

IDSC 100
Paradigm Shifts
Questions on the Tipping Point (cont'd)
Sept. 20, 2005

Discussion Questions:
Law of the Few, Stickiness, & the Power of Context
Chpts. 2, 3, & 4

1. What does Gladwell mean by “connectors” “mavens” and “salesmen?” What special traits do these people have that makes them good at what they do?
2. What does the research on Sesame Street and Blues Clues tell us about what makes a message “sticky?”
3. In the examples that Gladwell presents on the “stickiness problem” what is counterintuitive about them? What were the original intuitions about what would work, and why didn't they work? What shouldn't have worked, but did work?
4. What does Gladwell mean by the power of context? Give a couple of examples. What small changes does Gladwell say tipped the crime epidemic in New York City in the 1990s?
5. What does Gladwell mean when he says that, with respect to developing a theory of crime, that The Power of Context is an environmental argument?
6. What are the lessons of Zimbardo's “prison experiment?”
7. What is the “Fundamental Attribution Error”? What causes it, according to Gladwell?
8. There are thousands of angry people ready to act on their anger at a moment's notice. Why do some people act on that anger, but others don't, according to Gladwell?