

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CALGARY

YOUR WORK AND LIFE PURPOSE

Introduction

According to Gallup, a global management consulting company, the world is in the midst of an employee engagement crisis. Gallup found that only 15% of the world's one billion workers feel enthusiastic about their position.

IBM's Institute of Business Value found that not only are many Millennials and Generation Xers trying to determine what they are passionate about, but so are a large group of Baby Boomers.

On the other hand, Hamza Khan, TED and keynote speaker, learned when he interviewed a number of business leaders in Canada that they had a deep career satisfaction. They felt emotionally connected to their work and this connection made them feel happy. In his June 2018 article, *Ikigai: The Perfect Career Diagnostic*, Khan went on to say that these leaders felt motivated to persist. This led them to higher levels of success and satisfaction. They felt they were driven by purpose.

To find greater meaning and purpose in their work and life, many people have used a tool referred to by the Japanese for over 1,200 years as **ikigai**. This article provides greater insight into this tool.

Did you know?

- 85% of people in the world do not really like the work they do!
- In China, that number is 94%.
- In the Japanese language there is no word for "retirement," even though Japan has one of the world's longest average lifespans.
- Happier people tend to be those who find personal meaning in whatever they are doing. As a result, they are less stressed, more productive, more satisfied and, as a result, more successful.
- Work and life's purpose **can** have a direct relationship

Do you see your work as a job, a career, or a calling?

- How do you want to approach your work?
 - As something that satisfies just your basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter?
 - As something that only satisfies the needs of others but has little meaning to you?
 - As something that both satisfies your basic needs and is also something you find meaningful because it helps to meet the needs of others?

How Meaningful Is Your Work?

Most working adults are employed in positions that meet their basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter), yet they may not be certain as to whether what they are doing is making a meaningful difference.

Finding meaning in your work may have less to do with the actual work you do and more to do with how you choose to look at it. One person can look at what they do as simply a means to a paycheque, while another person views the same work as something they take pride in. Therefore, it is not what you do that bring meaning to your work, but how you choose to look at it.

The following set of questions may assist individuals in assessing how meaningful they find their work.

Put the number for the answer that best represents your views in the box to the right of each question.

		1 Never	2 Not Often	3 Some- times	4 Often	5 Almost Always
1.	Do you love your work or, at the very least, normally look forward to work when you get up each morning?					
2	Do you do things at work that you are really good at?					
3	Do you feel the work you do benefits others?					
4	Do you try to find solutions to problems that make things better for others?					
5	Do you find personal fulfillment in your work, and would you continue to do it even if you could retire?					
6	Do you try to become better at what you do at work by learning new things?					
7	Do you treat others with respect and try to help them?					
8	Do you have fun and find personal satisfaction in your work?					
9	Do take pride in your work?					
10	Do you try to stay relaxed and make a positive impact on others at work?					

Scoring

1. Add up the total value of all your responses.
2. If you scored less than 20, then you should learn a lot more about Ikigai *or* consider moving to another place to work if your employer and/or fellow workers do not treat you with respect or care about you.
3. If you scored 20 to 35 then you are probably getting close to your work Ikigai. Identify your lower scores and determine what steps you can take to improve yourself.
4. If you scored 36 to 50 then you have probably found your work Ikigai.

Ikigai Is a Tool That May Guide You In Finding Your Purpose in Life and Work

(pronounced “EE-key-guy”)



Are you:

1. Doing things that you really like or love doing?
2. Doing things that you are really good at?
3. Doing things that helps others and as a result makes their world a better place?
4. Doing things that you can be paid for?

Achieving all 4 of these will mean you have found your purpose in life or Ikigai.

Notes:

1. In addition to helping you find more meaningful work, Ikigai can help you live a longer, happier, and more meaningful life. Consider reading *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Longer and Happier Life*, by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles.
2. After years of research involving some 25 million people, Curt Coffman and Gabriel Gonzalez-Molina were able to identify a number of key factors that impact the degree of satisfaction individuals are able to find at work. They called them the Q¹². Their book is called *Follow This Path*.
3. *Ikigai, The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life*, by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles.
4. *The Happiness Advantage*, by Shawn Achor. Also see Shawn on TED.
5. *The Luck Factor*, by Richard Wiseman, The Effect of Positive and Negative Behaviour.
6. See Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs.”