



Journey to Self-Actualization

Principles of Ikigai to Work Life Harmony



Opening Act

- Share your Ikigai Snapshot
- The origin and evolution of Ikigai: Western meme and the original Japanese concept of Ikigai

The Main Act

- The 5 pillars you can adopt to work-life harmony and integration into the workplace

The Finale

- Share your Ikigai Snapshot...again
- Your takeaways and commitments

About Me: Veejay Madhavan (VJ)



With 26 years of leadership experience spanning boards, CEO and CXO positions, and governance roles across ASEAN, India, and the Middle East, I offer invaluable expertise.

Since 2022, my focus in consulting and coaching has driven change management and people transformation initiatives.

As a certified Ikigai Tribe Coach and Click! Colors Facilitator, I empower teams for success.

Currently pursuing a business doctorate, my research on Gen Z and AI promises groundbreaking insights.

I contribute to organizational development as a Senior Advisor for People and Culture at 27 Advisory Sdn Bhd, Malaysia, and as an Independent Director in Cambodia.

My diverse expertise and dedication to meaningful change make me a valuable resource to any organization.



Recognition

- Outstanding Leadership Award at Education 2.0 for contributions in the Gen Z arena
- Silicon India's 2023 List of 20 Most Promising Companies in APAC for the work done with start-ups



Sectoral experience

- Banking
- Education
- Insurance
- Government
- Health & Well Being
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Start ups
- Telecommunications

Opening Act



What is Ikigai?

- **Ikigai** is a Japanese concept that combines the words "*iki*" (meaning "life") and "*gai*" (meaning "value" or "reason").
- It represents your **reason for being or your life purpose**. In essence, ikigai is what. *It's the motivation that gets you out of bed every day. It brings you joy, inspires you, and gives you a sense of fulfillment in life*
- What are your moments of **Ikigai**?



So why has Ikigai gained more relevance to the youth of today?





GEN Z'S IKIGAI ESSENTIALS



Ikigai intertwines purpose with Gen Z's values and challenges.

Resilience & Creativity

Adaptability and innovative thinking are crucial in a rapidly changing world.



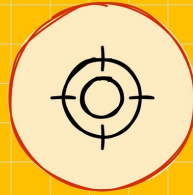
Purpose & Passion

Gen Z seeks meaningful careers combining their passions and skills.



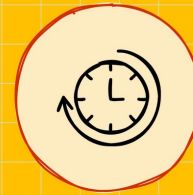
Well-being & Mental Health

Emphasis on mental health reflects Gen Z's prioritization of overall well-being.



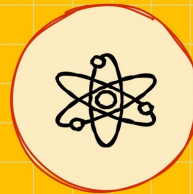
Economic & Civic Stability

Financial security and active community involvement are significant to Gen Z.



Environmental & Social Consciousness

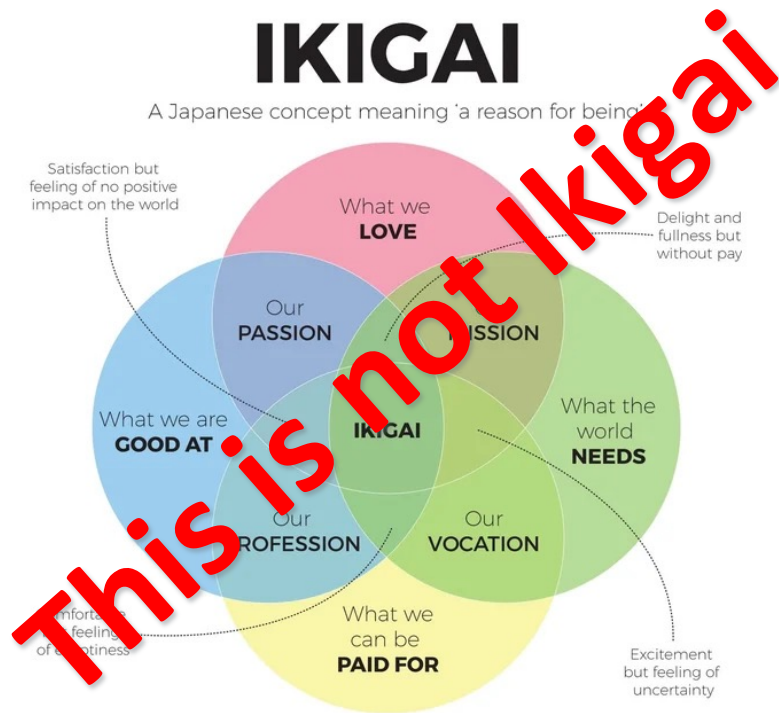
A sustainable, equitable world is central to Gen Z's mission.



