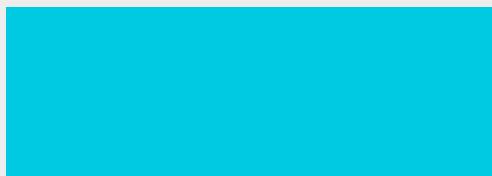


# Navigating Career Transitions

**Peter Gibson MD FRCPC**

January 08, 2026



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# Presenter Disclosure

## Dr. Peter Gibson

### Relationships with financial sponsors:

- Grants/Research Support: None
- Speakers Bureau/Honoraria: None
- Consulting Fees: none
- Patents: None
- Other:
  - Contracted by the Physician Health Program as Program Physician
  - Owner & coach for private life and leadership coaching practice



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# Objectives

- Describe how major career transitions and retirement impact physician identity and emotional well being
- Identify the key stages of retirement
- Explore the Ikigai framework to identify new purpose and meaning
- Outline essential financial considerations for a secure retirement

# Transitions

- Shifting from one phase of one's life to another or changing aspects of one's career
- May be voluntary or involuntary
- May be a positive change or a negative change
- Is usually stressful and can impact one's sense of identity



# Retirement

- Is a journey not a destination
- May be voluntary or coerced
- May be looked forward to .... or not
- Is an individual experience – each is unique



# Some Statistics

- No mandatory retirement age in BC for physicians
- Average retirement age for physicians in Canada is 65
- Wide variability from 50's to 70's and beyond
- No statistical difference among specialties
  - Slight tendency for some groups to retire later (e.g. surgeons) or earlier (e.g. ED physicians)

# Impact of Retirement

- **Is a Major Life Change → Stress**
- **Involves multiple losses**
  - Break in routine
  - Break in social networks
  - Loss of meaning and purpose
  - Challenge to self identity
  - Change in relationships
  - Change in income



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# 4 Phases of Retirement

Vacation Phase



Loss and Lost



Trial and Error



Reinvent and Rewire



Dr. Riley Moynes: [The Four Phases of Retirement: What to Expect When You're Retiring](#)

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# Vacation Phase

- No set routine – like being on holidays
- Often the ideal view of retirement
- Lasts up to a year
- Becomes boring



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# Loss and Lost

- Realization of what's been lost
- Big 5:
  - routine, identity, relationship, purpose and power
- Traumatic
- Also can lead to 3 D's:
  - divorce, depression and decline
- Emotions include fear, anxiety and depression



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# Trial and Error

- Regaining meaningfulness
- Experimenting with different activities



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# Reinvent and Rewire

- Not everyone reaches this phase
- What is my mission/purpose
- Often a service to others
- Recovery of the 5 losses



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# Managing the Stress

- Pre-planning
  - Beginning to think about retirement
  - Financial goals – meet with a financial advisor
  - Activities – begin to restart or explore activities that you would like to do in retirement outside of medicine
  - Build a graduated transition plan
    - Eg. Shifting from full-time practice to part-time practice to locums



# Managing the stress

## ▪ **Maximizing Cognitive Resilience**

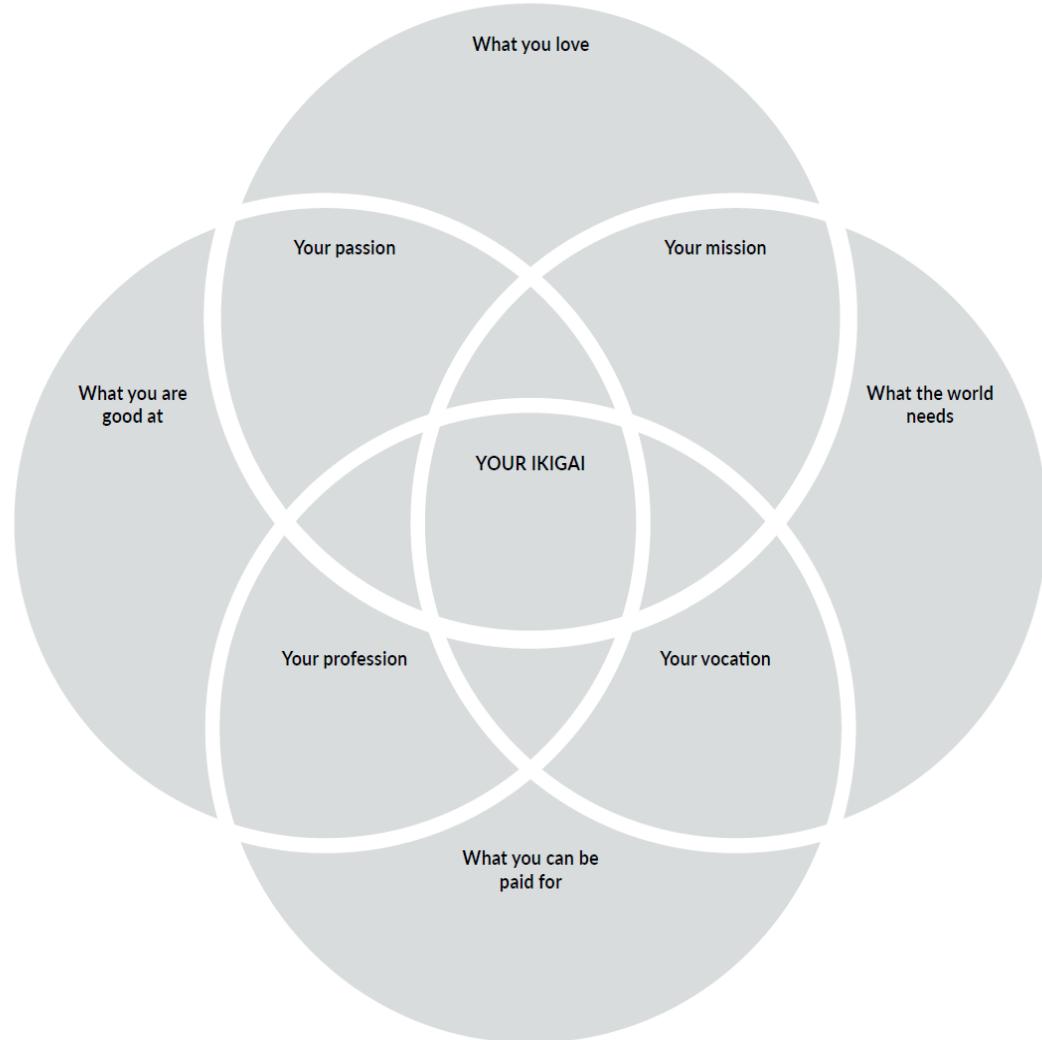
- Building and maintaining new routines
- Regular physical exercise
- Adequate quality sleep
- Social connections
- Healthy diet
- Mental stimulation
- Stress management
- Purpose and meaning



