

Awakening Purpose:
Exploring the Contributions
of Source Code Meditation and Ikigai to Purpose
Development

Adriana Brito Rodriguez

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree

at Ubiquity University

June 20th, 2026

Dr. Haley Fox

Dr. Haley Fox (Jun 30, 2026 08:31:38 CDT)

Dr. Haley Fox
Major Advisor

Gyorgyi Szabo

Gyorgyi Szabo, PhD
Dean of Graduates Studies

Abstract

Purpose has emerged as a central construct in understanding human well-being, resilience, and flourishing. This thesis explores the contributions of Source Code Meditation (SCM) and Ikigai to the process of purpose development. Using a qualitative, interdisciplinary, and heuristic methodology, the study integrates comparative analysis, literature review, and personal reflection to examine how purpose is discovered, embodied, and sustained throughout life.

The findings suggest that SCM and Ikigai contribute distinct yet complementary perspectives. SCM provides a developmental framework that supports awakening, identity clarification, embodiment, and conscious evolution through Higher Brain activation and the 9 Summits of Transformation. Ikigai contributes a deeper understanding of meaning, fulfillment, contribution, belonging, and the lived experience of purpose in everyday life. The comparative analysis indicates that purpose emerges through an ongoing interaction between awareness, identity, meaning-making, action, and personal growth.

Based on these findings, this thesis proposes an integrative conceptual model that positions purpose as a compass for conscious living. The model suggests that purpose is not only discovered through reflection, but also constructed through action, revealed through experience, and sustained **through continuous alignment between identity, values, and behavior.**

Keywords: purpose, purpose development, Source Code Meditation, Ikigai, conscious living, meaning in life, human flourishing, intentional living

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INTRODUCTION

Source Code Meditation (SCM), developed by Dr. Michael Cotton, offers a bio-psycho-spiritual pathway grounded in Integral Metatheory, mobilizing energy into the Higher Brain through Inner Organic Technology® (IOT) activation and the *9 Summits of Transformation (9ST)* as the applied map to wake up, grow up, clean up and show up. This process guides practitioners to awaken, heal, grow, and embody their Authentic Self—guiding the discovery of their **Authentic Self Mantra** (Summit 4) and its expression through action (Summit 8).

Conversely, Ikigai—rooted in Japanese philosophy—represents *the joy of living with purpose*, found at the intersection of what we love, what we're good at, what the world needs, and what we can be paid for. Both frameworks contribute to purpose development and meaningful living, although they do so through different mechanisms and at different levels of analysis.

This exploration ultimately led to the development of a practical model for conscious living in which purpose serves as a compass. The model proposes five iterative phases—Discover, Design, Live, Reflect, and Evolve—that synthesize the primary insights emerging from SCM, Ikigai, purpose research, and lived experience.

Research Questions

1. How does the process of discovering one's Authentic Self Mantra in SCM relate to finding one's purpose?
2. Are SCM and Ikigai describing the same destination (purpose) through different pathways, or do they complement each other by addressing distinct dimensions of the human experience?
3. Can SCM accelerate the embodiment of Ikigai?

Relevance to the Master's Program in Source Code Alchemy

The search for purpose is not a new human concern. More than a century ago, Henry David Thoreau warned that "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" (as cited in Cotton, 2018, p. 19). Contemporary concerns regarding mental health, burnout, loneliness, and the growing crisis of meaning suggest that this observation remains relevant today.

We know that there is a crisis of meaning; people are not pursuing a purpose in life. It seems as though we live on autopilot—doing what we believe we are *supposed* to do—without ever questioning *why* we want to do it, how it will impact the community, or what sense of meaning it generates for us on a daily basis.

The consequences of this crisis are evident, reflected primarily in mental health, where we have witnessed a rise in cases of depression and suicide—even among young people.

However, there are few practices specifically focused on helping individuals discover their life's purpose.

Source Code Meditation (SCM)—while not its ultimate objective—enables one to enter a state conducive to reflection and self-exploration. This, combined with the "9 Summits," offers a clear path toward self-actualization, personal growth, and enlightenment—a journey wherein one identifies and articulates their authentic self, a self inextricably linked to the question, "Why am I here?"—in other words, our purpose.

In this present work, I wish to go a step further: to explore Japanese philosophy—specifically the **Ikigai method**—as a means of deciphering one's life purpose, and to compare it with the SCM process. By doing so, I aim to complement both approaches and, perhaps, formulate a comprehensive methodology that integrates these two distinct philosophies.

Recognizing the planet's need for mindfulness and meditation, I am committed to cultivating inner balance while fostering a connection to the world around us. I firmly believe that by aligning my life with authenticity and embracing my higher self, I can become a catalyst for positive change. I am determined to be part of the solution rather than a bystander to the world's challenges. By harmonizing my life with my authentic and higher self, I aspire to effect change at both personal and societal levels.

My ultimate goal is to inspire others to embark on a journey of meaningful actions and purposeful living. Through personal growth and transformation, I intend to set an example of a thriving life, driven by compassion, mindfulness, and authenticity and create a model that simplify this process.

This research aligns with the Source Code Alchemy: Theory and Practice Master's program by deepening the understanding of *purpose* as the bridge between awakening and action.

The Search for Purpose in Human Evolution

What is purpose?

The concept of purpose has been explored across disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and spirituality, yet it remains difficult to define in a single, universally accepted way. At its most fundamental level, purpose can be understood as a guiding orientation that gives meaning and direction to human life. It answers not only the question of *what we do*, but more importantly *why we do it*.

From a psychological perspective, purpose is often described as a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is both personally meaningful and oriented toward contributions beyond the self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). This definition highlights two

essential components: meaning and direction. Meaning refers to the sense that one's life is significant and worthwhile, while direction provides a framework for decision-making and action. Together, these elements allow individuals to organize their experiences and behaviors around what truly matters to them.

Philosophically, purpose has long been associated with the human search for meaning. Existential thinkers, such as Viktor Frankl, emphasize that purpose is not something imposed from the outside, but something discovered through one's response to life's circumstances (Frankl, 2006). In this sense, purpose is not a fixed answer, but an evolving relationship between the individual and their lived experience. It is shaped by choices, values, and the meanings we assign to our actions.

Contemporary research further expands this understanding by emphasizing the role of purpose as a central component of well-being and identity. According to Steger (2012), purpose contributes to a sense of coherence in life, allowing individuals to integrate past experiences, present actions, and future aspirations into a meaningful narrative. This integrative function positions purpose as a key organizing principle in human development.

Within the context of this thesis, purpose is understood as a multidimensional construct that integrates identity, values, and action. It is not limited to a singular life goal or achievement, but rather reflects the alignment between who we are, what we value, and how we express that in the world. Purpose, therefore, is not only something to be discovered through reflection, but something that is constructed through action, revealed through experience, and sustained through continuous alignment between identity, values, and behavior.

This understanding allows us to move beyond the idea of purpose as a static destination and instead view it as a dynamic process. Purpose evolves as individuals grow, as their circumstances change, and as their awareness deepens. At different stages of life, it may take different forms—sometimes expressed through roles, relationships, or professional pursuits, and at other times through more subtle, everyday actions that create meaning.

In this sense, purpose is both deeply personal and inherently relational. It arises from within, yet it is expressed through our interactions with others and our contribution to the world around us. Understanding purpose in this way creates a foundation for exploring not only *what purpose is*, but also *why it matters* and *how it can be accessed and lived*, questions that will be further explored through the frameworks of Source Code Meditation and Ikigai.

Why Purpose Matters

Purpose has emerged as a central construct in understanding human well-being, functioning as a multidimensional force that influences how individuals interpret experiences, regulate emotions, and navigate life's challenges. Rather than serving as a static or purely philosophical concept, purpose integrates identity, values, and direction, providing a framework that organizes behavior and supports meaningful engagement with life. Purpose in life has been defined as a central, self-organizing life aim that provides a sense of direction, intentionality, and significance to one's activities (Boreham & Schutte, 2023). Research increasingly suggests that purpose is not merely a desirable aspect of life, but a foundational component of psychological and physical well-being.

One of the most significant contributions of purpose lies in its relationship with resilience. Research indicates that individuals with a strong sense of purpose do not necessarily experience

less stress than others; rather, they demonstrate a greater capacity to recover from adversity and adapt to challenges. Hartanto et al. (2020) found that purpose in life moderates the relationship between childhood emotional abuse and neglect and later depressive symptoms, suggesting that purpose functions as a psychological resource that helps individuals cope more effectively with difficult life experiences. Their findings highlight the important role of purpose in building resilience, coping with adverse life events, and supporting psychological well-being. This distinction suggests that purpose functions not as a protective shield against adversity, but as a stabilizing mechanism that enhances emotional regulation and adaptive response. In this sense, purpose enables individuals to remain oriented toward meaningful goals even in the presence of uncertainty or challenge.

