A Book Report on
Switch
(How to Change Things When Change is Hard)

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Preface:

Why is it so hard to make lasting changes in our companies, in our communities, in our own lives? The primary obstacle is a conflict that's built into our brains. 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. The tension can doom a change effort – but if it is overcome, change can come quickly.

In *Switch* Chip and Dan Heath show how everyday people – employees and managers, parents and nurses – have united both minds and as a result achieved dramatic results. In a compelling, story-driven narrative, the authors 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.

Three Surprises about Change:

A research project was conducted to see if people were given popcorn in a larger container would they eat more. The results were an overwhelming yes. Regardless of what cities this experiment happened in and however the details were tweaked the results were always the same: Bigger Container = more eating. Best of all, people refused to believe the results. After the experiment, the researchers asked, do you think you ate more because of the larger size? The majority scoffed at the idea, saying, "Things like that don't trick me," or, "I'm pretty good at knowing when I'm full." Whoops.

Imagine that someone showed you the data from the popcorn-eating study but didn't mention the bucket sizes. On your data summary, you could quickly scan the results and see how much popcorn different people ate – some people at a little, some ate a lot and some seemed to be testing the physical limits of the human stomach. Armed with a data set like that, you would find it easy to jump to conclusions. *Some people are Reasonable Snackers, and others are Big Gluttons.*

A public-health expert, studying the data alongside you, would likely get very worried about the Gluttons. *We need to motivate these people to adopt healthier snacking behaviors! Let's find ways to show them the health hazards of eating so much!*

But wait a second. If you want people to eat less popcorn, the solution is pretty simple: Give them smaller buckets. You don't have to worry about their knowledge or their attitudes.

You can see how easy it would be to turn an easy change problem (shrinking people's buckets) into a hard change problem (convincing people to think differently). And that's the first surprise about change: **What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem.**

This is a book to help you change things. We consider change at every level – individual, organizational and societal. There are hard changes and easy changes. What distinguishes one from the other? In this book, we argue that successful changes share a common problem. They require the leader of the change to do three things at once. We've already mentioned one of those three things: To change someone's behavior, you've got to change that person's situation. For individuals' behavior to change, you've got to influence not only their environment but their hearts and minds.

The problem is this: Often the heart and mind disagree. Fervently!

Your brain isn't of one mind. The conventional wisdom in psychology is that the brain has two independent systems at work at all times. First, there's what we call the emotional side. It's the part of you that is instinctive, that feels pain and pleasure. Second, there's the rational side, also known as the reflective or conscious system. It's the part of you that deliberates and analyses and looks into the future.

Jonathan Haidt, a University of Virginia psychologist, in his book *The Happiness Hypothesis,* uses this metaphor to explain the duo's tension. He says that our emotional side is an Elephant and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reigns and seems to be the leader. But the rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He's completely overmatched.

Most of us are all too familiar with situations in which our Elephant overpowers our Rider. You've experienced this if you've ever slept in, overeaten, dialed up your ex at midnight, procrastinated, tried to quit smoking and failed, skipped the gym, gotten angry and said something you regretted, abandoned your Spanish or piano lessons, refused to speak up in a meeting because you were scared, and so on. Good thing no one is keeping score.

The weakness of the Elephant, our emotional and instinctive side is clear: It's lazy and skittish, often looking for the quick payoff (ice cream cone) over the long-term payoff

(being thin). When change efforts fail, it's usually the Elephant's fault, since the kinds of change we want typically involve short-term sacrifices for long-term payoffs. (We cut back on expenses today to yield a better balance sheet next year. We avoid ice cream today for a better body next year.) Changes often fail because the Rider simply can't keep the Elephant on the road long enough to reach the destination.

The Elephant's hunger for instant gratification is the opposite of the Rider's strength, which is the ability to think long-term, to plan, to think beyond the moment.

But what may surprise you is that the Elephant also has enormous strengths and that the Rider has crippling weaknesses. The Elephant isn't always the bad guy. Emotion is the Elephant's turf – love and compassion and sympathy and loyalty. That fierce instinct you have to protect your kids against harm – that's the Elephant. The spine-stiffening you feel when you need to stand up for yourself – that's the Elephant.