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YOUR REASON FOR BEING



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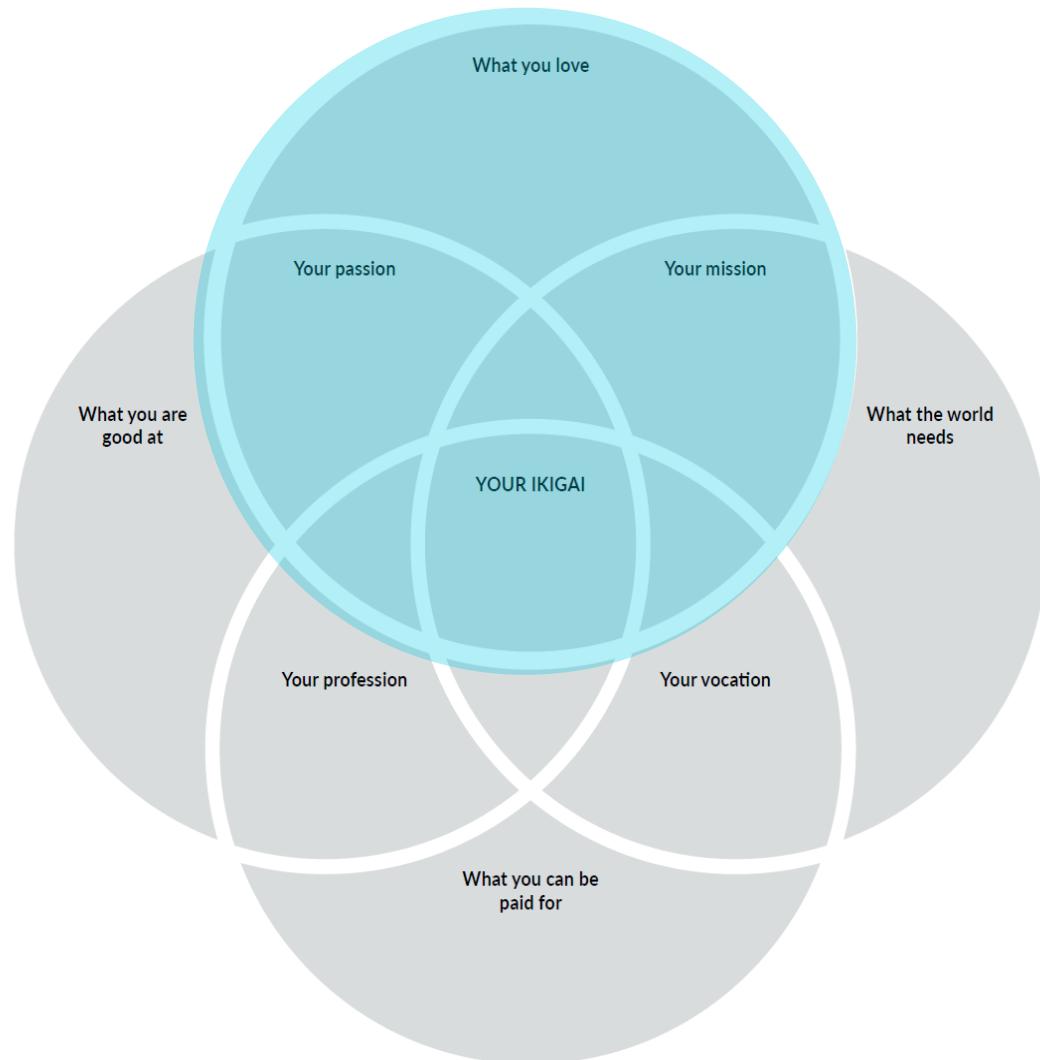
# Ikigai

Japanese for “to live the realization of what one hopes for”; the reason for being; that which makes life worth living

