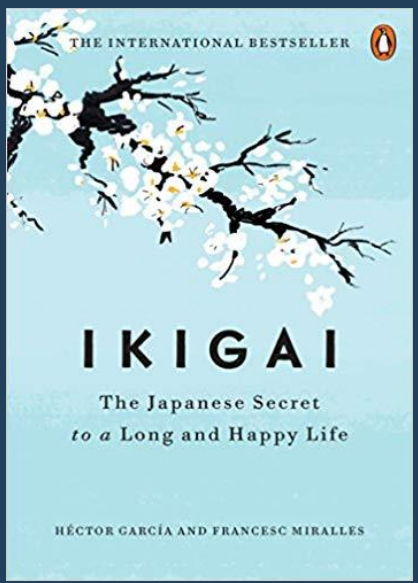

Ikigai

Year of publication: 2017
Author: Ken Mogi
208 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2AUq1JO

The book "Ikigai: The secret Japanese way to live a happy and long life" by Ken Mogi, explains the concepts of the Ikigai philosophy, a Japanese origin word that describes the pleasures and senses of life.
Through 5 steps, the author will help you find your Ikigai, showing how it is rooted in Japanese culture, and give lessons that will change your life. All of this through an easy reading, making the absorption of knowledge easier.

Score

9

9 Aplicability
9 Inspiration
9 Innovation
8 Impact on results
9 Structure

Main ideias of the book

- There are 5 steps to the Ikigai: Starting small, break free, harmony and sustainability, the joy of small things and to be in here and now;
- Ikigai gives a reason for living and determination. It can make you live longer, be healthier, be happier, and even be more successful;
- Japanese people value the artisan's work by recognizing the time and effort dedicated to the construction of the pieces;
- One of the benefits of having Ikigai is resiliency and robustness;
- Make an effort to be your primary source of happiness, joy, and inner satisfaction, and the results will be enough for you to move forward.

For whom is this book suitable?

This book is for all of those people who want to live longer, healthier and be more accomplished in life. And for those who need help in finding the purpose of life. Also, it's suitable for all of those who want to find out about the rich Japanese culture.

Overview of the book

Describing what is *Ikigai*

From a Japanese origin, the word Ikigai = "iki" (live) + "gai" (reason) describes the pleasures and senses of life. It's what makes you get up every day in the morning and gives meaning to your life.
Everyone has an Ikigai, you just have to find it. Author Ken Mogi defines 5 pillars for this:

1. Starting small;
2. Free yourself;
3. Harmony and sustainability;
4. The joy of small things;
5. Be in the here and now.

> *The culture of being proud of what you make, always creating the best is very strong and valued in Japan, and it's called Kodawari.*

Promoting the 5 pillars

1. Starting small

Japan is known for offering high-quality assets and services. The Japanese start the job ("starting small") and go through each step until they reach their best shape, dedicating time and effort.
The culture of being proud of what you make, always creating the best is very strong and valued in Japan, and it's called Kodawari.

2. Free Yourself

When we talk about "freeing ourselves," we can relate to two aspects: sensory beauty, flow, and creativity.

2.1 Sensory beauty

There is a lot of sonic symbolism in the Japanese culture and they are able to "break free" in the sense of opening up to the sensory universe.
The Japanese pay close attention to details. They value the work of craftsmen, for example, by recognizing the time and effort devoted to the construction of the piece.
Besides that, paying attention to the variety of sensory experience is key to enhancing your work, whether it's craft or high-tech manufacturing.

2.2 Flow and creativity

To Ken Mogi, "flow" is when people are so into an activity that nothing else seems to matter anymore. When you are in the "flow" state, you are more concerned with working on what gives you pleasure than on what gives you money.
He quotes as an example the manga's producers. It is a profession that is well paid and difficult, but it grows more and more because whoever produces them does that because it has a greater purpose.
Thereby, he says that you must "break free" from the ego. When you reach the state of flow, you start not to worry about the need of being recognized for your work and your effort or another kind of reward. But you start to worry about the satisfaction of your goals and your well-being.

3. Harmony and sustainability

Searching for individual desires in Japanese culture is linked to the concept of society's sustainability and environment.
To the Japanese, "harmony and sustainability" present themselves in a very strong way, because for them it is essential to be in harmony with people in general and with the environment.
There is a culture in Japan of nature's appreciation and one of the ways it manifests itself is through architectural projects such as the Meiji Shrine Forest.

4. The joy of the little things

The Japanese have a culture of valuing the sun and an economic history that has developed on them the pleasure of waking up early. In the historical era in which they worked on crops, for example, to succeed the Japanese should wake up very early.
The "taiso radio" the name given to exercises synchronized with music, refers to a morning culture of physical activity in Japan. Children are encouraged to get into this habit of getting up early since during school holidays, the ones who participate of the "radio taiso's" meetings receive prizes.
Another factor that influences the Japanese to get out of bed is the custom of eating their favorite food right after waking up and playing chess during the home-work path. Thus they fortify the culture of valuing and having **"the joy of the little things".**

5. To be in the here and now

Another fact to be punctuated is the valuation of the ephemeral things, of "***being in the here and now"*** that the Japanese people have.
For example, being in the "flow" state as said in topic 2 allows you to focus on what you are doing right now to develop your best.

Others Ikigai values

1. Resilience

To Ken Mogi, one of the benefits of having Ikigai is the resiliency and robustness it develops in people, making them face better the unforeseen and challenges that occur in life.
There are many natural disasters in Japan. And the author claims that the Japanese are very resilient in dealing with such tragedies. This is due to the fact that Japanese culture appreciates life a lot which is quite shown in mangas, for example.

2. Happiness

In this part, the author emphasizes that we must detach from what is called the "focus illusion". "Focus Illusion" happens when you believe that your happiness depends on one thing and this becomes a prerequisite to be happy. But to be happy, you must accept yourself.

3. Acceptance

To be happy you must accept yourself as you are. Japanese culture focuses on the appreciation of diversity, in which each human being is unique and exclusive. And that you should regard other people's recognition as something good, but not something essential to be happy.

What other authors say about it?

Tony Robbins's book "Awaken the Giant Within," also gives great lessons about turning your life around, which according to the author, depends only on the initial decision to change. Thus, the book outlines lessons about self-mastery and how these lessons can help you achieve your personal goals.

The book "The 100-Year Life" by Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott, is a guide for you to thrive in a world where people are living more and more. The book tells us how the job market has changed, what it stands for in terms of retirement, and what adjustments you need to make to enjoy that three-digit life.

In the book "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck", author Mark Manson presents us with the pressure that today's world put on us and how we should behave in the face of this reality. It gives us hints and leads us to reflect on habits that sometimes we have to care too much about the wrong things.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

Ikigai's philosophy is very cool, but we need to "get our hands dirty" and make it become part of our lives. So just look at these tips we've separated for you:

- Find your Ikigai in the little things and always focus on the now;
- Review the 5 steps that the author defines as the key to find the Ikigai;
- Reflect on how the author's teachings can be applied in your life.

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