

SWITCH



HOW TO CHANGE THINGS

WHEN CHANGE IS HARD



CHIP HEATH & DAN HEATH

THE BESTSELLING AUTHORS OF

MADE TO STICK

HOW TO MAKE A SWITCH

For things to change, somebody somewhere has to start acting differently. Maybe it's you, maybe it's your team.

Picture that person (or people).

Each has an emotional Elephant side and a rational Rider side.

You've got to reach both. And you've also got to clear the way for them to succeed. In short, you must do three things:

➔ DIRECT the Rider

FOLLOW THE BRIGHT SPOTS. Investigate what's working and clone it. [Jerry Sternin in Vietnam, solutions-focused therapy]

SCRIPT THE CRITICAL MOVES. Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors. [1% milk, four rules at the Brazilian railroad]

POINT TO THE DESTINATION. Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it. ["You'll be third graders soon," "No dry holes" at BP]

➔ MOTIVATE the Elephant

FIND THE FEELING. Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something. [Piling gloves on the table, the chemotherapy video game, Robyn Waters's demos at Target]

SHRINK THE CHANGE. Break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant. [The 5-Minute Room Rescue, procurement reform]

GROW YOUR PEOPLE. Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset. [Brasilata's "inventors," junior-high math kids' turnaround]

➔ SHAPE the Path

TWEAK THE ENVIRONMENT. When the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation. [Throwing out the phone system at Rackspace, 1-Click ordering, simplifying the online time sheet]

BUILD HABITS. When behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits. [Setting "action triggers," eating two bowls of soup while dieting, using checklists]

RALLY THE HERD. Behavior is contagious. Help it spread. ["Fataki" in Tanzania, "free spaces" in hospitals, seeding the tip jar]

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Here we list twelve common problems that people encounter as they fight for change, along with some advice about overcoming them. (Note that we're speaking in shorthand here—this advice won't make sense to anybody who hasn't read the book.)

Problem: People don't see the need to change.

Advice: 1. You are not going to overcome this by talking to the Rider. Instead, find the feeling. Can you do a dramatic demonstration like the Glove Shrine, or like Robyn Waters's demos at Target? 2. Create empathy. Show people the problems with *not* changing (think Attila the Accountant). 3. Tweak the environment so that whether people *see* the need to change is irrelevant. Remember, Rackspace employees didn't necessarily see the need to improve customer service, but after the call-queuing system disappeared, they had to pick up the phone.

Problem: I'm having the "not invented here" problem: People resist my idea because they say "We've never done it like that before."

Advice: 1. Highlight identity: Is there some aspect of your idea that's consistent with the history of your organization? (E.g., *We've always been the pioneers in this industry.*) Or is your idea consistent with a professional identity that people share? 2. Find a bright spot that *is* invented here and clone it.

Problem: We should be doing something, but we're getting bogged down in analysis.

Advice: 1. Don't overanalyze and play to the weaknesses of the Rider. Instead, find a feeling that will get the Elephant moving. 2. Create a destination postcard. That way, the Rider starts analyzing *how to get there* rather than *whether anything should be done*. 3. Simplify the problem by scripting the critical moves: What's your equivalent of the 1% milk campaign?

Problem: The environment has shifted, and we need to overcome our old patterns of behavior.

Advice: 1. Can you create a new habit so the Rider doesn't constantly have to wrestle the Elephant? 2. Set an action trigger. Preload your decision by imagining the time and place where you're going to act differently. 3. Use Natalie Elder's strategy of creating a routine for the morning that eliminates the old, bad behavior. 4. The old pattern is powerful, so make sure to script the critical moves, because ambiguity is the enemy. ALL railroad came up with four simple rules to work its way out of financial distress.

Problem: People simply aren't motivated to change.

Advice: 1. Is an identity conflict standing in the way? If so, you'll need to "sell" the new identity (think Brasilata's inventors). Encourage people to take a small step toward the new identity, as in the "Drive Safely" study. 2. Create a destination postcard that makes the change more attractive (like the teacher who told her first graders "You'll be third graders by the end of the year"). 3. Lower the bar to get people moving, as with the 5-Minute Room Rescue. 4. Use social pressure to encourage change (as when Gerard Cachon posted the review times for the operations journal). 5. Can you smooth the Path so much that even an unmotivated person will slide along? Remember, even jerks in the dorm donated to the food drive when given a specific invitation and a map.

Problem: I'll change tomorrow.

Advice: 1. Shrink the change so you can start today. 2. If you can't start today, set an action trigger for tomorrow. 3. Make yourself accountable to someone. Let your colleagues or loved ones know what you're trying to change, so their peer pressure will help you.

Problem: People keep saying, "It will never work."