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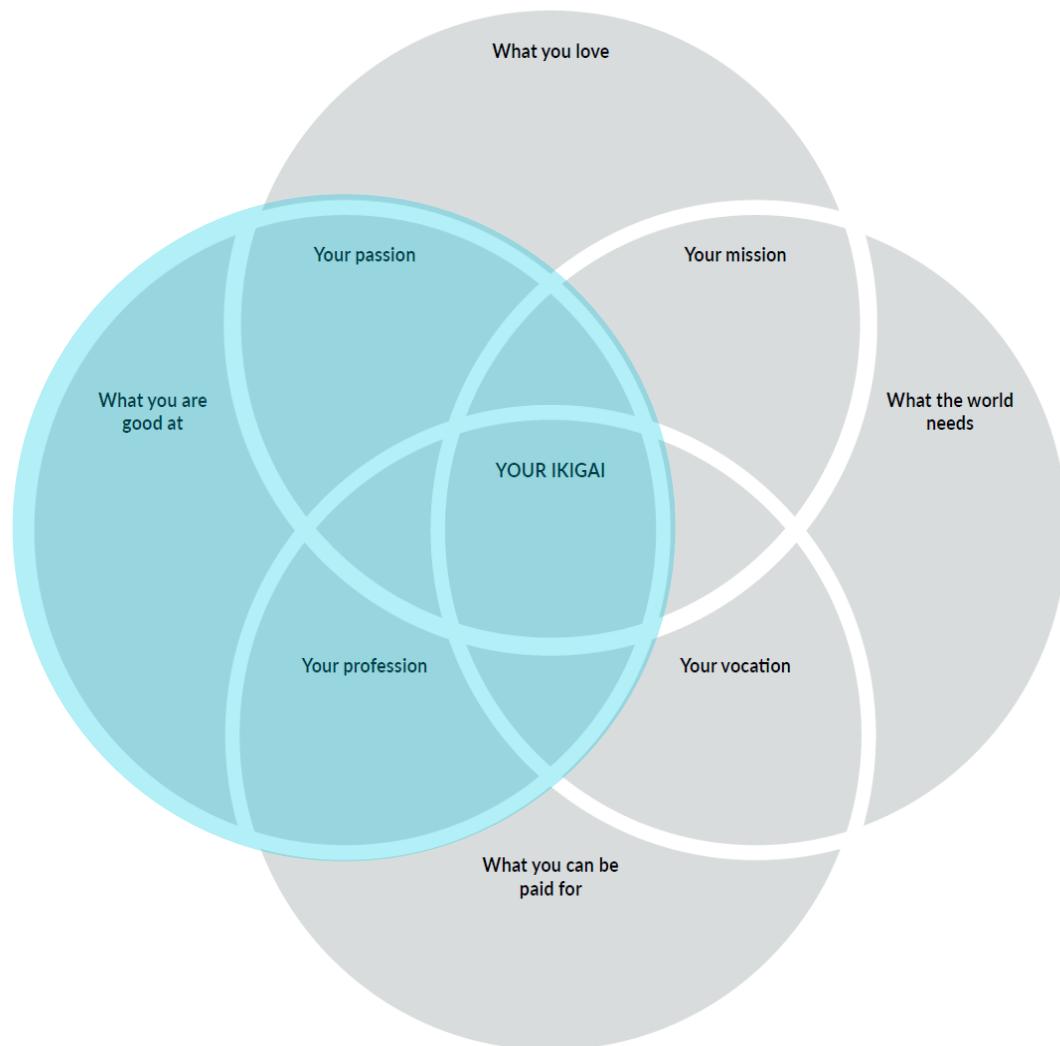
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## What You Love

- What do you never get bored of?
- What makes you smile?
- What were you doing when you last lost track of time?
- What did you love to do as a child?
- What aspects of your life make you feel alive and energized?

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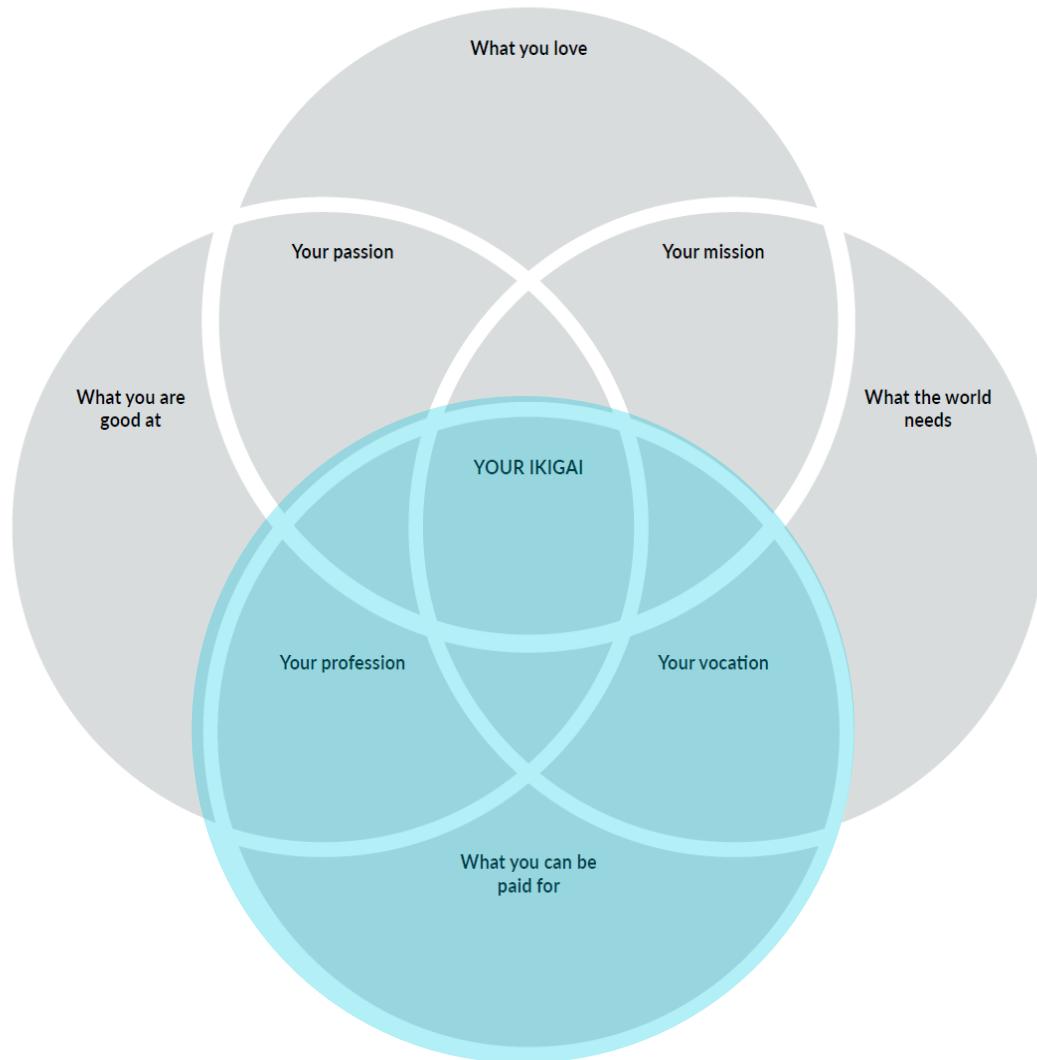
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# What You Are Good At

