Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard by Chip Heath, Dan Heath
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Last annotated on September 23, 2015

Changes often fail because the Rider simply can't keep the Elephant on the road long enough to reach the destination.Read more at location 106
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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.Read more at location 117
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When people try to change things, they're usually tinkering with behaviors that have become automatic, and changing those behaviors requires careful supervision by the Rider. The bigger the change you're suggesting, the more it will sap people's self-control.Read more at location 164
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Change is hard because people wear themselves out. And that's the second surprise about change: What looks like laziness is often exhaustion.Read more at location 170
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What looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity.Read more at location 213
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If you want people to change, you must provide crystal-clear direction.Read more at location 235
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"TBU"—true but useless.Read more at location 350
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"Knowledge does not change behavior," he said. "We have all encountered crazy shrinks and obese doctors and divorced marriage counselors."Read more at location 389
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The Rider loves to contemplate and analyze, and, making matters worse, his analysis is almost always directed at problems rather than at bright spots.Read more at location 421
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Show him where to go, how to act, what destination to pursue. And that's why bright spots are so essential, because they are your best hope for directing the Rider when you're trying to bring about change.Read more at location 430
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"What's working and how can we do more of it?"Read more at location 537
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Big problems are rarely solved with commensurately big solutions.Read more at location 584
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Instead, the question we ask is more problem focused: “What’s broken, and how do we fix it?”Read more at location 596
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“Honey, you made an ‘A’ in this one class. You must really have a strength in this subject. How can we build on that?”Read more at location 632
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“What is the ratio of the time I spend solving problems to the time I spend scaling successes?”Read more at location 641
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And that’s why decision paralysis can be deadly for change—because the most familiar path is always the status quo.Read more at location 704
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Any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behaviors.Read more at location 713
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To spark movement in a new direction, you need to provide crystal-clear guidance.Read more at location 740
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you need a gut-smacking goal, one that appeals to both Rider and Elephant.Read more at location 1092
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SMART goals presume the emotion; they don’t generate it.Read more at location 1101
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A big-picture goal like “Be healthier” is necessarily imprecise, and that ambiguity creates wiggle room for the Elephant. It makes it easy to rationalize failure. One response to this dilemma is to set super-prescriptive goals.Read more at location 1160
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Note that B&W goals—“No more Cheetos,” “No wine ever”—are not inspiring at all. They’re 100 percent restrictive. Furthermore, they are scripting critical behaviors rather than painting a picture of a destination.Read more at location 1175
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The strategy had changed in a way that gave lower-level employees an equally credible voice in the decision.Read more at location 1256
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The B&W goal worked exactly as the management team had intended. When BP left nowhere for people to hide, its people stopped trying to hide.Read more at location 1257

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What is essential, though, is to marry your long-term goal with short-term critical moves.Read more at location 1270

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When you're at the beginning, don't obsess about the middle, because the middle is going to look different once you get there. Just look for a strong beginning and a strong ending and get moving.Read more at location 1275

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follow the bright spots.Read more at location 1342

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Don't obsess about the failures. Instead, investigate and clone the successes.Read more at location 1344

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give direction to the Rider—bothRead more at location 1344

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In highly successful change efforts, people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in ways that influence emotions, not justRead more at location 1410

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(If someone is unsure about whether to marry her significant other, you're not going to tip her by talking up tax advantages and rent savings.)Read more at location 1422

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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.Read more at location 1717

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If you want a reluctant Elephant to get moving, you need to shrink the change.Read more at location 1752

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When you set small, visible goals, and people achieve them, they start to get it into their heads that they can succeed.Read more at location 1959

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More typically, you take one step forward and 1.3 steps back and 2.7 steps forward and then 6 steps to the side, and at that moment, a new CEO will come in and declare a new destination.Read more at location 1970

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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.Read more at location 2007

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How do you keep the Elephant motivated when it faces a long, treacherous road? The answer may sound strange: You need to create the expectation of failure—not the failure of the mission itself, but failure en route.Read more at location 2204
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"Everything can look like a failure in the middle."Read more at location 2285
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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.Read more at location 2301
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Edmondson found that the teams who failed made the mistake of trying to "get it right on the first try" and were motivated by the chance to "perform, to shine, or to execute perfectly.Read more at location 2346
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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 sick people.Read more at location 2384
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What looks like a person problem is often a situation problem.Read more at location 2408
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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.Read more at location 2415
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(It would be like watching a show whose premise was that if you take scalding-hot liquids—dangerous and slippery—and stick them in the freezer for a long time, they renounce their fiery former selves and turn to ice!) Now you can see why the thirdRead more at location 2429
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In this chapter, we've seen that what looks like a "character problem" is often correctible when you change the environment. The transformations are stunning. Take a bunch of customer-service slackers and rip out their call-queuing system, and they start helping customers. Take a boss whose employees say she "won't listen" and rejigger her furniture, and suddenly the employees' frustrations fade. Take the biggest jerks in the Stanford dorms and give them a page of instructions, and they'll donate more food to the needy than the saints. Simple tweaks of the Path can lead to dramatic changes in behavior.Read more at location 2731
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as the extra-credit study demonstrates, action triggers can have a profound power to motivate people to do the things they know they need to do.Read more at location 2826
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By preloading the decision, we conserve the Rider's self-control.Read more at location 2829

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The next time your team resolves to act in a new way, challenge team members to take it further. Have them specify when and where they're going to put the plan in motion. Get them to set an action trigger. (Then set another one for yourself.)Read more at location 2868

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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?"Read more at location 2982

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A trainer in California taught six elephants to stand in a line and urinate on command, and they hadn't even completed a Myers-Briggs.Read more at location 3415

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Change isn't an event; it's a process.Read more at location 3438

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