

## **ETERNAL RETURN**

I recently finished reading *The Will to Power* by Friedrich Nietzsche. One of the concepts covered in the book is the idea of the eternal recurrence, or the eternal return.

*How would you choose to live your life, if you knew that you must repeat the same emotional states, responses, and experiences, over and over again?*

This question becomes existential as a life on loop can seem daunting to most. Think of Sisyphus, pushing his rock uphill, only to have it roll back down over and over again. His fate was pain, and suffering, but he learned to accept and love that fate.

## **Amor Fati**

*The love of fate.*

*What is the inevitable fate and outcome of every human life?*

## **Death**

If this is the inevitable fate of our lives, perhaps we must learn to accept and love it now.

*Memento Mori*

We must remember that we will die. This is non-negotiable. I believe that this is what sets everything else into perspective in life. When I remember that I must die, I remind myself to live each day like it is my last. What this means is, I champion every fleeting moment, every feeling, all of the stimuli, the sounds, smells, sights, and experiences that I have on a daily basis. I only focus on doing things that I truly enjoy or find meaning in doing.

## **Be Willing to Fail**

Fear holds us back from achieving the goals that we set out to accomplish. We fear failure, rejection, and hesitate to even start doing things. As a street photographer, I love failure. For failure is the name of the game, as 99% of the time I set out with my camera, I know that I will make a “bad” picture. By accepting this fate, the inevitable outcome that I will fail, I find joy and meaning in the process itself. Through producing more photographs, I enter a state of Zen-like bliss, living in the moment, and appreciating the now.

## **How to Achieve Zen Bliss?**

In this modern world with so many distractions, from the news, media, text messages, emails, advertisements, etc. It becomes more and more difficult to achieve Zen bliss. However, there are some very simple things we can do to eliminate these distractions and find peace and tranquility amongst the chaos of modern life. Some of these include:

- Stop watching the news
- Stop using social media
- Stop watching TV/movies
- Stop texting/email

It's actually quite simple to achieve Zen bliss because all of the problem derives from the weapon of mass distraction that sits in your front right pocket, the iPhone. The iPhone provides us with creative tools, such as writing, like I am right now, or even using ChatGPT, to learn, but I find them to be more negative than positive.

I believe the quickest way to achieve bliss is through subtracting the superfluous. As a photographer, consider composition, and whether you photograph using black-and-white or color. Lately, I've been enjoying the high contrast, black-and-white aesthetics, and more minimalist approach to composition. By simplifying my process, I'm achieving this flow state of production, and I satisfy my creative urges by creating simple pictures. One practical suggestion is to always carry a camera with you, such as the Ricoh GR111, as it can fit in your front right pocket, in replacement of the iPhone. The goal is simple:

### *Produce more than you consume*

I find that through production, I remain focused on what is most critical in my life, that being creating art and photographs. Lately, if I'm not photographing, I like to think and write down notes or make essays using iA Writer on my iPhone, using voice dictation. There are so many new ways that we can create, and I believe we are living in this new age of a digital Renaissance, where the power to produce has never been so simple before. As much as it is easy to produce, it's even easier to consume, so let's be mindful of our consumption habits, eliminate more distractions, and focus on production as our primary goal.

### **Don't Fear Change**

In 2022, I decided to make a big change with my photography, switching to photographing in black-and-white instead of color. This took a lot of balls if I'm being honest, as I became very comfortable with my previous process. To destroy my old ways, habits, and process of doing things, I've created anew.

Through embracing change, and rediscovering my passion and love for photography, I feel like a kid again. I believe our goal should be to increase our curiosity by one percent each day. In order to achieve this, perhaps change is necessary, and embracing it openly.

### **Why Perfectionism is Overrated**

Perfectionism is overrated because it holds people back from doing more things.  
*Why not just start now?*

Life is not perfect, nobody is perfect, the world is not perfect, and we should recognize this, and love it. The imperfect nature of life is actually what makes it so beautiful. Whether you find beauty in the mundane, the weather and decay of flowers, the rusted walls, the fleeting moments, the ups, the downs, and the aesthetic frenzy and chaos of urban life, it all becomes meaningful.

*As much as order can be comforting, what if we chose to find peace in the chaos?*

I thrive in chaos, danger, and the unknown. I simply let the chips fall as they may, embracing the spirit of play, every single day. *Why?*

Life is too short to be a bore. Find beauty in your flaws, and the imperfect nature of this universe. Learn to laugh at yourself, and love your imperfection.

### **Laugh in the Face of Chaos**

When I consider chaos, I recognize its importance in my life as a street photographer. The street is like an arena, and you never know what you can find out there. Any moment could be your last, and Philadelphia is full of chaos. The sound of cars honking their horns, people screaming, begging, and fighting, are some of the sights and sounds I hear every day I walk outside with my camera.

*“One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.”  
- Friedrich Nietzsche*

As much as chaos is all around me, I too am full of this frenzy, deep within my soul. This frenzy, this ecstatic state is necessary when producing new photographs.

I like to treat the streets as my playground, dancing upon it, sort of like I’m an actor upon a stage. While the world is a stage, and we are all actors, I too am the conductor of the play, the drama, that unfolds on the street corner. The spontaneous nature of life excites me. The way people converge on a street corner, through movement, is beautiful to the eyes of a street photographer. The unpredictability, the spontaneity, the chaotic frenzy that lives and breathes on every street within any urban environment, becomes my canvas to draw upon.

