

Have a Vision

Without a clear vision, how are we to navigate through life? I find that when I contemplate the way I interact with the world, especially as a creative spirit with a camera in hand, I see with clear and sharp visual acuity. I possess a clairvoyance that predicts the patterns of both human behavior and nature. When you recognize these patterns, the mundane in life becomes your canvas, and the world forever opens up for exploration. You return to a childlike state and remain an eternal amateur or curious explorer.

School

I've never viewed school as a productive place. In high school, I often found myself skipping classes, escaping through the back door, and exploring the neighborhoods around town. I dislike being confined in a box and certainly detest following orders. Perhaps I've always been one to venture into the woods, the unknown, and figure things out for myself without needing guidance.

Perception of Reality

Ultimately, it's our perception of reality and our direct experiences that form our reality as we know it. Your unique and individual thoughts, actions, and words define you. I believe that the more we come under the influence of others and not turn inward to ourselves, the harder it is for us to form our own worldviews or paradigms. I say, let the chips fall where they may. Go ahead into the chaos and form your own opinions about the world.

Misfit

I think I was always a misfit. I never really fit in with any crowds or groups. My fondness for skateboarding, a sport you can engage in alone, grew because it was an individual activity. Like basketball, where all you need is a ball and a hoop, I often shot hoops by myself or skateboarded around the neighborhood, either alone or with my brother. We would build our own skate parks and find our own ways to play. Skateboarding, like street photography, offers a creative outlet—it's both a physical pleasure and a visual game. The street becomes your canvas, displaying your technical skills like a dance.

Be You

Let's be ourselves to the fullest. Don't worry about what others think and avoid speaking ill of people. Let's turn inward and really focus on our personal growth. It seems we're not encouraged to be bright or standout individuals anymore. We're often told to conform and not think outside the box. When I consider myself, I see an adventurer. I need stimulus, movement, and the great outdoors to thrive. I prefer to speak my mind, not filtering or censoring my thoughts. Perhaps speaking the truth is the wise path forward—to seek and speak the truth is the only way to find it.

I Think I Can

When I was a young boy, my godmother would read me the Thomas the Tank Engine books. The one I remember most is "I think I can." Thomas had to chug his way up the mountain, telling himself he could do it over and over. Like practicing street photography, lifting weights, or engaging in any endeavor, it's important to believe in oneself. When you believe in yourself and invest your mind, body, and soul into something, you become capable of achieving it. Hold beliefs, convictions, and strive to be like Thomas, chugging up the mountain, moving closer to your goals.

My Superpower

Street photography is my superpower. When I wield the camera, I can cut through the noise. It's as though I have a clear signal between the world and me when operating my camera. Everything clicks into place. It becomes a superpower because I can find myself in a state of bliss, regardless of the time of day. I will always find a way to play the same game every day. This superpower lies in my ability to walk the same street every day and still find beauty in the mundane. The intricate details around me will forever fascinate me until the day I die. Finding beauty in life these days, I believe, is a superpower.

Zen Meditation

I enjoy using the kendama in the morning as a way to meditate. When I meditate with the kendama, I'm moving my body, bending my legs, and focusing on my hand-eye coordination as I maneuver the ball around the different cups and spike on the wooden toy. It's a skill toy that requires patience and focus on the movement of your body and the toy itself. You become one with the kendama, similar to how I operate a camera on a wrist strap. When photographing on the street, you must become one with the camera so it doesn't obstruct your process. Practicing with the kendama is a unique method I've discovered, which I believe could enhance your capabilities as a street photographer. After all, street photography is my form of meditation, where I shut all thoughts down and laser-focus on the moment itself, existing outside the passage of time, and creating beautiful art with whatever I find.

The Feeling You Get by the Water

There's something special about being near water. Whenever I move toward the Penn's Landing area or the Schuylkill River here in Philadelphia, I start to feel uplifted and joyful inside. It's as if the water is calling my name. Maybe our names are echoing through eternity across rivers, lakes, and streams worldwide. We're connecting with our ancestors or tapping into some ancient, mystical interface. The water always gives me a good feeling, and I enjoy listening to the seagulls,

breathing the fresh air from the trees, and being by a stream of water that's ever-flowing. Like our photographs, let's strive to be a stream of becoming and never stop going out there to make new photos.