And even more important if you're contemplating a change, the Elephant is the one who gets things done. To make progress toward a goal, whether it's noble or crass requires the energy and drive of the Elephant. And this strength is the mirror image of the Rider's great weakness: spinning his wheels. The rider tends to over-analyze and over-think things. Chances are, you know people with Rider problems; your friend who can agonize for twenty minutes about what to eat for dinner; your colleague who can brainstorm about new ideas for hours but can't ever seem to make a decision.

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 the 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.

The second surprise about change is **what looks like laziness is often exhaustion**. Psychologists have discovered that s*elf-control is an exhaustible resource.* Here's why this matters for change: When people try to change things, they're usually tinkering with behaviors that have become automatic, and changing those behaviors requires carful supervision by the Rider. The bigger the change you're suggesting, the more it will sap people's self control.

And when people exhaust their self-control, what they're exhausting are the mental muscles needed to think creatively, to focus, to inhibit their impulses, and to persist in the face of frustration or failure. In other words, they're exhausting precisely the mental muscles needed to make a big change.

So when you hear people say that change is hard because people are lazy or resistant, that's just flat wrong. In fact, the opposite is true: Change is hard because people wear

themselves out. And that's the second surprise about change: What looks like laziness is often exhaustion.

This brings us to the third surprise about change: **What looks like resistance is often lack of clarity.** If you want people to change you must provide crystal-clear direction. The reason for this is so the Rider doesn't spin his wheels. If you tell people to "act healthier," think of how many ways they can interpret that – imagine their Riders contemplating the options endlessly. (Do I eat more grains and less meat? Or vice versa? Do I start taking vitamins? Would it be a good trade-off if I exercise more and bribe myself with ice cream? Should I switch to Diet Cola, or is the artificial sweetener worse than the calories?)

Remember, if you want people to change you must provide crystal-clear direction. For example, if you want people to change, you don't ask them to "act healthier." You say, "Next time you're in the dairy aisle of the grocery store, reach for a jug of 1% milk instead of whole milk."

Now you've had a glimpse of the basic three-part framework we will unpack in this book, one that can guide you in any situation where you need to change behavior:

- *Direct the Rider.* What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity. So provide crystal-clear direction. (Think 1% milk.)
- *Motivate the Elephant.* What looks like laziness is often exhaustion. The Rider can't get his way by force for very long. So it's critical that you engage people's emotional side – get their Elephants on the path and cooperative. (Think of the cookies and radishes study and the boardroom conference table full of gloves.)
- *Shape the Path.* What looks like a people problem is often a situational problem. We call the situation (including the surrounding environment) the "Path." When you shape the Path, you make change more likely, no matter what's happening with the Rider and the Elephant. (Think of the effect of shrinking movie popcorn buckets.)

We don't promise that we're going to make change easy, but at least we can make it *easier.* Our goal is to teach you a framework, based on decades of scientific research, that is simple enough to remember and flexible enough to use in many different situations – family, work, community and otherwise.

To change behavior, you've got to direct the rider, motivate the Elephant and shape the Path. If you can do all three at once, dramatic change can happen even if you don't have lots of power or resources behind you.

Direct the Rider:

In tough times, the Rider sees problems everywhere and "analysis paralysis" often kicks in. The Rider will spin his wheels indefinitely unless given clear direction. That's why to make progress on a change you need ways to direct the rider. Show him where to go,

how to act, what destination to pursue. The best hope for directing the Rider when you're trying to bring about change is identifying the "*bright spots*." When you're trying to change things there are going to be "*bright spots*" in your field of view. 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?

To pursue "*bright spots*" is to ask the question "What's working and how can we do more of it?" Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yet, in the real world, this obvious question is almost never asked. Instead, the question we ask is more problem focused: "What's broken and how do we fix it?"

What if the Rider had a more positive orientation? Imagine a world in which you experienced a rush of gratitude every single time you flipped a light switch and the room lit up. Imagine a world in which after a husband forgot his wife's birthday, she gave him a big kiss and said, "For thirteen of the last fourteen years you remembered my birthday! That's wonderful!"

But in times of change, it needs to be. Our Rider has a problem focus when he needs a *solution focus*. If you are a manager, ask yourself: "What is the ratio of the time I spend solving problems to the time I spend scaling successes?"

We need to switch from archaeological problem solving to bright-spot evangelizing. These flashes of success – these "*bright spots*" can illuminate the road map for action and spark the hope that change is possible.

Change brings new choices that create uncertainty. Ambiguity is the enemy. Any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behaviors. In short, to make a switch, you need to *script the critical moves*.

