Sheila Love IMPACT-ology Mastermind

“Sheila Love — Where Everything Is Possible”

LESSON 18

Ikigai & Your Ripple Effect

Position	Lesson 18 of 20
Duration	40–50 minutes
Age Group	12–18 years, Liberia, West Africa
Core Idea	Ikigai is your reason for being, sitting where what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be recognized for overlap. Every choice ripples outward.

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain what Ikigai means in their own words

2. Identify the four overlapping areas that make up their own Ikigai

3. Explain how personal well-being affects the size of their ripple effect

4. Ask themselves honestly what they really want, and what they're really meant to do

2. OPENING HOOK (5 minutes)

Ask: “What's something you do that you'd keep doing even if nobody paid you and nobody noticed?”

Let a few honest answers surface. Drawing. Singing. Fixing things. Helping a younger sibling with homework.

> “Hold onto that answer. It matters more than you think.”

3. CORE CONTENT

The Reason You Get Up

Ikigai is a Japanese idea meaning, roughly, 'the reason you get up in the morning.'

It sits at the overlap of four things: what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be recognized for. Miss one, and something feels slightly hollow, even if the other three are strong.

The Ripple Nobody Sees

Every choice you make sends out a ripple that reaches further than you can see. Your impact doesn't stop with you, the way a stone dropped in water doesn't stop moving the moment it hits the surface.

And here's the part worth remembering: your ripples are greater when your own sense of well-being is greater. A person running on empty produces a smaller ripple than a person genuinely full.

Two Honest Questions

What do you REALLY want? Not the polite answer. The true one.

What are you really meant to do on this planet? Nobody else can answer that for you, and you don't need the full answer today. You just need to start asking it honestly.

4. STORY: ‘THE BOY WHO TAUGHT THE ALPHABET’

THE BOY WHO TAUGHT THE ALPHABET

Prince, the same boy who once stood terrified at the radio station gate, had a much younger neighbor, a boy of six named Emmanuel, who couldn't yet read.

Prince hadn't set out to teach him anything. It started small, an idle afternoon, Emmanuel watching Prince read a newspaper on the porch and asking what the marks meant.

Prince showed him one letter. Then, a few days later, another.

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He didn't think much of it at first. It was just something to do in the slow hours between chores and homework.

But he noticed, after a few weeks, that he looked forward to those afternoons more than almost anything else in his day, including the radio work he'd fought so hard to get.

He was good at explaining things simply. He'd never really known that about himself

before.

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One evening, Emmanuel's mother stopped Prince on the road, something urgent in her face that worried him for a second before she spoke.

“He read a whole sentence to me last night,” she said. “From a sign outside the shop. He's never done that before.”

Prince didn't know what to say. It hadn't felt like teaching, exactly. It had felt like something closer to play.

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That night, lying under the mosquito net, Prince found himself turning over a question he hadn't asked in a long time. Not what job he wanted. Something underneath that.

He loved explaining things. He was apparently good at it, judging by a six-year-old reading signs on the road. Somebody clearly needed it. And Emmanuel's mother had thanked him for it in a way that felt more real than any applause the radio work had brought him so far.

He didn't have a tidy word for what he'd just noticed. He only knew he wanted more afternoons like that one, and he fell asleep still turning the question over, unfinished, in a good way.

5. ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

Materials: any paper, any pen or pencil.

1. Draw four overlapping circles, or just list four headings: What I Love, What I'm Good At, What the World Needs, What I Can Be Recognized For.

2. Write at least one honest answer under each heading.

3. Look for anything that appears under more than one heading. That overlap is worth paying attention to.

4. Write one honest answer to: what do I REALLY want?

5. Write one honest answer to: what am I really meant to do on this planet? It's fine if this one stays unfinished.

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you notice overlapping across more than one of your four headings?

2. Where have you felt your own well-being affect the size of your impact on someone else, for better or worse?

3. What did Prince discover about himself that he hadn't known before, and how did he discover it?

4. What is one honest answer to 'what do I really want' that you're willing to sit with, even if it's not fully formed yet?

7. FACILITATOR NOTES

This lesson's source material is thinner than most others in this course. Treat student answers as genuinely exploratory rather than expecting polished insight.

The two closing questions, what do you really want, and what are you meant to do, may open something significant for some students, echoing the same caution given for Lesson 1's Happiness Bubble. Hold space, don't rush to resolve.

Not every student will find a clean overlap across all four circles today. That's expected. The exercise plants a question more than it delivers an answer.

If time allows, let a few students volunteer what they noticed overlapping, without requiring anyone to share a full answer.

8. BRIDGE TO LESSON 19

Before students leave, ask:

“If a fly keeps hitting a closed window when an open door is right beside it, why do you think it doesn't just try the door?”

Let them guess.

“We find out next time.”