Digital Natives' Dilemma

Gen Z faces technology's double-edged sword - connectivity vs. digital overload.

Unfortunately, the concept of Ikigai is grossly misunderstood. So let's clear that up



The four questions in the framework are not questions Japanese ask themselves when they are contemplating their ikigai. If you were to show this Venn diagram to a native Japanese, they would not recognise it as ikigai.

Ikigai is a multifaceted concept that Japanese come to understand as they live life and grow older. It is not something they learn about from a framework.



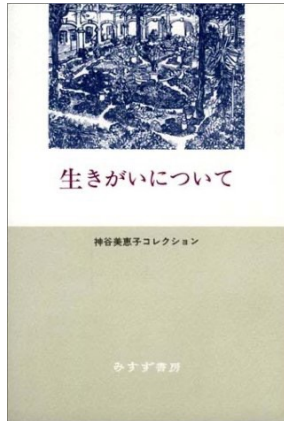
So how did this become the Ikigai “framework” ?

- The concept of Ikigai was popularized in the West following Marc Winn’s blog post “What’s your ikigai?”, inspired by Dan Buettner’s TED talk on longevity.
- Winn adapted the Zuzunaga Venn Diagram of Purpose, substituting ‘purpose’ with ‘ikigai’. The overwhelming response led him to clarify in a follow-up post, “Meme seeding,” that his interpretation diverged from the traditional Japanese view.
- He acknowledged the power of imagery to shape perceptions and underscored that his rendition of the Ikigai diagram was not an original creation but a fusion of existing ideas, presented in a way that highlighted their synergy.
- So the Venn diagram is the Western meme of Ikigai, including the books written by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles



<https://ikigaitribe.com/ikigai/podcast05/>

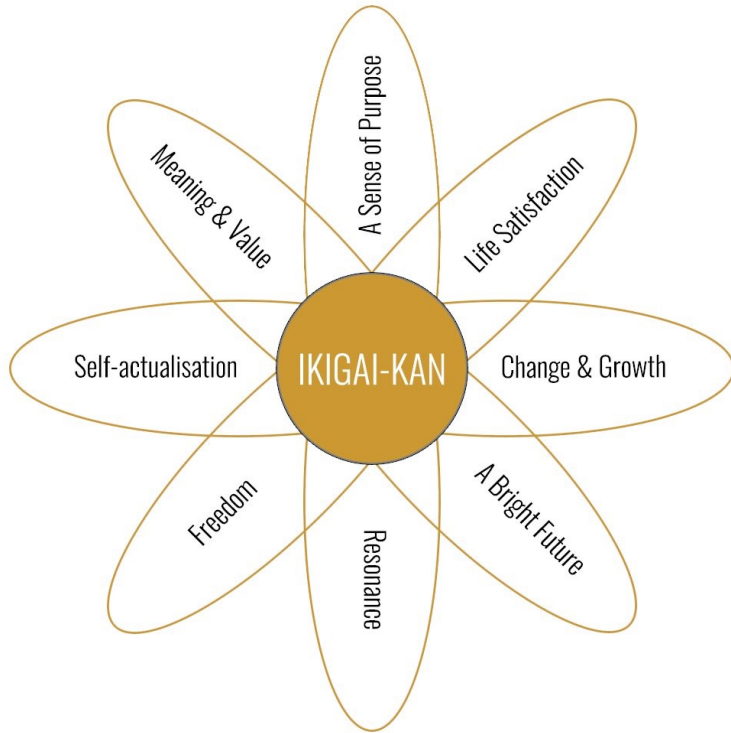
So what are the origins of Ikigai?



- Mieko Kamiya (1914-1979): the mother of Ikigai psychology
- It was from the interviews with leprosy patients at Nagashima Aiseien Leprosarium that she theorized her model of ikigai. Kamiya discovered that many patients with relatively light symptoms suffered from a sense of meaninglessness in their lives. This stimulated her into thinking about the question; “What makes one feel that life is worth living?”. Out of it grew the dissertation for which she received her doctorate from Osaka University in 1960.
- Her book *Ikigai-ni-Tsuite*, published in 1966, is still considered a standard reference by contemporary Japanese researchers, professors, and psychologists.