In addition to its role in resilience, purpose has been consistently associated with lower levels of psychological distress. A recent meta-analysis conducted by Boreham and Schutte (2023), which included 99 studies and more than 66,000 participants, found significant negative associations between purpose in life and both depression ($r = -.49$) and anxiety ($r = -.36$). These findings suggest that individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful and purposeful experience substantially lower levels of emotional distress. The authors further argue that purpose may reduce avoidant tendencies, enhance goal-directed behavior, and provide a coherent framework through which individuals interpret challenges and setbacks. Such findings indicate that purpose is not merely a long-term orientation but a psychological resource that influences immediate emotional experience and mental health outcomes.

Purpose also appears to play a critical role in moderating the effects of adversity and facilitating growth following difficult experiences. Individuals with a stronger sense of purpose

appear less vulnerable to the negative psychological consequences associated with trauma and hardship. This observation aligns with Viktor Frankl's (2006) existential perspective that meaning serves as a vital resource in confronting suffering. Rather than eliminating pain, purpose provides a framework through which difficult experiences can be integrated into a broader narrative of growth, learning, and contribution. In this way, purpose transforms adversity from an obstacle into an opportunity for meaning-making and personal development.

Beyond psychological outcomes, purpose significantly influences behavior. Individuals who are aligned with their core values and sense of purpose are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors, including increased physical activity, healthier lifestyle choices, and more effective management of chronic illness (Boreham & Schutte, 2023). One proposed mechanism for this effect is the reduction of resistance. When individuals reflect on what matters most to them, they become more open to change and more willing to align their actions with their values. In this way, purpose serves as a bridge between intention and behavior, increasing consistency between what individuals value and how they live.

Advances in neuroscience provide further insight into how purpose operates at the biological level. Research discussed in the University of Michigan course *Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life: Living for What Matters Most* examined how the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) plays a central role in purpose-related cognition. The vmPFC becomes particularly active when individuals reflect on questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I value?"—two questions that appear fundamental to purpose discovery. This region of the brain is responsible for integrating diverse information into coherent value judgments, allowing individuals to prioritize goals, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions aligned with their deepest values. Individuals with

a well-defined sense of purpose appear to experience less internal conflict when making decisions, because their actions are guided by a clearer organizing framework.

The influence of purpose extends beyond the brain to broader physiological processes. A growing body of research suggests that purpose and eudemonic well-being are associated with measurable biological benefits. In a landmark genomic study, Fredrickson et al. (2013) found that individuals with higher levels of eudemonic well-being exhibited reduced expression of pro-inflammatory genes and enhanced expression of genes associated with immune functioning. The authors concluded that eudemonic well-being is associated with healthier patterns of gene expression and may help protect against the physiological effects of chronic stress. These findings suggest that purpose is not simply a psychological experience but may influence health at the molecular level.

Additional evidence linking purpose and biology comes from research examining telomerase activity, a biological marker associated with cellular health and longevity. Jacobs et al. (2011) found that increases in purpose in life following intensive meditation training were associated with greater telomerase activity. Notably, purpose directly mediated changes in telomerase activity, suggesting that cultivating a stronger sense of meaning and direction may contribute to healthier cellular functioning. These findings provide preliminary evidence that purpose may serve as a protective factor not only psychologically but physiologically as well.

Importantly, not all forms of purpose appear to yield the same benefits. Fredrickson et al. (2013) distinguish between hedonic well-being, which focuses primarily on pleasure and personal satisfaction, and eudemonic well-being, which is characterized by meaning, contribution, and self-realization. Although both forms of well-being are associated with positive subjective experiences,

only eudemonic well-being was associated with healthier genomic profiles. These findings suggest that self-transcending forms of purpose—those oriented toward contribution, connection, and meaning beyond the self—may produce stronger psychological and biological benefits than purely self-focused goals.

Taken together, these findings suggest that purpose is not simply a personal aspiration or abstract ideal. Rather, it is a dynamic and integrative force that shapes how individuals think, feel, and act. Purpose supports resilience, reduces psychological distress, promotes healthy behavior, and contributes to physical health and may even influence biological processes related to inflammation, immune functioning, and longevity. As such, purpose represents a foundational element of human flourishing and provides a compelling framework for understanding how individuals create meaningful and fulfilling lives. The evidence reviewed here suggests that helping individuals discover, clarify, and embody their purpose may be one of the most powerful interventions available for enhancing both well-being and human development.

Methodology

This thesis employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary, and heuristic approach to explore the nature of purpose and the potential contributions of Source Code Meditation (SCM) and Ikigai to purpose discovery and embodiment. Rather than testing a specific hypothesis through experimental methods, the study seeks to integrate theoretical, empirical, and experiential sources of knowledge in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how purpose is discovered, enacted, and sustained throughout life.

Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis was conducted between Source Code Meditation and Ikigai. Although these frameworks emerge from different cultural, philosophical, and developmental traditions, both address fundamental questions concerning meaning, purpose, fulfillment, and human flourishing.

The purpose of the comparison was not to determine which framework provides the superior approach to purpose development. Rather, the comparison sought to examine how each framework illuminates different dimensions of the same phenomenon.

SCM was selected because it represents the primary transformational framework through which the researcher explored human development, consciousness, identity, and purpose. As a brain-first approach to transformation, SCM provides a comprehensive developmental pathway encompassing awakening, growth, integration, embodiment, and evolution.

Ikigai was selected because of its explicit focus on meaning, fulfillment, contribution, and purpose in everyday life. While SCM addresses purpose within a broader framework of transformation, Ikigai offers valuable insight into how purpose is experienced, cultivated, and sustained through engagement with life.

Examining these frameworks together provided an opportunity to explore how different approaches contribute to the process of purpose development and ultimately informed the creation of the proposed model presented in this thesis.

Heuristic Reflection

In addition to comparative analysis, this study incorporated heuristic reflection as a qualitative approach that recognizes the value of the researcher's lived experience in exploring a phenomenon.

Heuristic inquiry emphasizes deep engagement with the topic under investigation and acknowledges that personal experience can contribute meaningfully to the discovery of patterns, themes, and insights.

Because purpose development is both an intellectual and lived phenomenon, heuristic reflection was considered particularly appropriate for this study. Throughout the research process, I engaged in ongoing reflection informed by personal experience as a coach, facilitator, student of Source Code Meditation, creator of personal development programs, and individual actively exploring questions of meaning and purpose.

These reflections were not used as evidence in place of scholarly research. Rather, they served as a complementary source of insight that helped me identify recurring themes and patterns across theory, practice, and lived experience. The heuristic process also supported the interpretation of findings emerging from the comparative analysis and contributed to the development of the proposed model.

Over time, recurring observations emerged across diverse populations and life transitions, including adolescents exploring educational pathways, adults making career decisions, parents navigating family responsibilities, retirees redefining identity and purpose, individuals experiencing loss, entrepreneurs pursuing meaningful work, and caregivers supporting aging family members. Although the circumstances varied considerably, similar themes repeatedly appeared concerning identity, values, meaning, decision-making, adaptation, and intentional living.

These observations contributed to the recognition that while the expression of purpose is highly personal, the process through which individuals clarify, embody, and refine purpose may follow recognizable patterns.

Development of the Proposed Model

The proposed model emerged through the integration of three sources of knowledge:

1. Findings from the scholarly literature on purpose, meaning, well-being, flourishing, and human development.
2. Comparative analysis of SCM and Ikigai.
3. Heuristic reflection informed by lived experience and professional practice.

Rather than presenting a validated intervention, the model is offered as a conceptual framework intended to synthesize the primary insights emerging from this research. It proposes that **purpose serves as a compass for conscious living** and that *individuals can intentionally cultivate meaningful lives through an ongoing process of discovery, design, action, reflection, and growth.*

The model therefore represents the culmination of the research process and serves as a practical application of the theoretical, empirical, and experiential insights explored throughout this thesis.

Source Code Meditation as a Path to Purpose

What Is Source Code Meditation?

Source Code Meditation (SCM) is a brain-first approach to meditation and human development that activates the latent potential of the Higher Brain through the mobilization of what is referred to as the Inner Organic Technology® (IOT). Unlike traditional meditation practices that rely primarily on attention and awareness, SCM introduces a physiological entry point to higher states of consciousness through gentle, precise touch, breath, and intention.

