small solutions  
we focus on the negative; emotion words: 62% are negative vs 38% positive  
problem focus bias: bad is stronger than good; we need a solution focus

1:23:25 chapter 3. script the critical moves

multiple options can cause decision paralysis,

and cause retreat to the default plan; irrational but human

in times of change, uncertainty makes the elephant anxious

the most familiar path is always the status quo

many leaders pride themselves on setting high level direction

"I'll set the vision and stay out of the details."

a compelling vision is critical, but it's not enough.

big picture hands-off leadership isn't likely to work in change situation

because the paralyzing part of change is in the details.

need someone who can bring a noble goal within the realm

of everyday behavior; someone who can cut through the bewildering array

of choices and suggest a good place to start.

ambiguity is the enemy. any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behaviors. you need to script the critical moves.

change begins at the moment of individual decisions and behaviors.

that's a hard place to start because that's where the friction is.

inertia and decision paralysis will conspire to keep people doing things the old way.

to spark movement in a new direction, you need to provide crystal clear guidance.

scripting thinks about specific behavior you would want to see in a tough moment.

focus on the critical moves makes it easier to change direction.

set specific goals; behavioral goals

ladder down from a change idea to a specific behavior

need to be specific and be concrete in order to create movement

new behaviors are exhausting; the rider needs to supervise every single moment.

practice the behavior everyday so it gradually becomes instinctive;

the less self-control from the rider is required, and thus, the more sustainable it becomes.

what looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity-understanding

when faced with an insurmountable problem, a group can start with a small step that is achievable, realize the group has shared ideas about what it wants the community to be.

then things start to happen.

powerful elephant and path elements: the flush of victory, of making a difference gives the elephant strength to continue.

the strong support of the community makes the path seem less difficult.

it's easier to make a long journey when you've got a herd around you.

the community begins to rally around the movement.

leaders script the first critical move, and the community soon responds

with a new behavior. a small success interests more people to support a project, which enables larger successes.

the rider has to be jarred out of introspection, out of analysis

needs a script that explains how to act. clarity resolves resistance.

2:07:45 chapter 4. point to the destination

we can script the critical moves. but to what end?

how do you show others where they are headed?

and why going there is worth the effort?

in terms they can understand?

ineffective is to communicate to the rider

we need to motivate the elephant to feel something.

cultivate a new group culture

"built to last" by Jim Collins and Jerry Porus

BHAG : a Big Hairy Audacious Goal

distinguishes lasting from less successful companies

we want a goal that can be tackled in months or years, not decades

destination postcard: a vivid picture from the near-term future that shows what could be possible.

goal directs the rider AND motivates the elephant.

is inspirational, taps into feeling, has an emotional component.

organizational challenge to make people feel like they belong to something

best assets for those who wield little power are personal tenacity

and ability to sell a vision of what could be.

we need a gut-smacking goal that appeals to both rider AND elephant.

goals in most organizations lack emotional resonance.

norm is SMART goal: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Timely

specificity is a cure for worst sins: ambiguity and irrelevance.

SMART goals are better for steady state situation than change situations

underlying assumptions are that the goals are worthwhile.

SMART goals presume the emotion; they do not generate emotion.

destination postcard does double duty:

shows rider where we are headed AND shows elephant why the journey is worthwhile

how to counteract short-term thinking and adopt a longer-term mindset

rider problem: script the critical moves

path problem: economic budget culture encourages short-term thinking

elephant has motivation: most leaders prefer to have a longer-term focus

eliminate short-term expectations

point to the destination

motivate the elephant; shrink the change; an attainable first step

shape the path; build a habit; a simple checklist of things to address

rally the herd; bandwagon effect; behavior is contagious

destination postcards can be incredibly inspiring:

pictures of a future that hard work can make possible

members of the team may be resistant to the articulated future vision rationalization;

we like the vision but without commitment

a big-picture goal can be imprecise: creates wiggle room for the elephant

makes it easier to rationalize failure

one response to this dilemma: set up super-prescriptive goals

squeeze out ambiguity: B&W goal; black & white

combine the emotional power of a destination postcard

with the rationalization-squashing strength of a B&W goal

is essential to marry long-term goal with short-term critical moves  
you have to back up destination postcard with a good behavioral script  
plotting the journey to the destination is impossible  
look for a strong beginning and a strong ending and get moving  
the middle is going to look different once you get there

