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Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs at the Turn of the Millennium

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WORD.COM PRESENTS

Gig

AMERICANS TALK ABOUT
THEIR JOBS AT THE TURN OF
THE MILLENNIUM

Edited by John Bowe, Marisa Bowe, and Sabin Streeter

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From Crown : Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs at the Turn of the Millennium before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs at the Turn of the Millennium:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. FOR YOUR JOB SEARCHBy Joseph H. RaceWe are in the middle of a recession/depression and the unemployment rate is fast approaching about 8%. John Bowe's book comes along at

the right time for people to start thinking about job changes and preparing themselves for other opportunities. Students no longer walk out with a diploma in hand and find employment that same afternoon. It now takes some planning and

Bowe's book will give you insight into various job/career positions. I have used this book for teaching my college classes, particularly in the areas of criminal justice and social studies. Times are a-changing, and the student/job seeker needs to look down the line as what the chances are of finding a good job and of holding one's interest over the course of a working lifetime. Plus, if you're interested in what people think of their jobs, but not planning to go there for employment, it's just plain fascinating to hear what lawyers, pimps, musicians, computer wizards, detectives, actors, doctors, travel agents, etc., think of what they do, and if they do it, is it because they can't do anything else and feel trapped and bored? An excellent book and right for the times. Buy it!

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A truly fascinating survey of people from all walks of life

By A Customer This is the kind of book I try to ration to keep from reading cover-to-cover during the first sitting, but end up devouring anyway. Each one of the stories in it is immediately intriguing, and each one you read makes you more curious about the next. The stories are full of fascinating tidbits of information and insight into the everyday lives of Americans from all walks of life. It's the kind of information you can't and don't get from the media, even in in-depth articles and reports. If you've ever wondered what goes on in the lives of people you interact with only tangentially, buy this book. It makes for an amazingly engrossing and enjoyable read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars

By Customer got as gift. no news on it.

For the last several years, the editors of Word, the pioneering Web magazine, have been sending interviewers -- nearly forty in all -- across America to talk to people about their jobs. They wanted to document reality, not to advance any overarching thesis or political agenda. Their sole position on work was that it's a fascinating topic and an elemental part of nearly everyone's life. They were certainly not disappointed with what they found; this wide-ranging survey of the American economy at the turn of the millennium is stunning, surprising, and always entertaining. It gives us an unflinching view of the fabric of this country from the point of view of the people who keep it all moving.

Recalling Studs Terkel's 1972 classic best-seller, *Working*, the more than 120 roughly textured monologues that make up *Gig* beautifully capture the voices of our fast-paced and diverse economy. The selections demonstrate how much our world has changed -- and stayed the same -- in the last three decades. If you think things have speeded up, become more complicated and more technological, you're right. But people's attitudes about their jobs, their hopes and goals and disappointments, endure. *Gig*'s soul isn't sociological -- it's emotional. The wholehearted diligence that people bring to their work is deeply, inexplicably moving. People speak in these pages of the constant and complex stresses nearly all of them confront on the job, but, nearly universally, they throw themselves without reservation into coping with them. Instead of resisting work, we seem to adapt to it. Some of us love our jobs, some of us don't, but almost all of us are not quite sure what we would do without one.

With all the hallmarks of another classic on this subject, *Gig* is a fabulous read, filled with indelible voices from coast to coast. After hearing them, you'll never again feel quite the same about how we work.

.com A regular feature in the Web zine Word is a column called "Work," conceived as an updated homage to Studs Terkel's 1972 book, *Working*. A selection of these Word columns, augmented with some new material, has been collected under another monosyllabic title, *Gig*. The slightly more effusive subtitle describes precisely what the book offers: *Americans Talk About Their Jobs at the Turn of the Millennium*. Word conducted interviews with and accepted submissions from a wide range of people with an equally wide range of jobs. The editors have organized the entries into rough thematic groups such as Plants and Animals (lawn maintenance man, buffalo rancher, dog trainer), Bodies and Souls (palm reader, orthopedic surgeon, telephone psychic), and Artists and Entertainers (video game designer, Elvis Presley "interpreter," art mover). This is a casual book of over 120 brief first-person narratives. It is not a survey or an anthropological study, but a window onto how other people spend their days and nights. A few of the people are famous (supermodel Heidi Klum, painter Julian Schnabel), but most are not, and the latter are in some ways more interesting, not least because we already hear so much about the former in the welter of entertainment coverage that already graces our TVs and newsstands. The joy of *Gig* lies in its conversational tone and intimate peeks into occupations that many would never even know existed (who knew you could be a "clutter consultant"?). So, if you've ever wanted to ask the human resources director of a slaughterhouse how her day was, *Gig* is for you. --J.R.

From Publishers Weekly Edited by Word.com's Marisa Bowe (editor-in-chief), John Bowe (freelancer) and Sabin Streeter (senior editor), here's an engaging oral history for the dot-com era. This fat book originated as a weekly column on the site of Word.com, a hip, general-interest e-magazine; it's a smart, Studs Terkel-like examination of how we work now

Atemporary and permanent; at home and in cubicles; 20 and 100 hours a week. In place of a seamless, analytical account, the book instead collects more than 100 personal testimonies from a range of workers

Afrom the anonymous (a flight attendant, a UPS driver, a pretzel vendor, a dog trainer) to the famous (Heidi Klum, Julian Schnabel, Debra Messing, Barney Frank). Each testimony reflects a history, an identity and an age. Nonfiction and fiction lovers, employed and unemployed alike, will enjoy this book and its captivating real-life characters. In one account, a

transvestite prostitute speaks of the dangers of working the streets, his \$150,000 home in Queens, N.Y., and his early "retirement." In another testimony, a retired educator, now a Wal-Mart "greeter," declares, "My favorite thing about the job is just the fact that I have a job." By grouping these personal testimonies according to broad categories such as Workers and Managers, Buyers and Sellers, and Bodies and Souls, this well-considered, expertly crafted book manages to illustrate how work defines our lives while successfully dodging the tendency to impose a political angle on workers and their work. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Adult/High School-Admirers of Working (New Press, 1997), the authors combined many of Studs Terkel's techniques with their own in a column for the Webzine, Word. Over two years of columns and man-on-the-street interviews are combined in 125 entries. Divided into 14 categories, they run the gamut from a Wal-Mart greeter in "Welcome" to a funeral director in "Bodies and Souls." They cover everything from an advertising executive to a workfare street cleaner and people who are legally and illegally employed. Readers discover the reality of life for a heavy-metal roadie, a poultry-factory worker, and a crime-scene cleaner. Readers see a highway flagger whose feet hurt, back aches, and who is constantly cursed for holding up traffic in a new light. Terkel's book was banned from high schools because of a few expletives; 25 years later, the expletives have increased exponentially. Readers will dip into this 500-page book thinking that they will read just one or two interviews, but they may find that it's hard to stop.- Jane S. Drabkin, Potomac Community Library, Woodbridge, VA Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.