SCM emerges in response to a broader human challenge. Cotton (2018) argues that modern individuals frequently experience chronic stress, disengagement, and a lack of deep meaning in their lives. He notes that we moderns are not very happy and that many people feel overwhelmed, disconnected from their work, and lacking spiritual fulfillment (p. 36). Furthermore, once stress-based behavioral patterns become habituated within lower-brain structures, they are difficult to change through willpower or motivation alone. As Cotton explains, "finding your purpose and creating an extraordinary life don't motivate the lower brain's unconscious programming" (p. 36). This observation is particularly relevant to the present thesis because it suggests that the search for purpose may be hindered not by a lack of desire, but by the neurological and physiological conditions from which individuals attempt to engage in that search.

Cotton (2018) argues that many traditional approaches to personal development fail because they overlook what he describes as a "missing link" in human transformation: the untapped potential of the Higher Brain. According to Cotton, "the missing link to personal transformation is the untapped, slumbering highly evolved part of our brain. Source Code Meditation is a key that turns it on" (p. 20). From this perspective, lasting transformation does not occur solely through

motivation, willpower, or intellectual understanding, but through activating neurological capacities that support higher states of awareness, emotional regulation, and conscious choice. And this is backed up by the research mentioned before from the University of Michigan course *Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life: Living for What Matters Most* where they examined how the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) plays a central role in purpose-related cognition.

This premise forms the foundation of SCM's brain-first approach and provides the theoretical basis for its potential contribution to purpose discovery.

At the core of SCM is the understanding that the human body contains an untapped source of energy (IOT) that, when activated, can be directed toward higher brain structures, particularly the prefrontal cortex. This activation initiates a feedback process known as salutogenesis, characterized by spontaneous physiological responses such as changes in breathing patterns, energy flow, and increased coherence within the body. These responses indicate that the brain is entering a state conducive to higher awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive clarity.

SCM represents a significant shift from traditional contemplative practices. Rather than requiring prolonged effort to quiet the mind, SCM seeks first to alter physiological and neurological conditions. According to Cotton (2018), activation of the Higher Brain "turns on your body's ability to rejuvenate and feel a sense of inner calm and meaning" while simultaneously reducing stress and increasing receptivity to positive change (p. 44). In this sense, SCM can be understood as a method that prepares the system for meditation by creating the optimal internal conditions for higher states of consciousness to emerge.

The Inner Organic Technology® and the Brain-First Approach

Central to SCM is the concept of Inner Organic Technology® (IOT), which refers to the body's inherent capacity to generate, mobilize, and utilize energy for transformation. This technology is considered “organic,” because it relies entirely on the body's natural systems rather than external tools or substances.

Through specific contact points in the body—referred to as subtle energy vortexes—SCM practitioners activate this latent energy and direct it toward the Higher Brain. As this energy reaches the prefrontal regions, it enhances executive functions such as focus, decision-making, and emotional regulation. At the same time, it reduces the dominance of lower, survival-oriented brain structures associated with stress and reactivity.

This process creates what SCM describes as a pattern interrupt—a disruption of habitual stress-based neurological patterns that allows the system to reorganize into a higher-order state. As a result, individuals frequently report increased clarity, reduced anxiety, enhanced self-awareness, and a greater capacity to engage with life from a more intentional and less reactive state.

The significance of this brain-first approach for the present thesis lies in its potential relationship to purpose discovery. If purpose requires reflection upon identity, values, and future direction, then the physiological conditions necessary for such reflection become *critically important*. *SCM proposes that activating the Higher Brain creates a more supportive platform from which these deeper inquiries can occur.*

The New Holy Trinity: Energy, Brain, and Mind

A key framework within SCM is the concept of the “New Holy Trinity,” which describes the interaction between three fundamental components: Inner Organic Technology® (energy), Higher Brain structures (body), and higher cognitive capacities (mind). These elements function as a dynamic feedback loop that amplifies human potential and facilitates conscious evolution.

As energy is mobilized through the body and directed toward the Higher Brain, it enhances neural activity in regions associated with higher-order thinking. This, in turn, enables the mind to focus more effectively and direct attention with greater precision. The combined effect creates a self-reinforcing cycle in which energy fuels cognition, cognition directs attention, and attention further amplifies the energetic response.

As Cotton (2018) explains:

"Brain function and physiology has correlates in consciousness. As brain structure evolve, consciousness evolves and the corollary energy that fuels this evolution of brain/consciousness evolves, creating an emergent triune (the new holy trinity) of brain/consciousness/fuel (energy)" (p. 60).

This triadic interaction allows individuals to access elevated states of consciousness more consistently and to translate these states into meaningful action. From the perspective of this thesis, the New Holy Trinity provides a mechanism through which purpose is not only conceptualized but also physiologically supported and embodied.

If purpose emerges through the integration of identity, values, and action, then SCM offers a model in which the energetic, neurological, and consciousness dimensions of that process evolve together.

Integral Metatheory and the Four Dimensions of Life

SCM is informed by Integral Metatheory (IMT), developed by Ken Wilber, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human development across multiple domains. According to this model, all human experience unfolds across four interconnected dimensions: Mind, Body, Relationships, and Environment.

- The Mind dimension includes thoughts, beliefs, and meaning-making processes.
- The Body dimension encompasses physiological states and biological processes.
- The Relationships dimension refers to interpersonal connections and shared cultural meaning.
- The Environment dimension includes external systems such as social, economic, and structural conditions.

IMT emphasizes that transformation must occur across all four dimensions simultaneously in order to be sustainable. Changes in one dimension inevitably influence the others, creating a dynamic and interdependent system. As Cotton (2018) notes, "when you do take all of these areas into account and promote growth in all four dimensions, something extraordinary happens; a quantum response in life transformation results!" (p. 100). For example, shifts in physiological state can alter emotional patterns, which in turn affect relationships and behavior within broader systems.

Within SCM, this framework ensures that the pursuit of purpose is not limited to internal reflection but extends into all aspects of life. Purpose is therefore understood as something that must be expressed holistically—through thought, action, relationships, and engagement with broader systems.

The 9 Summits of Transformation

The 9 Summits of Transformation provide the structured developmental pathway through which SCM facilitates both the discovery and embodiment of purpose. These summits are designed as a progressive sequence that integrates higher states of consciousness with developmental growth and behavioral transformation across all four dimensions of life.

This process can be understood through four primary steps:

- Waking Up: Accessing higher states of consciousness
- Growing Up: Expanding developmental capacity and perspective
- Cleaning Up: Integrating unresolved patterns and emotional blocks
- Showing Up: Embodying purpose through action

While each summit contributes to this developmental journey, several are particularly relevant to the exploration of purpose in this thesis.

Summit 4 and the Discovery of the Authentic Self

Summit 4 introduces the concept of the Authentic Self, defined as the unique expression of one's deeper essence within the context of everyday life. This summit marks a transition from

experiencing higher states of consciousness to integrating those experiences into one's identity and purpose.

Within the context of purpose development, Summit 4 may represent SCM's most direct contribution to identity clarification. Rather than asking individuals what they want to do, the process first explores who they are becoming. Purpose emerges not from external achievement, but from greater alignment between one's deeper identity and one's actions.

Through this process, individuals begin clarifying what gives their lives coherence, meaning, and direction. The Authentic Self serves as a bridge between higher awareness and everyday living, providing a foundation from which purpose can be consciously explored and expressed.

Summit 5 and Vertical Development

Summit 5 focuses on vertical development—the expansion of consciousness through progressively more complex and inclusive perspectives. This process follows the principle of “transcend and include,” in which new stages of development integrate and build upon previous ones rather than rejecting them.

According to Cotton (2018), “we humans can evolve vertically to higher Life Altitudes, with each developmental altitude providing the interpretative framework for how we see the world, relate to each other and even how we relate to and interpret spiritual experience” (p. 119).

This insight is particularly relevant to purpose because it suggests that purpose itself evolves. As individuals develop more complex worldviews and broader perspectives, their

understanding of purpose often expands beyond personal achievement toward contribution, service, and participation in larger systems of meaning.

Summit 5 introduces a unique perspective largely absent from most purpose-development frameworks: vertical development. From this perspective, purpose itself evolves as consciousness evolves. A purpose centered on personal success may later expand toward contribution, service, stewardship, or participation in larger systems. Consequently, SCM suggests that purpose is not simply discovered once and maintained unchanged but continually refined through ongoing developmental growth.

Summit 8: Life Codes and the Embodiment of Purpose

Summit 8 represents a critical point in the SCM process, where purpose is translated into action through the creation of Life Codes. These are personalized, actionable statements that define how an individual intends to live and act across the four dimensions of life: Mind, Body, Relationships, and Environment.

Unlike traditional goal-setting, Life Codes are developed within an activated Higher Brain state, allowing them to become neurologically and physiologically reinforced. Over time, repeated engagement with these codes leads to the formation of new neural pathways, making aligned behavior with an individual's values and intentions more automatic and sustainable.