rider summary

rider is a visionary; short-term sacrifices for long-term payoff  
vs elephant that prefers immediate gratification  
clever tactician; will follow a map perfectly  
rider's flaws: limited reserves of strength,  
paralysis with ambiguity and choice  
relentless focus on problems rather than solutions  
strengths are substantial and flaws can be mitigated  
plan: follow the bright spots  
give direction; start and finish; send a destination postcard  
script the critical moves  
you will prepare the rider to lead a switch and will arm him for the  
ongoing struggle with reluctant and formidable partner: the elephant

2:57:40 chapter 5. find the feeling

Kotter and Cohen study: why change happens in large organizations  
in most change situations, managers initially focus on strategy,  
structure, culture, or systems, which leads to miss most important issue.  
the core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people.  
behavior change happens in highly successful situations mostly by speaking to people's feelings.  
in almost all successful change efforts, the sequence of change is not: analyze, think, change  
but rather: see, feel, change  
something that hits you at the emotional level  
it can be sometimes be challenging to distinguish why people don't support your change.  
is it because they don't understand or because they're not enthused?  
do you need an elephant appeal or a rider appeal?  
the answer isn't always obvious, even to experts.  
the elephant makes the rosier interpretation of the facts.  
interferes with objective self-evaluation.  
before people can change, move in a new direction,  
they need to have their bearings.  
but positive illusions make it challenging to orient ourselves  
to get a clearer picture of where we are and how we are doing.  
how can we dispel people's positive illusions without raining negativity on them?  
developers feel empathy for their customers in order to be open to change  
we often hear that people will change only when a crisis compels them to,  
which implies we need to create a sense of fear or anxiety or doom.  
change is hard because people are reluctant to alter habits that have been successful in the past.  
in the absence of a dire threat, people will keep doing what they have always done.  
emphasize the importance of crisis; turnaround leaders must convince  
people that the organization is truly on its death bed,

or at the very least, that radical changes are required  
if the organization is to survive and thrive.  
if necessary, we need to create a crisis to convince people  
they are facing a catastrophe and have no choice but to move.  
negative emotions help us avoid risks and confront problems.  
if you need quick and specific action, then negative emotions might help.  
but most of the time when change is needed, situations require creativity,  
flexibility, and ingenuity. negative emotions won't get you that.  
positive emotions are designed to build our repertoire of thoughts and actions.  
joy, contentment, pride, love, interest: produce the same "I am pleased"  
facial expression, known as the Duchenne smile.  
fear and anger give us a sharp focus, putting on blinders.  
positive emotions are designed to broaden and build our repertoire of thoughts and actions.  
joy makes us want to play.  
play doesn't have a script, broadens the kinds of things we consider doing  
we become willing to explore and invent new activities.  
learn to get along with others.  
we are building resources and skills.  
interest broadens what we want to investigate.  
we want to get involved, to learn new things, become open to new ideas.  
pride, experienced when we achieve a personal goal, broadens the kind of tasks we  
contemplate for the future, encouraging us to pursue even bigger goals.  
most of the big problems we encounter are ambiguous and devolving.  
compared with "burning platform" situations to execute a hard but well-understood game plan.  
to solve bigger more ambiguous problems, we need to encourage open minds, creativity, and hope.

### 3:40:25 chapter 6. 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.  
make people feel they are already closer to the finish line than they might have thought.  
placebo effect: awareness of the value of activity triggered benefit  
independent of any physical changes in behavior.  
a sense of progress is critical; the elephant in us is easily demoralized,  
spooked, derailed. needs reassurance, even for the first step of journey.  
make an effort to remind the people what has already been accomplished.  
we need to lower the bar, shrink the change.  
change mindset to smaller steps in order to prevent blocking action.  
starting an unpleasant task is always worse than continuing it.  
start to take pride in accomplishments; a virtuous cycle.  
make a change small enough to ensure scoring a victory. progress begins to snowball.  
to motivate change, plan for milestones that do not occur naturally  
hope is elephant fuel. once people are on the path and making progress,  
it's important to make their advances visible.  
design a miracle scale in range 0-10; progress to the final goal.  
you always have a clear idea where you are going next.  
you have a clear sense of what the next small victory will be.