‘There are two ways of using the word ikigai. When someone says “this child is my ikigai,” it refers to the source or target of ikigai, and when one feels ikigai as a state of mind. The latter of these is close to what Frankl calls “sense of meaning”. Here I will tentatively call it “ikigai-kan” to distinguish it from the former “ikigai”.’

The 8 Ikigai needs : The Kamiya Flower



- ❖ **Life Satisfaction:** Feeling that life is moving in a positive direction.
- ❖ **Change and Growth:** The desire for new experiences and personal development.
- ❖ **A Bright Future:** Expectation that life will improve and unfold in a positive way.
- ❖ **Resonance:** Building and nurturing meaningful relationships.
- ❖ **Freedom:** Having autonomy in one's life.
- ❖ **Self-Actualization:** Developing one's core identity and potential.
- ❖ **Meaning and Values:** Finding significance and worth in life
- ❖ **Sense of Purpose:** Taking on responsibility for one's existence and the reason for being alive

How is Ikigai different from its Western meme?

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- ❖ **What we can be paid for: Ikigai isn't synonymous with financial success;** While wealth may result from pursuing one's Ikigai, it's not the primary goal.
 - ❖ **What the world needs: Ikigai isn't dictated by societal demands** but is found within personal relationships and roles within the community, family, and friendships. It's about enriching the lives of those who matter most, not saving the world.
 - ❖ **What we are good at Discovering your Ikigai doesn't require expertise.** It can emerge from simple daily routines or exploring new interests, focusing on personal evolution over proficiency.
 - ❖ **What we love: Ikigai isn't limited to passions.** It's about living authentically, embracing values, and finding significance in everyday life, despite any challenges.

Further sources of Ikigai-kan



011 – Finding Ikigai in The Art of Drawing The Sword



010 – The Way of Tea With Tea Master Randy Channell Soei



009 – Gregg Krech on Japanese Psychology in Times of Uncertainty



008 – Paul Akers On Banishing Sloppiness With Japanese Precision



007 – How The Andrés Zuzunaga Venn Diagram Became Ikigai



006 – Rock Star Neuroscientist, Ken Mogi's 5 Pillars of Ikigai



Main Act

The background features a dark blue field on the left. On the right, there is a composition of geometric shapes: a light blue square in the top right, a bright orange square in the middle right, and a light blue square in the bottom right. A large, semi-transparent orange circle is positioned in the top right, overlapping the dark blue field and the light blue square. A large, semi-transparent light blue circle is positioned in the bottom right, overlapping the dark blue field and the light blue square. A diagonal line of light blue shapes, including a triangle and a circle, runs from the center towards the bottom right corner.

So how can you integrate the 8 needs of Ikigai into your life to achieve work life harmony and personal growth?



Introducing the 5 pillars Framework by Dr Ken Mogi

- ❖ Starting Small
- ❖ Releasing yourself
- ❖ Harmony and Sustainability
- ❖ The joy of little things
- ❖ Being here and now



Pillar 1: Starting Small

- ❖ Kokorozashi - a personal mission that unifies the passion and skills of a professional to create positive change in society.
- ❖ A mission is driven by a sense of purpose or what is called Shimei-kan.
- ❖ It starts small. Think Steve Jobs and the iPhone and small home - based Japanese restaurants with single iconic dishes.
- ❖ Ask yourself these questions
 - Who do you wish to serve?
 - Specifically, what problem do you wish to solve?
 - What is your **why**?
 - Are you qualified to do this?
 - How are you going to do this?

What is your Kokorazashi in life?





Pillar 2: Releasing yourself

- ❖ The psychological stay of flow: an optimal state of mind where high levels of enjoyment are experienced
- ❖ To do this one must let go of your ego and the need to conform to something
- ❖ To experience flow these statements must hold for you:
 - I was challenged, but I believed my skills would allow me to meet the challenge
 - I performed automatically, without thinking too much.
 - I knew clearly what I wanted to do.
 - It was really clear to me how my performance was going.
 - My attention was focused entirely on what I was doing.
 - I had a sense of control over what I was doing.
 - I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking of me.
 - The way time passed seemed to be different from normal.
 - I really enjoyed the experience.
- ❖ One way to get into the flow is Ichigyo Zammai: on practice concentration

What are the instances you experience yourself in the flow?





