

# Smart Summaries

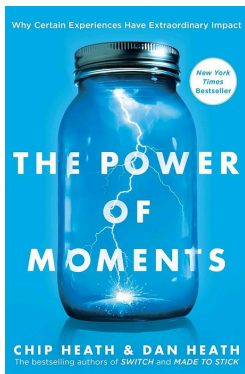
Book Briefs for Education Professionals



**CESA<sub>6</sub>**  
SMART THINKING.

Smart Summaries break down important books, texts, and other educational resources into an easy-to-read synopsis and provide busy education professionals with ideas to help develop greater leadership skills, intellect and innovation within classrooms and educational systems.

## The Book



**Date of Creation:**  
December, 2017

**Title**  
The Power of Moments Authors: Chip Heath and Dan Heath Copyright 2017  
Citation: Heath, C. (2017). The power of moments is why certain experiences have extraordinary impact. Waterville: Thorndike Press.

## Qualities of Moment Makers

- Create unique life opportunities
- Make the ordinary extraordinary
- Seek to understand the meaning of the moment
- Build courage in yourself and others



[Author Site](#)  
[Youtube](#)

## At a Glance

Elevate the ordinary by creating peaks in the moment.

Seek insight by seeking the truth and looking deep into the moment.

Create pride by seeing the contributions of others in the moment.

Develop connections by reflecting on the meaning of the moment.

## Introduction

The Heath Bros. have done it again. This short text is a great read for all levels of leadership. Regardless of your role, this text has methods for making the normal events of life more exciting by providing strategies to engage every part of yourself as you go through your day. The power of the text is in the stories and examples that can help you as a teacher, a principal, a business leader, and even a student.

The research, combined with the common sense approaches, allow for anyone to elevate their approaches in all facets of leadership. The idea that too many of us remember the wrong things or fail to recognize the power of the moment should be reason enough to read this summary and the text. Every leader at every level should read this and apply the lessons of the text so that we can serve others better through recognizing our obligation to seize the moment.

**“Defining moments shape our lives, but we don’t have to wait for them to happen. We can be authors of them.”**

## Chapter Review

### Chapter 1: Defining Moments

**Key Quote: "Our lives are measured in moments, and defining moments are the ones that endure in our memories."**

- "We all have defining moments in our lives – meaningful experiences that stand out in our memory."
- People tend to remember or recall moments based on "peaks, pits, and transitions."
- Customer service is expected, but memorable customer service differentiates itself by doing something unique and extraordinarily unexpected. The text gives an example of a hotel in Los Angeles that has a phone at the pool dedicated to ordering popsicles.
- Make traditions and norms memorable by changing the routine and adding a little bit of spice.
- There are four components of memorable moments known as EPIC:
  - Elevation – a moment that rises above all others in a day
  - Pride – a moment that happened while we are at peak performance
  - Insight – a moment that changes how we see our environment
  - Connection – a moment that is part of our cultural fabric

### Chapter 2: Thinking Moments

**Key Quote: "Transitions should be marked, milestones commemorated and pits filled."**

- If you want to lead people differently, you have to become cognizant of your ability to change the ordinary. Example: What if you treated the first day of work for a new employee like a first date? You worked hard to impress them instead of them working hard to impress you?
- People crave unique experiences.
- We should create moments for kids in school in different ways. "Ex: 1,000th day of school, 50th book read, etc" and what about teachers "Ex: 1,000th student taught." Don't make it about years – make it moments.
- Think of the opposite of peaks – pits. You need to create moments to fill these voids in life. If someone has a bad experience you can only look forward and create a memorable solution.
- Great customer service is also "service recovery."
- Great customer service people recognize the opportunities presented by pit moments. They capitalize on a negative moment and create a positive one. An example is a hotel that was contacted when a child left a stuffed animal there. The hotel staff took the stuffed animal took pictures of it everywhere and shipped it back with a little book of all the ways the toy was safe and enjoying her time. Memorable!
- One example for creating a memorable moment is at the end of a project. Normally we celebrate the end of the project by starting a new one. What if instead you had a project shower and celebrated the implementation of the project?

### Chapter 3: Building Peaks

**Key Quote: "To create fans, you need the remarkable, and that requires peaks. Peaks don't just happen. They take energy and effort."**

- "To elevate a moment, do three things: First, boost sensory appeal. Second, raise the stakes. Third, break the script."
- High school students log more time in classrooms than anywhere else. Yet most adults will not recall learning experiences.
- "What if we could design an academic experience that was as memorable as prom?"

### Chapter 3 Continued: Building Peaks

- Are there peaks in the learning environment?
- Using an athletic analogy, most schools run learning like it is a non-stop practice.
- Schools and customer service experiences have a lot in common: "mostly forgettable and occasionally remarkable."
- Design instructional methods that drive emotional connection and memory to the experience in order to increase student retention of knowledge.
- When investing in increasing your customer satisfaction, there is a greater return on investment when you spend money on moving people from an eight to a nine.
- "There is nine times more to gain by elevating positive customers than by eliminating negative ones."
- The quickest assessment of creating peaks is if people pull out their phones to capture the moment.
- "Beware the soul-sucking force of reasonableness."