Many leaders pride themselves on setting high-level direction: *I'll set the vision and stay out of the details.* It's true that a compelling vision is critical. But it's not enough. Big-picture, hands-off leadership isn't likely to work in a change situation, because the hardest part of change – the paralyzing part – is precisely in the details.

What tires out the Rider – and puts change efforts at risk – is ambiguity. If you are leading a change effort, you need to remove the ambiguity from your vision of change. Granted, this is asking a lot. It means that you'll need to understand how to script the critical moves, to translate aspirations into actions. It's not good enough to ask your team to "be more creative" or "to tighten up on the purse strings." That's like telling the American public to "be healthier."

We all hear a lot of "common sense" wisdom about change: People don't like to change; people resist change; people are set in their ways; people are stubborn. But the examples in this book show something else entirely: railroads made profitable, towns reborn, diets changed and child abusers reformed. **Clarity dissolves resistance.**

In the book, *Built to Last* by Jim Collins their research showed that setting big, audacious 10-to-30-year goals motivating goals was a practice that distinguished lasting companies from less successful ones. In creating change, though, we're interested in goals that are closer at hand – the kinds of things that can be tackled by parents or middle-managers or social activists. We want a goal that can be tackled in months or years, not decades.

We want what we might call a *destination postcard* – a vivid picture from the near-term future that shows what could be possible. That's the missing piece of what we've discovered so far. We've seen the importance of pursuing bright spots and we've discussed ways of instructing the Rider how to behave, but we haven't answered a very basic question: Where are we headed in the end? What's the destination?

When you describe a compelling destination, you're helping to correct one of the Rider's great weaknesses – the tendency to get lost in analysis. Our first instinct, in most change situations, is to offer up data to people's Riders: *Here's why we need to change. Here are the tables and graphs and charts that prove it.* The Rider loves this. He'll start poring over the data, analyzing it and poking holes in it and he'll be inclined to debate with you about the conclusions you've drawn. To the Rider, the "analyzing" phase is often more satisfying than the "doing" phase and that's dangerous for your switch.

Notice what happens, though, when you point to an attractive destination: The Rider starts applying his strengths to figure out *how to get there.*

You have a choice about how to use the Rider's energy: By default, he'll obsess about which way to move, or whether it's necessary to move at all. But you can direct that energy to helping navigate toward the destination. *Destination postcards* do double duty: They show the Rider where you're headed and they show the Elephant why the journey is worthwhile.

So far we've learned a great deal about the Rider and his many strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side of the ledger, the Rider is a visionary. He's willing to make short-term sacrifices for long-term payoffs (which is why he fights so often with the Elephant, who generally prefers immediate gratification). He's a clever tactician, too – give him a map and he'll follow it perfectly. But we've also seen plenty of evidence of the Rider's flaws – his limited reserves of strength, his paralysis in the face of ambiguity and choice and his relentless focus on problems rather than solutions.

Here's the good news: The Rider's strengths are substantial, and his flaws can be mitigated. When you appeal to the Rider inside yourself or inside others you are trying to influence, your game plan should be simple.

First, *follow the bright spots*. As you analyze your situation, you're sure to find some things that are working better than others. Don't obsess about the failures. Instead, investigate and clone the successes.

Next, *give direction to the Rider* – both a start and a finish. Send him a destination postcard and script his critical moves..

When you do these things, you'll prepare the Rider to lead a switch. And you'll arm him for the ongoing struggles with his reluctant and formidable partner, the Elephant.

Motivate the Elephant:

In *The Heart of Change,* John Kotter and Dan Cohen reported on a study they conducted with the help of a team at Deloitte Consulting. Summarizing the data, Kotter and Cohen said that in most change situations, managers initially focus on strategy, structure, culture or systems, which leads them to miss the most important issue:

> …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. This is true even in organizations that are very focused on analysis and quantitative measurement, even among people who think of themselves as smart in an MBA sense. 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 other words, when change works, it's because leaders are speaking to the Elephant as well as the Rider.

Kotter and Cohen say that most people think change happens in this order: ANALYZE-THINK-CHANGE. But they observed that in almost all successful change efforts the sequence of change is really: SEE-FEEL-CHANGE. You're presented with evidence that makes you feel something. It might be a disturbing look at the problem, or a hopeful glimpse of the solution, or a sobering reflection of your current habits, but regardless, it's something that hits you at the emotional level. It's something that speaks to the Elephant.