Pillar 3: Harmony and Sustainability

- ❖ Wa: Harmony in Japanese culture, emphasizing peaceful unity and conformity within a social group
- ❖ It's about finding a balance in your daily activities and ensuring that our actions are considerate of others and the world around us.
- ❖ Sustainability applies not only to your relationship with nature but also to our individual activities within a social context. You should show adequate consideration for other people and be mindful of the impact your actions might have on society at large.
- ❖ Practicing Wa involves prioritizing the group's harmony over personal interests, fostering cooperation, and suppressing public disagreement to maintain communal harmony.

What is one change you can make to live in harmony and sustainability?





Pillar 4: The joy of little things

- ❖ Make the joy of little things work for you, then you can also start your ikigai in the morning
- ❖ If you make a habit of having your favorite things sooner after you get up (for example, chocolate and coffee) dopamine will be released in your brain, reinforcing the actions (getting up) before the receipt of your reward (chocolate and coffee).
- ❖ You can use all your five senses to enhance the experience of enjoying your morning cup of coffee.
 - Sight .
 - Sound
 - Smell
 - Taste
 - Touch

What is that one small thing in your life that brings you joy?



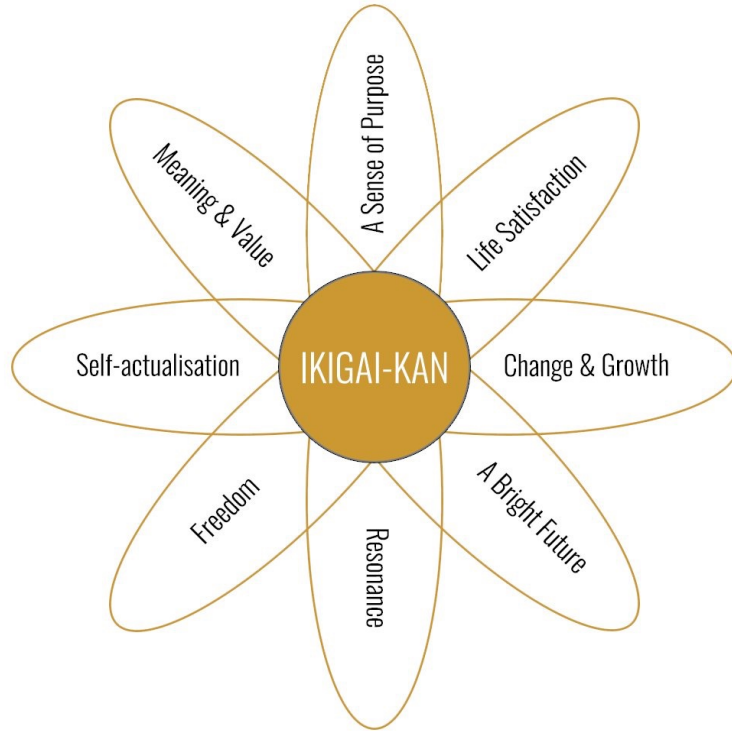


Pillar 5: Being here and now

- ❖ It's a state of mind, or work ethic, where you just immerse yourself in the joy of being in the here and now, without asking for immediate reward or recognition, which is an integral part of the Japanese concept of ikigai.
- ❖ It encompasses all the other 4 pillars of this framework. Its about appreciating life as unfolds, moment by moment.
- ❖ Some ways to experience this are:
 - Set Aside Time for Mindfulness Daily
 - Focus on your breath
 - Engage your senses
 - Minimize Distractions
 - Listen actively
 - Practice Time Awareness
 - Develop meditation/yoga practice
 - Embrace Ichi-go Ichi-e
 - Find Joy in little things

Closing Act

The background features a dark blue field on the left. On the right, there is a composition of geometric shapes: a light blue square in the top right, a light blue triangle pointing towards the center, an orange square below the triangle, and a bright cyan circle at the bottom right. A dark blue curved shape is also visible, partially overlapping the orange square and the cyan circle.



Lets revisit all your thoughts

- ❖ Has the Ikigai snapshot you shared at the beginning of this session changed?
- ❖ If there is one meaningful change you can make, what would that be?



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Thank You

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