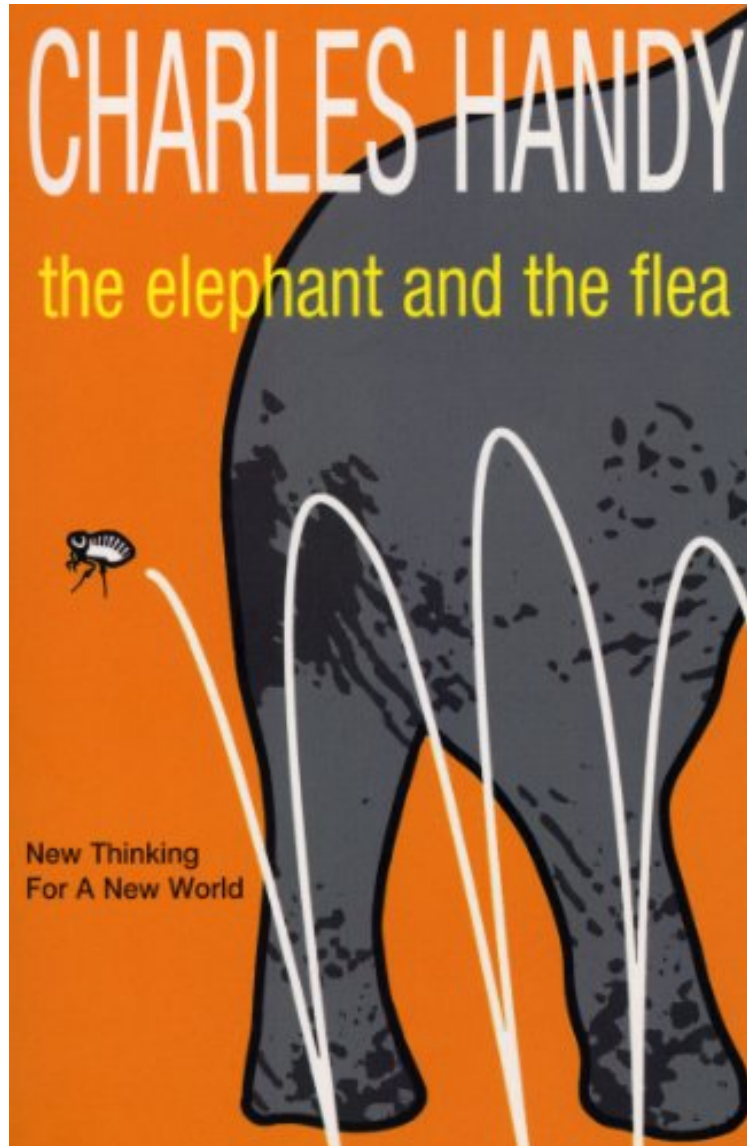


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The Elephant And The Flea

Charles Handy

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Charles Handy : The Elephant And The Flea before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Elephant And The Flea:

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GREAT GUIDE AND INSPIRATION FOR ANYONE GOING IT ALONE IN THEIR CAREERBy Barry SmithA GREAT GUIDE AND INSPIRATION FOR ANYONE GOING IT ALONE IN THEIR CAREERCHARLES WAS THE EXTERNAL ASSESSOR OF MY DOCTORATE FOCUSED ON HOW TO WORK AND LIVE IN WHAT IS LEFT OF MY LIFE0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy L. Heatoninteresting outlook

Bookseller Charles Handy's best-selling new book looks at how individuals (the fleas in his analogy) relate to multinational conglomerates (the elephants). In addition to addressing how and why we work today, he covers a wide range of preoccupations and issues including the increasing fear of big business: 'it is easy to see why many observers think that the big corporations are now both richer and more powerful than many nation states. They worry that these new corporate states are accountable to no-one - that their financial clout makes governments beholden to them ... The elephants, people feel, are out of control.'

.com Charles Handy is always a delight to read, and *The Elephant and the Flea*--his autobiography-laced analysis of business over the past two decades--is no exception. In his 13th book, the United Kingdom's preeminent sage on commercial and industrial matters looks within and at education, marriage, religion, and society in order to assess the changing nature of employment. His literate and knowledgeable tale begins in 1981, when Handy decided to exchange a safe but stifling life with a corporation (the "elephant" of his title) for the riskier but potentially more rewarding existence of an independent (or "flea"). Mixing diverse experiences with cogent observations on the evolving workplace, he sets the scene for plausible projections about where we might yet be headed. "Just as the signs were there 20 years ago for those who wished to see them, so I believe we can glimpse the shape of the new capitalist world even if it may take another 20 years to develop," he writes. "We may not like what is coming but we would be foolish to think that we can plan our lives, or our children's lives, without giving some thought to the shape of the stage on which we and they will be strutting." Intensely personal yet remarkably universal, the book is another provocative, illuminating, and enjoyable work from the oil executive turned bestselling author. --Howard RothmanFrom Publishers WeeklyA former oil executive and economist, as well as an early proponent of the "free agent" lifestyle, Handy (*The Age of Unreason*) uses his career as a telling example of how the nature of work has changed over the past 20 years and tries to predict how people will earn a living in the years ahead. Handy opens the book three-quarters autobiography, one-quarter social commentary with warm recollections of his Irish countryside childhood before elaborating his metaphor for the workplace, that of the elephant and flea. "Elephants" represent established corporations and large organizations of every kind, while "fleas" symbolize people who work independently as small-scale entrepreneurs. Handy, who used to work for Shell and has made his living as a lecturer and author since 1981, finds problems and opportunities in both kinds of establishments. Elephants, he contends, need to figure out ways to grow bigger while maintaining personal client relationships and rewarding creativity. The fleas need a better way to forge connections among themselves. Handy offers some general advice, but his main purpose is to try to make sense of the first 70 years of his life and the last two decades of the Western workplace. Some of his labor market analysis will seem familiar to readers, as it has already seeped into the cultural lexicon, but Handy's fans will appreciate this unusually personal look at the labor revolution. This is not the start-off book for those new to his work, however. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From BooklistIn 1981 British oil executive Handy quit his job to "go portfolio," a term he coined for what he believed would be the trend for many workers going into the twenty-first century, that of being self-employed, part-time, or temps of one sort or another, with a portfolio of many skills and a collection of clients needed to make a living. This is the flea that flits about between the elephant of large organizations, landing here and there but never desiring to become attached to any of them. In a combination of memoir and essay celebrating the independent life, in a love-hate relationship with government and big business, Handy waxes on the wealth disparity created by capitalism, the superficiality of the so-called new economy, and the balance of freedom and loneliness that comes with living the portfolio life. This is not another "how to start your own business" book, but rather one man's struggle to find meaning and fulfillment in work, latching onto elephants when needed, but mostly flying solo without a net. David SiegfriedCopyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved