



## Sticky Ideas Share Six Basic Traits

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*From the book, "Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die: Made to Stick" by Chip and Dan Heath*

### 1. Simplicity.

Messages are most memorable if they are short and deep. Glib sound bites are short, but they don't last. Proverbs such as the golden rule are short but also deep enough to guide the behavior of people over generations.

### 2. Unexpectedness.

Something that sounds like common sense won't stick. Look for the parts of your message that are *uncommon* sense. Such messages generate interest and curiosity.

### 3. Concreteness.

Abstract language and ideas don't leave sensory impressions; concrete images do. Compare "get an American on the moon in this decade" with "seize leadership in the space race through targeted technology initiatives and enhanced team-based routines."

### 4. Credibility.

Will the audience buy the message? Can a case be made for the message or is it a confabulation of spin? Very often, a person trying to convey a message cites outside experts when the most credible source is the person listening to the message. Questions—"Have *you* experienced this?"—are often more credible than outside experts. Case studies that involve people also move them.

### 5. Emotions.

How do we get people to care about our ideas? We make them *feel* something. Research shows that people are more likely to make a charitable gift to a single needy individual than to an entire impoverished region. "We are wired," Heath writes, "to feel things for people, not abstractions."

### 6. Stories.

We all tell stories every day. Why? "Research shows that mentally rehearsing a situation helps us perform better when we encounter that situation," Heath writes. "Stories act as a kind of mental flight simulator, preparing us to respond more quickly and effectively."