Advice: 1. Find a bright spot that shows it can work. There's no situation that's 100 percent failure. Like a solutions-focused therapist, look for the flashes of success. 2. Think of Bill Parcells and the way he prods players for small victories in practice. Can you engineer a success that could change your team's attitude? 3. Some people probably *do* think it will work. Carve out a free space for them where they can catalyze the change without facing direct opposition.

Problem: I know what I should be doing, but I'm not doing it.

Advice: 1. Knowing isn't enough. You've got an Elephant problem. 2. Think of the 5-Minute Room Rescue. Starting small can help you overcome dread. What is the most trivial thing that you can do—right at this moment—that would represent a baby step toward the goal? 3. Look for Path solutions. How can you tweak your environment so that you're "forced" to change? 4. Behavior is contagious. Get someone else involved with you so that you can reinforce each other.

Problem: You don't know my people. They absolutely hate change.

Advice: How many of your people are married or have a child? Whatever you're proposing is a less dramatic change. (And, by the way, reread the section on the Fundamental Attribution Error. You're committing it.)

Problem: People were excited at first, but then we hit some rough patches and lost momentum.

Advice: **1.** Focus on building habits. When you create habits, you get the new behavior “for free” (think of the stand-up meetings), and you’re less likely to back-slide. **2.** Motivate the Elephant by reminding people how much they’ve already accomplished (like putting two stamps on their car-wash cards). **3.** Teach the growth mindset. Every success is going to involve rough patches. Recall the IDEO example, which warned people not to panic when the going got tough.

Problem: It’s just too much.

Advice: **1.** Shrink the change until it’s not too much. Don’t give the Elephant an excuse to give up. **2.** Start developing the growth mindset. Progress doesn’t always come easily—achieving success requires some failures along the way. Don’t beat yourself up when those failures occur.

Problem: Everyone seems to agree that we need to change, but nothing’s happening.

Advice: **1.** Remember, what looks like resistance is often lack of clarity. Miner County residents really started moving when the high school students scripted the critical move of spending 10 percent more money in Miner County. **2.** Don’t forget the Path. Are there obstacles to change that you can remove? **3.** Can you find a bright spot that can serve as a model for the right behavior? Think of the mothers in the Vietnamese village. They always wanted their kids to be better nourished, but they didn’t change until two things happened: (1) They learned exactly what to do from the bright-spot moms (e.g., use brine shrimp and sweet-potato greens); (2) Seeing the success of the bright-spot moms made them hopeful and ready to move.

Next Steps

If you've finished *Switch* and are hungry for more, visit the book's website:

www.switchthebook.com/resources

On the site, you can find resources like these:

- **One-page overview.** Download and print the one-page overview (see page 259) and share it with your colleagues. [PDF format]
- **The *Switch* podcast series.** Listen to a series of short, tailored podcasts, in which the authors offer their thoughts about how to apply the book's concepts to different kinds of change.
 - *Switch for Business*
 - *Switch for Marketers*
 - *Switch for the Social Sector*
 - *Switch for Personal Change*
- ***Switch* book club materials.** Get access to a Facilitator's Guide designed to help lead book-club discussions on *Switch*. [PDF format]
- **Switch Your Organization outline.** Use this outline to guide your team's efforts to change your business or nonprofit. [PDF format]

Recommendations for Additional Reading

We read tons of books on change while writing *Switch*. Here are some of our favorites, in no particular order:

- *The Happiness Hypothesis*, by Jonathan Haidt [Psychology, Philosophy, Happiness]. Haidt came up with the Elephant/Rider analogy that we use in *Switch*. If you want to be happier and smarter, you should read his book.
- *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck [Psychology, Individual change]. If you found our discussion of the growth mindset (in Chapter 7) interesting, then please go to the source. Everyone should own this book.
- *The Heart of Change*, by John Kotter and Dan Cohen [Business and organizational change]. Our favorite book of Kotter's, this book will be useful if you are trying to change a big organization.

- *Mindless Eating*, by Brian Wansink [Dieting]. Do you want to lose a few pounds, or are you just curious about why everyone else is getting fatter? This book is filled with clever research like the popcorn study we described in the first chapter.
- *Nudge*, by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein [Decision making and public policy]. The authors argue that people can be “nudged” to make better decisions, and they propose some great Path solutions.
- *One Small Step Can Change Your Life*, by Robert Maurer [Individual and organizational change]. If you liked the chapter on shrinking the change, this is your book. Maurer shows how small steps can lead to great change.
- *Divorce Busting*, by Michele Weiner-Davis [Relationships]. Anyone in a relationship can benefit from this book by a practitioner of solutions-focused therapy.
- *Influencer*, by Kerry Patterson et al. [Societal and organizational change]. The authors behind *Crucial Conversations* wrote this excellent book on behavior change.
- *Unleashing Change*, by Steven Kelman [Government, Organizational change]. Kelman reviews his experience in leading procurement reform in the federal government. If you’re looking for a change book that’s rigorous and full of data, check out this one.