

YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

## The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact

by Chip Heath, Dan Heath

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### 38 Highlights | 11 Notes

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 8

When people assess an experience, they tend to forget or ignore its length—a phenomenon called “duration neglect.” Instead, they seem to rate the experience based on two key moments: (1) the best or worst moment, known as the “peak”; and (2) the ending. Psychologists call it the “peak-end rule.”

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What’s indisputable is that when we assess our experiences, we don’t average our minute-by-minute sensations. Rather, we tend to remember flagship moments: the peaks, the pits, and the transitions.

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For the sake of this book, a defining moment is a short experience that is both memorable and meaningful.

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**ELEVATION:** Defining moments rise above the everyday. They provoke not just transient happiness, like laughing at a friend’s joke, but memorable delight.

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**INSIGHT:** Defining moments rewire our understanding of ourselves or the world. In a few seconds or minutes, we realize something that might influence our lives for decades: Now is the time for me to start this business. Or, This is the person I’m going to marry.

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**PRIDE:** Defining moments capture us at our best—moments of achievement, moments of courage. To create such moments, we need to understand something about the architecture of pride—how to plan for a series of milestone moments that build on each other en route to a larger goal.

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CONNECTION: Defining moments are social: weddings, graduations, baptisms, vacations, work triumphs, bar and bat mitzvahs, speeches, sporting events. These moments are strengthened because we share them with others.

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Defining moments possess at least one of the four elements above, but they need not have all four. Many moments of insight, for example, are private—they don't involve a connection.

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 18

The lack of attention paid to an employee's first day is mind-boggling. What a wasted opportunity to make a new team member feel included and appreciated. Imagine if you treated a first date like a new employee: "I've got some meetings stacked up right now, so why don't you get settled in the passenger seat of the car and I'll swing back in a few hours?"

**Sadly true**

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Transitions, like milestones and pits, are natural defining moments. The transition of getting married is a defining moment in life regardless of whether it is celebrated. But if we recognize how important these natural defining moments are, we can shape them—make them more memorable and meaningful. That logic shows why the first day of work is an experience worth investing in. For new employees, it's three big transitions at once: intellectual (new work), social (new people), and environmental (new place). The first day shouldn't be a set of bureaucratic activities on a checklist. It should be a peak moment.

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 20

Shortly after you accept the offer letter from John Deere, you get an email from a John Deere Friend. Let's call her Anika. She introduces herself and shares some of the basics: where to park, what the dress norms are, and so forth. She also tells you that she'll be waiting to greet you in the lobby at 9 a.m. on your first day. When your first day comes, you park in the right place and make your way to the lobby, and there's Anika! You recognize her from her photo. She points to the flat-screen monitor in the lobby—it features a giant headline: "Welcome, Arjun!" Anika shows you to your cubicle. There's a six-foot-tall banner set up next to it—it rises above the cubes to alert people that there's a new hire. People stop by over the course of the day to say hello to you. As you get settled, you notice the background image on your monitor: It's a gorgeous shot of John Deere equipment on a farm at sunset, and the copy says, "Welcome to the most important work you'll ever do." You notice you've already received your first email. It's from Sam Allen, the CEO of John Deere. In a short video, he talks a little bit about the company's mission: "to provide the food, shelter, and infrastructure that will be needed by the world's growing population." He closes by saying, "Enjoy the rest of your first day, and I hope you'll enjoy a long, successful, fulfilling career as part of the John Deere team." Now you notice there's a gift on your desk. It's a stainless steel replica of John Deere's original "self-polishing plow," created in 1837. An accompanying

card explains why farmers loved it. At midday, Anika collects you for a lunch off-site with a small group. They ask about your background and tell you about some of the projects they're working on. Later in the day, the department manager (your boss's boss) comes over and makes plans to have lunch with you the next week. You leave the office that day thinking, I belong here. The work we're doing matters. And I matter to them.

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**Now, that's a first day done right**

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Companies in this era of apps and personal tracking devices have grown much smarter about surfacing milestones that were previously invisible. The app Pocket, which stores articles from the Internet on your phone for later reading, informs users when they've read 1 million words. The fitness-tracking bracelet Fitbit presents users with awards such as the 747 Badge, given for climbing 4,000 lifetime flights of stairs (which rises roughly to the altitude that 747s fly), and the Monarch Migration Badge, which is described as follows: "Every year the monarch butterfly migrates 2,500 miles to warmer climates. With the same lifetime miles in your pocket, you're giving those butterflies some hot competition!"