you are moving forward and you are getting more confidence  
in your ability to keep moving forward.  
when you start small visible goals, and people achieve them,  
they start to get into their heads that they can succeed.  
they break the habit of losing and get into the habit of winning.  
seek the small improvement, one day at a time.  
that's the only way it happens, and when it happens, it lasts.  
by pushing their teams to attain a sequence of small visible goals, they build momentum.  
a small win reduces importance, reduces demands, all that needs to be done  
raises perceived skill levels.  
factors make change easier and more self-sustaining.  
any important change is not going to feel like a steady inevitable march toward victory.  
typically take steps forward, steps back, steps sideways, and the destination changes.  
select small wins that have traits: meaningful + within immediate reach  
if you cannot achieve both traits, choose within immediate reach  
setting goals that are within reach, avoid mistake in creating to-do lists  
it's critical to ask yourself: what's the next action? find missing pieces  
when the task is too big, the elephant will resist.

4:24:22 chapter 7. grow your people

in contrast to shrink the change, grow the people to feel a sense of pride  
inspire to feel more determined, more ready, more motivated  
when you build up people this way, they develop the strength to act  
consequences model: we weigh costs and benefits of our actions, and make the choice that  
maximizes our satisfaction. rational-analytical  
identity model

1. Who am I? 2. What kind of situation is this?

3. What would someone like me do in this situation?

what is missing: any calculation of costs and benefits

explains the way most people vote

identity = immutable trait, e.g., racial, ethnic, regional identity

expanded: we adopt identities throughout our lives

any change effort that violates someone's identity is doomed to failure

is clumsy when people reach for incentives to change others' behavior

cultivate identity

orientation program

mentorship program to improve knowledge and skills

improve communication

turnover decrease

how can you make your change a matter of identity rather than consequences?

ask yourself whether you would agree with statement:

I aspire to be the kind of person who would make this change.

Yes: enormous factor in your favor

No : work hard to show them they should aspire to a different self-image

employee innovation program in a stable industry

empower front line employees to take ownership of their work

any employee who spotted a defect could stop the assembly line  
actively solicit ideas for innovation from employees  
new employees are known as inventors, sign innovation contract  
"foot in the door" technique or "sign petition" causes shift in identity  
people are receptive to adopting new identities  
once you start seeing yourself with an identity,  
you'll want to keep acting according to the identity  
living up to the new identity can take a while; ability issue  
a person needs to embrace the feeling of failure while learning  
the elephant really really hates to fail  
need to create the expectation of failure, on the route to mission success  
mindset test; which statements do you agree with  
1 you are a certain kind of person. there is not much that can be done to really change that.  
2 no matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially  
3 you can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.  
4 you can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.  
mindset conclusions  
if you agree with 1 and 3, you are someone who has a fixed mindset  
if you agree with 2 and 4, you tend to have a growth mindset  
if you agreed with 1 and 2, you are confused  
which mindset you have can help determine how easy it will be to handle failure, and how  
dogged you'll be in pursuing change  
"mindset - the new psychology of success" Carol Dweck  
+ a growth mindset will make you more successful at almost anything  
people with a growth mindset, those who stretch themselves,  
take risks, accept feedback, take long term view,  
can't help but progress in their lives and careers  
+ Labrador retriever compared with poodle  
+ a fixed mindset is everywhere  
a growth mindset praises effort  
fixed mindset - after trying an unfamiliar skill for a while,  
we concluded that we lack the natural ability and were born that way,  
and we quit because letting other people see that lack of natural ability made us uncomfortable  
someone with a growth mindset never would have jumped to this conclusion  
never would expect to be good at the new skill early on  
the growth mindset can be taught; the brain is like a muscle  
junior high school is when fixed vs growth mindset becomes significant  
in the business world, we implicitly reject the growth mindset  
two stages: you plan, then you execute  
there is no learning or practice stage in the middle  
from the business perspective, practice looks like poor execution  
results are the real thing  
we don't care how you do it. just get it done  
to create and sustain change, you've got to act more like a coach and less like a score keeper  
you've got to embrace a growth mindset and instill it in your team