### **Share Your Joy with Others**

If you feel good, happy, or joyful, perhaps we should allow this overwhelming feeling that flows through us, to pour outwards, into the lives of others. Because I find so much joy and meaning through photography, while I am walking through the city streets, I typically always have a smile on my face, laughing at any chance I can. I enjoy chatting with strangers, holding the door open for others, and just being a bright star in any environment that I enter. Not to share your joy with others, I believe is something small, that can go a very long way. We should strive to be, enjoy, so that we can uplift the lives of other people. I enjoy jokes, and just not taking myself so seriously in general.

### **Be a Bright Star**

Think about when you were a kid, and you would play games. We played the games voluntarily, and we were not forced to do so. I think the problem with modern life is that we are all involuntarily playing the game, against our will, and this dampens the human spirit. We become more rigid, serious, and less joyful because of this. We become more neurotic or anxious about the future, money in a bank account, or potential negative outcomes. However, embracing this spirit of play, voluntarily, every day can be beautiful, and you will be filled with this joyful and abundant sensation, that pours out of you, into the air, into the world around you.

### **How to Control Your Anger**

Anger is a very normal emotional response, especially as a man, with testosterone. I believe that with lower testosterone, you become petty, and more easily upset or angry. On the contrary, with higher testosterone, it is much easier to control your anger. We should start to think more critically about our physiology, hormones, and the effects this has on our emotional state of being.

Some simple solutions I found to controlling my anger, mood, and overall emotional state of being:

- 100% carnivore diet
- 8-10 hours of sleep
- Daily weightlifting

- Walking and standing throughout the day
- Maximum sun exposure

I think men are very simple and require our bodies to be physical, engaged, with muscles firing throughout the day. When I contemplate this notion of depression, I think of the idea of a *physical body* being depressed, simply *lower than*.

***Depression Latin Roots:***

- “De-”: A prefix meaning “down” or “away.”
- “Premere”: A verb meaning “to press.”

Considering the root etymology of the word, depression, meaning to press down, or away, perhaps we should strive to go upwards, and move our bodies onwards.

## **Movement is Medicine**

The solution to regulating your mood is very simple and requires real medicine, such as meat and movement. Have you ever met somebody who is depressed, that walks 15 miles per day?

I would find this hard to believe, as there is so much novelty, entropy, and randomness that exist throughout a long day of walking. This stimuli sparks new neural pathways within the brain, which in turn, affects the physiological effect on our bodies. Through movement, endorphins are released, cortisol levels are reduced, and your mood becomes regulated. My solution is actually to just never sit during the day. Anytime I am sitting during the day, my body responds through yawning, becoming sluggish, tired, or even feeling brain fog. However, while I am moving, standing, in the outdoors, in the fresh air, under the sunlight, I feel bliss.

The reason why I find meat to be so critical in my diet is that the more fat and cholesterol I consume, the more my body is being provided with the raw materials needed to synthesize testosterone. With increased testosterone, increased muscle mass, strength, and an overall improved and healthy lifestyle follow. Meat has become my medicine, and I have eliminated all other food groups from my life. I

enjoy fasting throughout the day, and eating as much red meat as I can before going to sleep, as this provides me with the vitality that I need to get through each day, with an elevated state, filled with power and strength.

## **Strong Body, Strong Soul**

I believe that our body is our soul. With this in mind, maybe we should be more critical about the things that we import to our bodies. Maybe the most critical thing to consider is what we remove from our bodies, through subtracting more. By eliminating processed junk food, sugary beverages, such as soda, or alcohol, and other toxins like cigarettes or smoking, we can create a stronger body and a stronger soul.

I also believe that the things that we consume will have a negative impact on the beauty of our bodies. Think of cigarettes, and the effects it has on your skin, or the color of your fingernails. Eating junk, and consuming toxins, you create a toxic body and an ugly soul. Contemplate the things that you consume more, or even better what we don't consume, and how what we do, and don't do, shape not only our bodies but our soul itself.

## **Always Evolving**

Every day is a new day to evolve, to become one percent more curious and courageous.

Let's live a life of vigor, power, and fuel our days with vitality. Let's champion this moment, right here, right now, and find new ways to thrive in the mundane. Personally, the camera is my superpower, as the world becomes my canvas to draw upon, and photography gives my life meaning. When you find the thing that affirms your life, whether it is a job, the creation of art, a lover, family, etc., it becomes easier to accept our fate, no matter the outcome.

If we feel anger, sorrow, or joy, let's embrace it openly, as a critical aspect of human life. The ups, the downs, the pleasure, and the pain will help us evolve through change. Change is good, and I do not seek to be complacent. I seek movement,

creation, and chaos as a way for me to evolve. When I think of the most primal instinct of the human, being production, to produce, to get, to create anew, through birthing new children, and spreading our DNA throughout the universe, it reminds me to do as much as I can while I'm alive to evolve. While this primal instinct becomes a way for humans to survive, let's seek to evolve, to go beyond this mere notion of *survive*, but **thrive!**

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