This process demonstrates how SCM operationalizes purpose—not merely as an abstract concept, but as a lived reality expressed through consistent action. It directly supports the central premise of this thesis that purpose is discovered through reflection, constructed through behavior and embodied through practice.

Summit 9: Unitary Evolutionary Enlightenment

Summit 9 represents the culmination of the SCM journey, integrating the Transcendent Self with the evolving Authentic Self in what is described as Unitary Evolutionary Enlightenment. In this state, individuals experience a profound sense of unity with interconnectedness while simultaneously recognizing themselves as active participants in the ongoing process of evolution.

Individuals no longer see themselves as separate from the world, but as active contributors to its unfolding. Purpose, in this context, becomes aligned with the broader movement of life itself as a never-ending process.

As Cotton (2018) writes, "evolution is waking to itself, in you, through you and as you" (p. 60).

From this perspective, purpose expands beyond personal fulfillment and even beyond service to others. Purpose becomes participation in the evolutionary process itself. The individual experiences meaning not only through what they accomplish, but through conscious participation in the ongoing development of self, society, and humanity. This evolutionary dimension represents one of SCM's most distinctive contributions to contemporary discussions of purpose.

SCM as an Activated Path to Purpose

Within the framework of this thesis, Source Code Meditation can be understood as an activated pathway to purpose. While traditional approaches often rely on reflection and cognitive insight, SCM introduces a physiological and energetic mechanism that facilitates access to the states required for clarity, alignment, and intentional action.

Cotton (2018) states that: "SCM and the 9 Summits help us discover our essence, our Highest Self, as an evolving unitary being – and helps clarify what our purpose in this body, at this time on this planet, actually is" (p. 132).

This proposition aligns closely with the central argument of the present thesis: that purpose is not merely discovered intellectually but emerges through a process of identity clarification, expanded awareness, and embodied action.

Furthermore, SCM provides a compelling complement to contemporary neuroscience findings discussed earlier in this thesis. Research from the University of Michigan's course *Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life* suggests that the ventromedial prefrontal cortex becomes active when individuals reflect upon questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I value?" SCM provide the physiological, neurological, and consciousness conditions that facilitate access to these deeper reflections.

Through the activation of the Higher Brain, the integration of the four dimensions of life, and the structured progression of the 9 Summits, SCM provides both a map and a method for discovering and embodying purpose. More importantly, SCM provides a comprehensive developmental system within which purpose can emerge, evolve, and be embodied. Through Higher Brain activation, Integral Metatheory, and the 9 Summits of Transformation, SCM addresses multiple dimensions of human development simultaneously. Purpose is therefore not treated as a separate objective but as a natural consequence of greater coherence, self-awareness, developmental growth, and conscious participation in life.

Therefore, the unique contribution of SCM to the field of purpose development may lie in its capacity to create the physiological, neurological, and consciousness conditions that facilitate the discovery, embodiment, and evolution of purpose.

Cotton (2018) suggests that the challenge may not simply be a lack of reflection or motivation. He argues that the lack of activation of the Higher Brain can obscure access to deeper dimensions of meaning, stating that this "missing link" "squashes our joy, flattens our passions and hides us from our life's purpose" (p. 20). From this perspective, purpose is not necessarily absent; rather, the neurological conditions required to perceive and embody it may be insufficiently activated.

The Ikigai Framework

What Is Ikigai?

The concept of Ikigai originates from Japan and is commonly translated as “**reason for being**” or “**that which makes life worth living.**” At its core, *Ikigai* refers to the sense of meaning and motivation that gives individuals a reason to engage with life each day. It is not limited to a single life goal or achievement but rather reflects an ongoing relationship between the individual and their experience of living.

Historically, the concept dates back to early Japanese culture and has been influenced by philosophical and spiritual traditions such as Buddhism and Shinto. Over time, Ikigai has evolved into a widely recognized framework for understanding purpose, fulfillment, and well-being. Unlike many Western approaches to purpose, which often emphasize achievement or success, Ikigai is deeply rooted in everyday life and the continuous experience of meaning.

Importantly, Ikigai is not a fixed or universal concept. It is personal, subjective, and dynamic, varying across individuals and evolving over time. This flexibility allows it to remain relevant across different stages of life and cultural contexts, making it a valuable lens through which to explore the nature of purpose.

Traditional Japanese Understanding of Ikigai

The traditional Japanese understanding of Ikigai differs significantly from its popularized Western interpretation. In its original context, Ikigai is not primarily concerned with identifying a single overarching purpose or career path. Instead, it is found in the small, meaningful aspects of daily life—such as relationships, routines, and contributions to one’s community.

Ikigai, in this sense, is both accessible and plural. Individuals may experience multiple sources of Ikigai simultaneously, and these sources may shift over time. For example, caring for family members, gardening, participating in community life, or simply enjoying daily rituals can all serve as expressions of Ikigai. The emphasis is placed not on achieving a distant goal, but on living meaningfully in the present moment.

Another key dimension of traditional Ikigai is its relational nature. It is closely tied to concepts such as *wa* (harmony) and *ibasho* (a sense of belonging), highlighting the importance of social connection and contribution. Meaning is not constructed in isolation but emerges through relationships and one’s role within a broader social context.

This perspective reflects a more holistic and process-oriented understanding of purpose. *Rather than defining purpose as a singular destination, Ikigai frames it as an ongoing practice of engagement, presence, and alignment with one’s life circumstances.*

Western Interpretation of Ikigai

In contrast to its traditional roots, the Western interpretation of Ikigai is often represented through a four-circle model that identifies purpose at the intersection of four domains: what one loves (passion), what one is good at (vocation), what the world needs (mission), and what one can be paid for (profession).

This model has gained widespread popularity due to its clarity and practical application, particularly in the context of career development and self-discovery. It offers a structured approach to identifying purpose by encouraging individuals to reflect on their interests, skills, values, and economic opportunities.

However, while useful, this representation simplifies the broader and more nuanced concept of Ikigai. It places a stronger emphasis on individual achievement and career alignment, which reflects Western cultural values but does not fully capture the relational and process-oriented nature of traditional Ikigai. As such, it is important to recognize the four-circle model as an adaptation rather than a direct expression of the original concept.

Ikigai as a Psychological Framework

Beyond its cultural origins, Ikigai can also be understood through the lens of modern psychological theories. In particular, it aligns closely with Self-Determination Theory, which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs for human motivation and well-being.

The pursuit of Ikigai naturally supports these needs. It encourages individuals to act in alignment with their values and interests (autonomy), to develop their skills and strengths

(competence), and to cultivate meaningful relationships and contribute to their communities (relatedness). When these needs are fulfilled, individuals are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement in their activities. This aligns with IMT that consider the four dimensions: Mind, Body, Relationships and Environment.

Ikigai also resonates with the principles of positive psychology, particularly the PERMA model of well-being, which includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. By integrating these dimensions, Ikigai provides a holistic framework for understanding human flourishing.

Additionally, the concept of flow, defined as a state of deep absorption and engagement in an activity, is often associated with Ikigai. Activities aligned with one's Ikigai tend to facilitate this state, contributing to both performance and well-being.

Ikigai in Practice: Personal and Professional Life

Ikigai functions as an inner compass that guides decision-making and behavior across different areas of life. On a personal level, it supports self-awareness, helping individuals clarify their values, priorities, and aspirations. This clarity enables more intentional choices and fosters a sense of authenticity and fulfillment.

In professional contexts, Ikigai enhances motivation, engagement, and resilience. When individuals align their work with their sense of purpose, they are more likely to persevere through challenges, find meaning in their efforts, and experience a deeper sense of satisfaction. Research further suggests that purpose is associated with greater social connectedness, prosocial behavior,

and stronger interpersonal relationships, factors that contribute to healthier workplace dynamics and a greater sense of belonging (Boreham & Schutte, 2023).

Furthermore, Ikigai promotes continuous growth and development. It encourages individuals to cultivate their talents, explore new opportunities, and remain open to change. In this way, it supports both personal and professional evolution.

Ikigai as a Dynamic and Evolving Process

A defining characteristic of Ikigai is its dynamic nature. It is not a fixed endpoint, but an evolving process that adapts to changes in identity, context, and life circumstances. As individuals grow and their priorities shift, their Ikigai may also transform, reflecting new sources of meaning and engagement.

This perspective emphasizes the importance of ongoing reflection and adaptability. Rather than seeking a definitive answer to the question of purpose, individuals are invited to remain curious and responsive to their experiences. Ikigai thus becomes a continuous practice of alignment, rather than a static achievement.

Ikigai as Lived Purpose

In the context of this thesis, Ikigai can be understood as a lived expression of purpose—one that emerges through daily actions, relationships, and engagement with life. It does not require a formal declaration or structured methodology; instead, it unfolds through participation in meaningful activities and the cultivation of presence and connection.

