



IN THE HEART

Draw a Venn diagram (three circles that overlap in the middle). In the upper circle, fill in what you like doing best; in the circle on the right, write what you think the world needs; and in the one on the left, write what you are good at.

Where the three circles overlap, define your *ikigai*. It does not necessarily have to be one thing.

You can make as many diagrams as you like.



IKIGAI

A passion or hobby that gives meaning to your life.

Ikigai is Japanese for 'life' and *gai* means 'value' or 'worth'. In short: *ikigai* is your personal life goal. Or, as Francesc Miralles and Héctor García, the authors of *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret for a Long and Happy Life* claim, it's the reason why the inhabitants of Okinawa, the island with the highest number of 100-year-olds in the world, get out of bed in the morning. Such passion not only gives satisfaction and meaning to your life, but also keeps you going. The elderly people featured in so many of the books now published on Japanese happiness stay really active after their retirement. In their book, Miralles and García refer to *National Geographic* reporter Dan Buettner, who knows Japan well and says that, 'Having a purpose in life is so important in Japanese culture that our idea of retirement simply doesn't exist there'. They call it 'flowing with your *ikigai*'.

'WHEN I'M A HUNDRED-AND-TEN'

Hokusai, the Japanese artist who made woodblock prints in the ukiyo-e style and lived for 88 years, from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, added this postscript to the first edition of his 'One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji': 'All that I have produced before the age of 70 is not worth being counted. It is at the age of 73 that I have somewhat begun to understand the structure of true nature, of animals and grasses, and trees and birds, and fishes and insects; consequently at 80 years of age I shall have made still more progress; at 90 I hope to have penetrated into the mystery of things; at 100 years of age I should have reached decidedly a marvelous degree, and when I shall be 110, all that I do, every point and every line, shall be instinct with life.'

Source: *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret for a Long and Happy Life*, by Francesc Miralles and Héctor García