

How to find Ikigai, or "Lifes Purpose"

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passions, resistance, executive function, life, purpose, build, kids, engagements, students, interests, weeds, seeds, planting, strengths, education, saturate, gift, feel, grow, talents

SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

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- S** Seth Perler 00:01
Hey, what's up, parents teachers? It's me Seth with SethPerler.com. I'm an executive function coach out of Colorado. I help struggling students navigate this thing called education so that they can have a great future. And in this video, I'm going to talk about how to help them find their life purpose. How do you help a neurodiverse student who struggles with executive function? How do you help them find their life purpose, especially when they're often resistant to doing things that they need to do to build a fantastic life? So in doing this, I'm going to talk a little bit about 'Ikigai.'
- S** Seth Perler 00:32
Ikigai is a Japanese term, and it translates to "reason for being," and there are a lot of great parallels between Ikigai and education. The Latin for education is educare, which means to "raise or to lift, or to bring up, or to bring forth." And what we do with our kids is we raise our kids, we bring up kids. Think about the metaphor of education. The metaphor is, is that we're moving them in an upward, forward type of emotion. And if Ikigai, the reason for being, both of these things, in lifting someone, in raising someone, and having a reason for being, this all has to do with life's purpose.
- S** Seth Perler 01:13
How do we know our life's purpose? Some of you watching might not even know your life's

purpose. I feel very lucky that I found my life's purpose very easy. And there are other things that are not in place where I want them in my life. But that is one thing that I'm very fortunate to have found. How do we do that, though? I certainly didn't do it on purpose. There is there are thoughts about this, and I have thoughts about this as an educator and I'm going to weave in what's going on with Ikigai. So in Ikigai, there are four components. There are four circles that come together and where they all intersect and come together is where Ikigai is where the life's purpose is, where your reason for being is. The four things for Ikigai are: (1) to find something that you're good at. (2) it should also be something that you love to do. (3) it should also be something that people need. (4) it should also be something that's valuable enough to make a living doing it, or to get paid doing it. So for a neurodiverse kids, this is an awesome way to look at how do they build a life, and a career, and a future. So ideally, all of us want to see, whether you're a teacher or a parent, we want to see our kids grow up, and we want to see them pour their heart and soul into their mission, into their calling, into what they were put here to do, so to speak. Whether or not you believe in spiritual terms, we all want our kids to be doing something that feels meaningful, something that feels like a mission to them, that feels important to them. So I talk about in doing this, I have 11 terms that when I'm doing speaking engagements and stuff, they're these 11 things that I rattle off all the time. I'm going to break those down for you because I think they align really well with Ikigai, educare and life's purpose.

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The way that I look at it is we are planting seeds. I want my students thinking for themselves. I want them learning how to learn. I want education to help them learn how to plant seeds in 11 areas of engagements, 11 engagements. What do I mean by that? Well, when there's no buy-in and ownership, we aren't getting engagement. So much of school unfortunately, right now there's very little buy-in and ownership. And what happens is obviously when kids get into middle and high school, and there's no buy-in and ownership, they start cutting corners, doing the least possible that they can with their schoolwork, not really investing in it. So this doesn't happen with all kids, but this certainly happens with a lot of neurodiverse kids, especially with executive function issues.

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So these 11 engagements, what are they? What are the 11 things that help engage somebody? (1) Helping is somebody developing their strengths. (2) Doing things based on their passions. (3) Your interests. (4) Your curiosities. (5) Your gifts. (6) Your talents. (7) Your skills, or skill sets. (8) Things that give you meaning. (9) Things that give you purpose. (10) Things that matter to you. (11) Things that are of service to others, which is aligned with

the Ikigai where they say doing something that the world needs. Let me go through those again. As an educator, what I want to do is provide my kids with educational experiences that build on their strengths. So number one is strengths. That tap into their passions, and I know a lot of you are thinking right now, "Well, my kid doesn't have any passions." That's okay, just follow me here. The other thing is the interests, that's a little easier to grasp than passions. Even easier than that is curiosities. What are they curious about? What are their gifts? You know, you nature and nurture. What's more nature? What are their gifts? Their talents? What skills do they have? What is meaningful to them? What matters to them? What is purposeful to them? And then finally, where do they like to serve or give back or contribute? So that's what we're going towards, even if we're not there now. In my opinion, that's what we want to build education around. We want to build engagements, engaging experiences around those things. If it's not engaging, again, there's not a lot of buy-in and ownership.