This understanding positions Ikigai as a complementary framework to Source Code Meditation. While SCM approaches purpose through conscious awakening and the discovery of

the Authentic Self, Ikigai reveals purpose through lived experience and ongoing interaction with the world.

Together, these perspectives offer a more complete understanding of purpose, suggesting that it can be both accessed through inner transformation and expressed through everyday life.

Comparative Analysis of SCM and Ikigai: Contributions to Purpose Development

What Unique Contribution Does Each Framework Make to the Process of Purpose Development?

Both Source Code Meditation (SCM) and Ikigai seek to address a fundamental human concern: *how individuals create meaningful and fulfilling lives*. Although they emerge from different cultural, philosophical, and developmental traditions, both frameworks recognize the importance of purpose as a guiding force in human flourishing. However, rather than approaching purpose through the same pathway, each framework appears to illuminate a different dimension of the process.

The purpose of this comparison is not to determine whether one framework is superior to the other. Nor is it intended to suggest that Ikigai completes, replaces, or improves upon SCM. SCM already presents a comprehensive developmental framework designed to facilitate awakening, growth, integration, and embodiment through Higher Brain activation and the 9 Summits of Transformation.

Instead, the value of examining Ikigai alongside SCM lies in its specialized focus on meaning, purpose, and the lived experience of a meaningful life. While SCM addresses purpose within a broader model of human development and evolution, Ikigai offers a rich perspective on how purpose is experienced, cultivated, and sustained in everyday life. In this sense, Ikigai helps illuminate one particular dimension of the broader phenomenon that SCM addresses.

Viewed through this lens, SCM and Ikigai can be understood as complementary rather than competing frameworks. Both ultimately seek to support meaningful living, yet they contribute different insights into how purpose is discovered, embodied, and sustained.

Different Levels of Analysis

One of the most important distinctions between SCM and Ikigai is that they operate at different levels of analysis.

Ikigai primarily focuses on the content of purpose. It explores questions related to meaning, fulfillment, contribution, belonging, and engagement with life. The framework invites individuals to reflect on what they value, what brings them joy, how they contribute to others, and what makes life worth living. Purpose emerges through reflection, participation, and interaction with everyday life.

SCM, by contrast, focuses primarily on the conditions that facilitate purpose development. Rather than beginning with questions about meaning, SCM first seeks to create the physiological, neurological, and developmental conditions that support higher levels of awareness and self-understanding. Through Higher Brain activation, identity clarification, vertical development, and

behavioral embodiment, SCM provides a framework through which purpose can emerge, evolve, and be expressed.

This distinction may be summarized simply: Ikigai helps individuals explore what gives life meaning, whereas SCM helps individuals develop the capacities required to live that meaning consistently.

Purpose Discovery: Different Entry Points

A second distinction concerns how each framework approaches the discovery of purpose.

The Western interpretation of Ikigai often begins with reflection. Individuals are encouraged to examine what they love, what they are good at, what the world needs, and how they may contribute through their talents and abilities. Even within traditional Japanese understandings of Ikigai, purpose emerges through engagement with meaningful activities, relationships, contributions, and daily life. The entry point is therefore largely experiential and reflective. The central question becomes: *What makes life worth living?*

SCM approaches purpose from a different angle. Rather than beginning with meaning itself, SCM begins with transformation. Through Higher Brain activation and the developmental processes associated with the 9 Summits, individuals gain access to greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, perspective-taking, and identity clarification. The central inquiry is not initially what gives life meaning, but rather: *Who am I beyond my conditioned identity?* Purpose emerges as individuals gain greater coherence between their deeper identity, values, and actions.

This distinction suggests that Ikigai provides a reflective pathway to purpose, whereas SCM provides an activated pathway to purpose.

Identity and Purpose

The role of identity represents another important distinction between the two frameworks.

Although Ikigai implicitly engages questions of identity through reflections on values, strengths, and contribution, identity itself is not the primary focus of the framework. The emphasis remains on meaningful engagement with life.

SCM places identity at the center of the developmental process. Summit 4, in particular, introduces the concept of the Authentic Self, inviting individuals to move beyond socially conditioned roles and assumptions toward a deeper understanding of who they truly are, their essence. Within SCM, purpose is not merely a matter of identifying meaningful activities; it emerges through increasing alignment between one's deeper identity and one's actions.

This focus on identity may represent one of SCM's most distinctive contributions to purpose development. While Ikigai helps clarify what matters, SCM helps clarify who is living that purpose.

Purpose and Action

A common challenge within purpose research is the gap between insight and action. Individuals may understand what is meaningful to them while struggling to translate that understanding into consistent behavior.

Ikigai emphasizes the importance of living purpose through everyday actions: activities, relationships, contributions, and engagement with life. Purpose is expressed through participation in meaningful experiences and the cultivation of fulfillment in daily living.

SCM contributes something unique, through Summit 8 and the development of Life Codes. These personalized commitments translate identity and values into intentional behavioral patterns. Purpose therefore becomes not only something that is understood, but something that is consciously embodied through repeated action.

This distinction reflects a broader insight emerging from the present research: purpose is not sustained by reflection alone. It must eventually be translated into behavior. In this regard, SCM provides a structured mechanism for embodiment that complements Ikigai's emphasis on meaningful living.

Purpose as an Evolving Process

Both SCM and Ikigai challenge the notion that purpose is a fixed destination discovered once and maintained indefinitely.

Traditional Japanese understandings of Ikigai recognize that meaning can emerge from multiple sources and may evolve throughout life as circumstances, relationships, and priorities change. Purpose is viewed as dynamic and adaptive rather than static.

SCM arrives at a similar conclusion through a different pathway. Summit 5 introduces the concept of vertical development, suggesting that individuals progressively evolve toward broader and more inclusive perspectives. As consciousness develops, purpose may evolve. A purpose initially centered on personal fulfillment may gradually expand toward contributions, service, stewardship, and participation in larger systems of meaning. Summit 9 extends this process further through the concept of Unitary Evolutionary Enlightenment, where purpose becomes increasingly aligned with conscious participation in the evolutionary process itself.

Both frameworks therefore suggest that purpose is not a static achievement but an ongoing developmental process requiring continual reflection, adaptation, and renewal.

Toward an Integrative Understanding of Purpose Development

The comparison conducted in this thesis suggests that SCM and Ikigai illuminate different dimensions of the same phenomenon. Ikigai contributes a rich understanding of meaning, fulfillment, belonging, contribution, and the lived experience of purpose. SCM contributes a comprehensive framework for awakening, development, identity clarification, embodiment, and conscious evolution.

Perhaps the most significant insight emerging from this comparison is that SCM appears particularly strong in facilitating the awakening and embodiment of purpose, whereas Ikigai appears especially valuable in understanding how purpose is experienced, integrated, and sustained within everyday life. SCM helps individuals access and develop the capacities required for purposeful living; Ikigai helps illuminate what purposeful living looks like in practice.

Taken together, these frameworks suggest that purpose is neither discovered solely through reflection nor awakened solely through transformation. Rather, purpose emerges through an ongoing interaction between awareness, identity, meaning-making, action, contribution, and development. This insight provides the foundation for the integrative model proposed in the following chapter, which seeks to illustrate how individuals may discover, clarify, embody, and sustain purpose throughout life.

A Proposed Model for Conscious Living: Using Purpose as a Compass

Introduction

As this research evolved, it became evident that the central question was not simply how individuals discover purpose, but how they create meaningful lives through it. The literature reviewed throughout this thesis, together with insights from Source Code Meditation (SCM), Ikigai, purpose research, positive psychology, and personal experience, suggests that purpose is not a destination to be reached but an ongoing process that shapes how individuals think, choose, act, and engage with the world.

A recurring theme across the various frameworks examined in this study is that purpose contributes to resilience, well-being, healthy behavior, and human flourishing. However, many existing approaches focus primarily on helping individuals identify or clarify purpose. Less attention has been given to the ongoing process through which purpose is embodied, maintained, and adapted throughout life.

Building upon the findings of this research, this chapter proposes a practical model designed to help individuals move from living by default to living by design. The model is based on the premise that **purpose serves as a compass for conscious living**. Rather than helping individuals identify a single purpose statement, it seeks to support an ongoing cycle of self-discovery, intentional action, reflection, and growth.

The model is guided by the following proposition:

Purpose is not only discovered through reflection, but constructed through action, revealed through experience, and sustained through continuous alignment between identity, values, and behavior.

This proposition emerged through the comparative analysis of SCM and Ikigai and reflects the broader understanding of purpose development that emerged throughout this thesis.

