

Weekly tip: find your purpose with the Japanese concept of Ikigai

Tictrac | Aug 3, 2021



When it comes to enjoying every day, having a sense of purpose is key but discovering how to find it can be a task all of its own. This is where the traditional Japanese concept of ikigai comes in.

It is a sentiment that encompasses various fundamentals of positive living that may help you to feel more aligned, confident and productive in your daily life. Ikigai concentrates on four main concepts:

1. Finding what you love
2. Thinking about what the world needs
3. How you can make money
4. What you are good at

These all coincide in harmony to deliver a clear idea of your purpose in life.

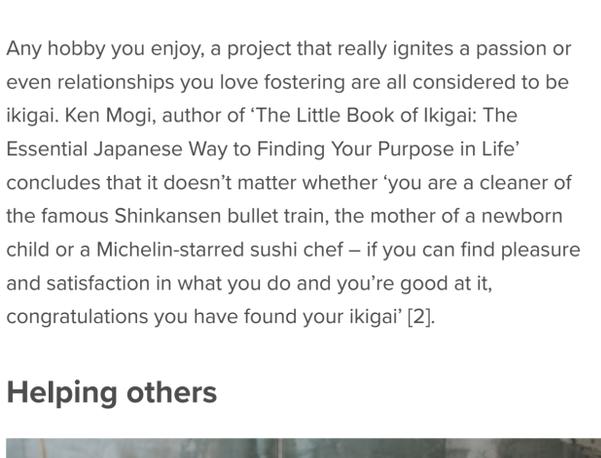
Some Japanese cultures believe that finding our purpose is a journey in itself and that discovering our ikigai entails a deep search within ourselves, resulting in an existence packed full of meaning and fulfilment [1].

Finding what you love

Pinpointing what actually makes us happy can feel like a daunting task and the modest moments of joy we experience in life can occasionally be dismissed as trivial and unimportant in the grand scheme of things.

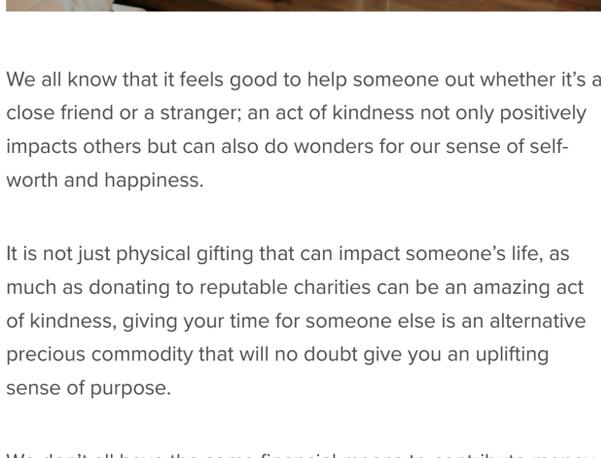
Whether you love taking long walks, being around people or even surrounding yourself with animals, taking joy from little things can actually be elements of finding your purpose or ikigai, rather than just fleeting moments of joy we may dismiss.

If making pottery calms racing thoughts or partaking in a virtual yoga class has become a necessary part of your morning wake-up routine, these things that give you a boost of serotonin and drive you to want to do them more are all completely valid and tangible activities that can bolster the happiness of your everyday life.



Any hobby you enjoy, a project that really ignites a passion or even relationships you love fostering are all considered to be ikigai. Ken Mogi, author of 'The Little Book of Ikigai: The Essential Japanese Way to Finding Your Purpose in Life' concludes that it doesn't matter whether 'you are a cleaner of the famous Shinkansen bullet train, the mother of a newborn child or a Michelin-starred sushi chef – if you can find pleasure and satisfaction in what you do and you're good at it, congratulations you have found your ikigai' [2].

