

The Puppy Who Followed the Spark

Inspired by Ken Mogi
Written by Sundeep Parmar



LITTLE KEYS
to the Universe



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DEDICATED TO

Ria & Mia



Big Lessons. Little Stories.



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Kibo lived at the edge of the windy meadow where the grass danced and the sky always seemed to hum a gentle tune. He was a small shiba inu puppy with big ears, a round nose, and paws that loved to wander. But lately, Kibo didn't feel like wandering. He watched the squirrels build towers of acorns. He watched the bees buzz from flower to flower. He watched the birds carry twigs to perfect nests high in the trees.



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Everyone seemed to know what they were meant to do. Everyone, except him. Why don't I have a thing? Kibo sighed, watching his reflection in a puddle. Shouldn't I be good at something by now? He tried chasing butterflies but got bored. He tried digging holes but forgot where he buried things. He even tried howling like the wolves. But his voice cracked into squeaky barks. His tail drooped.



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Maybe I don't have a purpose, he mumbled, curling up under a bush. And that's when he saw her. A tall, white crane, standing perfectly still in the shallows of the stream nearby. Her feathers shimmered like moonlight and her eyes held something ancient and kind. Why are you hiding? She asked gently. Kibo's ears perked. I'm not hiding. I'm thinking. Ah, the crane nodded.



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That's what I thought. Thinking often means searching. Kibo blinked. How did you know I was searching? The crane tilted her head. Because I've searched too. She stepped closer and looked down at the little puppy. You don't have to know your purpose all at once, she said. Sometimes you just need to follow the spark. Spark? Kibo asked. What spark? The crane smiled. The tiny flicker inside you when something feels fun.



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Or exciting. Or kind of magical. That's where ikigai begins. Kibo tilted his head. But what if I can't feel a spark? The crane, still and soft, dipped her beak toward the water and drew a gentle ripple with her wing. Then, begin with curiosity, she said. That's how all sparks are born. She looked across the windy meadow, where the grass waved like a sea and little trails disappeared into fog and flowers.



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I want to give you something. From under her wing she pulled a small bundle of dried reeds, tied together with a red thread. Inside was a map. But not the kind with roads or towns. This map showed feelings. A puddle with a smile beside it. A swirl of wind next to a drawing of music notes. A paw print pressed near a star. What is this?



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Kibo whispered. It's a map of sparks, said the crane. Each place on it holds a small joy. You may not know what your ikigai is yet, little one. But if you follow the spark, your path will reveal itself. She gave a tiny bow and stretched her wings. Go where the spark flickers, Kibo, even if it's just for a moment. And with that she rose into the air. Graceful. Glowing.



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Gone. So Kibo began his journey. First, he followed the trail of wind chimes hidden among the tall reeds. Each chimer rang a different note, and without meaning to, Kibo started to bounce with the rhythm. He laughed. This... is... fun! He marked it on his map. Then he found a spot where puddles made mirror-like pools. He dipped his paw in one and watched the ripples move like music.



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Another spark. Later, he stumbled upon a patch of sun-warmed stones. As he lay down, a family of field mice scurried by. One looked up and said, Your warmth scared away the hawk. You saved us! Kibo blinked. I did? He marked it down. A spark of helping. Days passed. Kibo kept moving. Sometimes he felt silly. Sometimes he felt lost again. But more and more, he felt light.



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One night, under a violet sky, Kibo sat with his map. It was now full of tiny marks. Paw prints. Stars. Songs. Doodles. And that's when he heard a soft voice behind him. Your spark's been busy. The crane had returned. Kibo's tail wagged. I don't know if I found my purpose yet, he said. But I don't feel lost anymore. The crane nodded. That is ikigai, Kibo.



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Not a finish line. A feeling. A path of small joys. Leading you home. Ken Mogi, a Japanese neuroscientist and writer, believes that ikigai, your reason for being, isn't something you have to figure out all at once. It can begin with tiny joys. A warm cup of tea. A kind word. A curious question. He teaches that we can all live more happily by noticing what lights us up, even in the smallest ways.



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So if you ever feel unsure of what you're meant to do, try following the spark. It might just show you the way.



THE LITTLE KEY

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You don't need a big plan. Just follow what
makes you happy.



FOLLOW THE SPARK

A little puppy sets off to follow his spark — and learns that his purpose is a path of small joys leading him home. A warm bedtime story about finding your spark.

For kids searching for 'their thing' — a reminder to follow what makes them happy.

Big Lessons. Little Stories.

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