

Expanding Your Sense of Purpose with Ikigai:

A Reason for Being and Your Career After Bonner

"Building Organizational Capacity" Series

Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum: The 8 Themes Series

BWBR Description: Bonner curriculum workshop introduces participants to the Japanese concept of *Ikigai* and uses this concept as a reflection tool to expand students' aspirations for life after Bonner and their vocational pathways.

Overview: This workshop will help participants reflect on the intersections of passion, mission, profession, and vocation (*Ikigai*) to come to a more nuanced understanding of their steps forward post-graduation. The *Ikigai* framework is presented and used to prompt student thinking and reflection on their future career and vocational interests. This is designed as part of the 8 Themes Curriculum for juniors (especially in the spring).

This workshop also incorporates Bonner alumni profiles and job sector guides as resources. Due to the short time of the session, however, students will need to review these materials on their own. The facilitator should encourage students to explore these materials further.



3rd year

Key Words: Reflection, visioning, networking, community building; building capacity; career planning; vocational discernment

8 Themes: Third Year - Semester 6

Bonner Developmental Connections:

This workshop is designed for the third (junior) year and can also augment the way that students think about their final capstone project to include the *Ikigai* framework. It is part of the 8 Themes Curriculum for the spring.

Bonner/VALUE Rubric Outcomes:

This workshop will help students develop their Civic Identity by facilitating their reflection and expanding their personal visions of their future career and vocational pathways in light of a common good for society.

Workshop Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about the Japanese concept of *Ikigai*, which brings together what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can get paid for doing.
- Participants will practice the concept of *Ikigai* by reflecting on their own post-graduate career and vocational interests and potential pathways.
- Participants will take away personalized *Ikigai* handouts to use as a jumping off point for self discovery and planning.

Materials:

- Make copies of the *Ikigai* Handouts

How to Prepare:

Review and become familiar with the workshop and activities. Prepare necessary materials, i.e. handouts.

Brief Outline:

The structure of this workshop is centered around an individual reflection activity, in which participants will complete their own *Ikigai* handout as a tool for self-discovery.

The outline has the following five parts and should last approx. 60 minutes:

- 1) Introductions and Context Setting suggested time 5 minutes

- 2) Introduction of Ikigai
- 3) Overview of Example
- 4) Ikigai Worksheet
- 5) Group Reflection

- suggested time 10 minutes
suggested time 10 minutes
suggested time 25 minutes
suggested time 10 minutes

Your Plan

Part 1) Introductions and Context Setting

Suggested time: 2-4 minutes

Welcome participants. If necessary, do a round of introductions so that everyone knows each other's names.

Then, open the workshop by explaining that ***Ikigai (pronounced: eye-ka-guy) is a tool to discovering your path after graduation. It is not a quick answer. To find your Ikigai requires a journey of self-discovery.***

Part 2) Introduction of Ikigai

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Present the concept of Ikigai.



Ikigai (pronounced: eye-ka-guy) is a Japanese concept meaning “a reason for being.” It is comprised of two words ‘iki’ meaning life and ‘gai’ meaning worth or value. In English, it can be translated to mean something to the effect of “the reason for which you wake up in the morning.” In the culture of Okinawa, it is believed that everyone has an ikigai and it is personal and specific to every individual.

Walk through each of the components: passion, mission, vocation, and profession. Ikigai is where all of these meet. You can show the image and provide the handout.

Part 3) Overview of Bonner Alum Examples

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Refer to the handout that describes Eni Aligbe, a Bonner graduate from Oberlin College. The quotes were taken from the **Alumni Profiles** and **Job Sector** guides found on the Bonner website: <http://www.bonner.org/alumni-profiles>. Explain that 30 alumni, to date, have been interviewed, with written profiles available on the Bonner website (at the link here).

Ask students to read the example and compare it to the chart below.

What I love	What the world needs	What I can be paid for	What I'm good at
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Freedom of choice ● Freedom of action ● Speaking ● Travel ● Learning ● Teaching ● Tactics ● Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compassion ● Focus ● Clarity ● Peace ● Strategy ● Tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching ● Reading ● Coaching ● Consulting ● Writing ● Speaking ● Acting ● Selling ● Leading ● Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching ● Facilitation ● Speaking ● Listening ● Strategy ● Tactics ● Analysis

While this workshop and handout focuses on Aligbe, many or most of the alumni have described ways that they have pursued pathways that represent Ikigai, combining what they love, are good at, addressing a need in the world, and earning a living through it. If you have time, and students have access to the Internet on their phones, tablets, or laptops, you can also provide students with a few minutes to look up other alumni profiles.

