

SWITCH

Chip and Dan Heath

Summary by Mark R. Elliott*

1. Jonathan Haidt's book *The Happiness Hypothesis* uses the analogy of an elephant and a rider. "Haidt says that our emotional side is an Elephant and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the rider is so small relative to the Elephant." (*Switch* page 7) How would you compare and contrast Haidt's analogy with the one Paul use as he describes the struggle between our flesh and our spirit? (Romans 8, Galatians 5)
2. The book is based primarily on three "surprises" the authors identify related to change. They are:
 - What looks like a people problem is often a situation problem (page 3).
 - What looks like laziness is often exhaustion (page 12).
 - What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity (page 15).Were you surprised as well? How convincing were the Heath's in getting you to agree with them?
3. Chapter 2 talks about finding the Bright Spots. As you reflect on your church, what are some of your bright spots? Have you stopped to celebrate and then analyze them to see why they are bright spots? Are there some transferrable principles that can be used in areas where you know change needs to happen?
4. "As Barry Schwartz puts it in his book *The Paradox of Choice*, as we face more and more options, 'we become overloaded, Choice no longer liberates, it debilitates. It might even be said to tyrannize.'" (page 52) If this is true, what might need to change in your church programming?
5. "Until you can ladder your way down from a change idea to a specific behavior [that must be changed], you're not ready to lead a switch." (page 63) In light of this reality, what might you need to do differently, if the current changes you are attempting to lead are to have the impact you desire?
6. What did you glean from their contrast of Collin's BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal) and their concept of a *destination postcard* on pages 75-76?

7. On page 82 they say that SMART goals sometimes aren't the smartest thing you can use to motivate change. What do they mean, and do you agree with them?
8. "Kotter and Chohen [in their book *The Heart of Change*] 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...Kotter and Cohen observed that, in almost all successful change efforts, the sequence of change is not ANALYZE-THINK-CHANGE, but rather SEE-FEEL-CHANGE" (page 105-106). How will this reality impact your current change efforts?
9. "Another way to shrink change is to think of *small wins*—milestones that are within reach. (Our dad, Fred Heath, who worked over thirty years for IBM, would tell his teams that when 'milestones' seemed too distant, they should look for 'inch pebbles.'" (page 136) How could you use "inch pebbles" rather than "milestones" to assist in the change you are currently initiating?
10. "You want to select small wins that have two traits: (1) They're meaningful. (2) They're 'within immediate reach,' as Bill Parcells said. And if you can't achieve both traits, choose the latter!" (page 145) As you look back at your times of celebrating wins, how would you describe your effectiveness in achieving both traits? What might be a significant small win you could work towards in the next 90 days? As you describe this win, are both traits present?
11. "James March, a professor of political science at Stanford University...says that when people make choices, they tend to rely on one of two basic models of decision making: the *consequences* model or the *identity* model. The consequences model is familiar to students of economics. It assumes that when we have a decision to make, we weigh the costs and benefits of our options and make the choice that maximizes our satisfaction....In the identity model of decision making, we essentially ask ourselves three questions when we have a decision to make: *Who am I? What kind of situation is this? What would someone like me do in this situation?*" (page 153) Reflect back on recent decisions you have made. In which of the two models would each fail? Are you using both models? Why or why not?
12. "If failure is a necessary part of change, then the way people understand failure is critical... *We will struggle, we will fail, we will be knocked down—but throughout, we'll get better, and we'll succeed in the end.*" (page 168-169) Do you agree with their statement that failure is a necessary part of change? If you do, what does that say to you as you wrestle with the changes you have initiated and that have not yet achieved success?

13. What is the fundamental Attribution Error, and how does it impact us as we initiate change? (page 180)
14. “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.” (page 183) Does the fact that “you have control over the situation” give you hope? In the current change initiative, what situational components do you control?
15. “So far, we’ve discussed how to shape the Path, we’ve encountered two strategies: (1) tweaking the environment and (2) 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.” (page 220) What do they mean by a checklist? If a checklist can be “game-changing,” are there areas in church life where you can utilize them?
16. Reflect on the following statements:
- “Riders, by nature, focus on the negative. Problems are easy to spot; progress, much harder.” (page 252)
 - “Change isn’t an event; it’s a process.” (page 253)

*Mark R. Elliott served as a Director of Missions (Associational Mission Strategist) in western Iowa and eastern Nebraska for almost three decades. He is a strong advocate for obedience and Biblically based disciple making. As such, he knows that making healthy disciples requires Christian leaders to be constantly pursuing spiritual maturity—be lifelong learners. Because of the time constraints of ministry, most pastors focus their reading list on resources that assist them in teaching and preaching the Word of God. As such, books focusing on church health, leadership development, and church growth tend to find their way to the bottom of the stack. With that reality in mind, Mark has written discussion summaries on several books that have helped him to personally grow in Christ and that tend to find themselves on the bottom of most pastor’s stack. Many pastors have found them helpful as they are able to more quickly process great insights from other pastors and authors.