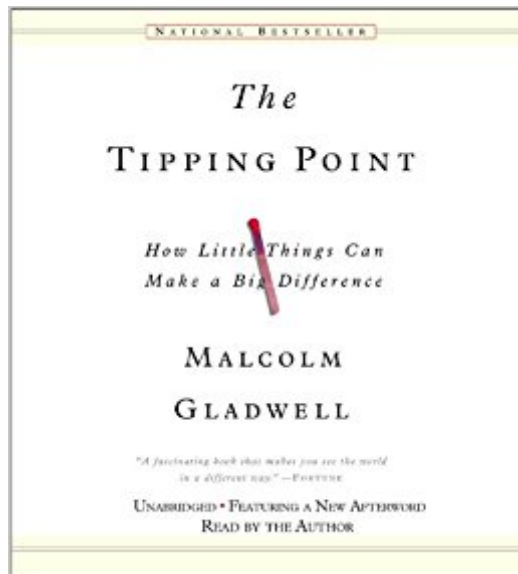




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# The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference



## Synopsis

This celebrated New York Times bestseller -- now poised to reach an even wider audience in paperback -- is a book that is changing the way Americans think about selling products and disseminating ideas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The best way to understand the dramatic transformation of unknown books into bestsellers, or the rise of teenage smoking, or the phenomena of word of mouth or any number of the other mysterious changes that mark everyday life," writes Malcolm Gladwell, "is to think of them as epidemics. Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do." Although anyone familiar with the theory of memetics will recognize this concept, Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* has quite a few interesting twists on the subject. For example, Paul Revere was able to galvanize the forces of resistance so effectively in part because he was what Gladwell calls a "Connector": he knew just about everybody, particularly the revolutionary leaders in each of the towns that he rode through. But Revere "wasn't just the man with the biggest Rolodex in colonial Boston," he was also a "Maven" who gathered extensive information about the British. He knew what was going on and he knew exactly whom to tell. The phenomenon continues to this day--think of how often you've received information in an e-mail message that had been forwarded at least half a dozen times before reaching you. Gladwell develops these and other concepts (such as the "stickiness" of ideas or the effect of population size on information dispersal) through simple, clear explanations and entertainingly illustrative anecdotes, such as comparing the pedagogical methods of Sesame Street

and Blue's Clues, or explaining why it would be even easier to play Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon with the actor Rod Steiger. Although some readers may find the transitional passages between chapters hold their hands a little too tightly, and Gladwell's closing invocation of the possibilities of social engineering sketchy, even chilling, *The Tipping Point* is one of the most effective books on science for a general audience in ages. It seems inevitable that "tipping point," like "future shock" or "chaos theory," will soon become one of those ideas that everybody knows--or at least knows by name.

--Ron Hogan --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The premise of this facile piece of pop sociology has built-in appeal: little changes can have big effects; when small numbers of people start behaving differently, that behavior can ripple outward until a critical mass or "tipping point" is reached, changing the world. Gladwell's thesis that ideas, products, messages and behaviors "spread just like viruses do" remains a metaphor as he follows the growth of "word-of-mouth epidemics" triggered with the help of three pivotal types. These are Connectors, sociable personalities who bring people together; Mavens, who like to pass along knowledge; and Salesmen, adept at persuading the unenlightened. (Paul Revere, for example, was a Maven and a Connector). Gladwell's applications of his "tipping point" concept to current phenomena--such as the drop in violent crime in New York, the rebirth of Hush Puppies suede shoes as a suburban mall favorite, teenage suicide patterns and the efficiency of small work units--may arouse controversy. For example, many parents may be alarmed at his advice on drugs: since teenagers' experimentation with drugs, including cocaine, seldom leads to hardcore use, he contends, "We have to stop fighting this kind of experimentation. We have to accept it and even embrace it." While it offers a smorgasbord of intriguing snippets summarizing research on topics such as conversational patterns, infants' crib talk, judging other people's character, cheating habits in schoolchildren, memory sharing among families or couples, and the dehumanizing effects of prisons, this volume betrays its roots as a series of articles for the *New Yorker*, where Gladwell is a staff writer: his trendy material feels bloated and insubstantial in book form.