In the next step, they will complete their own **Ikigai** handout. Explain that this example uses quotes to showcase the different aspects of **Ikigai** but on their own handout, they should write down specific ideas.

Part 4) Ikigai Worksheet

Suggested time: 25 minutes

Return to the Ikigai handouts. Ask students to follow each of the steps. There are eight simple steps you can highlight:

Step 1: What am I good at?

Step 2: What I love?

Step 3: Finding a passion (which combines skill + interest)

Step 4: What does the world need?

Step 5: Mission (interest + need)

Step 6: I get paid to?

Step 7: Vocation

Step 8: Profession

By the end of this time (20 minutes), they will develop a sense of their own **Ikigai**. You can have them post or share in pairs for 5 minutes.

Part 4) Group Reflection

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Ask for a few volunteers to share about their process.

Suggestions of questions include:

- *Did you find this activity difficult? Easy?*
- *Did this illuminate new ways of thinking about yourself? If so, how?*
- *Is your Ikigai in line with aspirations you currently hold?*
- *How can you incorporate this self-reflection moving forward?*

Finally, remember this workshop will be followed by the rest of the 8 Themes series – which has students learning about the sectors (nonprofit, public sectors, and private sector careers), how nonprofit organizations build and assess their own capacity, and about fundraising and resource development. Additionally, the capstone workshop guides students to create and carry out a culminating project that is the “sweet spot” between personal/career identity and interests, academic learning, and service/civic

experience. So, students can also expand their concept of the “sweet spot” to embrace Ikigai. Thus, it might be helpful to have students write down several potential career or vocational pathways to keep learning about over their junior and senior years.

Credits:

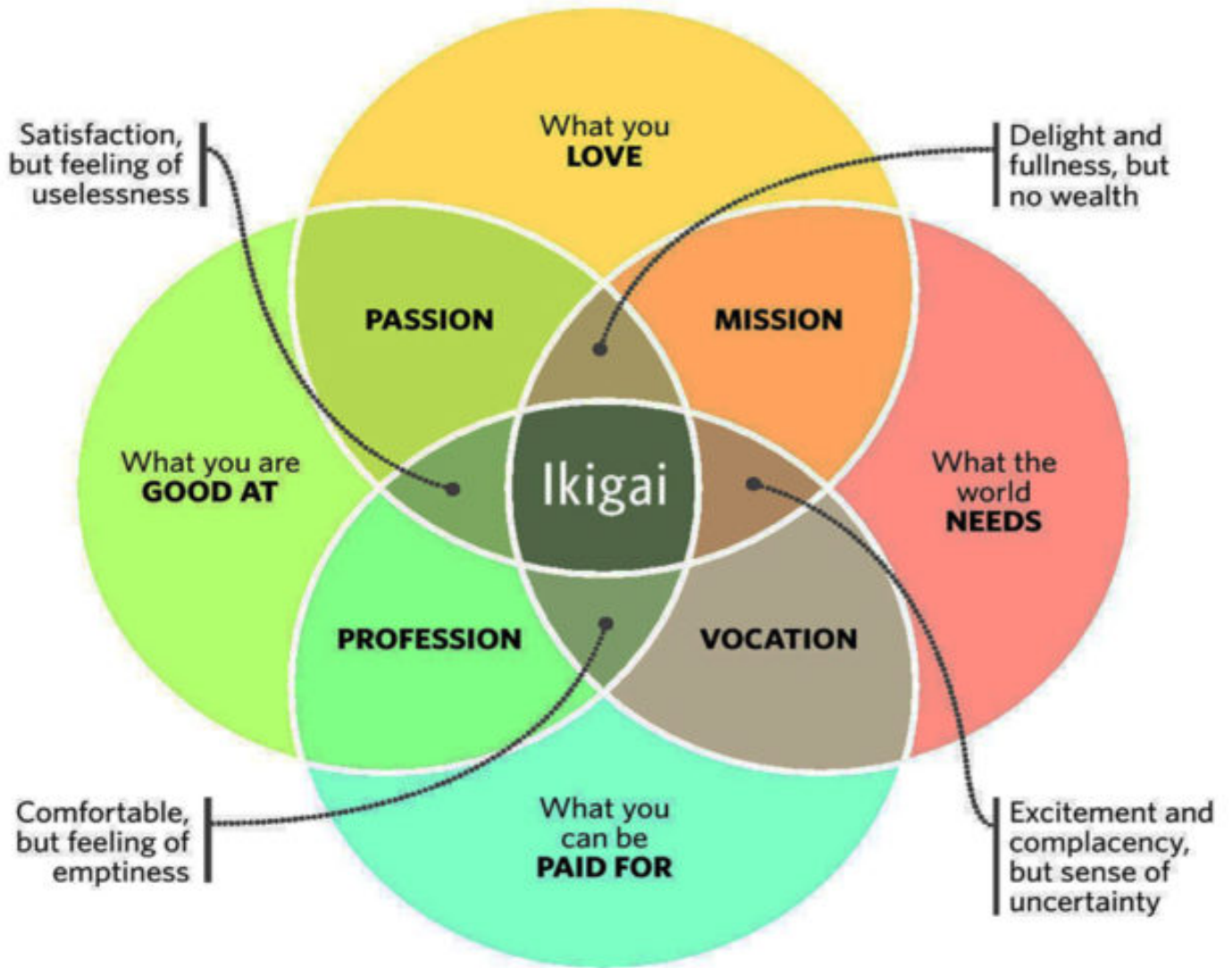
Developed in 2018 by Liz Brandt, Bonner Foundation Community Engagement Director. The workshop incorporates Bonner Alumni Profiles and Job Sector Guides that were developed by Bonner Foundation staff (Ariane Hoy, Samantha Ha) and 2018 National Bonner Interns that can be found at <http://www.bonner.org/alumni-profiles>. **Bonner Staff may want to identify and introduce students to other relevant profiles and job sector guides that match students’ career and vocational interests.**