otherwise, everything can look like a failure in the middle  
real change, the kind that sticks, is often 3 steps forward & 2 steps back  
mood chart U-shape; beginning: hope, middle: insight, end: confidence  
creates expectation of failure in the middle design period  
comes across as optimistic; the growth mindset  
growth mindset reframes failure as a natural part of the change process  
people perceive falling down as learning rather than as failing  
focus on practice, leaders act as a coach, set up processes to allow maximum opportunities to  
learn and improve  
growth mindset idea for grading in school: pass or "not yet"  
a student cannot stop until they have passed, vs quit with failure  
gives students the mindset: "my teacher thinks I can do better."  
changes their expectations.  
the central challenge of change is keeping the elephant moving forward  
whereas the rider needs direction, the elephant needs motivation  
motivation comes from feeling; knowledge is not enough to motivate change  
motivation comes from confidence; believes is capable to conquer change  
two routes: shrink the change and/or grow your people  
we also need to think about shaping the path  
in order to adapt to deficient rider or elephant performance

#### 5:16:05 chapter 8. tweak the environment

what looks like a person problem is often a situation problem  
people have a systematic tendency to ignore the situational forces  
that shape other people's behavior; the 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  
situations should be easier to tweak than people's core character  
shape the path; you can make the journey easier  
create a steep downhill slope and give them a push  
remove some friction from the trail  
scatter around lots of signs to tell them they're getting close  
tweaking the environment is about making the right behaviors  
a little bit easier and the wrong behaviors a little bit harder  
you know you have a smart solution when everyone hates it and it works  
and works so well that people's hate turns to enthusiasm  
we can outsmart ourselves; our riders are outsmarting our elephants  
we can sometimes change the environment to make bad behavior impossible  
without changing elephant or rider.  
Haddon matrix; pre-event intervention, event, post-event intervention

#### 6:00:00 chapter 9. build habits

people are incredibly sensitive to the environment, culture, norms and expectations of their  
communities; wear the right clothes, say the right things, frequent the right places;  
instinctively try to fit in with our peer group  
behavior is contagious

our environment subtly reinforces or deters our habits

behavioral autopilot

forming a habit is also mental

a situational trigger causes an action that people know they need to do

we are preloading a decision; there is no cycle of conscious deliberation

we can serve the rider's self-control

when people pre-decide, they pass control of behavior onto the environment

action triggers protect goals from tempting distractions, bad habits, competing goals

action triggers improve success with hard goals; create instant habits

how to create a habit that supports the desired change:

the habit needs to advance the mission

the habit needs to be relatively easy to embrace

checklist is a tool to combine: tweak the environment + build habits

checklists educate people about what's the best way to do something

checklists are effective to direct the rider

checklists can help people avoid blind spots in a complex environment

checklists provide insurance against overconfidence

standardize on the mission-critical elements and do them every time

will avoid a painful blind spot and a fundamental attribution error

6:41:25 chapter 10. rally the herd

in ambiguous situations, we look to others for cues about how to behave

sometimes in times of change, nobody knows how to behave, which can lead to problems

peer perception can cause group failure to act, compared to an individual

behaviors are contagious; send signals about the norm of the herd

advantage to publicize the norms only when they work for your goals

can influence society norms

send signals to people who already support the change, to unleash change

clinics

cultural reformers need a free space to develop a new identity

outside the gaze of the resisters; is a necessary identity conflict

7:27:25 chapter 11. keep the switch going

set a behavioral destination and reward each small step

need constant reinforcement to shape change behavior

change is a process

once a change is started, it feeds on itself; snowballing effect

mere exposure effect; change effort initially feels unwelcome and foreign

will gradually be perceived more favorably as people grow accustomed to it

cognitive dissonance works in your favor

people don't like to act in one way and think in another

at some point inertia will switch from resisting change to supporting it

when change works, it tends to follow a pattern

clear direction, ample motivation, and a supportive environment

the rider, elephant and the path are all aligned in support of the switch