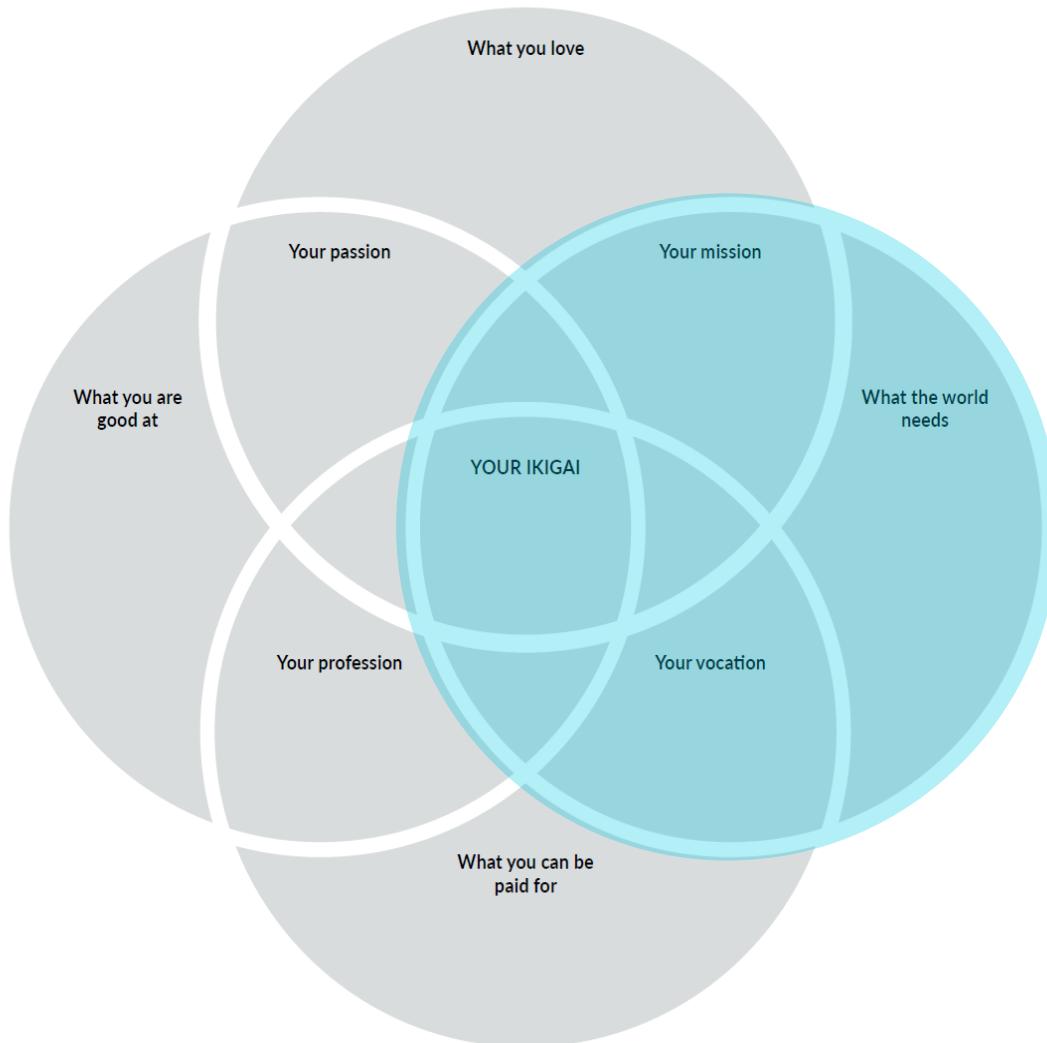
- What skills do you spend time practicing?
- What do people approach you to help with?
- If you had to teach something, what would it be?
- What do people compliment you about?
- What achievements are you proud of?

