Twitter Thread by Carlos E. Perez



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We wake up each day with the same attention budget as everyone else. This is the one thing all humans equally share.

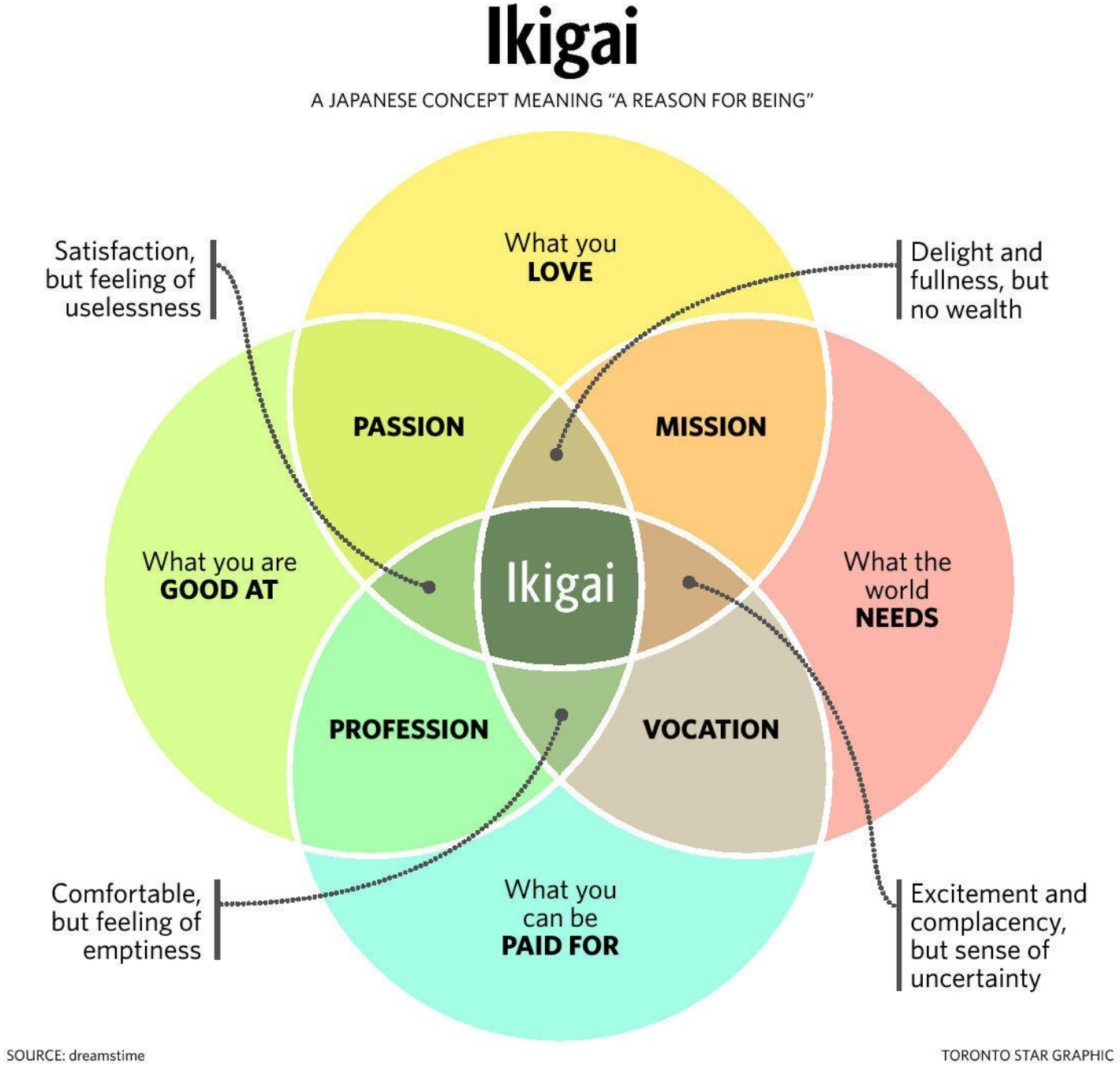
Spending that attention budget by doing this is what gives meaning to our lives.

It's is only through doing that we learn. It is only through learning that we find meaning.

Yet many of us waste attention budget exclusively on consumption. Seeking the random dopamine hits that tickle our curiosity. Yet we seek only the convenient things to do.

Activities that are convenient, that takes little effort don't consume a lot of attention. But enough of these small distractions will. But unfortunately, there's little learning taking place.

The struggle we all face in our modern information abundant society is finding a purposeful and thus meaningful focus to spend our attention budget. The Japanese Ikigai is all about doing.



Ikigai is about doing with a purpose. We structure our lives through work because work gives structure to all the smaller tasks that we do. Greater meaning is gained through structured doing. This is what it means to do things with a purpose.

Wealth is therefore quantified as the fraction of your daily attentional budget that is spent on doing what you love, you are good at, and what others need. All of these can only be found through learning.

A flow state is a consequence of competence. It's not your attention that is trained, it is the introspection of your proficiency at a task. It is that mental state where time ceases to exist. Yet, it cannot be reached without a mastery of something.

Introspection is valuable, but inward attention by itself does not lead to meaning. Someone who is depressed spends a lot of time in inward introspection. What is key is the mastering of one's introspection. This can only be learned through structured attention.

Meditation is the mastery of one's attention. Although this practice is commonly associated with Eastern religions, you can also find it in more mature Judeo-Christian faiths.

Civilization and technology both compete for your attention at the same time offer the opportunity to gain more control of one's attention. Both provide conveniences that previously did not exist.

It is the allure of these conveniences that also takes away from our ability to do things. Many people find meaning in cooking, but we never experience this if we always conveniently order cooked meals.

But progress does not prevent you from cooking. It is your choice if you want to do this or not, and this is what technology provides. That is the choice as to where you focus your attention.

What technology been conspicuously absent is in the tools that teach you how to structure your attention. The greatest competency we will ever find is the competency over our own minds.