

Ikigai: Living a purposeful life

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DEDICATION

Aber, Yazan and Solav, My true love, my true stars.
Metwalli, A true friend when you need one.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book does not provide the complete proof of Ikigai, but rather a brief description of the meaning of the principle itself.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever asked yourself what is the purpose of your life? What is the meaning of living each day and doing things? Is it only regarding enjoyable life, being free, maintaining beauty and health, owning properties? Is that's it? Is that why you get up each day of your bed?

The meaning of purpose itself may vary from one person to another, even for two people of the same age, the same background, the same occupation, living in the same house, eating the same food, having the same family environment, the same living level, someone will say that he lives and do what he does for money because

having money in his pocket allows him to be physically and mentally free, to live a relaxed life without rushing, someone will say for joy, he loves what he does and it makes him feel good, someone will say because he is good at it and other people need him for that.

Actually, none of that is correct, alone, none of that by itself forms a reason to live, none of that forms your Ikigai, for someone who lived his all life for one of that only, he'll always feel that there is something missing, and trying to catch all the parts not an easy step in your life unless you really understand what is Ikigai really is.

Finding the correct balance is what give you a reason to wake up every day, is what give a reason to live, and that is Ikigai.

生きがい

THE MEANING OF IKIGAI

Ikigai is an ancient Japanese philosophy that usually refers to the Japanese secret to a long and happy life, in Japanese the word “iki” (生き) means life, and the word “gai” (甲斐) means value so the word “Ikigai” can be roughly translated to a reason for being or reason to live, the philosophical meaning expands to the reason why we feel motivated to find our purpose and to be happy with what we already have, it means to understand why we want what we want.

“Ikigai” term was coined on Japanese island Okinawa which is a region where people have higher life expectancies than the rest of the world, the centenarians of Okinawa share their daily

lifestyle and well-being practices that they believe are the secret to their health and happiness, everyone there is motivated to get up of the bed every morning to do what he loved, understanding the reasons why we get out of bed every morning is important because it brings an internal and lasting motivation that can keep us on track of achieving our goals, “Ikigai” is an individual concept, as in order to achieve this state of contentment, each person must follow a different path that is compatible with his values, beliefs, and life circumstances.

According to psychologist Katsuya Inoue, “Ikigai” is a concept consisting of two aspects: "sources or objects that bring value or meaning to life" and "a feeling that one's life has value or meaning because of the existence of its source or object".

The word “Ikigai” is also used to refer to the mental and spiritual conditions in which individuals

feel that their lives are of value, as this state is not necessarily related to a person's physical condition.

So in theory, if we can make a living doing what we like, we tend to do our activities with greater satisfaction, care, and productivity, to know our “Ikigai” is to know our own reason for living, but how to find our purpose? How to find our “Ikigai”?

In order for us to achieve our life goal or our “Ikigai”, we must express our inner self honestly, our true desire for a life without fear or hesitation in order to feel completely satisfied, to decide between what we love to do, what we good at, what the world needs and what pays well.

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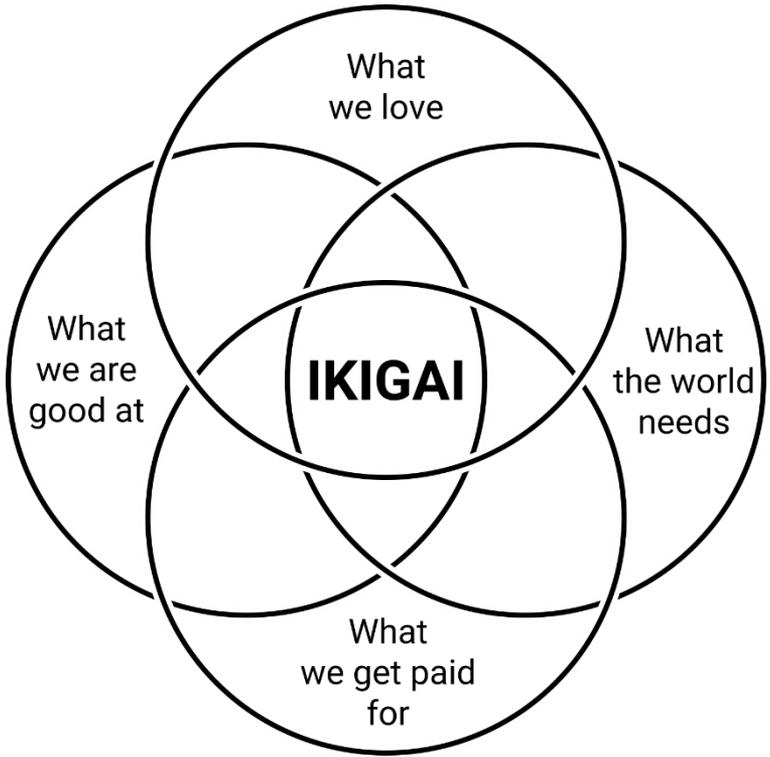
THE DECISION

The main questions in our life are: Are we going to do something that we love, something that we are good at, something that the world needs or something that pays well? We've probably been told so many times that these things are isolated, so that if we do something that we love we are not going to fulfil our needs, or it's going to be useless cause it only fits our desires.

In fact, if we decided to do one of these things separately, we would have made the worst decision in our lives, even if we decided to combine two of them, we would be doing the biggest mistake to ourselves or the rest of us, making a decision to do something that meets one goal will

affect us or others in one way or another, most of the despair that you see or hear about or even go through is the result of losing an element of this concept, this concept is called “Ikigai”.