Materials developed in part with credit to:

- Rahman, Bia. <http://biarahman.wordpress.com>

Ikigai

A JAPANESE CONCEPT MEANING "A REASON FOR BEING"



SOURCE: dreamstime

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

Example from Oberlin College Bonner Alum '14, **Eni Aligbe**

Technical Program Manager, Applied Research Works, Inc. - Cozeva, Los Angeles, California

A TECHNICAL PROGRAM MANAGER WHO BELIEVES IN THE POWER OF DIGITAL HEALTH CARE

What she loves:

"I am learning a whole bunch. I also like that, because it is a start up environment and not a huge corporation, I get to explore so many different areas within the sector."



What the world needs:

"Eni believes there are so many opportunities for this type of work in the age we live in today. She hopes to utilize digital health care to help mend the many health care problems that span the globe. She can envision building technology or digital health care initiative across Africa."



What she's good at:

"working closely with clients, many of whom work in a variety of medical practices."



What you can be paid for:

"It would have been great to know I could make money and be in a corporate environment, and still have that philanthropic outlook and work towards that."



Ikigai Worksheet

Take about 20 minutes to work through these 8 steps.
You can also draw your own Ikigai as you do so.

Step 1: What am I good at?

List down your skills and strengths below:

Step 2: What I love?

List down your interest – think ‘Create / Build / Do’

Step 3: Finding your passion.

Look through Step 1 and Step 2 earlier to find overlapping or connected area that allows you to identify your passion (skill + interest).

Step 4: What does the world need?

Instead of focusing on a larger than life concept, focus on small changes that you can contribute to your local community or organization. List them down below:

Step 5: Mission

Look through your list in Step 2 and Step 4 to find a connective area, allowing you to give back to your local communities (interest + need).

Step 6: I get paid to?

List down your source of income or what you can do to get paid:

Step 7: Vocation

Refer to Step 4 and Step 6 which can help you identify a vocation that allows you to earn and give back to society at the same time (need + get paid).

Step 8: Profession

To identify your profession, look at skills you listed in Step 1 and how you can get paid in Step 6 (skill + get paid).

Once you've completed the steps above – combine the Passion + Mission + Vocation + Profession and you'll have a rough idea of what your ideal career might look like or be.

