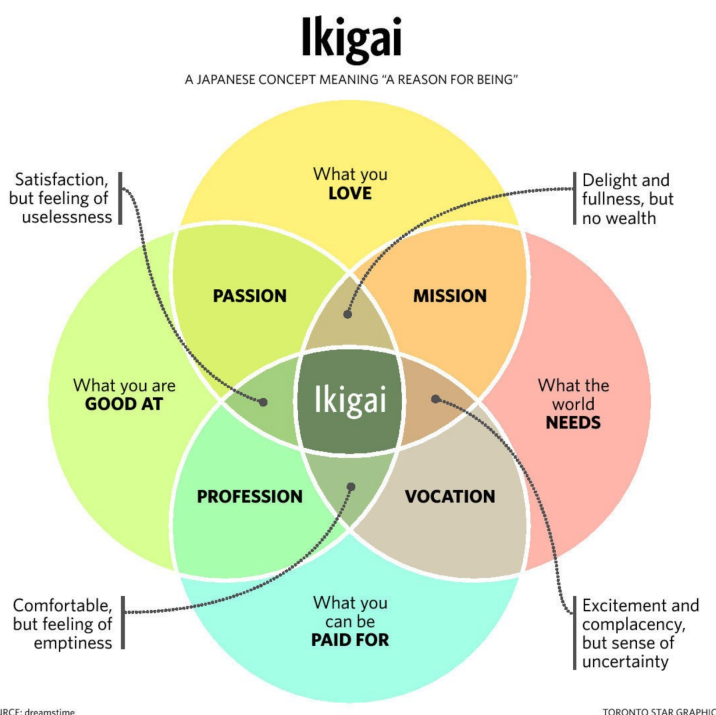


Ikigai – Your zone of genius

Consciously or subconsciously, we all seek meaning in our lives. A reason to exist. A reason to get out of bed in the morning. This is your Ikigai or zone of genius. A place where you have a unique purpose, where you can excel, be the best that you can.

Ikigai is a Japanese concept, which has existed for centuries but only gained popularity in the West in the 1960s. The expression that captures the extent to which your life is experienced as making sense, being directed and motivated by valued goals, and as mattering in the world.

Ikigai is where the four main elements come together



To find your *Ikigai*, answer these four questions:

- 1. *What do I love?* What you love keeps you alive inside.
- 2. *What am I good at?* What are you good at gives you confidence.
- 3. *What can I be paid to do now?* What you can be paid keeps your lights on.
- 4. *What does the world need?* What the world needs gives you purpose.

Study the diagram as you answer for yourself. *Ikigai* occurs when the big circles intersect in the centre, i.e., your answers to the questions above.

Work with your answers and use the four callouts, e.g. 'comfortable, but feeling of

emptiness', to identify gaps in your *Ikigai*. If you are comfortable but feeling empty, do more work on what you love. Similarly, if you *feel delight and fullness, but have no wealth*, do more work on what you can be paid for.

This is a lifelong journey, an exploration. It requires introspection, self-awareness, honesty and curiosity about what might be. It takes time; there are no instant or ready-made answers. However, the rewards of discovering and living in the *Ikigai* zone are enormous and enduring.

Ikigai is to live authentically, to be true to who you are, what you stand for, and what you want from life. Everything aligns. You attract the right people for you, opportunities present themselves, and you feel a deep sense of contentment and peace.

In closing...

... Once you find it, live it with all your being. 'Let your genius not be just a spark but a relentless flame, igniting paths unseen and potential untapped'.

Acknowledgement

In preparing this post, I have drawn on the work of Hector Garcia, '*The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life*'.