In the real world, most of our decisions are usually based upon others suggestion's, these suggestions may be either by someone who really loves us, such as when our parents advise us to do something that generates a lot of money to avoid poverty and sometimes by someone who hat or envy us in order to make us not feel satisfied in our life and thus fail in what we do, knowing our “Ikigai” help us make the right decision to fulfill our needs as human.



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THE CONCEPT

Remembering that “Ikigai” is a concept that means “reason to live” it can be broken down into 4 main questions:

- 1- What we love to do?
- 2- What we are good at?
- 3- What we get paid for?
- 4- What the world needs?

We often face the situation when we do something we don't love, or when we don't do it either because we are not good at it or it doesn't pay well, and even worse when nobody wants it.

But what happens if we do something we love and we are good at it but we don't make any

money from doing it? This would be considered our “passion”, like the street artist who draws on the walls, they love drawing and they are good at it but they don't get paid to do it, on the other hand, if we do something we love and the world needs and we don't make any money, this is considered a “mission”, like the missionaries, if we do something we are good at but we don't love, when we are paid for it that's called our “profession” or simply a “job”, like any regular job, we show up, do what we are good at, and can't wait for the work to be over , and lastly, when we do something we are not good at and we don't love but the world needs it and we are paid for it this is called a “vocation”.



4 QUESTIONS EXPLAINED

Ikigai is this Japanese concept that tells us that we must find something to do we love, be good at it, get paid for it, and most importantly the world needs it, when we find this balance we find our “Ikigai”, we find the “reason for living”.

1- What we love to do?

What makes us think that really like to do it?

- Does it touch us?
- Do we enjoy doing it?
- Do we count time doing it, or wish to do it always?

2- What we are good at?

What are our unique talents?

- Is it easy or natural to us?

- Do people give us compliments about it?
- What are the experience we have?

3- What we get paid for?

Why we could be paid for doing it?

- Does it pay anyhow?
- Are our skills in top demand?

4- What the world needs?

How can we contribute to the world and what are the benefits others will get?

- What will positively affect the world?
- How we can be helpful to others?
- Will we be proud of it?

The “Ikigai” concept consists of the following aspects:

1. Passion: Things we are good at and love to do.
2. Mission: Things that we love to do and the world needs.

3. Profession: Things that we are good at and can be paid for.
4. Vocation: Things that we can be paid for and the world needs.

If we take a look at it in a bit more depth we'll find:

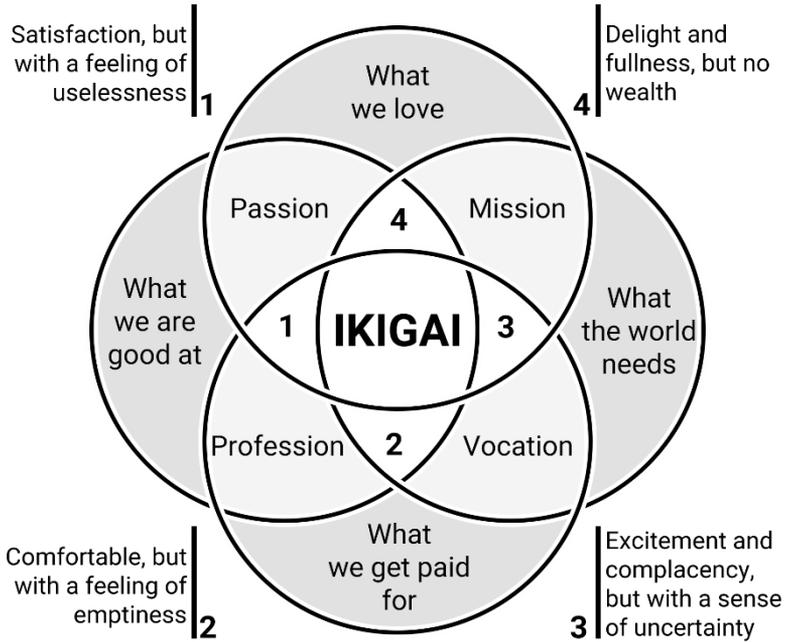
Doing what we are passionate about as a profession, will cause us to receive a lot of satisfaction but we'll also get a feeling of uselessness.

Doing our profession as a vocation will make us feel comfortable doing it, but we'll get a feeling of emptiness.

Doing a mission as a vocation will make us feel excitement and complacency but we'll also feel some uncertainty.

Doing our passion as a mission will make us feel delighted and fullness but there is no wealth.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Growing up with a dream is a beautiful thing, having that dream come true is even more beautiful; this is the case for Maher Asaad Baker. Maher has been building up his career since his teens, starting by developing applications and websites while exploring various types of media creating paths. Today he is one of the most recognized graphic designers and visual artists.

Maher started his career in 1997 with a dream of being one of the well-known artists in the world, at his first year in the university he discovered the world of digital graphics which was evolving side by side with the revolution of computer

programming, with all these new technologies he started teaching himself programming and digital drawing which was a very slow and costly process yet a very useful experience.

To support his dream he started developing software for individual customers which was a time-consuming process, finally, he had to leave the university to follow his dream, he started his first programming team that worked on developing commercial software, while he moved on to studying digital drawing and visual effects which was a long term process.

Maher has participated in many forms of production from visual effects, to directing commercials, promos and short films, He started his own team which has grown and widely participated in many projects.

Although finally his dream come true, he discovered that life is not one dream, it's not about achieving your dream, it's about to keep dreaming and keep achieving your dreams, this is what life is all about, maybe you'll fall down, maybe life treats you bad, but that is never enough to break you down, Maher is still dreaming so should we all do

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