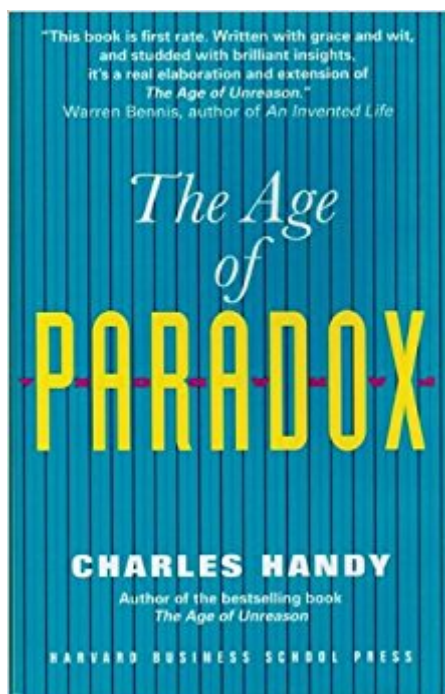


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# The Age Of Paradox



## Synopsis

In a widely acclaimed book, the bestselling author of *The Age of Unreason* contends that what society needs is a new ethic--one based on a renewed humanism, a fresh interpretation of capitalism, and a belief in proper federalism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the first page it is obvious that the author has an incredibly diverse background of experience and knowledge which enable him to take a high level view of the world. Most books dive right into a subject and never explain where they are going. Handy tries to fit all of our life experiences into a model by stating that life is a series of paradoxes. And therein lies the key--we cannot make a perfect working model of life because things are always paradoxical in nature. Take the paradox of justice--Handy's discussion of this phenomenon allows you to finally come to grips with why issues such as affirmative action can seem so compelling to both sides. If you are interested on the ideas of capitalism and whether or not it is a best solution the book provides some real insights. Take for example Handy's simple explanation about Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations*. Having personally done some reading on the subject, Handy was the first to inform me that Smith was actually a professor of moral philosophy. He thought that the market would work, but it would require social responsibility on the part of society. I think this simple point is rarely discussed when using Smith's invisible hand in defense of capitalism. As an avid reader who gets disinterested after the first chapter of most books, this is the first one in a long time worthy of being finished. Handy has an

amazing ability to incorporate our experiences in life: love, money, work, family, etc. into a model which serves to explain it all. While I'm sure Handy himself would agree that his model is incomplete, the thought excites me and I can't wait to see what "age" he publishes next. This book may not be the newest book out there, but it is certainly one of the best.

While the Age of Paradox was written more than 15 years ago, it is just as relevant today as it was then - perhaps even more so. Charles Handy makes engaging arguments as to how individuals and businesses should conduct themselves. While the book has a philosophical bent, it is also a practical guide. Charles Handy frames up many emerging trends that were less clear in the early 1990's but in many situations have come to fruition during the last decade. I had to chuckle when he described the turbulence of the times (1990's). Looking back, it all seemed pretty tame compared to today. His discussion on The Sigmoid Curve and the need to create new Curves as you go through life is fascinating. Equally compelling are his discussions about the purpose of a business. The book points out that profit for the sake of profit is destructive in the long-run. But profit as a means to make things better, more abundant, and create long-term wealth is the best model. As you read his words, you can appreciate how a culture of short-term profit maximization during the last decade led to not only a destruction of shareholder wealth but crippled this nation's competitive advantage on the global stage. This book is a classic masterpiece that will help you gain a better appreciation of who you are or can become both as a human being and as a person in business.

Charles Handy does an excellent job in setting forth his case that we live in an age of paradox. The need for organization is greater than ever yet the need for remaking our organizations is also greater than ever. He has many ideas and suggestions which may be helpful in refitting our organizations. The concepts that the new capital of organizations is their intellects and that there needs to be a new 'federalism', an era of 'twin citizenship' between the local and the center, are both interesting and challenging. It is a good read and a provocative one. One weakness is that Handy seems to posit the need for greater local control while speaking of social changes which only a new power center (the government) will truly be able to implement. He seems to be caught in a paradox of his own creation.

Handy, one of the world's foremost business philosophers, provides an important work that all leaders must read or at minimum acknowledge the concepts he espouses. As a leadership writer and instructor, Handy's work is a staple for my students. His chapters on the Sigmoid Curve and

Doughnut are alone worth the price of the book.

Handy does an excellent job of defining key business and personal paradoxes. The best section was on the intellectual paradox which future managers need to know how to anticipate and deal with.

This is one of those books you must read in this age of turmoil. Opens your eyes in so many ways. I insist, a must read!

Everything was okay.

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