

COLUMNIST



Andrew Thornton

What gets you out of bed?

Andrew Thornton explains how identifying your purpose in life can help your store succeed

Last month, we discussed organisational purpose and how critical this is. Today, I'd like to ask you to consider what your life purpose is – why are you here, what excites you about life and why do you work so hard?

I believe we all have a purpose in life, yet many people never discover theirs. I was in my late-40s before I realised this.

The Japanese have a word for life purpose – ikigai, which means 'a reason for being'. I have also heard it described as 'the reason I get up in the morning'. The diagram shows how this works.

It's really simple – if you find yourself in the sweet spot where the four circles intersect, you're more likely to find yourself springing out of bed in the morning, full of joy.

Let me use the example of the midlife crisis I had in my mid-40s – with the proviso that I'm doing this with the benefit of hindsight, as I wasn't aware of this way of thinking at the time.

I ran the consultancy SRCG and

worked in the convenience sector across the world with clients such as BP, Circle K, Spar, Musgrave and PepsiCo.

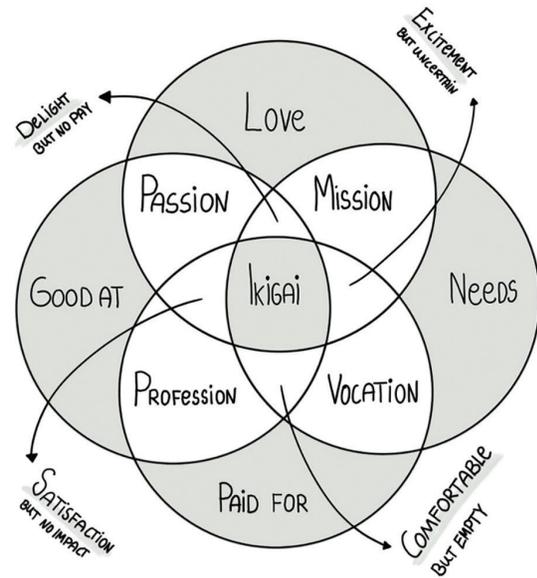
I was very good at what I did and, for 14 of the 16 years I was there, I loved it. The last two years were harder, and that was probably connected to the third circle – 'Does the world need this?'. I found myself getting more and more disillusioned with our clients' motivation for commissioning our work.

Was it just a box-ticking exercise? Was it really going to make a difference in the world and to people's lives? (I must stress these were my feelings and no reflection on the quality of the work we did).

The final circle is 'What I can be paid for'. That certainly worked for me in the consultancy, where I mostly earned good money – in fact, a lot more than I have earned since – but even with a big pay cheque, it was not enough to compensate for the lack of fulfilment in the other circles.

Looking at the chart, the

→ **Ikigai** > HAVING A SENSE OF PURPOSE



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phrase 'comfortable, but empty' would have resonated with me, as I pondered my life at the time.

Had I known about this model then, using it might have helped me become clearer about why I wasn't feeling fulfilled and give me some clues as to what I should do with my life.

This existential crisis led me to sell SRCG to my partners and find Thornton's Budgens. During my time at Thornton's Budgens, I felt really fulfilled and was definitely in that sweet spot at the centre of the chart.

Part of this journey was the development of the heart way of working and the emergence of the direction I am now going down.

Ask yourself, how does your life pan out in each of the four circles of the ikigai model? How do you feel when you do this?

Do any of the comments on the chart resonate with you? Is there anything in your life that you need to change?

If so, what needs to change and what are you going to do about it? Please allow yourself some time to consider this – it is not a process that can be rushed.

Andrew Thornton is the former owner of Thornton's Budgens, founder of Heart in Business and author of 'Putting the Heart Back into Business', scheduled for release on 21 April 2022

★ My life purpose

+ MY LIFE PURPOSE is that I am a visionary heart surgeon – I help leaders heal so I can help others shine. I am a student, a teacher and a storyteller. Let's look at the pieces. I believe the heart of business is blocked, and that businesses who want to change need surgery to recover; I believe leaders need to feel more at ease with themselves to enable them to help others shine and thrive in their jobs or lives; I believe in life learning, sharing what I know with others; and as an Irishman, I'm a storyteller.