



Ikigai

A JAPANESE CONCEPT MEANING "A REASON FOR BEING"



SOURCE: dreamstime

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

sense of Satisfaction, Delight, Excitement, and Comfortableness as they approach the dawn each day. I must admit that most days, after I rub the sleep out of my eyes, I do begin to anticipate the joys and challenges of the next twenty-four hours.

SATISFACTION often comes more frequently at day's end while preparing for slumber. A review of the joys of an active life, including an early exercise program which I survive weekly, without too many goofs and groans, to the memory of a smile and helping hand stretched out to some lonely human that day. A quick prayer, however, also sends a tiny thank you to God for minimizing my ignorance or oversight at other times throughout the day, when I fell too old, incapable, or useless as a human servant of the Master.

DELIGHT and fullness is an emotion we sometimes almost feel guilty if we exhibit. Ikigai suggests the opposite of delight is a feeling of 'no wealth'. This author would define 'no wealth' as a lack of love or the absence of passion and mission. Some days joy fills my soul, as my love of helping others and of being engaged in thoughtful or meaningful ways helps me almost yell out thanks to God. The brain, with the help of the Holy Spirit, perhaps provided thoughts for this writer and some new creative blurb finds its way into my fingers as I type the next Ransom Note epistle. Maybe, for you it will be pleasure when your passion for providing a new knitted sweater for the homeless, or a pair of helping hands as you reached out to someone unable to complete an urgent task, is a memory for your nighttime prayers.

EXCITEMENT is rarely minus in my day as I truly love life. Being active, engaged, unlocking challenges, or just watching an ant carry a crumb across the sandy ground, brings joyful memories for my wrinkled body and soul. Having a vision of the future with Christ helps motivate the daily decisions. Can you imagine the joy and excitement Christ must have experienced as he walked from the tomb that early morning, so long ago? But, yes, daily excitement may also include moments of pain, worry, or unpleasantness. Hopefully none of us will have to experience similar pain as that of Christ's pain of death, but tragedies and stumbles just help us appreciate more the moments of success and joy.

COMFORTABLENESS is a bit more difficult for me to define. I do not think the Japanese culture suggests that it refers to having the latest memory foam mattress on which to plop our weary bones each evening. Apparently the opposite of being comfortable is a feeling of emptiness. How do we fill an empty vessel or heart that is lonely, or a feeling of usefulness? Paul suggests a challenge to Titus when he says, *"Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives"* (Titus 3:14). The challenge to being comfortable in your own skin, is to find a way to help others.

Paul told the Ephesian Christians to remember purpose for living: *"We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10). So . . .

Ransom Notes

Hop Out of Bed – With 'Ikigai'

The alarm rings in your ear. Turning over quickly, you shut it off and then . . . and then what goes through your head? Ugh! Boy, I wish I could snuggle down for another few minutes or hours, OR do your feet hit the rug with dash in your spirit, ready to tackle the challenges of the day?

I have to admit that some mornings I want to throw the little alarm 'beast' out the window and snooze some more. Generally, however, I'm ready to move swiftly into the day's plan of activities and joys.

The Japanese culture has an interesting concept called 'ikigai,' which loosely translates as a purpose or reason for living. Basically the philosophy centers around four internal feelings, at least that is how this non-philosopher would describe it.

Comfortable, productive persons seem to have a

Go For It! Grab Your List of Talents and Put Them to Work Helping Others.