

What If There Is No Goal?

In the realm of photography, we often get caught up with these notions of what success looks like. Whether it's the creation of a book, gallery, prints, zine, etc. All of these notions to me are superfluous and boring at best.

Why?

For me, the goal of photography has never been directly sharing it. If anything, I share my photographs with my mother, my brother, whoever I meet in person, in the flesh, one on one. I have no desire for my photographs to be viewed in these grandiose settings while I am alive. That has never been my goal and the reason why I make photographs. I've even had my photographs offered to be on display in a fancy gallery, in Italy, but declined.

Why Make Photographs?

I make photographs as a way for me to affirm life and give the mundane meaning. It seems that in this modern world, we are all in search of some sort of meaning and purpose. What if there was no purpose? What if the goal was to be in a state of production, and enjoy the process along the journey?

Consider goals, consider curiosity. Perhaps increasing your curiosity by one percent each day is the ultimate goal as a photographer, artist, or person.

I believe that your photograph can potentially impact the life of one other person, and that's great. If you reach one person, consider that success. When it comes to the material and external, there's no amount of validation or legitimacy worth seeking.

The Pursuit of Happiness

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” – Thomas Jefferson

When I consider liberty in the pursuit of happiness, I remind myself of George Washington crossing the Delaware River, a revolutionary hero, fighting against the British to gain self-autonomy, as the colonists were being unjustly taxed and controlled through military power. It took an act of courage to gain freedom.

Those who have been injured or died in battle receive a Purple Heart medal, established by George Washington in 1782. I think the color purple is beautiful and something that we should hone in on today, where the United States is separated through political parties from the left to the right or from red and blue. We need a middle ground, something in between the red and the blue, the and the color of our skin, and stop dividing ourselves.

We are all people of color in a sense, unified in our diversity, except for the British who historically positioned themselves as distinct and dominant. If I must choose a color, I choose purple!

Maybe we are becoming slaves to our identities. The more that we divide ourselves, the more mediocre we become. I seek to go beyond the division, and transcend through physical greatness. By increasing your power, you become healthier, stronger, and ultimately more “happy.” It seems that the pursuit of happiness is not the ultimate goal, but it is power that we seek. Perhaps power is where true happiness is.

What is a Slave?

When I contemplate slavery, I remind myself of Moses, leading the Israelites through the desert, freeing them of slavery and bondage from Egypt, in search of the promised land. When Moses rose to Mount Sinai and received the tablets, the 10 Commandments, from God, he was missing for 40 days. The Israelites became

anxious and decided to craft a golden calf and worship this idol. When Moses returned, he was furious and smashed this golden calf to the ground. Many of these Israelites were plagued, and thousands were killed following this event.

In the modern world, we are slaves to time. Perhaps a modern-day slave wears a watch, uses an alarm, a phone, and is dependent on emails and texting.

We are slaves to time, and most of us have no time. We no longer have time to think for ourselves, to be outside, as we are forced to be inside, transporting our physical bodies through vehicles, sitting down, and enjoying the air conditioning of an office building.

What are you sacrificing your physical body for?

Moses never reached the promised land, as he sacrificed himself for the Israelites and died near the valley of Jericho. Perhaps we too, are like Moses, wandering in the desert, but will never reach that promised land.

Think of Minecraft, and how you can control a pig with a saddle and a fishing rod with a carrot on a string. When you sit upon this pig and dangle the carrot in front of it, the pig will keep on moving and never stop. > Maybe we are like these pigs, enticed by the golden calf, the Lamborghini, the Tesla, fame, and all these lame material things. Most of the junk that we produce and purchase could be smashed on the ground as they have no meaning or function to them anyway.

So if there is no external thing, or material possession, external validation, even within the realm of art and photography, and life generally, worth striving towards, then what is the goal in itself?

Finding Meaning

Find meaning in the chaos, the unknown, the ups, the downs, the happiness, sadness, anger, and bliss. There is no goal, and that's okay. Find your own way to give life meaning. Free yourself through photography. Wield your camera as the passport to the promised land. Create your own world, and move onwards into the unknown, back into the desert.