Helping others

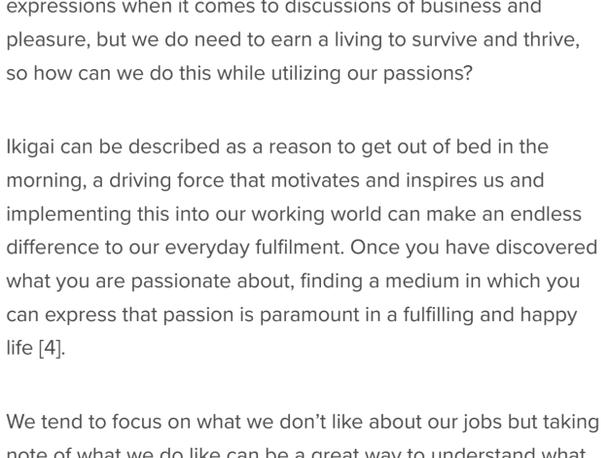


We all know that it feels good to help someone out whether it's a close friend or a stranger; an act of kindness not only positively impacts others but can also do wonders for our sense of self-worth and happiness.

It is not just physical gifting that can impact someone's life, as much as donating to reputable charities can be an amazing act of kindness, giving your time for someone else is an alternative precious commodity that will no doubt give you an uplifting sense of purpose.

We don't all have the same financial means to contribute money, but we do all have time and some of this can be donated to others, whether it's a full-time service-lead vocation, or for a few hours a year working in a charity shop, animal shelter or local soup kitchen [3].

Making money

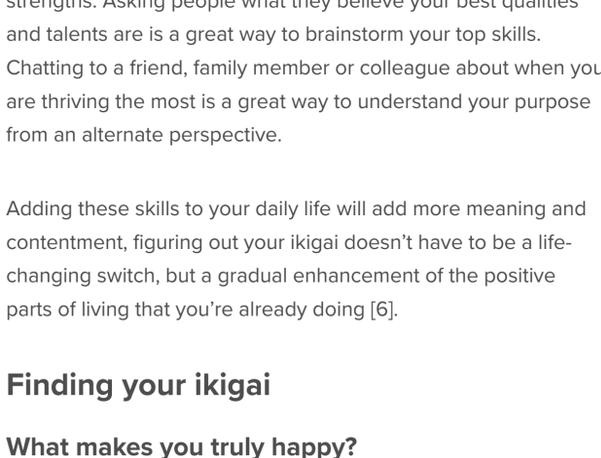


'Money can't buy happiness' is one of the most well-used expressions when it comes to discussions of business and pleasure, but we do need to earn a living to survive and thrive, so how can we do this while utilizing our passions?

Ikigai can be described as a reason to get out of bed in the morning, a driving force that motivates and inspires us and implementing this into our working world can make an endless difference to our everyday fulfilment. Once you have discovered what you are passionate about, finding a medium in which you can express that passion is paramount in a fulfilling and happy life [4].

We tend to focus on what we don't like about our jobs but taking note of what we do like can be a great way to understand what elements we love and what we should be doing more of. When we sit down and think about these positive parts, it is easier to figure out what is important and helps us to focus on these things that will bring us satisfaction in the future [5].

Honing your skills



We aren't always the best judge of ourselves when it comes to strengths. Asking people what they believe your best qualities and talents are is a great way to brainstorm your top skills. Chatting to a friend, family member or colleague about when you are thriving the most is a great way to understand your purpose from an alternate perspective.

Adding these skills to your daily life will add more meaning and contentment, figuring out your ikigai doesn't have to be a life-changing switch, but a gradual enhancement of the positive parts of living that you're already doing [6].

Finding your ikigai

What makes you truly happy?

Focus on the moments when you are happiest and note them down, even the most trivial parts, and you may see a pattern forming.

What do you like and dislike about your job?

Keep a record of the moments you are enjoying at work and the times you feel frustrated.

What are you good at?

From languages to funny party tricks, have a think about what makes you, you.

How can you help?

From donating money and/or time to giving advice, becoming a positive beacon for the world can start at home. Focusing on these elements and spotting a common theme may make finding your purpose or ikigai easier than you think.

1. [Discover your passion or 'ikigai' with four simple tips.](#) Forbes, September 29, 2017.

2. [Ikigai: The Japanese concept of finding purpose in life.](#) Savvy Tokyo, January 15, 2020.

3. [The secret to happiness is helping others.](#) Time Magazine.

4. [How to find your ikigai and transform your outlook on life and business.](#) Forbes, February 23, 2018.

5. [The difference between a job and a calling.](#) Time Magazine, April 14, 2016.

6. [Find meaning in the small things.](#) Mayo Clinic, February 19, 2019.