When people push for change and it doesn't happen, they often chalk it up to a lack of understanding. But when people fail to change, it's not usually because of an understanding problem. Knowledge does not change behavior. This realization that we can make an impeccably rational case for change and people still won't change is pretty frustrating.

Why can't we simply think our way into new behavior? The answer is that, in some cases. We really can't trust our own thinking. It's emotion that motivates the Elephant. In fighting for change, we've got to find the feeling.

People find it more motivating to be partly finished with a longer journey than to be at the starting gate of a shorter one. That's why the conventional wisdom in development circles is that you don't publicly announce a fund-raising campaign for a charity until you've already got 50% of the money in the bag.

One way to motivate action, then, is to make people feel as though they're already closer to the finish line than they might have thought. If you want a reluctant Elephant to get moving, you need to *shrink the change.* This is an Elephant trick. The Elephant hates doing things with no immediate payoff.

If people are facing a daunting task, and their instinct is to avoid it, you've got to break down the task. *Shrink the change*. Make the change small enough that they can't help but score a victory. For example, once people clean a single room, or pay off a single debt, their dread starts to dissipate and their progress begins to snowball.

When you engineer early successes, what you're really doing is engineering hope. Hope is precious to a change effort. It's Elephant fuel. Once people are on the path and making progress, it's important to make their advances visible. When you focus attention on small milestones that are attainable and visible, rather than on the final destination you're engineering hope. It's like climbing a tall ladder and focusing on the next step rather than gawking up at the top. There may be many more steps to go, but you can take comfort that you're making real progress in the right direction.

When a task feels too big, the Elephant will resist. Small targets lead to small victories and small victories can often trigger a positive spiral of behavior. It's a theme we've seen again and again – big changes come from a succession of small changes. It's OK if the first changes seem almost trivial. The challenge is to get the Elephant moving, even if the movement is slow at first.

The Elephant has no trouble conquering these micro-milestones, and as it does, something else happens. With each step, the Elephant feels less scared and less reluctant, because things are working. With each step, the Elephant starts *feeling* the change. A journey started with dread is evolving, slowly, toward a feeling of confidence and pride. And at the same time the change is shrinking, the Elephant is *growing*.

How do you keep the Elephant motivated when it faces a long, treacherous road? The answer may sound strange: You need to create the *experience of failure* – not the failure of the mission, but failure en route. This notion takes us into a fascinating area of research that is likely to change the way you view the world.

Read the following four sentences and write down whether you agree or disagree with each of them:

1. You are a certain kind of person, and 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.

If you agreed with items 1 and 3, you're someone who has a "fixed mindset." And if you agreed with items 2 and 4, you tend to have a "growth mindset." As we'll see, which mindset you have can help determine how easy it will be for you to handle failure and how dogged you'll be in pursuing change. It might even determine how successful you are in your career.

People who have a fixed mindset believe that their abilities are basically static. Maybe you believe you're a pretty good public speaker, an average manager and a wonderful organizer. With a fixed mindset, you believe that you may get a little bit better or worse at those skills, but basically your abilities reflect the way you're wired.

If you are someone with a fixed mindset, you tend to avoid challenges, because if you fail, you fear others will see your failure as an indication of your true ability and see you as a loser. You feel threatened by negative feedback, because it seems as if the critics are saying they're better than you, positioning themselves at a level of natural ability higher than yours. You try not to be seen exerting too much effort because you believe that people who are really good don't need to try that hard, right?

In contrast, people who have a growth mindset believe that abilities are like muscles – they can be built up with practice. That is, with concerted effort, you can make yourself better at writing or managing or listening to your spouse. With a growth mindset, you tend to accept more challenges despite the risk of failure. You seek out "stretch" assignments at work. And you're more inclined to accept criticism, because ultimately it makes you better. You may not be as good as others right now, but you're thinking long-term, in a tortoise-versus-hare kind of way.

Fixed versus growth: Which are you? If you want to reach your full potential, you need a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset will make you more successful at almost anything. Which, of course, prompts an obvious question: Can people with a fixed mindset learn to adopt a growth mindset? Research has shown that the growth mindset can be taught and that it can change lives.