Turn Off the TV

Perhaps every modern home has a television on at some point in the day. I say, turn it all off. These devices are such a distraction, pulling us into a different world that has nothing to do with reality. Reality is in the physical flesh—your family, friends, neighbors, your body, the sun, the water, the food on your plate, and the small things in life that make up an entire day. The conversations you overhear, engage in, or the people you notice across the street. The television is one of the biggest distractions in our world. When I consider television, I categorize it with computers and phones as well—they pull us out of reality and suck us into the matrix. Disconnect from it, unplug, and free yourself from the narratives, news, celebrity gossip, and Hollywood that bombard our screens.

Spiritual Warfare

If there's going to be a World War III, perhaps it has already begun. It's a spiritual war for your mind, involving distractions, smoke screens, and the content on your screens. Going forward, I only trust people in the flesh. I consider anyone online to be a bot or an NPC, artificial intelligence. Disable any comments or likes that you may receive. I would suggest not interacting with any online communities or participating in the internet in any significant capacity. Use tools like ChatGPT for research or to gain deeper understanding. Read books and go for nature walks. Turn inward to your own thoughts and share them with others. If World War III breaks out, it will be on the internet—a war in the digital front lines. Disconnect from it and become a street warrior.

Truth Seeker

Perhaps when you seek truth, you embark on the adventure of a lifetime. Similar to Jesus carrying his cross, we too carry ours. It's challenging to speak up and tell people how you feel or what you truly believe, especially when you know it might hurt them. But perhaps we must hurt others' feelings, ruffle a few feathers, and speak the truth along the way.

Return to Nature

I believe nature holds the answers to our questions about the universe. Everything feels connected when you walk through a beautiful trail surrounded by trees. Just observe the branches of the trees. Similar to the lungs in a human body, the branching of the trees looks almost identical. There are so many visual connections that reveal the divine nature of life itself.

Forget Everything You Think You Know

When you walk, go slow, and forget everything you think you know. If you're an artist making photographs, don't follow the rules you've been taught. Create your own game to play. Return to a childlike state and tinker with the world. Remain in a state of play and don't take yourself too seriously. By forgetting everything and creating anew, I believe we can make art that is truly worthwhile in the end.

Follow the Light

The sunlight is the way. As photographers, we are essentially painting with light. A simple heuristic: don't stay on the shady side of the street. Always follow the light. We are the new light chasers. Sunlight provides me with a blissful feeling. Perhaps with more sun exposure, we will charge our batteries with more power.

Stay Sober

Nowadays, it's normal to have a drink every night after work, smoke weed, play video games, or indulge in other substances. I say, stay sober. When you're sober, not only do you feel better, have good sleep, clear thoughts, and better relationships, but I believe that there are even more superpowers we can achieve when abstaining from these substances. Consider alcohol as poison and something that lowers your testosterone. Would you want to consume that?

Disease

I'm starting to think that society is suffering from a disease on a large scale. Obesity, diabetes, and vitamin deficiencies are becoming more and more apparent from my simple observations while walking around the streets. The standard American diet has been compromised by large corporations like Kellogg's and General Mills, which produce nothing but unhealthy products. It's shocking to me how Cheerios, for example, is marketed as heart-healthy on its box when it's clearly not beneficial. We're not only suffering from physical diseases, but I believe many also suffer from mental unease. Perhaps the term "dis-ease" just means to be uneasy or unwell. I believe the remedy for most of our modern diseases can be found in simple activities like going outside, getting sun exposure, walking in nature, eating animal-based proteins, and drinking water.

Elevate

When I start the day on an elevated surface, like behind the art museum here in Philadelphia, where I can see the river, the trees, and the endless horizon, I feel like I can conquer the world. We should strive to make changes in the world by first changing ourselves. Fuel yourself with courage, curiosity, and power by starting your day in an elevated place. Look out at the view and think about the endless terrain there is to explore. The world is open, and if you venture out without preconceived notions, you will be amazed by what life has to offer.

No Fear

Venture into the world without fear. Don't fear judgment, confrontation, or even death. I believe what we fear most as humans is the pain itself. When you're open to the world, fear seems to stay away, and you can navigate through chaos on a feather-light path. The more you fear, the more unease you feel, and you may not even want to step outside your door to explore. But fear not, go forward with a Spartan mindset, and carry yourself as a warrior throughout the day.

What's the End of the Game?

What is the end of this crazy video game we call life? Do we get to defeat the boss battle, will we respawn and have another shot at it? Is there a way to upgrade our character to such a degree that we become godlike? Will we be able to terraform new planets and create our own suns? What is the future of biology and the way we reproduce? Who knows... But what I do know is, treating this life like a video game is a wise decision. After all, video games are meant to be fun. So go out there, under the sun, follow the light, and simply enjoy the fruits of life!