



Unpacking Ikigai



MEANING OF IKIGAI

Ikigai (ee-key-guy) is a Japanese concept that combines the terms *iki*, meaning “alive” or “life,” and *gai*, meaning “benefit” or “worth.”

When combined, these terms mean that which gives your life worth, meaning, or purpose.

Ikigai is similar to the French term “raison d’etre” or “reason for being.”

For us at *my8dayweek*, it’s really similar to our tagline *with passion +purpose.*

The IKIGAI Concept

Interestingly, the concept of *ikigai* is said to have evolved from the basic health and wellness principles of traditional Japanese medicine. This medical tradition holds that physical well-being is affected by one’s mental-emotional health and sense of purpose in life



Honestly, this makes so much sense to our modern interpretation of a Healthy Life; one with balance and a sense of peace and pursuing happiness.

Ikigai is also related to the concept of flow, as described in the work of Hungarian–American psychologist **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**. For Csikszentmihalyi, flow occurs when you are “**in your zone**,” as they say of high-performing athletes.

In Your Flow

Flow is a string of “*best moments*” or moments when we are at our best. These best moments “usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limit, in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

Flow can be said to occur when you are consistently doing something you love and that you are good at, with the possible added benefit of bringing value to others’ lives. In such a case, flow might be seen as in tune with your *ikigai*, or activities that give your life meaning and purpose.

We like to refer to our teaching on flow with our hashtag **#InYourFlow**. It’s like a river of creativity that needs to flow without blockages or restrictive practices.

The concept of *ikigai* as a purpose in life with both personal and social dimensions is captured by the well-known *ikigai* diagram. This diagram includes overlapping spheres covering:

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What you love

What you are good at

What the world needs

What you can get paid for

It is further noted that according to this diagram:



At the intersection of what you love and what you are good at is your passion.

At the intersection of what you love and what the world needs is your mission.



At the intersection of what the world needs and what you can get paid for is your vocation.

At the intersection of what you are good at and what you can get paid for is your profession.

A **“sweet spot”** within this *ikigai* diagram would therefore involve something you are passionate about, that you are also good at, that the world needs now, and for which someone will pay you. For example, if I am passionate about crisis counselling, I am also skilled at it, there is a need for it in my world at the time, and I have several job offers in this field, I might say I’ve found my ***ikigai* sweet spot.**

Ask Yourself

Are you spending time making connections with others or being passionate about what you are doing? Or are you caught in a mundane unproductive task?

Can you change how much time you spend on tasks that are not rewarding or vary them to be more engaging and fulfilling?



Do most of your activities focus on the present or the future?

Empty response area for the first question.

Do your hobbies, pastimes, and other actions exist only for you, or do you share them more widely?

Empty response area for the second question.

Do you connect with the world mostly through giving or receiving? Can you improve the balance?

Empty response area for the third question.

Do you approach life with a fluid or a fixed mindset?

Empty response area for the fourth question.



Is your thinking only logical, or do you engage with your feelings?

Do you only help people you do not know, or do you also help those close to you?

Are you actively pursuing your goals or waiting for them to happen?

To set the scene for the changes to come, spend some time considering the following:

Remember that you are not your job; you are what you do.

Take pleasure seriously. Block out your R&R Time.

That is a non-negotiable.

Find things you enjoy. Doing them will lead you to search out others.
Your Love Tank will be full.



DISCOVERING YOUR IKIGAI

FOUR KEY QUESTIONS

Question 1: **What do you love?**

- What do you never get bored with?
- When do you feel happiest?
- What were you doing when you last lost track of time?
- In the past, what has left you feeling energised?
- What would you continue to do even if you did not get paid?

Question 2: **What are you good at?**

- What do people approach you for help with?
- What skills or talents come naturally to you?
- What do you excel at even when you are not trying?
- What parts of your current job come to you easily?
- In what activity do you excel in your social circle, workplace, or community?



Question 3: What can you get paid for?

- What would you be doing if you were not in your current job?
- Can you make a good living doing this work in the long term?
- What does the competition look like? Can you spot a niche?
- Which jobs, positions, or tasks spark your interest?
- Are you already making a good living in your line of work?

Question 4: What does the world need?

- What can you do or offer that would bring meaning to others?
- What problems in your society would you like to help solve?
- Will your work still be relevant a decade from now?
- What is the world lacking?
- How could you be more involved in your community?

Look for patterns that may form in your answers and consider what is helpful or unhelpful for your *ikigai*.

Allow your uniqueness to be your ***Secret Sauce***.

It's the **ONLY** ingredient you need to ensure your weekly schedule is **ONLY** reserved for the type of activities that make your heart sing. *And trust me*, you'll be singing from the rooftops when you nail this!



When people out there talk about waking up excited, passionate and on a natural high, that's not airy fairy energy, it's real and it possible if you put your heart and soul into doing the groundwork.

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Finding your ikigai is a life philosophy that gives you the obvious answers to the meaning of your very existence.

Pretty deep kinda-stuff that 'adulting' is all about. - my8dayweek

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The journey to *ikigai* might require time, deep self-reflection, and effort, but it is one. **We. All. Can. Make.**

The discovery of one's *ikigai* is attainable with patience, commitment, and introspective exploration. While the concept is decidedly personal and specific to the individual, *ikigai* is consistently found at the convergence of four fundamental elements, namely, passion (what you love), mission (what the world needs), vocation (what you are good at), and profession (what you can get paid for).

As you can see, it's worth taking time out of your busy schedule to discover your *ikigai*. **#PressPause**

