

The irony is, that summarizing this book entirely removes its stickiness.

“Some things are inherently interesting, and some are inherently UNinteresting. We remember the interesting ones. So what is it that makes them stick. Are ideas born interesting or made? This is a nurture book.”

6 Principles of Stickiness:

- **Simplicity** - simple and profound
- **Unexpectedness** - generate interest, curiosity
- **Concreteness** - explain in terms of human actions
- **Credibility** - Help People test ideas for themselves
- **Emotions** - make them feel something
- **Stories** - show them

Simple: Find the core of the idea, find the commander's intent, the end goal. “A Designer knows when he has achieved perfection, when there is nothing left to take away.” When people are given more choices, even irrelevant ones, they have trouble making decisions. You must be willing to sacrifice ideas for the bottom line.

It is easier to learn new concepts by tying them to a concept - or schema - that you already know. Schemas enable simplicity - they help create complex messages from simple materials. Analogies, like movie pitches, tap into existing schemas and accelerate the learning curve. Good analogies are generative. They generate new perceptions and ideas, they derive power from clever substitution - like Disney calling employees cast members.

The Curse of Knowledge: Accuracy to the point of uselessness. Making an idea simple to understand is key to making it stick. This is hard to do, because once we know something, it is hard to unknow it.

Unexpected: Breaks a pattern. It is the best way to get attention. Surprise makes us want to find the answer. In order to be sticky, the surprise must cause insight. Like a ad for seat belts that starts out like an ad for minivans and ends in death. No one expects it. Figure out what is counterintuitive about your message, and communicate that in an unexpected way. Push your common sense message to uncommon sense. The mantra, ‘Names, names names,’ makes sense to a newspaper reporter. But saying, “I’d publish phonebook pages to get more names,” pushes it to uncommon sense and makes it memorable. Surprise happens when our guessing machines fail. But then we must fix them, to get that ‘aha’ moment. Great customer service is common sense. Service so good that you will refund money for a product you don’t sell is uncommon sense.

Keeping people’s attention. Start with a mystery. What will happen next? How will it turn out? Curiosity happens when we feel a gap in our knowledge. Our tendency is to tell the facts first, but first we must help people realize that they need those facts. To create a gap, you start with knowledge. The more information we gain on a subject, the more we focus on what we don’t know. If we know 17 state capitals, that’s just fine; but if we know 47, we just *have* to know the other 3. Sometimes, you have to give people context to make them care. No one cared about the outcome of college football games until someone had the idea of giving people an inside look at the college towns and rabid fans.

Concreteness: You must be able to SEE the idea to remember it. Break large ideas into small pieces that people can understand. “World class customer service” is abstract - warming a customer’s car while they shop is concrete. Make ideas tangible, bring them to real life. Prejudice is abstract - having to use a different bathroom is concrete.

Credibility: Honesty and trustworthiness can be more powerful than status. Messages must have internal credibility. Vivid details that support your core idea give it credibility. Like urban legends that happened to a friend Jim’s out by the pond off Hwy 99. Statistics can also be used to create credibility, but they must be clear and create a relationship. It is more important for people to remember the relationship than numbers. Like movie popcorn has as much fat as a whole day’s worth of unhealthy eating. Vivid details that we can picture, make us more likely to judge a story as true. This mother makes sure her son brushes his teeth every night, vs This mother makes sure her son brushes his teeth every night. He uses a Darth Vader toothbrush. Putting statistics on a human scale makes them seem more accurate - because we can picture them. This can be done using analogies, which work with our existing schema.

The Sinatra test: "If I can make it here, I can make it anywhere."

Testable credentials - see for yourself, like where's the beef ads.

Emotional: When we think analytically, we are less likely to act. We act on emotions, and thinking analytically hinders that ability. The most basic way to get people to care about something is to form an association with something that they already care about or understand.

When an association becomes overused it is called *semantic stretch* - when everyone is tapping into the same thing. To avoid it you have to tap into a new schema. Sportsmanship became an overused term with weak connotations, so someone changed it to Honoring the Game, and it regained its strength.

To get people to care about our ideas, we must appeal to things that matter to them - appeal to their self interests. Emphasize benefits over features. Personalize it. Say, "You, Picture yourself, imagine yourself."

"They laughed when I sat down at the piano, and then I started to play!" Most famous headline in advertising history.

What motivates people:

- Transcendence: help other realize their potential
- Self Actualization: realize our own potential, peak experiences
- Aesthetic: Symmetry, order, beauty, balance
- Learning: know, understand, mentally connect
- Esteem: achieve, be competent, gain approval, independence, status
- Belonging: love, family, friends, affection
- Security: protection, safety, stability
- Physical: hunger, thirst, bodily comfort

People pursue all of these pretty much simultaneously.

BUT, when dealing with politics our principles are a better indicator. Group interest takes over - what is better for my group?

James Stafford's 2 basic models for decision making: First involves calculating consequences vs value. The second is based on identity. Who am I? What kind of situation is this? What do people like me do in this situation? Example: Don't mess with Texas ad campaign successfully convinced target audience (Bubba) that Texans don't litter.

"A credible idea makes people believe, an emotional idea makes people care, stories make people act."

Stories: When we hear a story, we act it out in our heads. "Mental simulation of past events can help us deal with them in the future and solve problems....We cannot imagine events without evoking the same modules of the brain that evoke real physical activity." It can help prevent us from relapsing into bad habits, and even build skills such as public speaking or piano playing. Mental simulations help us manage emotions. It is important to note that, the visualizations that help; focus on the events, the process, not the outcomes. "This is the role that stories play - putting knowledge into a framework that is more lifelike... More like a flight simulator." Being the audience to a story, gets us ready to act.

When talking about inspirational stories, there are 3 basic plots:

- The Challenge: David and Goliath
- The Connection: developing a relationship that bridges a gap
- The Creativity: Involves a mental breakthrough - Macgyver

For business:

A good strategy guides behavior. A story works better to exemplify strategy. Your core message works as a summary of your story, like a punch-line. The story and the moral, but the moral is implicit in the story - not vice versa. A good strategy works better than a set of rules - it helps people choose between 2 good choices. As a newspaper photographer, do you take a photo of the beautiful sunset or the boring meeting? The motto, "Names, names, names;" gives you the strategy you need to make the decision easily.