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# What You Can Be Paid For

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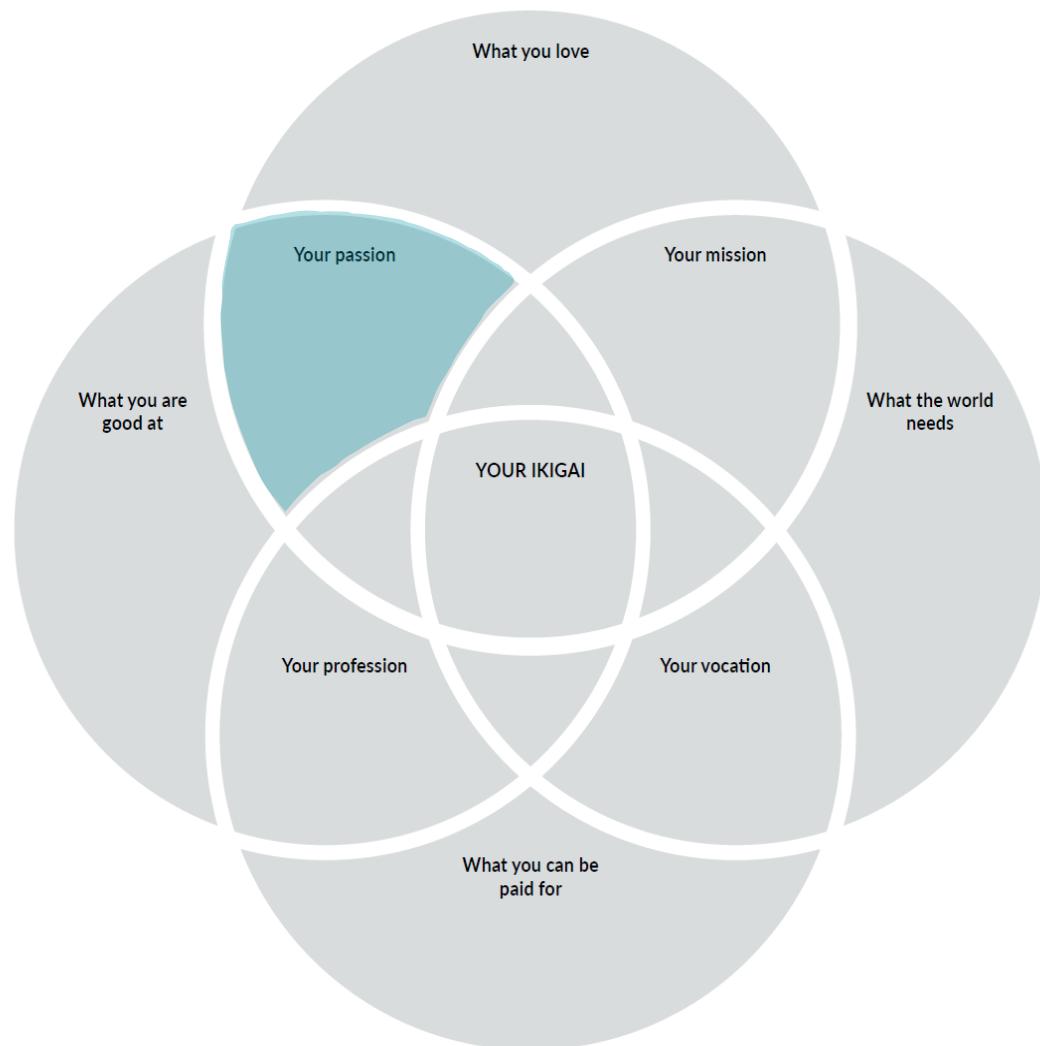
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## What the World Needs

- What do people in your immediate society need?
- Is there something about the way the world works that you want to change?
- What can you do or offer that would bring meaning to others?
- How do you help others?
- How can you contribute positively to those around you?

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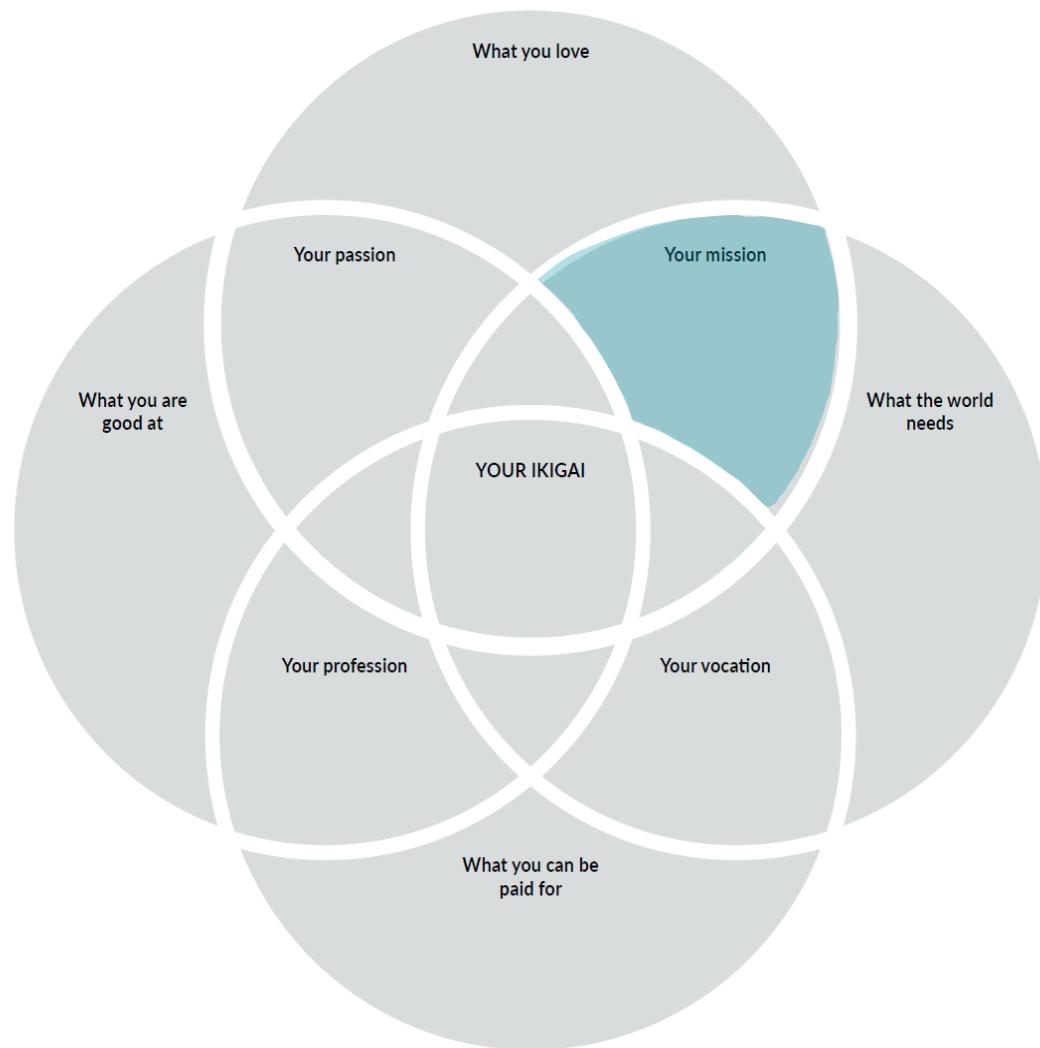
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# Your Passion

- What brings you happiness and fulfillment in life
- Activities that bring you genuine joy and contentment

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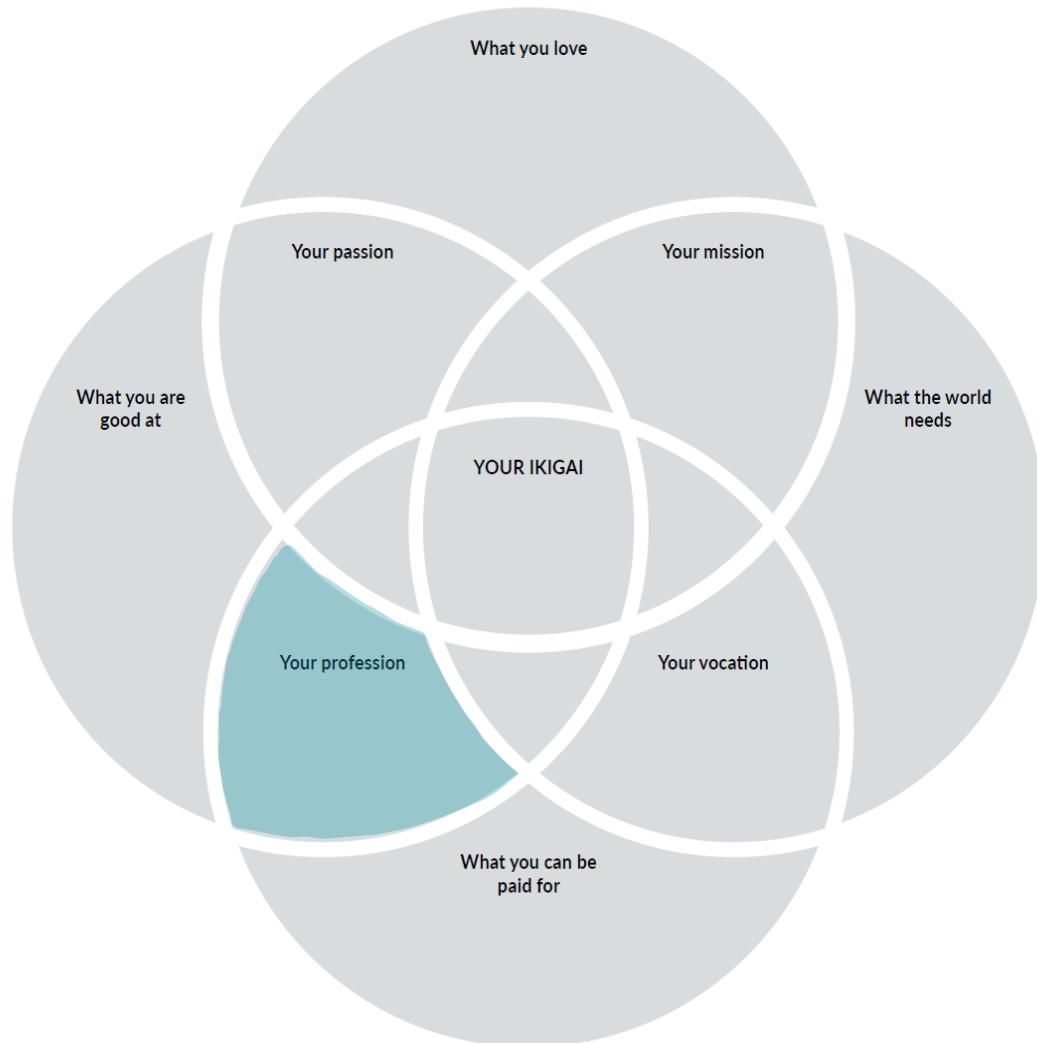
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# Your Mission

- The values, goals, or ideals that you believe in
- It represents your purpose in life and the impact you want to make on the world

