

# IKIGAI - A JAPANESE MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY ON REASON TO LIVE

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**Abstract.** *Despite the ICT revolution with the inventions of gadgets and AI technologies, employees as well as the common people are being plagued with the strenuous work, stress and complexity life styles. Does emotional intelligence fails? Do people fail to maintain the work-life balance? As lot of words enter the lexicon, ikigai- the Japanese origin, envisages the value and joy to life. The book enthalls happy mind and healthy body for a well-being. The term Ikigai was traced back when Japanese psychiatrist and academic Mieko Kamiya popularized the concept of ikigai in her 1966 book On the Meaning of Life. Hope ikigai, will change the mindset of the global citizens just as the concept of Toyota production systems, which revolutionized the global industries.*

**Keywords** *Ikigai, Mieko Kamiya, Management Philosophy*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Héctor García was a software engineer, he worked at CERN in Switzerland before moving to Japan. He developed voice recognition software and the technology needed for Silicon Valley start-ups and entered the Japanese market. He is the creator of the popular blog kirainet.com and the author of *A Geek in Japan*, a #1 bestseller in Japan.

Francesc Miralles is a lecturer and he authored many books in arena of health and spirituality. He authored *Jet Lag*, *Barcelona Blues* and so on. His novel “Love in Lowercase” has been translated into 28 languages.

## EVALUATION

Ikigai, is a Japanese word, which translated literally would mean: “what is worth living for.” It is a practical tool for all people who want to discover the meaning of life, or what makes you wake up with excitement every day. The contents are based on the key factors which can be contributed for longer life of people in Italy, Japan, California, Costa Rica and Greece as lessons from the *The Blue Zones* authored by Dan Buettner. Aging’s escape velocity and the rabbit is a good parable. Short case studies highlight the need for self-realization and the purpose of life. Concepts of logotherapy, Morita therapy, Naikan meditation reminds us of the Japanese traditional.

## CONTEXT

The concept of ikigai exposes the person’s purpose of life and to lead a happy and long life. Various concepts and Japanese theories are discussed in this book. The Ikigai answers four key questions ., passion (what do I love), vocation (what am I good at), profession (what I can be rewarded for) and mission (what the world needs). The four key components of human life are interrelated as shown in the diagram.

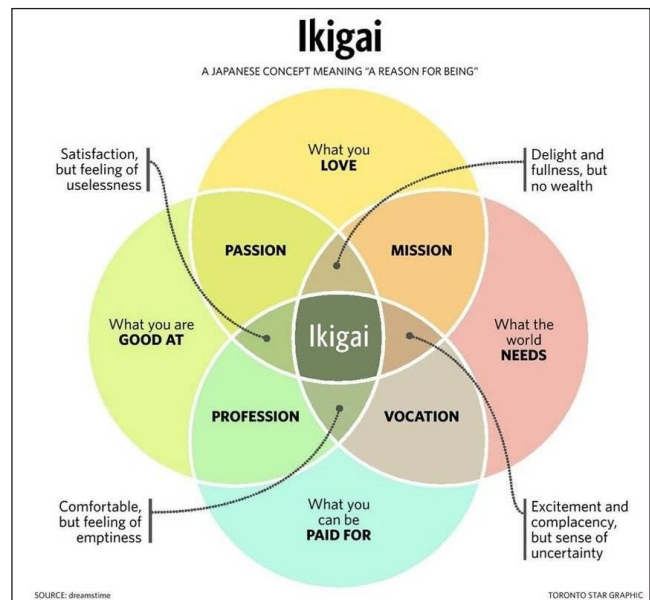


Fig. 1: Ikigai Venn Diagram

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The authors of Ikigai developed their ten rules of Ikigai:

- Stay active; don't retire.
- Take it slow.
- Don't fill your stomach.
  - Surround yourself with good friends.
  - Get in shape for your next birthday.
  - Smile.
  - Reconnect with nature.
  - Give thanks.
  - Live in the moment.
- Follow your ikigai.

## OPINION AND CRITICISMS

The thematic approach of ikigai coincides with the Japanese concept of "Oubaitori", which depicts the trees that bloom in spring as related to the human beings grow and flower at their own pace and there is no comparison with the others. In Indian context, Ikigai at some instance reminds of the Buddhism. The concept of "Fit your belly to 80 percent" resembles 80-20 rule. Consumption of green tea, shikuwasa citrus fruit may keep us younger as stated has no proof. Ikigai venn diagram is often misunderstood and it doesn't highlight the career upliftment or financial freedom. It never lets the individual to go for social activities outside of the work, which may lead to the social isolation. Few chapters deals with the diet regimen and balanced diet in name of ikigai diet is our traditional concept. Sun salutation is not a newer concept to us, where the procedures are explained in detail.

The improper follow of Ikigai may leads to "ikigaimayoi" where the individual may feel lost or live without purpose. Illustrating the finding the purpose reminds of the need for mission statements for an organization. This must be avoided. The concept of Morita therapy once again revises the concepts of occupational therapy.

The chapter – "Find flow in everything you do" stresses a continuum in action and it highlights coping up of stress techniques. Excerpts from the world's longest survivors will boost the readers.

## STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The words are quite understandable in simple English. Even though, the essence of the book is based on the Japanese concepts, as many number of Japanese vocabulary are being translated in English. Even though, the book is adapted from many excerpts by other authors, many concepts related to the art of living is collated.

## CONCLUSION

In no doubt the book enthalls the Japanese self-management to cope up stress and to lead a self-sustainable long life. Long and happy life is the ultimate desire of everyone, however, mere reading of this book, won't yield any fruitful results, but must be practiced. It must be realized that the reading through the chapters will rejuvenate everyone. The contents envisages the concept of mindfulness and no one can stop the continual reading. In other words, this book aims at a holistic approach for the global citizens to lead a longer and purposeful life.