

Life. Fun. Purpose.

With Purpose Coach Fawn Miller

Module 9.1

"Ikigai"

And The "Purpose Diagram"

The Importance of Purpose and Meaning

*Research shows that living a life of **purpose** and **meaning** contributes to greater health, well-being, longevity, energy, relationship satisfaction, and overall authentic
HAPPINESS.*

*Oh yeah,
and better sleep.*

Pretty awesome, right? It would seem like a no-brainer then, that because these are all pretty universally agreed upon elements that we all desire and need to thrive during our precious time here on Planet Earth, we'd have this "purpose" and "meaning" pretty dialed by now as a species, right?

Wait, what's that?...*We're not even close?!...*

We're still struggling and unfulfilled and confused and unhappy?

Oh dear...well, then, I'd say it's time to get to the bottom of this disconnect and learn what we can do to enrich our lives, connect with what we're here for, and embrace the art of thriving, right? Are you with me? Excellent!

In Module 9, you are going to learn about "Purpose, Meaning, and The "BIG WHY" from several different angles, and by the time you emerge on the other side of this fascinating and exciting adventure you are going to know exactly *why* it is absolutely imperative that you live a purpose-driven life, and *how* to explore, create, and embrace purpose, meaning, wellbeing, and happiness every single day!

We are going to begin our quest into the heart of these beautiful and powerful themes by exploring the little known but immensely enlightening Japanese philosophy for living a life of true fulfillment, purpose, and joy:

“Ikigai”

What is “Ikigai”?

“Ikigai” (pronounced **eee-kee-guy**) is the Japanese secret of living a long, happy, and healthy life full of purpose. It translates as “*The thing that you live for*” or “*The reason for which you get up in the morning.*”

Ikigai is about finding joy, fulfillment, and balance in the daily routine of life, and living it as a core, lifelong philosophy. It is one of the core practices of the Japanese people, and a common denominator amongst the highest population of centenarians (people who live to be over 100 years old!) in the world, who reside in Okinawa, Japan.

One of the core tenets of the Ikigai philosophy is that everything is connected: our job, family, passions, relationships, desires...*everything* is connected. When we feel disconnected, or disjointed, because we don’t have an all-encompassing motivation for our existence, we feel...lost, stressed, confused, and/or what is commonly known as “existentially anxious.”

Having and *living* an Ikigai remedies those symptoms of purposelessness, and infuses our everyday existence with, well, *LIFE*: The energy that moves us, inspires us, connects us, and fills us with the *real* joy of living...colloquially referred to in this program as your “Hell YES!” life:)

So let’s take a look at the 4 elements of Ikigai, and how - at their intersection - our unique purpose(s) emerge as the ideal focal point of our time, energy, and attention.

Note: I refer to the Ikigai diagram interchangeably as the “Purpose Diagram” - I have found that the title “Purpose Diagram” seems to be more relatable to our “Western” minds. But they are, in essence, the same thing.

Ok, let’s get our Ikigai on!



In essence, as Melody Wilding explains in her article [*“The Japanese Concept of ‘Ikigai’ is a Formula for Happiness and Meaning”*](#): *“to discover your Ikigai, you must first find what you’re most passionate about. Then, you find the medium through which you can express that passion.”*

She goes on to explain that *“Ikigai has a few essential qualities that separate it from the “follow your passion” truism as we conceive of it in Western culture:*

- ***It’s challenging.*** *Your ikigai should lead to mastery and growth.*
- ***It’s your choice.*** *You feel a certain degree of autonomy and freedom pursuing your ikigai.*
- ***It involves a commitment of time and belief,*** *perhaps to a particular cause, skill, trade, or group of people.*
- ***It boosts your well-being.*** *Ikigai is associated with positive relationships and good health. It gives you more energy than it takes away.*

She adds that *“An ikigai can serve as a compass to navigate both career and life decisions, which it seems people crave for now more than ever.”*

This is exactly why I have implemented the Ikigai philosophy and “Purpose Diagram” in my coaching methodology for several years and shared it with hundreds of clients, many of whom have experienced life-changing clarity, direction, and motivation in the process of self-discovery that this exercise facilitates.

So, Darlings, let’s begin the quest into Ikigai!

But before we do, I invite you to reflect on all of the resources that you’ve explored in this program up until present, including your Values, Character Strengths, Longings+Discontentments, Visions, Visualizations, and “Allies.” Oh - and as always, please be mindful of any Gremlins that may pop up as you give yourself permission to explore yourself, your desires, and your truth:)

Exploring Your Ikigai / Purpose

Ok, let's dive into the exploration of your Ikigai+Purpose! In this portion of the workbook you will find a series of questions related to each of the 4 primary areas of the diagrams above: What you love, what the world needs, what you are good at, and what you can get paid for. The questions are meant to help you 'unpack' yourself and what lives inside of you in each of these areas.

Please complete as much of this exercise as possible. Take your time and be as thorough and honest as you can, the more specific and elaborate you are, the better. Don't worry, there are no "wrong" answers. Feel free to use as much space as you need. If you are unsure about how to answer any of these, don't worry - we will work on these things together.

