

Subject: How to Find Your 'Ikigai'

Monday Morning Motivator



Hi NAME

This is going to sound strange...

Even a bit mystical.

But bear with me, because it's absolutely true.

There are moments when I'm writing these newsletters that I feel perfectly at one with the universe.

I know, I know – it's all very zen!

But the best way I can describe it is a surge of immense wellbeing 'where I'm no longer aware of 'writing' or 'working' or even 'thinking'.

I'm just alive in the moment and it all flows out of me – the words and the ideas – without any feeling of conscious effort.

It's a bit like a spider spinning a web... or an eagle soaring on a current of air... or a bee making honey.

Everything suddenly feels RIGHT, like I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing.

Have you ever felt like this?

Perhaps you get a similar sensation when you listen to music, or when you play sport, or when you're engrossed in a hobby like gardening, model railway building or painting.

It's what is known in Western culture as a 'flow state'.

The American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, describes 'flow' as a state of complete concentration on an activity that's meaningful to you and perfectly suited to your abilities.

In Japanese culture there's a similar idea which they call 'Ikigai', loosely translated as a 'reason for being'.

It's that feeling of inner drive, absorption and fulfilment you get when you follow your passions and interests in life.

The Perfect Recipe for Motivation

Finding your Ikigai is crucial when it comes to long-term success.

It makes 'working' on a big project (like setting up a business, or learning how to trade) not feel like work at all, but something that you're compelled to do... that makes you feel fulfilled, complete and happy.

To achieve Ikigai you need to combine:-

- What you love to do
- What you are good at
- What the world needs
- What you can be paid for

Here's a diagram to illustrate how these all intersect...



Now, it struck me recently that I've been following the Ikigai way for years without knowing it...

My business involves copywriting, editing, design, product creation and marketing.... with the aim of educating and training people in methods of making money.

All of these have totally keyed into my Ikigai.

For example...

- **'What you love'** – I love reading, writing, creativity and coming up with new ideas. It's what I enjoyed as a kid – even before I got involved with business and marketing. So when I write an email like this, I am usually having fun, rather than working.
- **'What you are good at'** – I've always been good at doing research, formulating ideas, making original combinations, and writing them down persuasively. That's pretty much my core role in my business!

- **‘What the world needs’** - people need to find genuine ways to make money, and find financial freedom for their families, especially during these uncertain times in the 21st Century.
- **‘What you can be paid for’** - as a publisher I can get paid for my research, ideas and content – if it’s good enough, which it usually is - I hope! ;-).

Now, I’m not telling you this to blow my own trumpet...

(Although I do feel very privileged that I have found a way to make money doing what I love.)

My reason for sharing this is that finding YOUR Ikigai could be crucial.

How To Fire-Up Your Inner Drive

Whatever anyone tells you, making money from a business, trading or betting project is NEVER easy.

Even when you follow a legitimate plan it still requires focus, effort, self-education and persistence...

Achieving a big long-term goal requires you to push through those inevitable periods when the chaos of life gets in the way... when you feel mentally or physically challenged.... or when shiny new things distract your attention.

But when you pursue a business idea that gives you a sense of Ikigai, these all become less of a challenge.

Because you’ll be doing something you enjoy, which gives you a sense of purpose, and a reason for being.

These factors will trump ANY obstacle that comes your way.

The secret is to find a business where the main tasks are those which tap into your ‘intrinsic motivation’.

Intrinsic motivation refers to something you do because you find it naturally rewarding, satisfying, or meaningful... and NOT because you want praise or money.

For example...

- You find reading books relaxing...

- You love the task of trying to solve a difficult problem,
- You get a buzz when you write something good.
- You're passionate about the way things are designed...
- You love a good spreadsheet...
- You doodle, draw and make shapes whenever you're bored...
- You get obsessed over a good deal and will spend hours searching for a bargain.

If these are things you do in life anyway, then imagine how powerful they become when they're part of your business project!

According to psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, who developed Self-Determination Theory in the 1970s, intrinsic motivation happens when...

- You feel in control of your actions.
- You feel capable and effective at what you're doing.
- You feel connected to others or that what you're doing matters socially.

If these needs are met, you're more likely to keep going on something.

Which is very like the theory of Ikigai, isn't it?

So if you're hunting around for an income idea, I don't recommend that you focus on the money, the rewards or the kudos.

Instead, sit down with a sheet of paper (or a word document) and consider the following questions:

- ✓ Will I enjoy doing this?
- ✓ Are the core tasks things that I am good at?
- ✓ Will this help improve the world in some way?
- ✓ Can I get paid for it?

If it ticks the boxes, then it's certainly a contender – and you should prioritise this idea over others that might make more money, or be easier to set up.

And if you are struggling to persevere with a business plan then perhaps a lack of Ikigai could be the reason.

I'd be interested to know what you think.

If so, send me an email and let me know!

Best regards

Nick Laight