



It's spring! My favorite part about spring is the warmer weather, listening to all the birds that have come back after winter and watching for flowers to pop up out of the ground. What are your favorite things to do during spring? Around here, we love to pick flowers. Have you ever picked flowers in your yard? What do you do with them after you've picked them? My girls love to give the flowers as a surprise to me or someone else in our family which makes us all feel so special. Have you ever done something to make someone feel special and loved? It's always so wonderful to make someone smile and I'll bet you enjoy it when someone does something special for you!

Of course, sometimes we have to do things that we may not enjoy very much. Have you ever had a time when you really didn't want to do something? Maybe pick up your toys or go to the doctor? Well, if you have, you are not alone! It can be really hard to do things that we may not enjoy. Do you know any tricks that might make it a little bit easier to do something you don't like? Well, I have a suggestion and it's really easy to do. All you have to do is find a purpose. Purpose is the reason why you do something. For instance, I'll guess that your mom or dad (or both) go to work every day. Somedays they might not want to go, but they have a purpose for going to work. What do you think their reason for going to work is? Now, think about why it is important for you to pick up your things or why we go to the doctor. If you can come up with a really good reason, then maybe next time you have to pick up your toys, go see the doctor or do something you're not too excited about, you can use your purpose as a way to help you.

Have a great April and I hope you are able to visit with us for the next Zoom get-together - we'll be making cookies together! It will be Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. I will send the recipe and list of items you will need in a couple weeks, so make sure your parents know to be on the lookout!

## A FEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT PASSION AND PURPOSE

### **Lola Dutch – Written and illustrated by Kenneth Wright and Sarah Jane Wright**

Meet Lola Dutch, a delightfully creative girl who is bursting with grand ideas. From the best ways to serve breakfast – an elegant feast! – to the ideal sleeping spot – a majestic blanket fort, of course! – Lola is inspired all day long. Her dear companion Bear sometimes says she is just too much, but Lola is rich with imagination and originality, which even Bear will agree is AMAZING. The unstoppable Lola Dutch is about to show you how to make every day grand and full of fun. You'll love her so much! Inspired by their own four gorgeously feisty children, Sarah Jane and Kenneth Wright are thrilled to introduce the unstoppable Lola Dutch and her fresh, fun, commercial, character-driven series.

### **The Reptile Club – written by Maureen Fergus and illustrated by Elina Ellis**

There are lots of clubs for Rory to join at his new school, but none seem quite right for him. So when his parents suggest he start his own club about something he loves, Rory knows exactly what it will be: a Reptile Club! He's positive that there are other kids out there who share his passion. He sets up his first meeting and then waits and waits for students to show up. Just as he is about to give up, Rory hears whispering in the hallway and hurries over to see who it is. To his astonishment, it's not his schoolmates who have arrived to attend the first meeting, but a crocodile, an anaconda and a gecko!

### **Wangari's Tree of Peace – Written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter**

A paperback picture book based on the true story of Wangari Maathai, an environmental and political activist in Kenya and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. As a young girl growing up in Kenya, Wangari was surrounded by trees. But years later when she returns home, she is shocked to see whole forests being cut down, and she knows that soon all the trees will be destroyed. So Wangari decides to do something—and starts by planting nine seedlings in her own backyard. And as they grow, so do her plans . . . This true story of Wangari Maathai, environmentalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of how one woman's passion, vision, and determination inspired great change. Includes an author's note.

### **Charlie Takes His Shot – written by Nancy Churnin and illustrate by John Joven**

Charlie Sifford loved golf, but in the 1930's only white people were allowed to play in the Professional Golf Association. Sifford had won plenty of black tournaments, but he was determined to break the color barrier in the PGA. In 1960 he did, only to face discrimination from hotels that wouldn't rent him rooms and clubs that wouldn't let him use the same locker as the white players. But Sifford kept playing, becoming the first black golfer to win a PGA tournament and eventually ranking among the greats in golf.

### **Jasmine Toguchi, Drummer Girl – Written by Debbi Michiko Florence and illustrated by Elizabet Vukovic and Debbi Michiko Florence**

It's talent show time at school, and eight-year-old Jasmine Toguchi is excited to show her stuff. But as she thinks about her strengths—tree-climbing, mochi making, collage—none of them feel quite right to perform on-stage. Jasmine's friends already have a talent: Tommy yo-yo's, Daisy dances, and Linnie plays piano. Plus, Maggie Milsap (aka Miss Perfect) is saying she'll have the best talent.

When Jasmine's mom introduces her to the taiko, a traditional Japanese drum, Jasmine finally finds an activity that feels just right. But will she be good enough at taiko in time to beat Maggie Milsap? Join Jasmine as she discovers her talent—and the difference between being the best and trying your best.



Why hello again! I hope you are enjoying this warmer weather – I sure know I am! This month the theme is **PASSION**. With your first thought, how do you think passion makes someone feel? Passion is an emotion - a really strong emotion. It is so powerful that sometimes it can take over and cause us to forget we have a brain! Trust me, been there, done that. However, it can be used for good – people that are really passionate about something are super motivated and have been known to devote their entire lives to a certain passion. Can you think of anyone you know – famous or not, who is or was driven by their passion? Is there anything in your life that you are passionate about? Of course, many of us have a passion for something that isn't all-consuming and is more of a love for something. What do you enjoy doing that might make you forget what time it is, or you love it so much that you forget to eat? I love to read and until I became a mom, would stay up all night reading. Can't put a good book down! Maybe you have a passion for a sport, art, music or video-games?