In the business world, we implicitly reject the growth mindset. Businesspeople think in terms of two stages: You plan, and then you execute. There's no "learning stage" or "practice stage" in the middle. From the business perspective, practice looks like poor execution. Results are the thing: *We don't care how ya do it, just get it done!*

But to create and sustain change, you've got to act more like a coach and less like a scorekeeper. You've got to embrace a growth mindset and instill it in your team. Real change, the kind that sticks, is often three steps forward and two steps back. So, if failure is a necessary part of change, then the way people understand failure is critical.

Leaders of successful change transformations understand the need to prepare their employees – and more important, their clients – for failure. Tim Brown, the CEO of IDEO, says that every design process goes through "foggy periods." One of his designers created a "project mood chart" that predicts how people will feel at different phases of a

project. It's a U-shaped curve with a peak of positive emotion, labeled "hope" at the beginning, and a second peak of positive emotion, labeled "confidence," at the end. In between the two peaks is a negative emotional valley labeled "insight."

Brown says that design is "rarely a graceful leap from height to height." When a team embarks on a new project, team members are filled with hope and optimism. As they start to collect data and observe real people struggling with existing products, they find that new ideas spring forth effortlessly. Then comes the difficult task of integrating all those fresh ideas into a coherent new design. At this "insight" stage, it's easy to get depressed, because insight doesn't always strike immediately.

The project often feels like a failure in the middle. But if the team persists through this valley of angst and doubt, it eventually emerges with a growing sense of momentum. Team members begin to test out their new designs, and they realize the improvements they've made, and they keep tweaking the design to make it better. And they come to realize, *we've cracked this problem*. That's when the team reaches the peak of confidence.

Notice what team leaders at IDEO are doing with the peaks-and-valley visual: They are creating the expectation of failure. They are telling team members not to trust that initial flush of good feeling at the beginning of the project, because what comes next is hardship and toil and frustration. Yet, strangely enough, when they deliver this warning, it comes across as *optimistic*.

That's the paradox of the growth mindset. Although it seems to draw attention to failure, and in fact encourages us to seek out *failure*, it is unflaggingly optimistic. *We will struggle, we will fail, we will be knocked down – but throughout, we'll get better, and we'll succeed in the end*.

The growth mindset, then, is a buffer against defeatism. It reframes failure as a natural part of the change process. And that's critical, because people will persevere only if they perceive falling down as *learning* rather than *failing*.

In times of change, we need to remind ourselves and others, again and again, of certain basic truths: Our brains and our abilities are like muscles. They can be strengthened with practice. We're not born skateboarders or scientists or nurses; we must learn how to skateboard, do science, or care for the sick. And out inspiration to change ourselves comes from our desire to live up to those identities.

Over the past few chapters, we've seen that the central challenge of change is keeping the Elephant moving forward. Whereas the Rider needs direction, the Elephant needs motivation. And we've seen that motivation comes from feeling – knowledge isn't enough to motivate change. But motivation also comes from confidence. The Elephant has to believe that it's capable of conquering change. And there are two routes to building people's confidence so that they feel "big" relative to their challenge. You can shrink the change or grow your people (or, preferably both).

Our picture of change is still incomplete, though, because it's clear that in some situations even a reluctant Elephant and a confused Rider will manage to change their behavior. For instance, consider the fact that even a lost, angry driver who is hopelessly late for an appointment will stop dutifully for a red light.

That's why, to make changes stick, we've got to think about shaping the Path.

Shape the Path:

Noted Stanford psychologist Lee Ross surveyed dozens of studies in psychology and noted that 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." The error lies in our inclination to attribute people's behavior to *the way they are* rather than to *the situation they are in*. What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem.

That's why the third element of our framework, the Path, is so critical. 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 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. In short, you can *shape the Path*.

What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem. And no matter what your role is, you've got some control over the situation. Tweaking the environment is about making the right behaviors a little easier and wrong behaviors a little bit harder. It's that simple. Simple tweaks of the Path can lead to dramatic changes in behavior.

Habits are behavioral autopilot, and that's why they're such a critical tool for leaders. Leaders who can instill habits that reinforce their teams' goals are essentially making progress for free. They've changed behavior in a way that doesn't draw down the Rider's reserves of self-control.

How can you create a habit that supports the change you're 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. If it's too hard, then it creates its own independent change problem.

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 set up a situation that brings out the good in these people?"