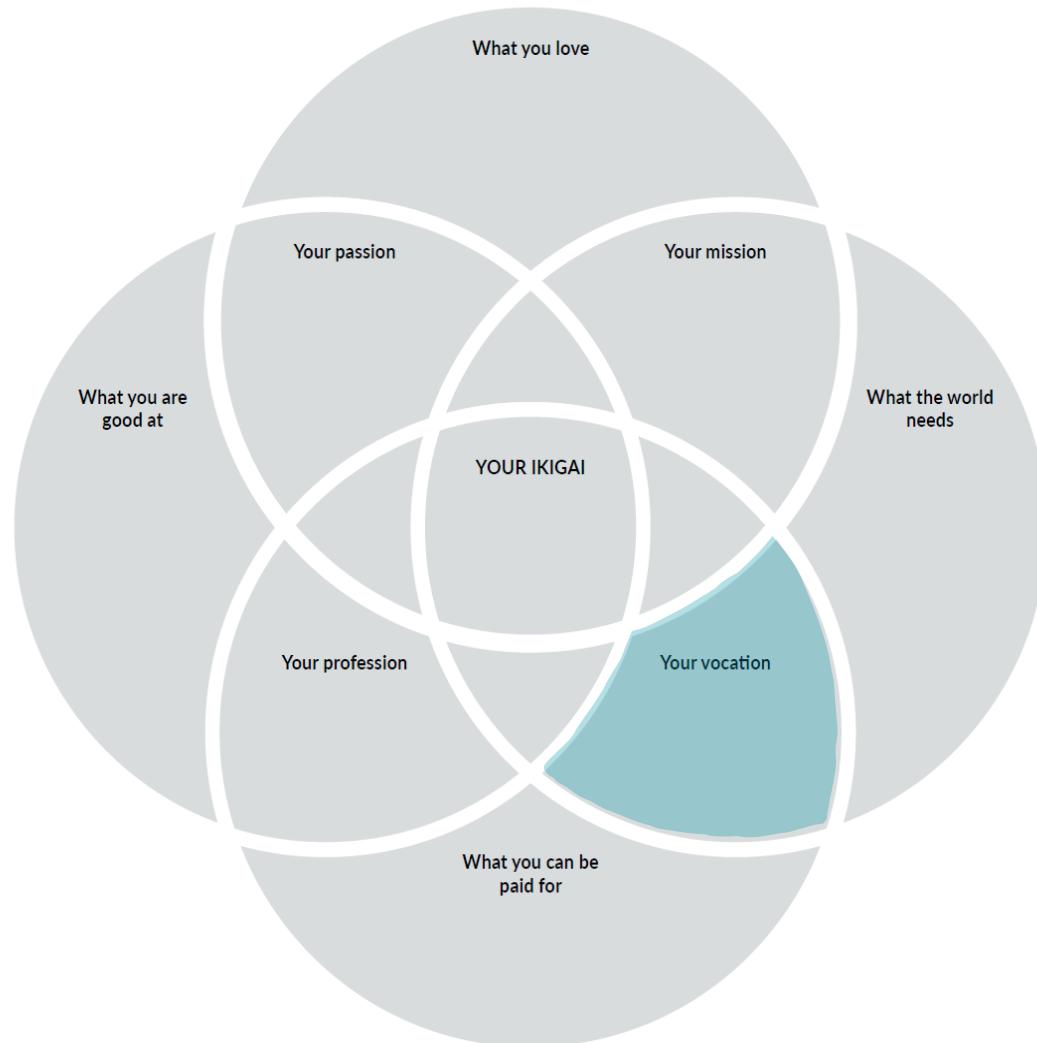
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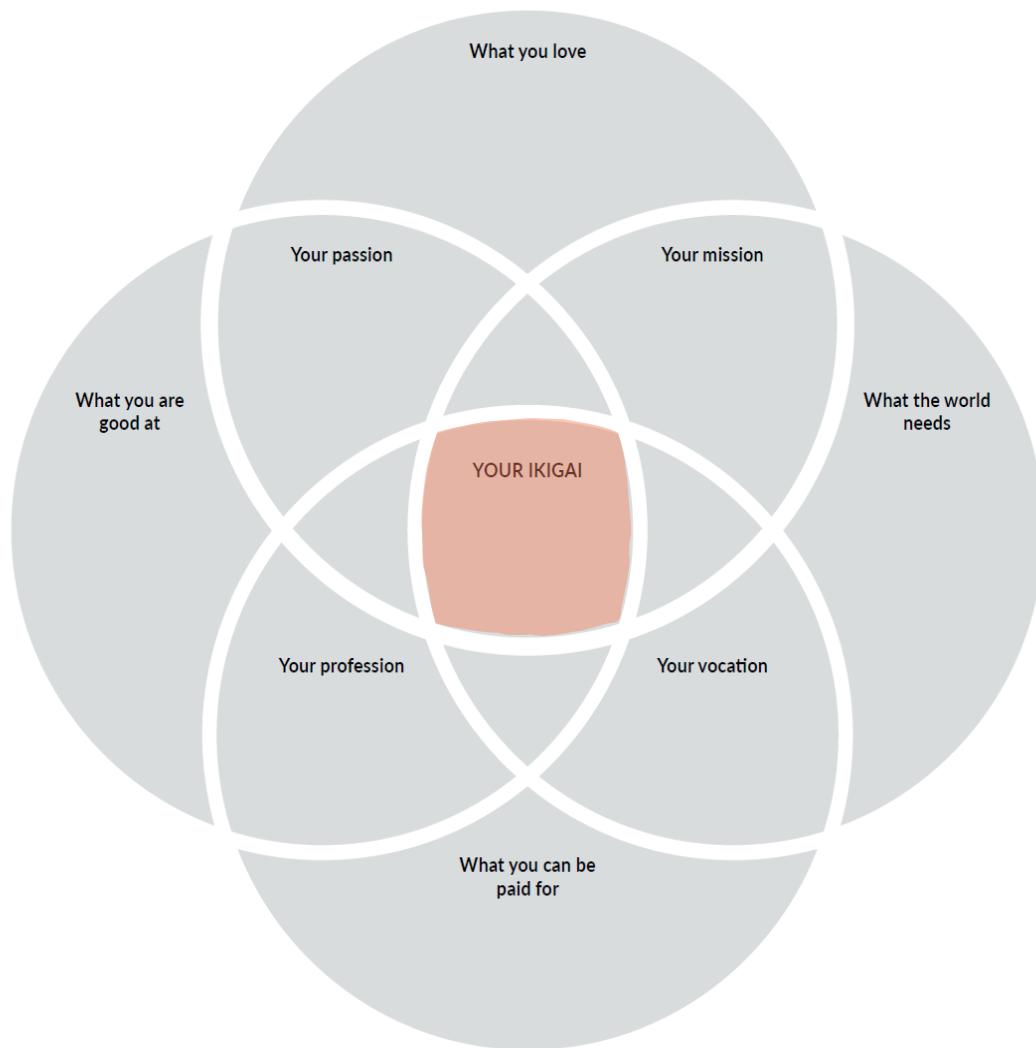
# Your Profession

