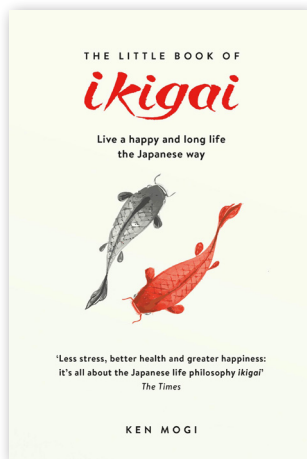


## Book Review

Sutsawad Jandum



**Title:** The Little Book of Ikigai  
**Author:** Ken Mogi  
**Publisher:** Mogi, K. (2018). *Ikigai*.  
**London:** Quercus Edition Ltd.

the vital foundation which allows ikigai to flourish. They are: *Starting small, Releasing yourself, Harmony and sustainability, The joy of little things, and Being in the here and now.*

Ken Mogi states that *ikigai* gives your life purpose. *Ikigai* and happiness must first come from the acceptance of yourself. Your happiness need not be determined by others, nor does it depend on external things (this is an illusion). To find your *ikigai* you must start small, take it slow, and care for the fine details. The acceptance of oneself is important. To accept yourself, paradoxically, you must ‘release yourself’ or let go of your ‘ego’ and be in the state of ‘flow’. Live in harmony with other people and the environment. Understand the connection between harmony and sustainability. Ask yourself what the little things that you appreciate are and enjoy them. Relax and take pleasure in them. Value being in the present; your happiness resides in the here and now so you can have *ikigai* whether you win or lose. You don’t need external rewards to make you happy as your inner joy of being in the present is sufficient.

There are 10 chapters in this 196-page book. Each chapter gives various supportive examples, mostly from Japanese culture and society, to clarify the Five Pillars of *ikigai*. The example of the traditional tea ceremony in Chapter 5 and the strict ranking system of Sumo wrestlers in Chapter 7 embody all Five Pillars of *ikigai* within them. A very impressive example of ikigai is found in Chapter 1’s example of Jiro Ono’s life, the great

Ten years ago, while I was in Japan to attend a training program for teachers of the Japanese language, a Japanese professor asked me why I became a teacher. I told her teaching makes my life worth living, to which she remarked, “Because you have *ikigai* in your life. You can recognize what is fulfilling and meaningful.” That was the first time I heard the word “*ikigai*” before reading this book.

The word “*ikigai*” (生き甲斐) is a compound of two Japanese words: *iki* (生き), meaning “to live or alive” and *gai* - from the word *kai* (甲斐), meaning “result or worth”. Thus, *ikigai* can be described as “a reason for living, a meaning to life, or that which makes life worth living.” For Japanese people, *ikigai* has been a commonly used word. It is, however, gaining a lot of interest outside of Japan and there are many books written about *ikigai* in various aspects.

According to the author, Ken Mogi, *ikigai* can be understood simply by focusing on the individual’s inner being and feeling. He refers to the Five Pillars of *ikigai*,

Japanese chef who started working at a small local restaurant until he became the owner of Sukiyabashi Jiro, the world's most famous sushi restaurant.

***The Little Book of Ikigai*** will be useful for anyone. Those who are interested in Japanese life philosophy, or are pursuing meaningful living, or simply desire to live a long happy life, will find this book resonating well with them. For readers who are unfamiliar with Japan, this book is filled with many interesting illustrations of Japanese culture and society.

***The Little Book of Ikigai*** will inspire you to make

changes in your life in small steps. It will fire you up with motivation each morning. Utilizing this book, you can become happier, healthier, and more fulfilled. After reading this book, I have found myself becoming more relaxed. I have begun to take notice of the fine details of life and find joy in little things around me-joy in things I used to ignore or not notice because of my hurried daily routine. Surprisingly enough, it took this book to help me finally understand why my friend always sought out beautiful teacups-it is so that she finds joy in drinking her morning coffee every day!