

Go Through the Portal

In *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater on PlayStation*, your character evolves by assigning stat points, allowing you to advance with speed and agility. I always maxed out *speed* and *air* to move ahead faster. For me, this approach translates into photography as well, where speed becomes essential. I use a compact, digital camera with small JPEG files and black-and-white settings on my iPad Pro, letting me produce and move on quickly to the next shot.

Photography, like *Minecraft*, has its grind. You spend time mining for XP, searching for diamonds. In the game, you bang out stone repetitively, looking for that rare item to push you forward. We must embrace this grind, approach it with speed, and press forward to reach the next level.

They say your first 10,000 photographs are your worst. *Let's get them out of the way*. Let's advance in our photographic journey by moving with speed and using tools that help us keep up with our curiosity.

The Adventure and the Boss Fight

In *Minecraft*, the true thrill is the adventure—descending into the Nether, battling through dungeons, and facing the Ender Dragon. The outcome isn't what truly matters, though. What if we never reach the final victory? What if we never get the wings? The fun lies in the journey, in descending through the portal and emerging somewhere new.

Photography should be the same way—a continuous journey, where joy comes from the process itself, detached from the results. Embrace every step, the ups and downs, and enjoy the adventure.

The Telos of Photography

The term *telos* comes from Ancient Greek (τέλος), meaning "end," "purpose," or "goal." Aristotle used it to describe the inherent purpose of something. For me, the telos of photography is simple: *fun*. I don't worry about results or perfect shots. Instead, I use photography to increase my curiosity and courage, letting it be my reason to get out of bed and explore like a child.

Be a big kid with a camera. Look at life openly and honestly, like it's the first time you're seeing it.

Motivation in Movement

We are built to move. For me, motivation isn't some elusive force—it's in the action itself. The more you walk, the more you see, and the more you see, the more you'll find to photograph. *Motivation is in your legs.*

Photography requires time—time to explore, time to observe, time to immerse. I believe we should shoot more and think less. *Put your sword to the grindstone*, as if you're in *Skyrim*, sharpening your blade for the next battle. There's joy in trying again, and again, despite failure.

Failure is inevitable. I think we have to get used to it in photography. If I told you that 99% of your photos would miss the mark, would you still pick up the camera? If the answer is yes, then go out there, shoot from the heart, and have fun.

POV: Starting the Day

"What's popping, people? It's Dante here, and do you hear those birds? I'm starting my morning in the footsteps of Rocky, climbing the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, watching the moon linger over the flag."

I find the little things—the sounds, the sights, the details of each day—inspire me to see life freshly. This city, its rhythm, its sounds—it's my daily portal, a pathway to a new adventure every time I pick up my camera. Just like a portal in *Minecraft*, every puddle, every shadow, and every scene feels like it can lead to something new, something unexpected.

Puddles as Portals

A puddle might seem like a cliché to photograph, but I see it differently. *It's a portal to another world.* In *Minecraft*, you drop into the Nether to conquer challenges, only to emerge somewhere else, somewhere transformed. For me, every day with my camera is like stepping through that portal, facing new challenges, discovering new perspectives, and advancing on my journey.

Embracing the Process

There's a grind in the journey, a necessary repetition. Think of Rocky, putting in the work, step by step, punch by punch. Every time he trains, he's moving closer to his goal. As photographers, we're in the same grind, building our skills and pushing through thousands of shots to uncover those rare gems.

"Shoot More, Ask Questions Later"

For me, the magic in photography comes from shooting without hesitation. I capture anything interesting that crosses my path. It's about *doing first*, then reflecting. *Stop thinking and just do.* The goal is to keep moving forward, pressing the shutter more, following that curiosity wherever it leads.

Journey Over Destination

Maybe, as artists and photographers, we should worry less about where we're headed. The results—the photos, the galleries, the praise—aren't the point. *The journey is the goal.* Whether we ever "defeat the dragon" doesn't matter as much as living each step of the adventure.

So go out, **keep moving forward, keep pressing the shutter**, and follow that gap in the clouds. There's beauty in the journey itself.