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This book dissects pivotal situations in history in which the decisions that we collectively made as a society ultimately had major ramifications or "tipping points" as Gladwell points out. He discusses the ripples in history and how our human behavior collectively and individually have ultimately shaped the society that we live in today. Overall, I think this book is a game changer! Gladwell does

a great job providing glimpses into our human behavior and even more so explaining what we as a group are capable of doing. The book is insightful and easy read to read. Definitely worth purchasing.

Malcolm Gladwell does a fantastic job dissecting the causes of why some messages spread and some don't. He does a great job weaving in relevant research to make his points. Book is exceptionally well written. Must read for anyone in spreading a message, whether you are in the business of selling products, saving lives or saving souls.

This book has a very interesting method of teaching using multiple case studies to give examples of the effectiveness, the uniqueness, and the power of these natural skills that together create an epidemic. It takes the smallest change to shatter epidemics equilibrium. It sets the tone for the book in my opinion. Letting you grasp the concept that it's the subtle things that create a monumental compounding effect in epidemics. The book pulls you into the short stories broken down to explain how the smallest change can happen in any of the 3 agents. Law of the Few- it's not masses of agitating agents that cause an epidemic, but just a few small insignificant changes. Stickiness Factor- delivering a message in such a way that a person cannot remove it from their mind. Power of Context- the sensitivity we have to our surroundings and situations that make us react in a certain manner. He also breaks down how there are 3 main types of people that are critical to social epidemics. Connectors- These people who have an uncanny ability to make friends everywhere they go. Nothing makes them happier than building and keeping relationships with people. These people simply make the length of seemingly impossible connections far shorter than you can fathom. Marvans- These are people that live for the moment to share something with you. To somehow provide you with money saving or life changing recommendations. They have a wealth of knowledge in consumer goods and services and just want to help get the best deal and or experience. These people drive word of mouth advertising. Salesman- This is what I am. These are people that have the ability to persuade someone from the point of not interested to so excited they are telling their friends. Not because they are conniving or taking advantage of people but because they have a passion for what they are offering or telling you about. They wake up excited about the ability to help another person because that's what their feeling of success is wrapped around. What separates a great salesman from the average one is the number of answers they have to the objections commonly raised by potential clients.

I had to read this book for a class and I'm not a big reader of business books...I have to admit I really liked the book. Usually I don't care for business books because the flow of the writing bores me out of my mind. However this book, to be honest has me thinking of exploring some of the other Gladwell titles. I'm a human resources and organizational development graduate student, and as I was reading, I was able to identify with the role that Connectors, Mavens, Salesmen, Innovators, and Trendsetters could play if I had one of each on a team at my job. The next time I have to put a team together I know exactly who to look for. I could go on and on, but at the end of it, I just really enjoyed reading this book.

Common sense is not always common to all. Sometimes, the things that make the difference in any system, in any society and in any business should be identified with careful thought using common sense. Malcolm has done the research and revealed to us things that we sometimes take for granted and has illustrated it in graphic fashion. He reminds us of the importance of the context of the effects of an environment on our behaviour. He reminds us of the value of certain socially gifted people and the value they give to society and business right down to the money. This book is awesome because it sharpens your mind eye to see the things that can cause an epidemic or start the next fad in popular culture. This book is a must read for persons who desire to make big impact on this tightly connected world.

In *Tipping Point*, Gladwell indicated his purpose as "the biography of an idea. . . the best way to understand the emergence. . . ideas and produces and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do" (p. 7). Gladwell further noted, "when an epidemic tips. . . it tips because something has happened. . . three agents of change I call the Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor, and the Power of Context" (pp. 18, 19). He then proceeds to discuss and illustrate these three factors. Who would like this book? People interested in marketing/sales, communication, social movements, social capital, social networks, persuasion, and influence. Gladwell is yet another "I read everything he writes" type of writer. If you peruse the 'news' for Gladwell, I am fascinated by how seemingly polarizing he can be particularly with regard to whether what he says is valid, scholarly, or worthy of consideration (smile). Yet from a reader's perspective - his thoughts have a great deal of street credibility, meaning - Gladwell has a knack for describing, illustrating and explaining (with a great deal of clarity) our lived experience regardless of the topic he chooses....such that I find myself wanting to tell the critics to just relax - he's not portraying himself as a social scientist, he's a writer

telling a story about what he sees and the observations he makes....

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