



Ikigai and Schwartz's theory of values share a common vision of the importance of values in the quest for purpose and fulfillment. Shalom Schwartz, a social psychologist and researcher, developed a theory of universal values that proposes a structure and dynamic of human values. This theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the deep motivations that underlie the quest for Ikigai and the life choices that flow from it.

According to Schwartz, values are enduring beliefs that guide our actions and judgments across different situations. They are organized into ten universal categories: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism. These values are organized into a circular continuum, where adjacent values are compatible, and opposite values are in tension. This dynamic structure allows understanding the conflicts and synergies between the different aspirations that drive an individual.

The quest for Ikigai, which aims to find one's purpose in life by aligning one's passions, talents, and contribution to the world, is deeply influenced by individual values. People who attach great importance to values such as self-direction, stimulation, and universalism will be more inclined to seek an Ikigai that allows them to express their creativity, explore new horizons, and contribute to collective well-being. Conversely, those who prioritize values such as security, conformity, and tradition may find their Ikigai in activities that reinforce stability, respect for norms, and preservation of heritage.

A striking example of the convergence between Schwartz's theory of values and Ikigai is that of Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist and founder of the Grameen Bank. Driven by values of benevolence and universalism, Yunus has dedicated his life to the fight against poverty and the promotion of microcredit. His Ikigai, which combines his passion

for economics, his financial expertise, and his desire to change the lives of the most disadvantaged, is deeply rooted in his humanist values. Yunus's journey illustrates how values can guide the quest for Ikigai and give rise to innovative and meaningful initiatives.

Schwartz's theory of values also highlights the tensions and conflicts that can arise in the pursuit of Ikigai. It is not uncommon for our different aspirations to compete, forcing us to make choices and compromises. For instance, a person who attaches great importance to both professional achievement and benevolence towards loved ones may find themselves torn between their desire to invest in their career and their desire to devote time to their family. The quest for Ikigai often involves navigating these different values, finding a balance, and making trade-offs based on current priorities.

Clarifying values thus appears as a crucial step in discovering and realizing one's Ikigai. By becoming aware of one's deep values, by ranking them, and aligning them with one's life choices, one provides the means to build a meaningful existence that is in harmony with oneself. Tools for exploring values, such as the "Schwartz Value Survey" or the "Portrait Values Questionnaire," can be valuable allies in this process of introspection and clarification.

Schwartz's theory of values also invites consideration of Ikigai from an intercultural perspective. While the ten categories of values identified by Schwartz are universal, their relative importance and expression vary from one culture to another. Thus, in individualistic societies, values of self-direction and achievement will be more prominent, while in collectivist societies, values of conformity and benevolence will be more pervasive. These cultural differences influence how individuals conceive and pursue their Ikigai, based on the expectations and norms of their social environment.

An example of this intercultural dimension is that of Jiro Ono, a renowned Japanese sushi chef. His Ikigai, which consists of achieving perfection in his culinary art, is deeply rooted in the traditional Japanese values of rigor, discipline, and respect for hierarchy. Jiro Ono's journey, beautifully depicted in the documentary "Jiro Dreams of Sushi", illustrates how cultural values shape the quest for excellence and give profound meaning to a seemingly simple activity.

The theory of values by Schwartz and the philosophy of Ikigai invite us to a deep reflection on the profound motivations that guide our life choices. They remind us that the quest for purpose and fulfillment is inseparable from clarifying and aligning our values. By becoming aware of our priorities, navigating between the different aspirations that drive us, and placing our Ikigai in a given cultural context, we provide the means to build a meaningful life in tune with our deep identity. This process, both personal and universal, invites us to embrace the complexity of our being and chart our own path toward a life fully lived.

Key takeaways:

1. Schwartz's theory of values and Ikigai share a common vision of the importance of values in the quest for purpose and fulfillment.
2. According to Schwartz, values are enduring beliefs that guide our actions and judgments. They are organized into ten universal categories and articulate in a circular continuum.
3. The quest for Ikigai is deeply influenced by individual values. People who attach importance to values such as self-direction, stimulation, and universalism will be more inclined to seek an Ikigai expressing their creativity and contributing to collective well-being.
4. The example of Muhammad Yunus illustrates how the values of benevolence and universalism can guide the quest for Ikigai and give rise to meaningful initiatives.
5. Schwartz's theory of values sheds light on the tensions and conflicts that can arise in the pursuit of Ikigai, requiring choices and compromises to be made.
6. Clarifying values is a crucial step in discovering and realizing one's Ikigai, allowing the construction of a life in harmony with oneself.
7. Schwartz's theory of values invites Ikigai to be considered from an intercultural perspective, with cultural differences influencing how individuals conceive and pursue their Ikigai.
8. The example of Jiro Ono illustrates how cultural values shape the quest for excellence and give deep meaning to an activity.
9. Schwartz's theory of values and the philosophy of Ikigai invite deep reflection on the profound motivations guiding our life choices, aligning our values to construct a life rich in meaning.