The vast majority of the state spending, or 6.6 trillion roubles, came in the first six months of the crisis, which saw the rouble weaken by a third and halted production as demand and capital deteriorated. Russia's good economic fortunes that brought growth of more than 7 percent between 2003 and 2007, swiftly reversed into a recession, which saw gross domestic product shrinking by 10.1 percent in the first half of 2009. Russia has spent half of $480 billion crisis package...

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Gladwell describes it as a book about change. In particular, it's a book that presents a new way of understanding why change so often happens as quickly and as unexpectedly as it does. For example, why did crime drop so dramatically in New York City in the mid-1990's? How does a novel written by an unknown author end up as national bestseller? Why do teens smoke in greater and greater numbers, when every single person in the country knows that cigarettes kill? Why is word-of-mouth so powerful? What makes TV shows like Sesame Street so good at teaching kids how to read? I think the answer to all those questions is the same. It's that ideas and behavior and messages and products sometimes behave just like outbreaks of infectious disease. They are social epidemics. The Tipping Point is an examination of the social epidemics that surround us.

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