Research on purpose development increasingly suggests that purpose evolves throughout life in relationship to identity development, changing life circumstances, and ongoing engagement with meaningful goals. Purpose therefore requires continual reflection, adaptation, and renewal rather than a single moment of discovery.

Why a New Model?

The literature reviewed throughout this thesis demonstrates that purpose is associated with numerous psychological, behavioral, and health-related benefits. Research suggests that purpose contributes to resilience, well-being, healthier lifestyles, improved emotional regulation, and human flourishing. Yet despite growing interest in purpose, many existing approaches focus primarily on helping individuals identify, define, or clarify purpose.

The findings of this research suggest that purpose development involves more than discovery alone. Individuals must continually interpret changing life circumstances, make decisions aligned with their values, translate insights into action, and adapt their understanding of purpose throughout different stages of life. Purpose therefore appears less as a destination to be reached and more as an ongoing developmental process.

The proposed model emerged from the recognition that there is a need for a simple and practical framework capable of supporting this process. Rather than replacing existing frameworks such as SCM or Ikigai, the model seeks to synthesize key insights from purpose research, human development, and lived experience into an accessible process that can help individuals consciously navigate life with greater clarity, intention, and meaning.

Purpose of the Model

The purpose of this model is not simply to help individuals identify a purpose statement.

Rather, it is designed to help individuals pause, reflect, and choose with intention. The model seeks to create moments of conscious awareness in which people can examine whether the lives they are living remain aligned with what matters most to them.

Many individuals move through life responding to responsibilities, expectations, habits, and circumstances without regularly pausing to examine whether their choices align with what matters most to them. As a result, they may achieve success, productivity, or external accomplishments while simultaneously experiencing disconnection, dissatisfaction, or a lack of meaning.

The proposed model suggests that purpose serves as a compass for conscious living.

A compass does not dictate a destination, nor does it determine the exact path that an individual must follow. Instead, it provides orientation. Similarly, purpose provides direction by helping individuals evaluate choices, priorities, and actions according to what they value most deeply.

By clarifying identity, values, meaning, and desired direction, individuals can make more intentional decisions and create greater alignment between who they are and how they live.

Purpose as a Compass for Conscious Living

One of the central insights emerging from this research is that purpose functions less like a destination and more like a compass.

A destination implies a fixed endpoint. A compass, however, provides orientation while allowing for multiple paths, changing circumstances, and ongoing adaptation. Life rarely unfolds according to a predetermined plan. Individuals encounter transitions, opportunities, losses, relationships, responsibilities, and developmental changes that continually reshape their experiences and priorities.

Purpose helps individuals navigate these changes by providing a stable reference point grounded in identity, values, meaning, and contribution. Although the specific expression of purpose may evolve throughout life, purpose itself continues to offer direction.

This perspective also helps explain why purpose appears relevant across diverse life stages and circumstances. Whether an individual is choosing a career, raising a family, redefining identity after retirement, navigating loss, pursuing meaningful work, or caring for aging parents, the specific questions may differ while the underlying need remains similar: the need for a framework that helps orient decisions and actions toward what matters most.

Within the proposed model, purpose serves this orienting function. It provides direction without rigidity, guidance without prescription, and meaning without requiring a single fixed definition of success.

The Conscious Living Through Purpose Model

The model consists of five interconnected phases. The five phases emerged through the integration of scholarly literature, comparative analysis, and heuristic reflection. They also reflect recurring patterns observed across different life transitions and developmental challenges. Although circumstances may vary considerably, individuals repeatedly engaged in processes of self-discovery, intentional decision-making, action, reflection, and adaptation. The model therefore seeks to describe a repeatable architecture for conscious living while recognizing that the specific expression of purpose remains unique to each individual.

1. Discover
2. Design
3. Live
4. Reflect
5. Evolve

Rather than functioning as a linear sequence completed once and then abandoned, these phases form a continuous developmental cycle through which purpose is clarified, expressed, and refined throughout life.

Phase 1: Discover

Guiding Question: Who am I?

The first phase focuses on self-awareness and identity exploration.

Before individuals can make purposeful choices, they must develop a deeper understanding of themselves. This includes exploring strengths, values, interests, passions, experiences, relationships, and recurring life themes that contribute to identity formation.

This phase was informed by both SCM's exploration of the Authentic Self and research linking purpose development with identity development. Purpose and identity appear to develop in relationship to one another, with greater self-understanding supporting greater clarity regarding life direction.

The outcome of this phase is not purpose itself. *The outcome is clarity.*

Phase 2: Design

Guiding Question: What kind of life do I want to create?

Once individuals develop greater self-awareness, attention shifts toward direction.

Rather than creating a rigid plan for life, individuals begin identifying what matters most to them and how they wish to express their values through their lives.

This phase integrates insights from purpose science, Ikigai, and values-based approaches to flourishing. The emphasis is placed on identifying meaningful direction rather than fixed outcomes.

Purpose begins to emerge here as an orientation toward a meaningful future.

The result is the creation of what I call a **Purpose Compass**: *a personalized understanding of the values, priorities, relationships, contributions, and experiences that give meaning and direction to life.*

Phase 3: Live

Guiding Question: How do I express my purpose through everyday choices?

Purpose becomes meaningful only when it influences behavior.

This phase focuses on embodiment.

Individuals translate their Purpose Compass into everyday decisions, habits, relationships, commitments, and actions. The emphasis is not on dramatic life changes but on consistent choices that align behavior with values and intentions.

One of the central insights emerging from this research is that purpose is not sustained through reflection alone. Individuals frequently gain greater clarity through engagement, experimentation, contribution, and lived experience.

Purpose is therefore not merely discovered. It is also constructed.

The outcome of this phase is intentional action and increased congruence between identity, values, and behavior.

Phase 4: Reflect

Guiding Question: Is my life aligned with what matters most?

Reflection transforms experience into learning.

Individuals periodically evaluate whether their actions, priorities, and commitments remain aligned with their Purpose Compass.

This phase encourages awareness without judgment. The goal is not perfection but *alignment*.

Reflection allows individuals to recognize:

- what is working
- what feels meaningful
- what requires adjustment
- what no longer reflects who they are becoming

The outcome of this phase is recalibration and renewed intentionality.

Phase 5: Evolve

Guiding Question: What is changing?

Purpose is not static.

Research increasingly suggests that purpose develops throughout the lifespan in relationship to identity, personal growth, changing roles, and life transitions.

This phase recognizes that purpose must remain responsive to life itself.

As individuals grow, their priorities, responsibilities, interests, and opportunities evolve. Consequently, the expression of purpose may also evolve.

The goal of this phase is not to abandon purpose but to continually renew it.

The outcome is growth, adaptation, and the capacity to navigate life's transitions with greater meaning and intention.

The Role of Source Code Meditation

SCM functions as an activation layer that supports the entire process.

Through Higher Brain activation, individuals may gain increased access to self-awareness, emotional regulation, perspective-taking, cognitive flexibility, and intentional decision-making. These capacities support each phase of the model by facilitating deeper reflection, greater clarity, and more conscious action.

Within this framework, SCM serves as a catalyst that enhances the process of discovering, embodying, and evolving purpose.

The Contribution of Ikigai

Ikigai contributes a deeper understanding of meaning, fulfillment, contribution, belonging, and purpose in everyday life.

Traditional Japanese understandings of Ikigai emphasize that purpose is not merely something that is found but something that is lived through relationships, contribution, daily engagement, and appreciation of ordinary life.

Within the proposed model, Ikigai informs the understanding of purpose as a lived practice rather than a singular achievement.

Living Purpose

The central insight emerging from this research is that *purpose is most valuable when it informs how life is lived.*

Purpose is not the destination.

Purpose is the compass.

When individuals are clear about what matters most, they are better equipped to make conscious choices, align their actions with their values, navigate challenges with resilience, and create lives that feel meaningful and fulfilling.

The ultimate goal of this model is therefore not simply to help individuals find purpose. Its goal is to help individuals **live purposefully.**

Through an ongoing cycle of discovering, designing, living, reflecting, and evolving, individuals can continually realign their lives with who they are, what they value, and what matters most.

The architecture of this process may be universal, but its expression is deeply personal. Each individual will create a unique life shaped by their own values, interests, relationships, aspirations, and circumstances. The purpose of the model is therefore not to prescribe a particular way of living, but to provide a practical framework through which individuals can consciously create lives that feel meaningful, aligned, and fulfilling.

In this sense, the ultimate objective of the model is not simply to help people find purpose. Its objective is to *help people use purpose as a compass for conscious living*.

My Journey

A Description of My Experience: The Beginning

I chose to delve into the subject of life purpose, because I have always wanted to help people live a more conscious life—one in which they intentionally create the life they desire, one that brings a sense of fulfillment.

