

Matthew's Book Club Summary #4

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Title: The Tipping Point

The book club started as an informal, fun way to explore and consider business ideas relevant to our work with colleagues. The format consists of one person (usually Matthew) reading a book and writing a summary for discussion during team meetings. This allows the other team members to benefit from the book's insights, without carving time in their schedule to read the full volume.

The idea was to summarize *an interesting part* of each chapter in a paragraph or two, and where applicable, note how these could be relevant to the workplace. This provides the reviewer with practise condensing a mass of data into a few pieces of key information: an underappreciated skill. The reviews are meant to be accurate but light-hearted, on the assumption that people learn more when they're having fun.

Matthew's company gave permission for these to be distributed to non-employees as long as the employer-specific content was removed, for which he is sincerely appreciative.

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About the author:

Malcolm Gladwell (whose dad was a professor at the University of Waterloo!) grew up in Ontario, and currently writes for The New Yorker. The Tipping Point was his first book; his next, Blink, drew heavily from subsequent book club selection Gut Feelings.

Ch	Title	Summary
Intro		Epidemic = contagiousness. Little causes can have big effects, and change happens not gradually but at one dramatic moment. That moment when everything can change all at once (good or bad) = the Tipping Point.
1	The Three Rules of Epidemics	<p>The three rules are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Law of the Few 2. The Stickiness Factor 3. The Power of Context <p>A few people can agument a disease flare-up into a epidemic. Stickiness allows a commercial message to stay in someone's mind long enough to influence future purchasing decisions. Situational context can also facilitate or impair the spread of an idea or virus.</p> <p>Obey these laws and you have a recipe for a successful epidemic.</p>
2	The Law of the Few: Connectors, Mavens, and Salesmen	<p>People with special skills are needed. Do not need many of them to effect change successfully.</p> <p>Salesmen = sell idea, product, info Mavens = have/collect information Connectors = social glue, spread info</p>
3	The Stickiness Factor: <i>Sesame Street</i> , <i>Blue's Clues</i> , and the educational virus	Contagiousness is not enough, it has to stick and stay with you. <i>Sesame Street</i> learnings did not stick but its characters did. Learnings from <i>Blue's Clues</i> stuck but its characters did not.
4	The Power of Context (Part One): Bernie Goetz and the Rise and Fall	Broken Windows Theory. Clean up our own act, and others will follow. Many compelling examples are offered. Our environment influences us

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	of New York City Crime	and not the other way around.
5	The Power of Context (Part Two): The Magic Number One Hundred and Fifty	Gore Associates is covered here; they seemed to intuitively figure out that the maximum ideal size for a business unit is 150 people (Dunbar's number). More than that, and people can't quite keep their relationships with each other. An interesting choice for this chapter.
6	Case Study: Rumors, Sneakers, and the Power of Translation	Again, many compelling examples are offered. None of them directly applicable for the firm.
7	Case Study: Suicide, Smoking, and the Search for the Unsticky Cigarette	Nicotine is the stickiness factor – you get addicted to it. Smoking itself is not cool. But cool people smoke. You want to be cool? Do what cool people do: smoke. "Coolness" is subjective.
8	Conclusion: Focus, Test, and Believe	Effecting change that sticks does not have to cost a lot. You can attain Tipping Points but the right series of events have to occur. This requires people.
9	Afterword: Tipping Point Lessons from the Real World	Again, many compelling examples are offered.