Passion can be a great motivator (meaning it makes you want to do something), but sometimes, it can feel overwhelming or might just fade away. What happens when you know you need to do something, but have no passion or motivation to do an activity? Well, that's where purpose can come in. Purpose is probably more important than passion and is the **why** behind what you do. For instance, you might not be passionate about school, but if you know why you go to school and why it matters, then you can use purpose as a way to motivate you. Purpose can also encourage us to be part of and give back to those in our community. Our purpose is to help others. Purpose may not be as exciting as passion, but it can make many instances in your life a little bit easier to handle. Is there anything in your daily life that has a purpose, but you struggle with? For me, I really dislike picking up dog poop (there's so much of it with THREE dogs), but I know that there is a purpose behind cleaning it up. I know that chemicals from it can end up in our drainage systems and even drinking water, it can cause disease in others and their pets, and basically it's for the good of everyone if I just clean it up. Nobody likes poo on their shoes. Purpose lasts a lifetime and the more purpose in life you can come up with, the more fulfilling your life will feel. To put this into practice, try to think of something you really don't enjoy doing. Now, come up with a purpose for this task. See if maybe next time, it's a little easier to get through knowing there is a purpose for it. If you are interested in more about purpose and passion, I have lots of resources listed on the UUCE website – be sure to check them out! I also hope you are all able to come to our April Zoom get-together – we'll be baking together! Our meet-up will be Sunday, April 25 at 2pm. I look forward to seeing you!

## 14 Words: Get to know yourself

Have everyone sit at the table with some paper and a pencil. Think of as many words as you can to describe yourself.

Now circle 14 of the words.

Now write or think of a short sentence for each word that describes why you chose it. Share with your family and see what they came up with! This is a great way to find out what is important to you.

i.e. Curious – I love to try new things.  
Helpful – I love to help others.

## BUILDING YOUR HOUSE

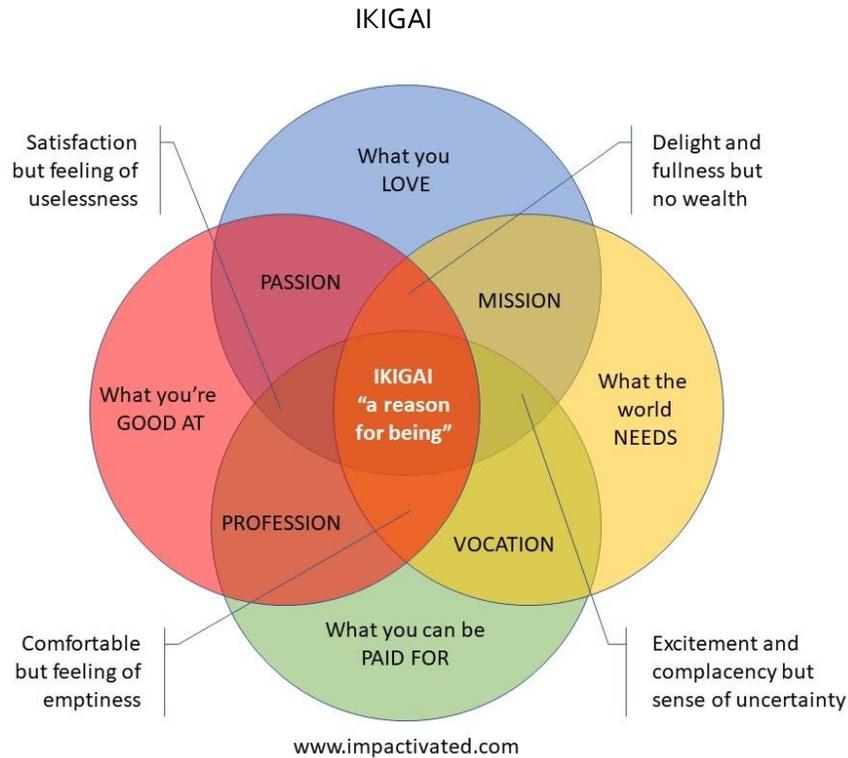
An elderly carpenter was ready to leave the business. He told his employer of his plans to retire and spend more time with his wife and family. He would miss the paycheck, but they could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his favorite worker go & asked if he would build just one more house, as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but over time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He did not put much effort into his workmanship and used poor quality materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, his employer came to inspect the house. Then he handed the front-door key to the carpenter and said, “This is your house... my gift to you.”

The carpenter was shocked and ashamed. If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then, with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we would do it much differently. However, you cannot go back. You are the carpenter, and every day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Someone once said, “Life is a do-it-yourself project.” Your attitude, and the choices you make today, help build the “house” you will live in tomorrow so be sure to build wisely.



Ikigai (生き甲斐) - According to Japanese culture, we all have an ikigai, or a 'reason for being'. As you can see from the diagram, Ikigai is made up of 4 different themes. What you're good at, what you can get paid for, what the world needs and what you love. The aim is to define how you can best contribute to the world, the things you're good at and what you like to do.

Questions to help define yourself:

What is your personality like? Do you make friends easily or enjoy being on your own?

With what activities does your time fly? What is something you could spend hours doing? Remember, this is an activity in which you don't think about anything else while doing.

What do you find easy to do? Is there anything which you personally find easy that others seem to struggle with? Some people enjoy organizing, others are great with people, some enjoy being told they can't do something, they see this as a challenge.