The studies I undertook in *Source Code Alchemy* and *Higher Brain Living* provided me with a methodology that allows me—both personally and with my clients—to analyze the various dimensions of life and align them with my “higher self,” which represents my true essence. By doing this, I can infuse greater meaning into the activities I perform on a daily basis.

When I first heard about the concept of *Ikigai*, I found it fascinating to learn that—particularly in Japan—people grow up with the idea of permeating everything they do in life with meaning, viewing it as an integral part of their culture.

My initial introduction to this concept came through a Western interpretation—one that delineates specific “spheres” to consider when seeking to discover one’s *Ikigai*. It was this introduction that sparked my interest in exploring the subject further, and from an Eastern perspective.

Paradoxically, now that I have begun studying this subject, I find myself at a point in life where I struggle to see much meaning in my days; I haven’t felt particularly inspired or focused. Nevertheless, I started researching *Ikigai* and discovered that it possesses many applications and

characteristics—one of which is that it is temporary. Therefore, I hope that writing this thesis will become my *Ikigai* and, in the process, help me rediscover my own sense of purpose in life.

Earlier this year, I attended a Source Code Meditation retreat, where we practiced SCM and the “9 Summits of Transformation.” There, I created my “Authentic Self Mantra”—a paragraph describing my essence and purpose—through which I was reminded that helping people find their own purpose and live a meaningful life is what I am passionate about and what gives *me* a sense of purpose. Thanks to this realization, I can infuse this thesis with new meaning, remembering that the objective behind writing it is to develop a comprehensive method that enables people to identify their own purpose.

People sometimes believe that finding one’s purpose must be some grand, transformative mission; yet, part of what I have discovered through *Ikigai* is that it is, in reality, something simple—something that should guide our daily decisions and actions.

I also came across a course offered by the University of Michigan titled: “Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life: Living for What Matters Most.” This course has helped me to remember the importance of living with purpose—a subject that has long captured my interest and which I am now revisiting. I do so with the understanding that this is my way of contributing to a better world—something I had lost sight of amidst life’s distractions and stresses. I actually caught myself attempting to write a thesis merely “to fulfill a requirement,” rather than with the intention of contributing something truly meaningful to society. This current process is helping me reconnect with that original intent.

Furthermore, this experience helps me recognize that simply discovering your purpose, *ikigai*, or “Authentic Self Mantra” once in a lifetime does not automatically guarantee a

“meaningful life,” nor does it mean that making decisions will always be easy. In reality, it is a continuous process. Identifying that purpose is just as important as pausing every so often to reflect: Is it still relevant? Are my actions and activities aligned with it? Or is it necessary to recalibrate my course—and, in doing so, remind myself *why* I am doing what I do? For that very realization helps one overcome challenges and prioritize one’s time and activities—or, as my course puts it, helps one in “living for what matters most.”

Personal Reflection: Purpose Across the Stages of Life

My mother is aging, and this year the decline in her health has been rapid. She is living with dementia and, beyond that, with a deep sense of loneliness. Watching this unfold has been both painful and illuminating.

Her life’s purpose, for many years, was centered around caring for us—her daughters. She devoted herself fully to that role, and she did so with love, presence, and commitment. However, once my sisters and I grew up and our lives naturally led us in different directions, she was left without a clear sense of how to update or redirect that purpose. In many ways, the role that had once given her identity and meaning was no longer available in the same way.

Through the lens of Source Code Meditation (SCM), this experience has helped me recognize the difference between a role-based identity and a Transcendent Identity. When purpose is rooted primarily in external roles, it can become fragile—dependent on circumstances that inevitably change. When those roles dissolve or shift, the sense of meaning can diminish with them.

Witnessing my mother's experience has led me to reflect deeply on the importance of cultivating a purpose that is not only meaningful, but also transcendent and adaptable—one that is not limited to a specific role but emerges from a deeper sense of being.

In SCM, the Transcendent Identity is not defined by what we do, but by who we are at a deeper level—beyond time, roles, and changing life conditions. From this perspective, purpose is not something we lose; rather, it is something we can continually access and express in new ways as our life evolves.

This understanding resonates with the concept of *Ikigai*, which emphasizes that purpose does not need to be grand or fixed. The concept of *Ikigai* offers a gentle yet powerful perspective. It reminds us that purpose can be found in the small, everyday elements that give meaning to our lives. At one stage, this may look like caring for a family; at another, it may be tending to a garden, nurturing relationships, building a business, or contributing to a community. In my current stage of life, it is expressed through the process of writing this thesis—deepening my own understanding of purpose while supporting others in discovering theirs.

This experience has made it clear to me that purpose is not something we define once and then hold onto indefinitely. It is not a static answer to a set of questions. Instead, it is a living process—one that must be continually renewed and redefined as we grow and as our circumstances shift.

As our identity evolves, so do our skills, interests, relationships, and opportunities for contribution. If our purpose does not evolve alongside us, there is a risk of becoming disconnected from meaning. This is why it is essential to revisit and rearticulate our purpose over time. Within

the SCM framework, this ongoing renewal can be understood as a reflection of vertical development—the expansion of our capacity to perceive, integrate, and express meaning from higher levels of awareness. If our sense of purpose remains attached to a previous identity or stage of life, there is a risk of disconnection or incoherence. However, when purpose is rooted in a deeper, more expansive identity, it can continually take new forms, adapting to the conditions of each stage of life.

Purpose, then, becomes a dynamic relationship between who we are becoming and how we choose to engage with the world. For this reason, cultivating purpose requires intentional pauses—moments in which we step back and reflect on what we are doing, where we are going, and—perhaps most importantly—why we are doing it. These moments of reflection allow us to realign with what truly matters and to consciously shape the next expression of our purpose. Practicing SCM has allowed me the sense of greater clarity, coherence, and alignment with my authentic self by creating the right “conditions” internally (mind) and externally (body).

Personal Reflection on a Family Trip: Living Purpose

During spring break, we rented a cabin in Blueridge and invited my niece, nephew and my daughter’s best friend. This trip became more than a break from routine—it became a living expression of what I have been studying, reflecting on, and slowly embodying through this journey.

As I continue to explore the concept of purpose through this thesis, I have come to understand that purpose is not only something to be defined or analyzed, but something to be lived—often in simple, intentional moments. During our time in the mountains, I found myself creating spaces for connection almost naturally, without overthinking it. What surprised me was

realizing that these moments were not random; they were aligned with something deeper within me.

One of the most meaningful experiences occurred during a scavenger hunt I created for my children and their friends. What began as a playful activity became a moment of genuine connection. In one of the challenges, I asked them to say something kind about each other—not about how they look but about their being. They took it seriously. They paused, reflected, and spoke with sincerity. In that moment, I witnessed something beautiful: they saw each other, they expressed appreciation, and they connected in a way that felt real and present. They even included me in that circle of appreciation, which made the moment even more meaningful.

Later, on our way back home, I invited them to share their favorite moment from the trip and something they felt grateful for. Each response was different, thoughtful, and heartfelt. Listening to them, I realized that what had stayed with them were not the plans or the destinations, but the shared experiences—the laughter, the adventure, and the time spent together.

These moments brought me back to my own guiding intention, expressed in my Soul Purpose Mantra:

“I am authentic love. I enjoy, I trust, I listen, and I connect with intention to create a better world by living with purpose. I embrace, I help, and I create experiences that connect us in love.”

Reading this mantra every day has not only shaped how I think, but how I show up. Through this trip, I became aware that I am not only reflecting on purpose—I am practicing it. The experiences I created were not accidental; they were intentional expressions of who I am becoming.

This realization has deepened my understanding of purpose as something that moves beyond theory. Purpose is not only found in major life decisions or long-term goals; it is also present in the way we design – with intention – moments, in how we listen, and in the environments we create for others to feel seen, valued, and connected. And it is perfectly aligned with the philosophy of Ikigai, about finding meaning in everyday life.

In this sense, writing this thesis has not only helped me study purpose—it has helped me recognize it in my own life. It has made visible the ways in which purpose can be embodied, not as an abstract concept, but as a lived, relational experience.

Personal Reflection: A Purpose That Was Always There

As I continued developing this thesis, I began to recognize a pattern in my own life that I had not fully seen before. The intention behind this work—to help others live with greater awareness, meaning, and purpose—was not something new. It had been present in different forms throughout my journey, even when I was not consciously naming it as such.

In 2017, I created and published a “conscious planner” designed to help people live with intention and plenitude. At the time, I did not fully understand the depth of what I was creating. I knew I wanted to help others pause, reflect, and make more conscious choices about their lives, but I framed it more as a practical tool than as part of a broader methodology.