So far, as we've discussed how to shape the Path, we've encountered two strategies: Tweaking the Environment and Building Habits. There's a tool that perfectly combines

these two strategies. It's something that can be added to the environment in order to make behavior more consistent and habitual. *That tool is the humble checklist.*

Checklists educate people about what's best, showing them the ironclad right way to do something. (That means that checklists are effective at directing the Rider.) Checklists provide insurance against overconfidence. And overconfidence is worth insuring against because we all have a knack for it.

People fear checklists because they see them as dehumanizing – maybe because they associate them with the exhaustive checklists that allow inexperienced teenagers to operate fast-food chains successfully. They think if something is that simple enough to be put in a checklist, a monkey can do it. We'll, if that's true, grab a pilot's checklist and try your luck with a 747. Checklists simply make big screw-ups less likely.

How can you create an environment that would make it easier for you, or your team, to change? We've seen that supportive habits can help. We've seen that action triggers can allow you to preload difficult decisions. Even a simple checklist can make a difference. In the next chapter, we'll get the final piece of the puzzle: the influence of other people. It's easier to persevere on a long journey when you're traveling with a herd.

Think of the last time you were in a situation where you weren't totally sure how to behave. Maybe it was your first time in a new church, or your first time in a new country, or maybe it was a dinner party where you didn't know many of the guests. What did you do to try to fit in?

You watched other people, of course.

In ambiguous situations, we all look to others for cues about how to behave. We all talk about the power of peer *pressure*, but "pressure" may be overstating the case. Peer *perception* is plenty. In this entire book, you might not find a single statement that is so rigorously supported by empirical research as this one: You are doing thinks because you see your peers do them. It's not only your body-pierced teen who follows the crowd. It's *you*, too. Behavior is contagious.

When you're leading an Elephant on an unfamiliar path, chances are it's going to follow the herd. So how do you create a herd?

The Elephant constantly looks to the herd for cues about how to behave. This is why bartenders seed their tip jars – they're trying to send signals about the "norm" of the herd. It's a time-honored tactic. In fact, opera companies used to plant stooges in the audience to laugh and applaud at the appropriate times. How does this apply to the changes you're contemplating? Let's look at the underlying dynamics. 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 often is the linchpin of successful organizational change.

Keep the Switch Going:

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

The first thing to do is recognize and celebrate that first step. Something you've done has worked. You've directed the Rider, you've motivated the Elephant, you've shaped the Path – and now your team is moving, or you're moving. When you spot movement, you've got to reinforce it. Reinforcement is the secret to getting past the first step of your long journey and on to the second, third, and hundredth steps. And that's a problem, because most of us are terrible reinforcers.

We are quicker to grouse than to praise. At work, we love to bond with our colleagues through communal complaining. But this is all wrong: We need to be looking for bright spots – however tiny – and rewarding them. If you want your boss or your team to change, you better get a little less stingy with the mango.

These are encouraging realizations: Big changes can start with very small steps. Small changes tend to snowball. But this is not the same as saying that change is easy. If it were, we wouldn't see so many struggling alcoholics and troubled marriages and lagging companies and thwarted social change efforts. Change isn't always easy and it isn't always hard. In some ways change is ubiquitous; in others it's unlikely.

We can say this much with confidence: When change works, it tends to follow a pattern. The people who change have clear direction, ample motivation and a supportive environment. In other words, when change works, it's because the Rider, the Elephant and the Path are all aligned in support of the switch.

How to Make a *Switch*

When change happens, it tends to follow a pattern. We've got to stop ignoring the pattern and start embracing it. 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.
- **Script the Critical Moves.** Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.
- **Point to the Destination.** Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.

Motivate the Elephant

- **Find the Feeling.** Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something.
- **Shrink the Change.** Break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant.
- **Grow your People.** Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset.

Shape the Path

- **Tweak the Environment.** When the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation.
- **Build Habits.** When behavior is habitual, it's "free" – it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits.
- **Rally the Herd.** Behavior is contagious. Help it spread.

Message from Gary Tomlinson:

I hope you enjoyed reading this book report. It's important to understand that this book report should not take the place of you reading; *"Switch – How to Change Things When Change is Hard.* Chip and Dan Heath's book contains a lot of stories and examples that are not contained in my book report. You can learn more at www.heathbrothers.com.

Enjoy the education and wisdom contained within this book report and feel free to share it with other because the *"illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."*

You can engage Gary at gary@garyetomlinson.com. To read his other book reports or book reviews visit his website at www.garyetomlinson.com.