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 32

GE's "Adventure Series," led by Dietz, have since been installed in dozens of children's hospitals, and the results have been dramatic. Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, one of the early adopters of Dietz's design, found that the number of kids needing sedation dropped from 80% to 27%. For the shorter CT scan, only 3% of children needed sedation. The child's key moment of anxiety—lying down on a sterile table that feeds into a threatening-looking machine—has been eliminated. The kids, Dietz said, "are excited to get to the adventure, versus holding on to mom's leg."

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Transitions should be marked, milestones commemorated, and pits filled. That's the essence of thinking in moments. To be clear, not all defining moments fit into these three categories. Many defining moments could happen anytime.

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A relationship in which one party is oblivious to the most profound moments in the life of the other is no relationship at all.

**Truth**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 61

To elevate a moment, do three things: First, boost sensory appeal. Second, raise the stakes. Third, break the script. (Breaking the script means to violate expectations about an experience—the next chapter is devoted to the concept.) Moments of elevation need not have all three elements but must have at least two.

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So how do you break the script consistently enough that it matters—but not so consistently that customers adapt to it? One solution is to introduce a bit of randomness.

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Executives who are leading change should be deliberate about creating peaks that demarcate the shift from the “old way” to the “new way.” The heart of change, after all, is the need to break the script.

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It’s striking that 6 out of the 10 most important events all happen during a relatively narrow window of time: roughly age 15 to 30. (This 6 out of 10 calculation presumes that marriage and kids happen within that window, which of course isn’t true of everyone but is true for most people.) Similarly, if you ask older people about their most vivid memories, research shows, they tend to be drawn disproportionately from this same period, roughly ages 15 to 30. Psychologists call this phenomenon the “reminiscence bump.” Why does a 15-year period in our lives—which is not even 20% of a typical life span—dominate our memories? “The key to the reminiscence bump is novelty,” said Claudia Hammond in her book *Time Warped*. “The reason we remember our youth so well is that it is a . . . time for firsts—first sexual relationships, first jobs, first travel without parents, first experience of living away from home, the first time we get much real choice over the way we spend our days.”

### Interesting

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 86

For those anxious about facing a future that’s less memorable than the past, our advice is to honor the old saw, “Variety is the spice of life.” But notice that it does not say, “Variety is the entrée of life.” Nobody dines on pepper and oregano. A little novelty can go a long way. Learn to recognize your own scripts. Play with them, poke at them, disrupt them. Not all the time—just enough to keep those brown shoes looking fresh.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 87

Here’s our three-part recipe to create more moments of elevation: (1) Boost the sensory appeal; (2) Raise the stakes; (3) Break the script. Usually elevated moments have 2 or 3 of those traits. • The Trial of Human Nature has all three parts: (1) Sensory appeal: The costumes, the real courtroom. (2) Raised stakes: One side will win and capture the glory. (3) Break the script: Everything about the Trial defies the normal rhythms of school.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 92

If you have a standing meeting in your organization, you’ve got a great opportunity to create a moment that refreshes and rejuvenates the participants. Not every meeting needs to be a “defining moment.” But once every 5 to 10 meetings, find a way to break the script.

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This three-part recipe—a (1) clear insight (2) compressed in time and (3) discovered by the audience itself—provides a blueprint for us when we want people to confront uncomfortable truths. It would have been so easy for CLTS facilitators to lecture the villagers, to show them facts and data about sanitation practices. But it's so much more powerful when the crystallizing insight happens inside them.

Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 106

“The dirty secret of higher education is that faculty aren't taught how to teach,” said Palmer.

**Sadly, almost always true**

Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 108

He puts the following question to his audience of 25 to 30 professors: “Imagine that you have a group of dream students. They are engaged, they are perfectly behaved, and they have perfect memories. . . . Fill in this sentence: 3–5 years from now, my students still know . Or they still are able to do . Or they still find value in .” The professors brainstorm privately for about 10 minutes, and then they share their answers. At the CDI in July 2015, a professor who taught an animal behavior course said, “I want them to know the scientific process. If they see some animal doing something interesting, they can come up with a way to work through the scientific process to study it.” A health sciences professor said, “I want them to be connecting and collaborating with colleagues. They will feel confident reviewing new research and being part of ‘journal club’ meetings.” A math professor said, “I want them to think of math as fun and interesting in its own right, not just practical. . . . When they see a link to a math story, I want them to click it.” Palmer scrawls their answers on a whiteboard at the front of the room. Everyone catches on immediately to one pattern: Very few of the answers are content focused. The math teacher, for instance, did not say he wanted his students to remember the Chain Rule; he said he wanted them to retain a natural interest in math. Now Palmer is ready to help them trip over the truth. He reminds them that they've just written down their top goals for their students. Then he asks them to pull out the syllabus they brought to the institute. How much of your current syllabus will advance your students toward the dreams you have for them? There's an awkward silence in the room. George Christ, a biomedical engineering professor, remembered the moment with a chuckle: “You look at your syllabus, and you go, ‘Zero.’ ” Most professors discover exactly the same thing. It's a head-slapper of a moment.