The idea for the planner emerged after I was invited to give a talk on Marie Kondo’s philosophy (2014). What resonated deeply with me was not the act of organizing a physical space, but the underlying principle: to intentionally choose what we allow into our lives based on what “sparks joy” and serves a purpose. I saw that this concept could extend far beyond the home—to

relationships, activities, and life decisions. It became clear to me that living with intention meant continually choosing what aligns with our values and letting go of what does not.

However, at that stage, I did not fully step into that vision. The planner was created, published, and shared within my close circle, but it was not expanded or fully developed. I moved on to other paths, including coaching and later my involvement with Higher Brain Living and Source Code Meditation. Each of these experiences deepened my understanding of human potential, awareness, and transformation.

What I now see, in retrospect, is that these were not disconnected chapters, but expressions of the same underlying purpose. **The desire to help others live more consciously, find meaning, and create a life aligned with who they truly are** has been a consistent thread throughout my life.

At the same time, this journey has not been linear. There have been moments—like the beginning of this thesis—when I felt disconnected from that sense of purpose. I found myself approaching this work as a requirement to complete, rather than as a meaningful contribution. This realization was important, as it revealed something essential: understanding purpose does not mean we are always connected to it.

Purpose, as I am discovering through both my research and my own experience, is not something we define once and carry effortlessly forever. It requires continuous awareness, reflection, and realignment. It can become obscured by stress, distraction, or the demands of daily life, and it must be consciously revisited.

Paradoxically, it has been through the process of writing this thesis that I have reconnected with my own sense of purpose. What initially felt like an academic obligation has become a space for integration—bringing together my past experiences, my current studies, and my intention to create something meaningful for others.

This realization has shifted my perspective. Rather than viewing this thesis as an end in itself, I now see it as part of a larger process—one that not only explores purpose conceptually but also embodies it in practice. It reflects not only what I have learned, but how I am learning to live with greater intention, clarity, and alignment.

Discovering the Real Inquiry

One of the most unexpected parts of this research was discovering that I was not entirely clear about my own inquiry when I began. While I knew I wanted to explore Source Code Meditation and Ikigai, two of my favorite topics, I initially approached the project as a comparison between the two frameworks. As the research progressed, however, I found myself repeatedly asking why I felt compelled to include both perspectives in the first place.

A significant moment of clarity came during a presentation I gave to my peers as part of an Epoch 6 project in the membership of PA (a continuation of the Master's program). As I shared my ideas and listened to their questions and reflections, I realized that I had been approaching the thesis from the wrong angle. I was focused on comparing SCM and Ikigai, when the real question was not how they differed, but why I felt they both belonged in the conversation.

The feedback I received helped me see that Ikigai was never intended to be an alternative to SCM, nor was the purpose of this thesis to determine which framework was better. Instead,

Ikigai offered a complementary perspective that highlighted different aspects of purpose and meaningful living. Once I recognized that, everything became clearer. The focus of the thesis shifted from comparison to integration, and the project became much more aligned with what I was genuinely trying to understand.

That realization also helped me recognize something deeper. My interest was never limited to SCM or Ikigai. Both became lenses through which I could explore a question that has accompanied me throughout much of my life: How do people live consciously, intentionally, meaningfully, and purposefully?

Ultimately, this thesis represents an attempt to bring together the insights that emerged from these experiences into a practical model that can help individuals discover, clarify, embody, and sustain purpose throughout life. In this sense, SCM and Ikigai are not the destination of the research. They are two of the many paths that helped illuminate a larger question about what it means to live a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Conclusions

This thesis began with a seemingly simple question: *How do human beings discover and live their purpose?* What initially appeared to be a comparative exploration of Source Code Meditation (SCM) and Ikigai gradually evolved into a broader inquiry into the nature of purpose itself and its role in human flourishing.

The literature reviewed throughout this study demonstrates that purpose is far more than an abstract philosophical concept. Research consistently associates purpose with greater resilience, lower levels of anxiety and depression, healthier behaviors, improved decision-making, enhanced

physical health, and increased well-being. Purpose appears to function as a central organizing principle that helps individuals interpret experiences, navigate challenges, and create coherence across different dimensions of life. These findings support the view that purpose is not merely desirable but may be one of the most important contributors to human flourishing and long-term well-being (Boreham & Schutte, 2023; Fredrickson et al., 2013). This perspective is also consistent with contemporary flourishing research, which identifies meaning and purpose as central dimensions of a flourishing life.

The comparative analysis revealed that Source Code Meditation and Ikigai make distinct yet complementary contributions to the process of purpose development. SCM provides a comprehensive developmental framework that addresses awakening, consciousness development, identity clarification, embodiment, and evolution. Through Higher Brain activation, Integral Metatheory, and the 9 Summits of Transformation, SCM creates the physiological, neurological, and developmental conditions that support self-awareness, personal transformation, and purposeful action. In contrast, Ikigai contributes a rich understanding of how purpose is experienced and sustained through everyday life. Rather than focusing primarily on transformation, Ikigai emphasizes meaning, contribution, belonging, engagement, and fulfillment within ordinary human experience.

Rather than demonstrating that one framework is superior to the other, my findings suggest that they illuminate different dimensions of the same phenomenon. Together, they offer a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals discover, embody, and sustain purpose throughout life.

One of the most significant outcomes of this research to me, was the development of a conceptual model proposing that purpose serves as a compass for conscious living. The model emerged through the integration of scholarly literature, comparative analysis, and heuristic reflection on lived experience. The “Compass for Conscious Living” model proposes that purpose is not simply discovered through reflection but is constructed through action, revealed through experience, embodied through aligned behavior, and sustained through continuous reflection and development. The process of Discover, Design, Live, Reflect, and Evolve offers a practical architecture through which individuals can intentionally create meaningful lives while remaining responsive to changing circumstances and developmental growth.

Throughout the process of writing this thesis, I realized that my interest in purpose did not begin with this project. Looking back, many of the experiences, studies, programs, and projects that have shaped my life—including coaching, personal development work, the creation of a planner designed to help people live intentionally, my studies in Higher Brain Living and Source Code Meditation, and my exploration of meaning and well-being—were all expressions of the same underlying question: How can people live more consciously, intentionally, meaningfully, and purposefully?

What initially appeared to be different approaches gradually revealed themselves as interconnected parts of a larger inquiry. In many ways, this thesis did not create that question; it helped me recognize it. The process of research became a process of discovery, not only about purpose itself but also about the deeper purpose behind much of my own work.

This realization also led to an important insight regarding contemporary approaches to well-being and self-improvement. Modern culture often encourages individuals to measure,

optimize, track, and improve every aspect of life. While many of these tools can be valuable, they can also create the illusion that a meaningful life is something to be constantly measured and perfected. After this research, I am suggesting a different possibility. *Human flourishing may be less about endless optimization and more about alignment.* A meaningful life is not necessarily the result of achieving perfect balance, maximizing productivity, or continuously improving every metric. Instead, it emerges when individuals live in alignment with what matters most to them, express their values through their actions, cultivate meaningful relationships, contribute beyond themselves, and engage consciously with the life they are creating. In this sense, the goal is not endless self-improvement; the goal is to live the life one has intentionally created.

Through this research, I came to see that purpose is not a destination but an ongoing developmental process. Purpose evolves as individuals evolve. It must be revisited, clarified, embodied, and renewed throughout the different stages and transitions of life. The challenge is not simply discovering purpose once, but remaining consciously connected with it over time.

If there is one central insight that emerges from this work, it is that *purpose matters because it helps us remember what is essential.* It provides direction in times of uncertainty, resilience in times of adversity, and meaning in the midst of the ordinary moments of life. More importantly, purpose invites individuals to participate consciously in their own development and contributions to the world.

Another important insight that emerged through this research is that much of the existing literature on purpose focuses on helping people discover or define their purpose. While this is valuable, my experience, the literature reviewed, and the comparative analysis of SCM and Ikigai

suggest that discovering purpose is only the beginning. The greater challenge is learning how to continue living it.

For this reason, the model proposed in this thesis is not designed simply to help individuals find their purpose, but to support an ongoing process of living, reflecting on, and evolving that purpose over time. In this sense, purpose is not a one-time discovery, but a lifelong journey.

The completion of this thesis does not represent the end of this inquiry. On the contrary, it marks the beginning of a new phase of exploration. The question that guided this research remains as relevant as ever: How can we help people live with greater awareness, intention, meaning, and purpose?

This thesis does not offer a final answer. Instead, it offers a practical framework, a starting point for further exploration, and an invitation to continue the conversation. It also inspired in me a desire to further develop and refine this model so it can become an accessible tool for helping others create lives that feel meaningful, aligned, and fulfilling.

If there is one final message that emerges from this work, it is this:

Purpose serves as a compass for conscious living, guiding us through a lifelong process of awakening, alignment, and contribution.

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