

---

## BOOK REVIEW

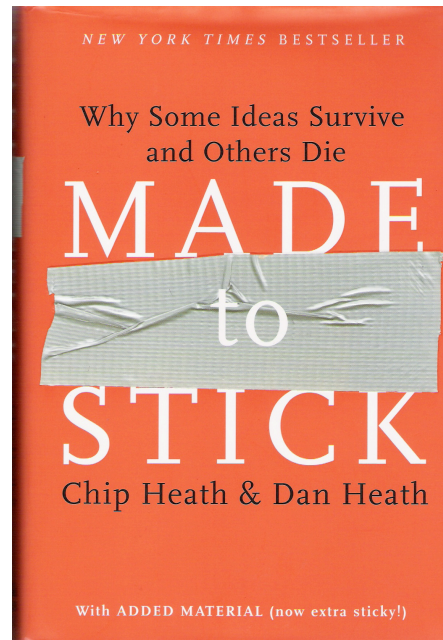
---

### **"Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die" by Chip Heath & Dan Heath**

**Random House: New York 2008**  
**ISBN 13: 978-1-4000-6428-1**  
**ISBN 10: 1-4000-6428-7**

[Hard Cover for around US\$17.16  
on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for a new copy;  
From US\$9.97 for a used copy]

**Reviewed by Dr Darryl Cross,**  
**leadership & careers coach**  
**& psychologist**  
[www.DrDarryl.com](http://www.DrDarryl.com)



---

We've all been there. No matter whether it has been a seminar, meeting, conference, talk or presentation, the subject matter itself may have been appealing or the topic interesting, but the delivery itself was at best a very average or at worst boring. Time dragged and perhaps you found it difficult to concentrate. You come away from such an occasion feeling disappointed, maybe wondering how else you could have spent your time. What a wasted opportunity. The occasion held such promise, but the delivery was anything but stimulating. You may also have had trouble recalling exactly what was said. What were those main points again?

The Heath Brothers (Chip and Dan) have done us all a great service. There is no excuse any more for anyone to give a presentation that is not "sticky." Sticky? This is a presentation that is understood, remembered and it changes something. Through their research and surveys of great orators and memorable speeches, they have determined that there are six traits that ensure successful presentations. So what are these traits that make ideas and presentations stick?

You've heard about the KISS principle. Keep It **Simple** Stupid (Chapter 1). First of all, you've got to work out what your core message is. It's a matter of prioritising. Choose the core concept or notion. What's in and what's out? Put it in a nutshell. Then you work out how to communicate that simply. Use an analogy? Use a concept pitch? Proverbs are ideal. Make it short and sweet. A one-sentence statement. Tease your audience, don't tell all.

Second, you need to grab attention so it's important to use the **Unexpected** (Chapter 2). Ask a question for example, and get your audience thinking. Who has ever wondered if there is more out there for them? What are Saturn's rings really made of? According to the United Nations quality of life index, which country has the highest standard of living? Before your message can stick, your audience has to want to hear it.

Third, there is the tray of being **Concrete** (Chapter 3). Most of us don't deal well with the abstract. This is where business gets it wrong. Mission statements, strategies and visions are often ambiguous and abstract. People don't connect with these. One way to be concrete is to paint a mental picture for people or use an analogy. But make it real. "High performance" is abstract. A V8 engine is concrete. It can also help to use some sensory input to make it real. Can you help your audience to "see" the image/concept/notion? "Imagine you're standing in front of the Mona Lisa...." or "You've just cut a lemon in half and now you bring it up to your lips, the juice rolls across your tongue and into your mouth...."

Fourth, it has to be **Credible** (Chapter 4). Using statistics can help, but especially if you use a comparison or show a relationship. A primary school teacher doesn't just tell the class that they have a 1 in 8 million chance of winning the lottery, instead, he says that they have more of a chance of being struck by lightning than winning the lottery. The kids get it.

Fifth, it's about in **Emotion** (Chapter 5). I remember reading once that, "Logic makes people think; Emotion makes them act." Putting emotion into a presentation makes people feel something. Sometimes this means including the WIIFM Principle (What's In It For Me) where it's about self-interest. Sometimes it's about appealing to their identity, who they want to be and where they want to go.

Finally, it's about **Stories** (Chapter 6). Stories always captivate attention. The world's religions are built on powerful stories. We thrive on stories. We have an affinity with stories. Stories drive action through stimulation (what to do) and inspiration (the motivation to do it).

We all need this book. It doesn't matter whether you're presenting one-on-one to somebody formally (counselling, instructing) or informally (coffee chat) or to a group (ie., team leader, supervisor, manager) or on a professional basis (trainer, facilitator, key-note speaker), this book shows how to get your message across. The secrets of the great orators and communicators has been revealed.

Needless to say, the book uses all the "sticky" traits that it espouses and therefore is an easy read with lots of great stories. Generally, towards the end of each chapter is an "Idea Clinic" which is an exercise where you can implement the principles discussed to allow ideas to become stickier. It's practical home-work if you like.

In this day and age, it's about communicating and getting your ideas across. Go get sticky.

[Dr Darryl Cross is a clinical and organisational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be seen at [www.DrDarryl.com](http://www.DrDarryl.com)]