



Understanding Ikigai

A Guide to Meaningful Career & Retirement Design

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that means “reason for being.” In modern career and retirement design, it offers a powerful framework for identifying work—and life directions—that feel purposeful, energizing, and sustainable.

Ikigai sits at the intersection of four key elements:

1. What You’re Good At

Your natural strengths, trained skills, and the talents others consistently acknowledge.

2. What You Love

Activities that energize you, bring a sense of flow, or feel deeply meaningful.

3. What the World Needs

Problems worth solving, contributions that create impact, or needs emerging in your profession, community, or society.

4. What People Will Pay For

Services, expertise, and value that clients, employers, or markets are willing to invest in.



Why Ikigai Matters in Career & Retirement Planning

Ikigai is especially relevant for:

Career Transitions

It helps clarify which strengths and experiences translate into meaningful, income-generating paths.

Leadership Development

Leaders gain clarity on where their natural capability meets organizational needs.

Retirement (Non-Financial) Planning

As individuals leave structured work, Ikigai provides a roadmap to design a life anchored in contribution, fulfillment, and continued relevance.

A Simple Exercise to Get Started

Below are four reflection prompts your readers can use:

1. What You're Good At

- Which skills come easily to you?
- What strengths do others consistently mention?

2. What You Love

- What activities make you lose track of time?
- What subjects or challenges draw out your curiosity?

3. What the World Needs

- What problems do you genuinely care about solving?
- Where do you see unmet needs in your field or community?

4. What People Will Pay For

- Which of your skills solve a meaningful problem?
- Where is there clear demand—today or emerging—for the value you can provide?



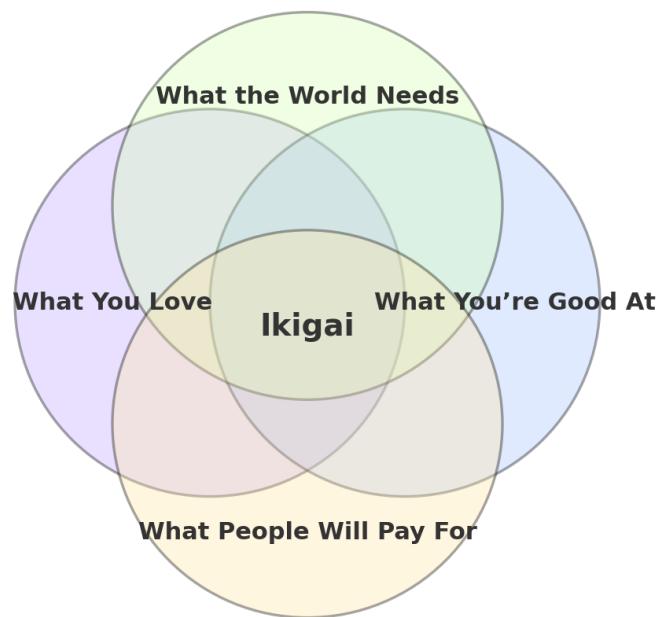
Bringing the Intersections Together

As readers begin mapping these four areas, they'll start to see patterns:

- Overlapping strengths and passions
- Market opportunities aligned with their values
- Potential career pivots or retirement ventures
- Ideas for consulting, part-time work, or purposeful volunteer roles

This framework becomes a powerful guide for creating a more intentional, aligned, and sustainable next chapter.

Illustration of the Ikigai Framework



Ikigai Reflection Worksheet

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Which skills come easily to you?

What strengths do others consistently mention?



2. What You Love

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What subjects or challenges draw out your curiosity?



3. What the World Needs

What problems do you genuinely care about solving?

Where do you see unmet needs in your field or community?



4. What People Will Pay For

Which of your skills solve a meaningful problem?

Where is there clear demand—today or emerging—for the value you can provide?

