



The Ikigai and the quest for meaning in the work of Viktor Frankl share a deep affinity in their exploration of what gives direction and value to human existence. Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist and survivor of Nazi concentration camps, developed logotherapy, a therapeutic approach centered on the search for the meaning of life. His thinking, forged in the harshest conditions, provides powerful insight into the notion of Ikigai and the need to find meaning in one's existence.

In his book "Man's Search for Meaning", Frankl asserts that the quest for meaning is the fundamental motivation of the human being. According to him, each individual has a unique reason for being, a mission to fulfill that gives direction and value to their life. This idea resonates deeply with the concept of Ikigai, which invites everyone to discover and pursue their personal vocation, aligning their passions, talents, and contributions to the world.

Frankl emphasizes that the meaning of life cannot be given from the outside, but must be discovered by each individual through their unique experience. He warns against existential vacuum, this feeling of absurdity and futility that lurks in those who fail to find a meaning to their existence. For Frankl, the key to overcoming this void is commitment to values and projects that transcend us. It is by devoting ourselves to something greater, by contributing to the well-being of others and the world, that we give meaning to our life. This vision echoes the philosophy of Ikigai, which encourages finding a balance between personal aspirations and contribution to society.

Frankl's experience in concentration camps led him to develop a vision of human resilience in the face of adversity. He observed that those who managed to find meaning in their suffering, by clinging to a project or a loved one, were more likely to survive and keep hope. For Frankl, the ability to find meaning in the most difficult situations is a fundamental

strength of the human being. This idea resonates with the concept of Ikigai, which invites us to draw on inner resources to overcome obstacles and pursue our purpose, even in the darkest times.

A striking example of the convergence between Frankl's thought and Ikigai is that of Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, a Japanese actress, and writer. In her book "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window", Kuroyanagi recounts her experience in an alternative school during World War II. Despite hardships and privations, she found meaning in her life through the love of learning and the kindness of her teacher. This experience shaped her Ikigai, her reason for being, which was expressed through her commitment to education and advocacy for children's rights. Kuroyanagi's journey illustrates how, even in the most difficult circumstances, the quest for meaning and the discovery of one's Ikigai can transform a life and have a positive impact on the world.

Frankl's logotherapy provides concrete tools to help individuals discover the meaning of their lives. One of these tools is "Socratic questioning", an interview technique aimed at stimulating reflection and insight. By asking open-ended questions and encouraging the exploration of deep values and aspirations, the therapist helps the patient clarify their view on life and identify the actions that give meaning to their existence. This approach echoes the support process proposed by Ikigai Coaching, which aims to guide individuals in the discovery and fulfillment of their purpose.

Another tool of logotherapy is "dereflection", which consists of diverting attention from symptoms and problems towards meaningful goals and activities. Frankl encouraged his patients to engage in projects they were passionate about, to serve others and to cultivate gratitude for the positive aspects of their lives. This approach aligns with the philosophy of Ikigai, which invites us to focus on what genuinely moves us and to find a balance between pleasure, passion, vocation, and mission.

Frankl's thinking and the concept of Ikigai remind us that the meaning of life is not something abstract or distant, but a concrete reality that manifests itself in our daily choices and actions. Every moment becomes an opportunity to cultivate our reason for being, to express our values, and to contribute to the well-being of the world around us. By engaging in activities that deeply resonate with us, overcoming challenges with resilience, and keeping hope in difficult times, we bring our Ikigai to life and carve our path towards a meaningful existence.

Frankl wrote: "Life only has meaning if we give it one." This quote powerfully summarizes the convergence between logotherapy and Ikigai: the meaning of our lives is a unique and personal creation, built through our commitments and the way we inhabit the world. By pursuing our Ikigai, we affirm our freedom and responsibility in shaping an authentic and meaningful existence, even in the face of adversity and absurdity.

Key takeaways:

1. Ikigai and the quest for meaning in Viktor Frankl's work share a deep affinity in exploring what gives direction and value to human existence.
2. According to Frankl, the quest for meaning is the fundamental motivation of the human being. Each individual has a unique reason for being that gives direction and value to their life, an idea that resonates with the concept of Ikigai.
3. The meaning of life cannot be given from the outside but must be discovered by each individual through their unique experience. Commitment to values and projects that transcend us is the key to overcoming the existential vacuum.
4. Frankl's experience in concentration camps led him to develop a vision of human resilience in the face of adversity. The ability to find meaning in the most difficult situations is a fundamental strength of the human being, an idea that resonates with the concept of Ikigai.
5. Frankl's logotherapy provides concrete tools, such as "Socratic questioning" and "dereflection", to help individuals discover the meaning of their lives, an approach similar to that of Ikigai Coaching.
6. Frankl's thinking and the concept of Ikigai remind us that the meaning of life manifests itself in our daily choices and actions. By pursuing our Ikigai, we assert our freedom and responsibility in shaping an authentic and meaningful existence, even in the face of adversity.