

**Ikigai** is a Japanese concept meaning “a reason for being.” When we lose a sense of purpose in our lives, we suffer. Often, we don’t know what to do to remedy that situation; we don’t know where to look or how to find what will give us that sense of purpose — that will restore our reason for being (or help us find it for the first time). The purpose of this course is to help you on that path — to that end, this concept is a really useful tool for you to benefit from.

You’re going to start by asking yourself four questions. (The same answers can apply to multiple categories, so write them under every heading that fits.)

- ✦ What do I love?
- ✦ What am I good at?
- ✦ What can I get paid for — either now or fairly quickly?
- ✦ What does the world need?

Now you’ll begin narrowing it down by looking at any overlap.

- ✦ **Passion** — What You Love | What You’re Good At
- ✦ **Mission** — What You Love | What The World Needs
- ✦ **Vocation** — What The World Needs | Can Be Paid For
- ✦ **Profession** — Can Be Paid For | What You’re Good At

If you don’t have any overlap in one (or more) of the categories, don’t worry. You can instead fill it in as follows:

- ✦ Passion → What You Love
- ✦ Mission → What The World Needs
- ✦ Vocation → What You’re Good At
- ✦ Profession → What You Can Be Paid For

What you’re looking for is something that fits all of those categories. You may notice something that appeared under each heading. Or you may have to play around a bit and see what the similarities are between your answers and how they could be tweaked in order to come together. Either way, the most important question to ask yourself is:

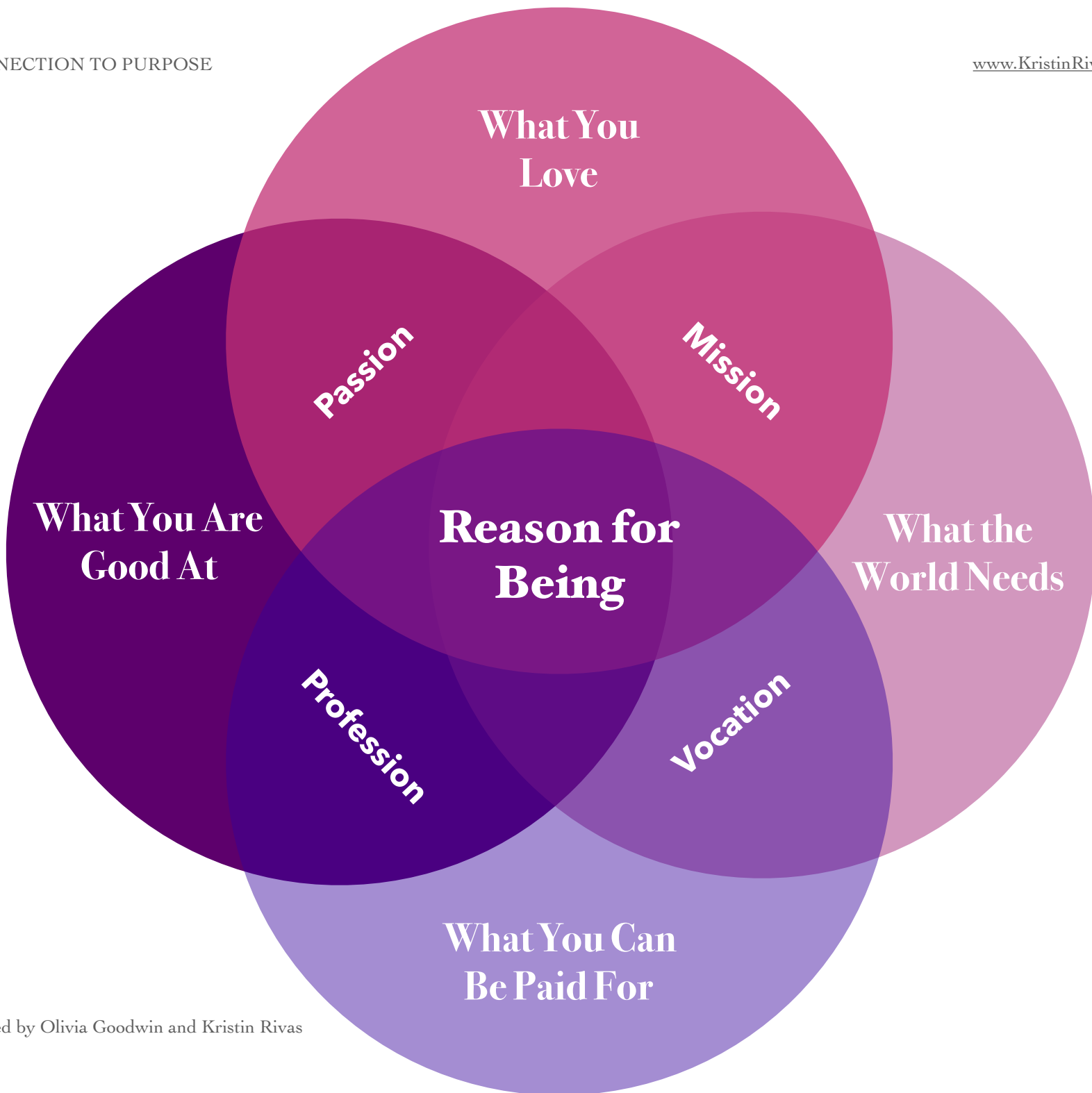
#### ✦ **What makes me come alive?**

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“You have a right to experiment with your life. You will make mistakes. And they are right too. No, I think there was too rigid a pattern. You came out of an education and are supposed to know your vocation. Your vocation is fixed, and maybe ten years later you find you are not a teacher anymore or you're not a painter anymore. It may happen. It has happened. I mean Gauguin decided at a certain point he wasn't a banker anymore; he was a painter. And so he walked away from banking. I think we have a right to change course. But society is the one that keeps demanding that we fit in and not disturb things. They would like you to fit in right away so that things work now.”

— *Anaïs Nin*

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## Suggested Further Reading

♦ [Awakening Your Ikigai: How the Japanese Wake Up to Joy and Purpose Every Day](#) | Ken Mogi | “Ikigai can

be small moments: the morning air, a cup of coffee, a compliment. It can also be deep convictions: a fulfilling job, lasting friendships, balanced health. Whether big or small, your ikigai is the path to success and happiness in your own life. Author Ken Mogi introduces five pillars of ikigai to help you make the most of each day and become your most authentic self:

1. starting small → focus on the details
2. releasing yourself → accept who you are
3. harmony and sustainability → rely on others
4. the joy of little things → appreciate sensory pleasure
5. being in the here and now → find your flow.

Weaving together insights from Japanese history, philosophy, and modern culture, plus stories from renowned

sushi chef Jiro Ono, anime filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, and others, Mogi skillfully shows the way to awaken *your* ikigai.”

- ♦ [Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life](#) | Héctor García and Francesc Miralles | “In researching this book, the authors interviewed the residents of the Japanese village with the highest percentage of 100-year-olds—one of the world’s Blue Zones. *Ikigai* reveals the secrets to their longevity and happiness: how they eat, how they move, how they work, how they foster collaboration and community, and—their best-kept secret—how they find the *ikigai* that brings satisfaction to their lives. And it provides practical tools to help you discover your own *ikigai*. Because who doesn’t want to find happiness in every day?”

- ♦ **[Born for This](#)** | Chris Guillebeau | “Finding the work you were “born to do” isn’t just about discovering your passion. Doing what brings you joy is great, but if you aren’t earning a living, it’s a hobby, not a career. And those who jump out of bed excited to go to work every morning don’t just have jobs that turn their passions into paychecks. They have jobs where they also can lose themselves for hours in the flow of meaningful work. This intersection of joy, money, and flow is what Guillebeau will help you find in this book. Through inspiring stories of those who have successfully landed their dream career, as well as actionable tools, exercises, and thought experiments, he’ll guide you through today’s vast menu of career options to discover the work perfectly suited to your unique interests, skills, and experiences.”
- ♦ **[Pivot](#)** | Jenny Blake | “Jenny Blake — a former training and career development specialist at Google who now runs her own company as a career and business consultant and speaker — has a solution: the pivot. Pivoting is a crucial strategy for Silicon Valley tech companies and startups but it can also be a successful strategy for individuals looking to

make changes in their work lives. This book will introduce you to the Pivot Method and show you how to take small, smart steps to move in a new direction — now and throughout your entire career.”

- ♦ **[Finding Your Own North Star](#)** | Martha Beck | “In this book, you'll start by learning how to read the internal compasses already built into your brain and body--and why you may have spent your life ignoring their signals. As you become reacquainted with your own deepest desires, you'll identify and repair any unconscious beliefs or unhealed emotional wounds that may be blocking your progress ... Based on Dr. Beck's work as a Harvard-trained sociologist, research associate at Harvard Business School, instructor at Thunderbird Business School, and especially on her experiences with her clients over the last six years, *Finding Your Own North Star* offers thoroughly tested case studies, questionnaires, and exercises to help you articulate your core desires and act on them to build a more satisfying life.”