- Your skills and expertise and what the world is willing to pay for
- It represents a job that utilizes your talents and provides financial stability



# Your Vocation

- Is meaningful contribution and purpose driven work aligning skills and societal needs
- Bridges financial viability and societal value

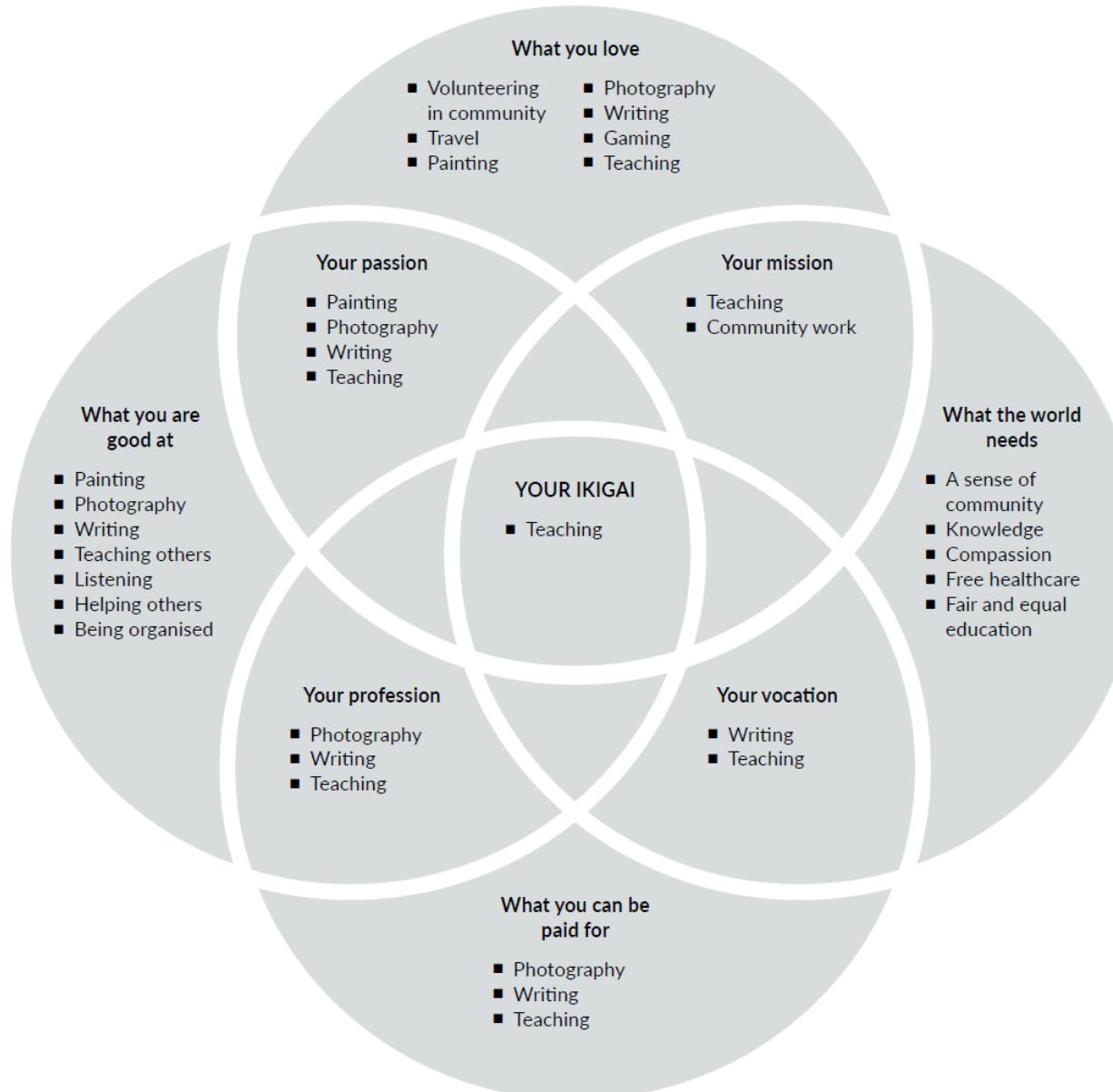


# Your Ikigai

Discovering your Ikigai can lead to a fulfilling and meaningful life, allowing you to balance passion, mission, vocation, and profession.

# IKIGAI

## YOUR REASON FOR BEING



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# Resources



Divisions of Family Practice BC:

<https://divisionsbc.ca/north-shore/retirement-planning-physicians>



Canadian Physician Coaches Network:

<https://www.coach4md.org/>



Physician Health Program – Doctors of BC

[www.physicianhealth.com](http://www.physicianhealth.com)

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# Contact

Kindly contact us if you need support or have any questions.

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- **Email:** [info@physicianhealth.com](mailto:info@physicianhealth.com)
- **More information:** [physicianhealth.com](http://physicianhealth.com)



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