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Now, I know what you're thinking, that there is resistance. And yes, and any of you students that are watching, resistance is the thing that is going to block you from being able to have Ikigai, being able to create a life of purpose and meaning, being able to do the things that you want to do. Resistance. And one of the problems, if you struggle with executive function, is that resistance, that "I don't want to, I don't feel like it, I'll do it tomorrow, I'll procrastinate, this is stupid, why do I have to do this blah, blah, blah," all these resistances, all these things, these walls that we have built up, these mechanisms that we have designed and spent years, even you students that we've spent a lot of time and energy practicing, help us avoid taking action that will help us build a great future. So we have spent a lot of time creating excuses, limiting beliefs, ways that we can procrastinate and put things off, but that are in our own best interest. And we put off the things that are in our own best interest so that we can do something in the short term that feels good. Whether it's screen time, whether it's TV, whether it's, I mean, these are not necessarily bad things. But when we are investing so much of our time, this is an investment and we're planting seeds, and things that really aren't bearing any fruit. We're really not planting seeds at all, we're just growing weeds. The our garden of our life is just getting overrun by weeds, and it is very difficult to deal with when you get older. So resistance is the thing that we have to look at that holds us back from Ikigai or educare or launching a great life. So because anything you want to do in life, any career, any hobby, anything you want to do that's meaningful, and that matters, and that you care about, and gives your life purpose is going to have parts of it you don't like. It's going to have parts that stink. parts that are not fun, parts that you just have to grind through. But you can do this, we can all do this. But yes, it's hard. It's not always fun. And it doesn't always have to be fun. There's a lot of value in the mundane. That was a big lesson that I learned.

But either way, resistance is the enemy, that's the thing that will ultimately hold you back.

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But resistance is a gift. And what I mean by that is, we all have resistances. And our resistance is a gift to really learn how to overcome it, how to work through things, how to problem solve, how to get grit, how to become resilient. It's a gift to help us that's going to help us in so many other areas. Because when we learn to work with resistance and start to overcome some of the resistances that we have, we learn to execute in the way that we need to, in our own personalized, customized, tailored, special way. We have our own ways of doing things. We learned that there's a lot of advice out there, but we need to find our own ways. The advice can help as a jumping off point, but ultimately we need to find our own ways. So I also want to mention when it comes to Ikigai you should not be good at everything. For a long time, I would like doing art, music, all time, all types of art. I would sit there and draw picture for hours, and then I would get away from it for a minute, get up get a drink of water or something, come back, look at it, hate it and crumple up the whole thing that just drew. I got so frustrated with myself because it wasn't good. Well, you know what? You know how you get good at something. Do it again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again. A million times. The way that I got a guitar, I look at people on the internet and I see that they got good in a few years, it took me probably 10 or 15 years to feel like I was a decent guitar player. So things just take time, way more time than you think. So be patient and be persistent. Be patient with yourself and be persistent. The two P's, patience and persistence. Keep doing the thing that's hard. I mean, you're not going to be Jimi Hendrix in a year. That's not reality. He wasn't, I mean he was, but he was not a great guitar player overnight. There is no such thing as overnight success. Stop looking for it. We live in a society that tells you there's a quick fix, magic bullet. Do this change fast. That's not reality. That is not reality. They're selling people pipe dreams, this is not reality. Okay? So be comfortable with being patient and persistent. That is where the magic happens, patiently and persistently pursuing your engagements.

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Next, I want to mention, don't look for your passion. Because guess what? It's not lost. Okay? People think you have to look for your passion. We have many passions and interests. Passion can be the type of word that keeps people stuck, that they say, "Oh, I can't find my passion." It's not lost anywhere. I've found this many times myself, and I'm sure a lot of wise people you know, will tell you the same thing. Oftentimes, our passions are right in front of our face. Sometimes our passions can be found by looking at what makes you angry. And when you find an injustice, for example, one thing that makes me angry, is it makes me angry to see animals around the world not treated properly. That

makes me angry. Well, that tells me that that's one of my interests and passions. That's something that matters to me, that brings me purpose. Okay. So a lot of times, things that matter are right in front of our face. So look right in front of you. Sometimes you might just find that you actually do know many things that you're interested in and passionate about. But sometimes there is noise static, we live in a noisy world with distractions everywhere. I did not grow up with as many distractions as you, if you're a student watching this. We didn't have the sorts of distractions. Yes, I feel for you, this is a tough world in terms of that. So we have to deal with those distractions, they are so noisy, that they will often drown out your hearts knowing, your calling, your gut feeling, okay? So sometimes we need to get away from that stuff so that we can actually hear what our passions, and interests, and strengths, and talents, and to get over the resistance. Okay.

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Next, I want to say, saturate yourself in your interests, your passions, your curiosities. Obsess on these things, get really into them. Like really explore them, really dive in, try things, fail, succeed, play with ideas, be creative. Try all these things. But the point is, is when you saturate yourself, and obsess, and get really into something that you're curious about, patiently and persistently keep exploring it, don't just give up. Next, I want to say, we need you. I mean you, like literally the world, we need you to develop your strengths, your passions, your interest, your talents, those things, you're Ikigai. We have a very complicated world. I apologize for all the adults of my generation and previous generations because we have left you with a mess. But you have literally everything you need, in this very moment to build a great life and to contribute to the world, and to give back, and to be able to build on your strengths, and build who you are, and become the best version of yourself. You matter. We need you. You matter. And no matter what, we need you.

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That's all I have to say. Now go out there, plant some seeds for yourself, and your communities, and the people around you. Think very wisely about how you use your time and whether you're letting weeds grow or you're planting seeds for a great future. My name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach in Colorado. I help students navigate this thing called education so they can have great life. Be well. Be safe, be healthy.