

## Ikigai: The Secret to a Long, Happy Life, More Fulfilling Life<sup>i</sup>

In Japan, millions of people have *ikigai* (pronounced **ick-ee-guy**)— “a reason for being” – a reason to jump out of bed each morning. The Japanese island of Okinawa, where *ikigai* has its origins, is said to be home to the largest population of centenarians in the world. Studies show that losing one’s purpose can have a detrimental effect. Could the concept of *ikigai* contribute to longevity?

Find it and pursue it with all you have, anything less is not worth your limited time on planet earth.

What’s your reason for getting up in the morning?

Make three lists: **(1)** your values, **(2)** things you like to do, and **(3)** things you are good at. The cross section of the three lists is your *ikigai*.<sup>ii</sup> “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” ~ Howard W Thurman<sup>iii</sup>



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**Ikigai is the convergence of four primary elements.** Discovering your own *ikigai* is said to bring fulfillment, happiness and make you live longer. Ask yourself the following four questions:

1. What do I love? (your passion)

2. What am I good at? (your vocation)

3. What can I be paid for now — or something that could transform into my future hustle/profession?

4. What does the world need? (your mission)

## To find and maintain your ikigai:<sup>v</sup>

1. Stay active and don't retire.
2. Leave urgency behind and adopt a slower pace of life.
3. Only eat until you are 80% full.
4. Surround yourself with good friends.
5. Get in shape through daily, gentle exercise.
6. Smile and acknowledge people around you.
7. Reconnect with nature.
8. Give thanks to anything that brightens our day and makes us feel alive.
9. Live in the moment.
10. Keep your sense of wonder and awe.
11. Follow your curiosity.
12. Follow your ikigai.

American mythologist and author **Joseph Campbell** once said:

"My general formula for my students is "Follow your bliss." Find where it is, and don't be afraid to follow it."

The problem for millions of people is that they stop being curious about new experiences as they assume responsibilities and build routines. Their sense of wonder starts to escape them. You can change that, especially if you are still looking for meaning and fulfillment in what you do daily.

**Albert Einstein** encourages us to pursue our curiosities. He once said:

"Don't think about why you question, simply don't stop questioning. Don't worry about what you can't answer, and don't try to explain what you can't know. Curiosity is its own reason. Aren't you in awe when you contemplate the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure behind reality? And this is the miracle of the human mind — to use its constructions, concepts, and formulas as tools to explain what man sees, feels and touches. Try to comprehend a little more each day. Have holy curiosity."

**Hector Garcia** and **Francesc Miralles** wrote:

"Our intuition and curiosity are very powerful internal compasses to help us connect with our ikigai,"

***What is the one simple thing you could do or be today that would be an expression of your ikigai?***

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<sup>i</sup> "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life Might Just Help You Live a More Fulfilling Life" [Thomas Oppong](https://medium.com/thrive-global/ikigai-the-japanese-secret-to-a-long-and-happy-life-might-just-help-you-live-a-more-fulfilling-9871d01992b7)  
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<sup>ii</sup> **Dan Buettner**, author of [Blue Zones: Lessons on Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Philosopher and civil rights leader **Howard W Thurman**

<sup>iv</sup> Graphic source: dreamstime, Toronto Star Graphic

<sup>v</sup> [Ikigai The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life](#), **Hector Garcia** and **Francesc Miralles**