**"You can't schedule epiphanies."**

### Chapter 4: Break the Script

**Key Quote: "Just by disrupting routines, we can create more peaks."**

- We all have scripts that we follow. Break the script in order to make memories.
- Focus on surprises on routines. If you think you're going to get people to remember something you can't make it an expectation. An example – every Friday you give something away. The first Friday it makes an impression. But if you repeat it, it becomes part of the script and as a result people will expect it. It no longer makes it memorable – instead if you stop doing it, you'll create disappointment.
- Employees must have the ability to break the script and be creative and spontaneous.
- Spontaneity in every aspect of your life will create lasting moments at home, with friends, and at work.
- Get people out of their traditional environments and mix it up. Move your classroom for a day, take the leadership "planning" day to an unexpected environment, get people talking about the environment, and moving to increase creativity and memory.
- "Breaking the script is a strategy."
- We are most likely to recall our youth and life cycle rituals because they are all firsts.

### Chapter 5: Trip Over the Truth

**Key Quote: "When you have a sudden realization, one that you didn't see coming, and one that you know viscerally is right, you've tripped over the truth."**

- Create visual stories and examples to truly drive home your point.
- A strategy to get people to engage is to allow people to experience something vs. simply explaining it. If you want to change learning environments and student experiences, have teachers go through an entire day as a student.
- We have to create "uncomfortable truths" in order for people to break the script.
- Three steps:
  - Clear insight
  - Compressed in time
  - Discovered by the audience
- "You can't appreciate the solution until you appreciate the problem."

**"How do you make moments of pride? The recipe seems clear: You work hard, you put in your time and as a result, you get more talented and accomplish more, and those achievements spark pride. Simple as that."**

## Chapter Review

### Chapter 6: Stretch for Insight

**Key Quote:** “By stretching, we create moments of self-insight, that well-spring of mental health and well-being. We will never know our reach unless we stretch.”

- Studying our own behavior is a critical component of insight. Not simple reflection, actually breaking down decisions and reviewing the consequences of those actions.
- “Learning who we are, and what we want, and what we’re capable of – it’s a lifelong process.”
- You have to “stretch” yourself to become insightful.
- Two parts to getting others to stretch: High standards and assurances
- Great mentors add two more components: standards and assurance.
- “I have high expectations for you and I know you can meet them. So try this new challenge and if you fail, I’ll help you recover.”
- These four components “high standards + assurance + direction + support = enhanced self-insight.”
- Mentors must work to expose their mentees to risk, “which is unnatural as we want to protect people by nature.”
- Risk is the source of our own insight.
- The promise of “stretching ourselves is not a success, it is learning about ourselves.”

### Chapter 7: Recognize Others

**Key Quote:** “Being grateful to others elevates your own spirits.”

- Teachers have an infinite ability to change the direction of a child’s life and learning.
- “Of all of the ways we can create moments of pride for others, the simplest is to offer them recognition.”
- Thoughtful teachers need more strategies and development in order to increase their ability to create moments for students.
- One of the single most motivating factors for others is to simply recognize and show “full appreciation of work done.”
- Surveys have found that “the top reason people leave their jobs is a lack of praise and recognition.”
- Praise should always be unique and personal – not a process or “programmatically.”
- Make recognition spontaneous.
- The most important message: “I saw what you did and I appreciate it.”

### Chapter 8: Multiply Milestones

**Key Quote:** “When giving tasks or objectives, create micro-deliverables so that employees/students/colleagues can see and celebrate progress.”

- Multiply milestones and success by breaking larger tasks into smaller pieces.
- The smaller the piece, the more success. These moments of success are motivating and we look forward to them.
- Youth sports offer great examples of breaking down skills into smaller parts. Over the course of the season, there are many milestones and successes. First goal, first steal, first win, etc. Break down life like this to increase milestones, recognition, and motivation.
- Over time, it is difficult to see the impact of incremental change. Celebrate the little victories to increase the power of moments.
- Find ways to preserve the before and after state of activities, events, learning, or projects.
- People love milestones in their lives – 10,000 steps on the pedometer is an example. People who track their steps are obsessive about making certain that they hit their daily milestone.
- “A common trait you will observe in accomplished people is an obsession with completion. Once a project falls into their horizon, they crave almost compulsively to finish it.”

**“If one person is brave enough to defy the majority, we are emboldened.”**

### Chapter 9: Practice Courage

**Key Quote:** “People almost always know the right thing to do. They just lack courage because they have not practiced or experienced the results of taking the risk to be brave.”