**@bonni208 You might enjoy this**

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 120

Often it's other people who prod us to stretch. You hire a personal trainer because you know she's going to push you beyond your comfort zone. And this is the same quality we value about our mentors: They bring out the best in us. You'll never hear someone say, “Yeah, the best coach I ever had was Coach Martin. He had no expectations whatsoever and let us do whatever we wanted. He was a great man.” Mentors focus on improvement: Can you push a little bit further? Can you shoulder a little more responsibility? They introduce a productive level of stress.

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II. Just wanted you to know that we resisted the urge to include a cheap joke about Spanx in the “Stretch” chapter.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 132

They need not be serendipitous. To deliver moments of insight for others, we can lead them to “trip over the truth,” which means sparking a realization that packs an emotional wallop.

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For example, every Employee of the Month program in human history has been plagued by a similar dynamic: If you judged the award fairly, your best employee would win the award every month, but it seems socially awkward to give it to Jenny every time, so you start concocting reasons to spread the award around, and after a year or two of hopscotching among employees, Stuart is the only guy on the team who hasn't won, and it's becoming An Issue, so one November you throw him a bone (“He has made real progress on his tardiness!”), and from that moment on, anytime you say the phrase “Employee of the Month,” your employees will roll their eyes. And pray it's not them. II Recognition experts have advice on how to escape this trap. For formal recognition programs, they recommend using objective measurements, such as sales volume, to protect against cynicism. If Stuart doesn't hit the sales target, he won't win the award, period. The larger point is that most recognition should be personal, not programmatic. In our own research, when we asked people about the defining moments in their careers, we were struck by how often they cited simple, personal events.

**So true**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 151

The style is not important. What's important is authenticity: being personal not programmatic. And frequency: closer to weekly than yearly. And of course what's most important is the message: “I saw what you did and I appreciate it.”

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 164

Many Americans aspire to learn another language, for example. But “learning Spanish” is one of those amorphous goals that should give us pause. There's no destination and no intermediate levels. Using Kamb's principles, we can make this a more exciting journey. We can level up: Level 1: Order a meal in Spanish. Level 2: Have a simple conversation in Spanish with a taxi driver. Level 3: Glance at a Spanish newspaper and understand at least one headline. Level 4: Follow the action in a Spanish cartoon. Level 5: Read a kindergarten-level book in Spanish. And so on, leading up to . . . Destination: Be able to have full, normal conversations in Spanish with Fernando in accounting (not just “Cómo está usted?”) Compare that plan with the typical way we think about pursuing goals: Level 1: Try to squeeze in a Spanish study session. Level 2: Try to squeeze in a Spanish study session. Level 3: Try to squeeze in a Spanish study session. Level 4: Try to squeeze in a Spanish study session. Level 5: Try to squeeze in a Spanish study session. Destination: Someday, eventually: “Know”

Spanish. Which of those plans sound like more fun? Which are you more likely to return to, if you're forced to take a break? Which are you more likely to complete?

### **Why we set low-bar commitments in every Academy session**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 168

We should be careful that we don't let this corporate style of goal-setting infiltrate our personal lives, where we're in full control. "I'm going to lose 10 pounds in 2 months," for instance, is a classic corporate goal: arbitrary, numerical, and lacking intermediate milestones. By now, you know what to do: Restore the milestones. Level up: Go one week straight without using the elevator. Pick out 2 microbrews to enjoy on Saturday after a full week without booze. If I jog continuously for three songs on my playlist, that entitles me to download three new ones. And so on. Furthermore, the ultimate destination should not be "losing 10 pounds," it should be something intrinsically motivating, such as "Fitting into my sexy black pants (without gastrointestinal distress)." Suddenly, your weight-loss mission starts looking more like a playful quest, with frequent victories along the way, and less like a daily weigh-in on the bathroom scale

Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 174

(One of your authors will sometimes walk laps around his bedroom at night in order to clinch 10,000 steps for the day. Absurd but true.) We all love milestones.

### **Ironically I'm walking on a treadmill right now trying to close exercise ring**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 176

Cal Newport, an author and computer science professor, spent years studying the habits of successful people. "From my experience, the most common trait you will consistently observe in accomplished people is an obsession with completion. Once a project falls into their horizon, they crave almost compulsively, to finish it."

Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 185

The psychologist Peter Gollwitzer has studied the way this preloading affects our behavior. His research shows that when people make advance mental commitments—if X happens, then I will do Y—they are substantially more likely to act in support of their goals than people who lack those mental plans. Someone who has committed to drink less alcohol, for instance, might resolve, "Whenever a waiter asks if I want a second drink, I'll ask for sparkling water." And that person is far more likely to turn down the drink than someone else who shares the same goal but has no preloaded plan.

### **Huge lesson**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 193

In short, courage is contagious. From historic protests to everyday acts, from the civil rights movement to an employee asking a tough question, this is the lesson we've learned: It is hard to be courageous, but it's easier

when you've practiced, and when you stand up, others will join you. Think of it: Your moment of courage might be a defining moment for someone else—a signal to them that red is red, that wrong is wrong, and that it can be righted if we stand, together, against it.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Page 195

Moments when we display courage make us proud. We never know when courage will be demanded, but we can practice to ensure we're ready. • The protesters involved in the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins didn't just show courage, they rehearsed it.

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 256

She shared the five most common regrets of the people she had come to know: 1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me. ("Most people had not honoured even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made.") 2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard. 3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings. ("Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others.") 4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends. 5. I wish that I had let myself be happier. ("Many did not realize until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits.") It is striking how many of the principles we've encountered would serve as antidotes to those common regrets: 1. Stretching ourselves to discover our reach; 2. Being intentional about creating peaks (or Perfect Moments, in Eugene O'Kelly's phrasing) in our personal lives; 3. Practicing courage by speaking honestly—and seeking partners who are responsive to us in the first place; 4. The value of connection (and the difficulty of creating peaks); 5. Creating moments of elevation and breaking the script to move beyond old patterns and habits.

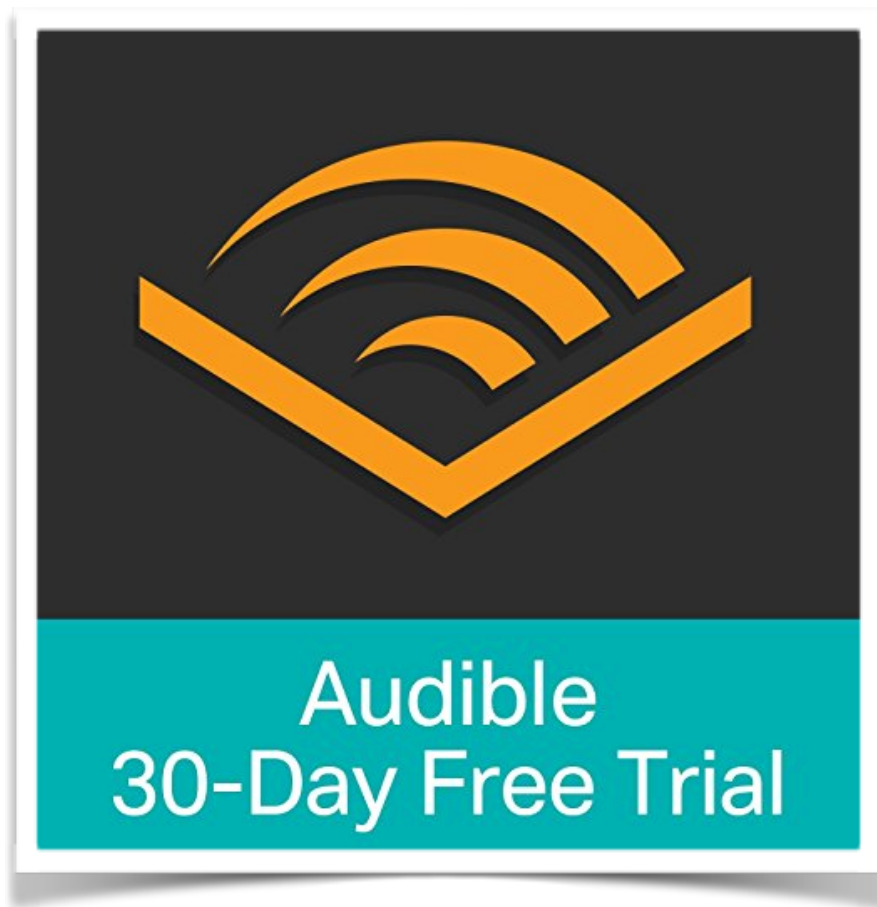
### Important findings

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