

The Japanese Secret to A Long and Happy Life

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INTRODUCTION

“*Ikigai*” (pronounced ee-key-guy) a self-help book originally written in Spanish by Hector Garcia¹ and Francesc Miralles² won hearts of millions across globe and titled as ‘The international bestseller’ encloses valuable life modules (Hector Garcia, 2021). Author sussed out to ‘the secret of happier as well as healthier life’ and presented aesthetically in the book. The average longevity recorded in Ogimi village (also known as the village of longevity) of Okinawa, Japan is significantly longer than the average of entire world. Therefore, Hector opts that location of Japan and conduct the research on their elderly residents in order to irks out the philosophy of their extraordinary longevity and happy life. More than a hundred of them have been interviewed for the same. (KIZUNA, 2022) This rigorous approach of conducting interviews implicate the academic mind of authors which marks authenticity and reliability towards the book globally.

A 208 pages book translated by Heather Cleary and published in 2017 under Penguin Random House India, distributors in Indian subcontinent, secured place in amazon’s best seller (PTI, 2023). Surprisingly, the term “Ikigai” doesn’t directly translate into English; yet, its literal meaning defines it as ‘reason of living happy life’ (Mitushashi, 2017). Whilst, this Japanese term is composed of the words iki means “life” and gai means “to be worthy”. When put together it reads “reason of your being”, your purpose of life that keeps you motivating to work, and leave your bed every morning (Eatough, 2021).

Ten Rules of Ikigai

Search of Ikigai has been described as, it lies deep inside within us and everyone has their own different ikigai. this book endeavors to ekes people’s own ikigai out when feel drained. Describing the proliferation of health diseases all over the world, author lime lighted the lifestyle of residents of Ogimi. They don’t only differ from rest of the world as centenarians, but also suffer less from chronic diseases and embrace happier lifestyle over the aeons. He illuminated ten step by step major formula to hone lifestyle of people-

1. Continue to be active even after official retirement,
2. Don’t ruse, it will inversely affect the health,
3. Consume less than your hunger and adhere the rule of 80 percent,
4. Good friends are gem in your life, surround yourself with them,

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5. Maintain your body by daily gentle movements,
6. Smiling,
7. As a human being connect yourself with natural environment,
8. Show gratitude to everything and every person that makes you feel good, brings joy and revive you,
9. Don't dwell on the past and stop worrying about future. Make today worth remembering,
10. Pursue the passion that distinguishes you from others. If you couldn't recognize your ikigai yet, discover it now.

Art of Living

Author introduces art of living and disperse the chapters within antiaging secrets, logotherapy, Morita therapy, power of flow, longevity, ikigai diet, exercises, resilience, and Wabi-Sabi³. When the book drives into achieving mental health, it talks about the importance of slowing down in life it details the way to enjoy stress free lifestyle keeping positive and stoic attitude. Though author also emphasizes the prominence of little stress in life and says a little stress is congenial to health.

Where on the one hand author mitigates the stress through mindfulness, he talks about logotherapy on the other through which people who are skeptical about their existence can discover the reason to live and purpose of life. A few years earlier on that same decade a psychotherapist, Shoma Morita a Zen Buddhist created his own therapy named Morita therapy that left a remarkable impact on Japan. Instead of controlling the melancholy, this therapy teaches to accept those emotions, that is how you discover your Ikigai,

The book alludes to concentrate on a single chosen difficult task with clear objective that is the power of flow. It will free you from distractions and lead to follow your passion. In order to learn more about the lives of super centenarians (people aged more than 100 years), a particular book section is a storehouse of interviews with these international champions of longevity, stories of their healthy lifestyle such as diet and exercise regimen, have been added in subsequent chapter within a proper revamped structure. Those are the individuals that discovered their own Ikigai.

Okinawa diet and centenaries exercise strategy

Book limelight the importance of minimal diet and suggests to curb the gluttony to keep oneself healthy for longevity without diseases. More precisely, it suggests to eat two-third of your appetite and call it *Hara hachi bu* an ancient Buddhism practice of dieting. Also, there should be intake of at least eighteen different foods per day. Apparently, containing green tea, Sanpin-cha⁴ and shikuwasa⁵ is focused more and less attention has been paid to food which includes sugar, sweet, chocolates. Explaining about exercise, it doesn't cover intense routine exercise rather it focuses to never stop moving and keep the body active throughout the day. The major coup to stay healthy includes Radio taiso for warm-ups, sun salutations, Qigong, and many more. Developing the penchant for such exercises lead to prolonged existence of mankind.

Suggestions on Ikigai

The book gets flak where chapters include postures of yoga and unnecessary data which distracts the readers and loose the engagement with the book (Tayade, 2022). Apart from that, book lacks the brevity when it talks more about healthy diets and exercise benefits, whilst abundance of contents is already available on internet that can be read on numerous blogs nowadays. It seems peculiar that, book talks less on finding ikigai instead suggests more on eating habits. Also, it wasn't long enough to go through deeply into the book thoughtfully. (laura, 2023)

Well signposting and a lot of real substance made the book worth reading. (Sharma K. R., 2021) The book has been rated five out of five by publishers and suggested to read by many others. (Sutton, 2021) (BooksLoveMe, 2020) (Malik, 2021) Author's struggle to garner numbers of interviews is appreciable. The book is must read for those who lacks happiness and peace instead having everything in their life. It is an aid to stumble the greater purpose and deeper perspective of the life, to cherish friendship, to motivate, and nudge people to follow their passion along with the secret of longevity (Sharma R. , 2022). In short, this book guides all and sundry to find their *ikigai*.



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