- When needing to be courageous, you must practice it, visualize the possible outcomes, and prepare yourself for the consequences.
- The young men and women who did the counter sit-in in the South in the 1950s practiced and prepared for it to build courage.
- Take small steps to build courage. If you are afraid of heights start by going up two floors on day and three floors the next. Build your way to the top.
- Having a plan and practicing courage allows us to manage our own fears.
- Use “implementation intentions” when building yourself up. Example: I am going to eat a cookie; if I crave a second cookie I’m going to eat an apple. In the absence of “implementation intentions” we end up defaulting to the path of least resistance because we didn’t have a plan.
- Rehearse with kids what to do when they face peer pressure. Talk about ways to get out of the situation and practice the situation by role-playing.
- “Courage is contagious.”

### Chapter 10: Create Shared Meaning

**Key Quote:** “If you want to be a part of a group that bonds like cement, take on a really demanding task that’s deeply meaningful. All of you will remember it the rest of your lives.”

- If you expect customers to have great experiences, it starts with the employees having great experiences.
- Create connections with people by doing it in person. No one feels meaning from an email.
- “The presence of others turns abstract ideas into social reality.”
- People who struggle together grow very strong social and personal bonds.
- People in every organization need to understand or discover their “why.” Why they clean the floors. Why they teach. Why they work in customer service.
- When people understand their role in the work it leads to “innovation and improvisation.” This builds meaning and ownership.

### Chapter 11: Deepen Ties

**Key Quote:** “If we can create the right kind of moment, we can change relationships in an instant.”

- Genuine responses go a long way. Processes and checklists to determine how others are doing do not build genuine connections.
- Create processes that allow people to script or draw what matters to them.
- “If we want more moments of connection, we need to be more responsive to others.”
- “Relationships don’t deepen naturally. In the absence of action, they will stall.”
- One school system did home visits to parents who were disconnected from the school and found that when they went in without scripts, clipboards, or notecards and simply talked with parents, there was a gigantic increase in engagement from those who would have been traditionally disengaged.

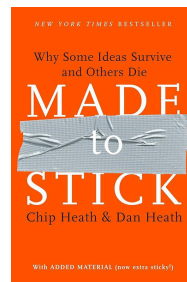
## Chapter 12: Making Moments Matter

**Key Quote:** “A bit of attention and energy can transform an ordinary moment into an extraordinary one.”

- Too often we focus on the wrong things. Fixing problems, looking for solutions and we fail to recognize the opportunity to reinforce the moment. Bring attention to the struggle, recognize the courage, and reinforce the relationships that are getting the outcomes. That’s what making moments is all about.

### Reflective Questions:

- Describe ordinary moments in your day that could be extraordinary.
- List ways that you can support others to build courage.
- Review your willingness to support others finding the importance in the moment.
- Describe how you utilize collaborative practice in order to make moments matter.
- List your strategies for recognizing others.
- Describe your method for breaking down large outcomes into smaller objectives to increase the power of moments.
- Evaluate your own ability to deepen the purpose of work for others or yourself.



If you liked this book you should read the Heath brothers “Made to Stick” [Author Site](#)

Classroom	☆☆☆☆☆
Leadership	☆☆☆☆☆
Motivation	☆☆☆☆☆
Parents	☆☆☆☆☆
Personal Development	☆☆☆☆☆
Schools and Systems	☆☆☆☆☆
Teaching	☆☆☆☆☆

## Notable and Quotable

“These extraordinary minutes and hours and days – they are what makes life meaningful. And they are ours to create.”

## Ted’s Take

This text is one that looks like it should be a quick and easy read. It is an easy read because the stories and strategies are very powerful. Yet, it is not a quick read. The reason for that is that just about every fifth page you put the book down on your lap and stare into the distance reflecting on what you just read. It makes you think of all of the ways in which you could be better at leadership, influencing and supporting others, and most importantly, how we can take the daily grind and find ways to celebrate the ordinary.

This book fuels optimism, it makes you look at others with greater empathy and will have you doing your life work with more passion. I do believe that every school in the United States should read this book. It provokes a little bit of guilt, which I believe will fuel many to change how they approach instruction, leadership, and customer experiences. I find the Heath Bros. to be talented in their ability to take what is otherwise complicated and high-level research and morph it into common sense and easily applicable knowledge. This text is a must-read and will change your outlook and approach for the ordinary and make you find ways to see life as extraordinary.

## More Information

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## About Ted

Ted Neitzke is the Chief Educational Officer and Agency Administrator for CESA 6, a non-profit cooperative that serves 40 public school districts in Wisconsin. Ted is an advocate for children and public education. He believes that everyone in a school is a servant leader. “A leader is anyone who has influence over another person.” This, Neitzke believes, “makes all of us leaders.” These Smart Summaries are his way of helping pay-it-forward for the leaders in the classrooms and schools. “Not everyone has time to read or search for great texts that will help them develop as learners, leaders, or innovators and these briefs help to increase personal intelligence and support the strategies necessary to help leaders in the 21st-century educational world. Ted Neitzke has been a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, high school and middle school teacher and, while in high school, was an aide in a summer school program for students with significant disabilities. He is the father of two and is married to Megan, a 7th-grade teacher in a public school. Ted is the son of a kindergarten teacher and is surrounded by relatives who are leading classrooms and systems.