For each question, brainstorm and list all of the ideas that apply for you based on your life, experiences, education, credentials, relationships, etc.

Note: I recommend that you check out the following Ted Talks and articles before diving into the questions in this workbook (Recommended but not required:)

Videos:

["How to Ikigai" Tedx Talk by Ted Tamashiro](#)

["Don't Wait, Find Your Ikigai" Tedx Talk by Gangadharan Menon](#)

Articles:

["The Japanese Concept of 'Ikigai' is a Formula for Happiness and Meaning"](#)
by Melodie Wilding

["Finding Your Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to Health and Happiness"](#) by Tom Ough

WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

What do you love doing, experiencing, creating, etc. What brings you satisfaction and joy?

What makes you feel good about yourself?

What are you doing when time seems to “fly”?

What gets you excited and fired up?

What gives you a sense of accomplishment and positive self-esteem?

If you could spend all day doing _____, what would it be?

What are your Top 10 Core Values?

If money, age, health, gender, or fear were *not* an object, what would you do in the next 5 years?

WHAT DO YOU DO WELL?

List any and all of your valuable experiences, skills, credentials, triumphs, survival stories, accolades, 'against-all-odds' stories, impact zones, 'wow I just did that' moments, natural flow states, things that others have complimented you for, etc.

When you think about projects, experiences, and situations where you have felt like you've really contributed and made a difference, what are the skills and abilities that you've used?

What are your strengths?

What are your Character Strengths?

What are your natural talents and abilities?

What do people compliment you on?

Describe a time when you felt good about being a part of something:

WHAT DOES THE WORLD NEED?

What issues do you care about that the world needs solutions for?

If you could fix 3 problems in the world, what would they be?

What ways do you love to help, serve, or contribute to other people's wellbeing?

What businesses, products, or services do you think should exist that don't already (or what businesses should there be *more* of if they already exist)?

What would make you feel like a hero?

What would you love to invent that would improve the world?

If you could make a million dollars doing something to help the world, what would it be?

On a scale from 1-10, how important is it to you to help the world in your everyday life?

On a scale from 1-10, how important is it to you to help the world in your line of work?

What do you want your legacy to be?

WHAT CAN YOU GET PAID FOR

What are your monetizable experiences, skills, credentials, triumphs, survival stories, accolades, 'against-all-odds' stories, impact zones, 'wow I just did that' moments, natural flow states, things that others have complimented you for, etc.? (P.S. don't worry about whether you think it's actually monetizable in a big or realistic way...if it provides value, you can almost certainly get paid for it). List them here:

What value do you bring to people, situations, and experiences?

What value have you brought to people, situations, and experiences in the past?

What are your dream jobs/professions/careers?

If you could create the *perfect* profession and get paid well for it, what would it be?

Who is a professional inspiration for you? Who has a job where you're like "dang, I'd like to do that!", and what do they do?

What skill sets would you love to be able to combine and get paid for performing? (ex. Wilderness skills + writing + travel = blog, book, or workshops)

EXTRA EXPLORATION: BELIEFS

Do you believe it is possible to do what you love, help the world, and get paid well for it? Describe why:

Do you believe that with effort, commitment, strategy, a great attitude and enthusiasm, anything is possible? Yes/No? Describe why:

Do you *want* to live a life that fires you up, excites you, and make a great living doing what you love?

What will it be like if you *don't* choose to create the life of your dreams and stay where you're at instead?

Who do you look up to? Who are your role models?

What is your “Money Story”? What beliefs, ideas, and stories do you have about money? How do you feel when you think about money? (If unsure, please explore [Module 8: “Relationship with Money”](#))

What is your “Work Story”? What beliefs, ideas, stories do you have about work? How do you feel when you think about career, profession, or ‘work’? (We will do a more thorough dive into this in the next module)

TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION!

Whew! Way to unpack your Ikigai! Now it's time for reflection and action!

Stand back, take a deep breath, and read through your responses in this workbook. Feel free to continue adding, updating, and elaborating on your Ikigai, as this process typically takes *time* to thoroughly brainstorm, consider, and experiment with. Revisit the workbook often, and notice what stands out to you, what inspires excitement, curiosity, and desire. Then...

VISUALIZE

Begin researching the “Ikigai” common denominators at the cross section of the 4 categories. Hop on Google, look to your role models, and even tune into who you're jealous of (oftentimes that can be a guiding light to “I wish I could do that!”)...

Visualize: When you begin to have a sense of what your “Ikigai” paths might be, imagine yourself following them. What is your life like in 1 year? 3 years? How can you bring your Ikigai into the world in a way that meets your values and the “longings” of your “Hell YES!” life?

As you visualize, journal about how the simulation of these paths feels to you. Do you feel excited? Relieved? Called forth? Curious? Write everything out as elaborately as you can. Simulation is one of the best ways that we can begin honing in on our Purpose.

TAKE ACTION!

Begin taking steps everyday that include and prioritize *actually* exploring your Ikigai by “trying it on” in the world. Turn off Netflix. Get up 10 minutes earlier. Volunteer your time on a Saturday instead of partying on a Saturday night. Turn off the game and start working on your side hustle.

Get your hands dirty, and before you know it, your Ikigai will become YOU.