

Embrace the Journey, Not the Outcome

Today, I want to share the best advice I've come to understand after nearly two years of street photography with a new mindset. I began shooting exclusively in black and white in November 2022, marking almost two years of daily photography with a more liberated approach.

The Liberating Approach to Street Photography

This approach is freeing because I'm completely detached from the outcome. Every day, I make photographs, briefly review them in the evening, and then let them be. I'm not focused on whether a photograph is good or bad, nor am I meticulously sorting or organizing them. I keep telling myself that maybe by 2025, I'll go through them, but the more I dive into this process of photographing for its own sake, the less inclined I am to stop and evaluate.

The spirit of play and the flow state truly take over when you let go of attachment to results. This is when you can go out, explore, experiment, and photograph with curiosity at the forefront. When you're not bogged down by the need for "keepers," there's a freedom that comes with just being present in the act of creating. It's a mindset I encourage anyone to try — maybe go a month without curating or, like me, aim for a longer stretch. There's something deeply satisfying about remaining in a state of production without obsessing over the results.

Detaching from the Outcome

When you focus on the external goals of photography, such as making a book, having an exhibition, or creating prints, it's easy to lose sight of the joy in the process. Frankly, I don't care about these things. Photography, to me, is about the journey and the continuous act of making new pictures. My goal is simple: to increase my curiosity by 1% each day. This means waking up early, heading out with an open mind, and seeing what unfolds around me.

Street photography requires time, patience, and persistence to see results. But the more you're attached to the outcomes, the easier it is to become discouraged. The longer I've practiced this art, the less attached I've become to individual photographs. Detachment helps me return to past work with fresh eyes, discerning what truly matters and shedding what doesn't. It's like a renewal, and it helps me stay focused on the future.

Embracing a Lifelong Journey

Looking back on my decade of photography, I realize that I'm less attached to older images. This detachment allows me to refine my perspective, selecting the strongest photographs and shedding the superfluous. In photography, there's a rewarding feeling when you capture a successful image, and you'll know it when it happens. But reaching that point takes years, perhaps decades, of committed practice.

Approaching photography as a way to see what's happening in the world around you, without any expectations, is crucial. The more you focus on the picture itself, the more you risk frustration and burnout. Detaching from the outcome allows you to embrace street photography as an autotelic pursuit — something you do purely for the love of it.

Photography as a Daily Routine

Making photographs each day is like breathing for me; it's part of my daily rhythm. I stay in a state of production, continuously creating images. After years of consistent practice, I might come away with a few memorable shots. But the process itself is enough. Even if you treat street photography like a full-time job, success in terms of "keeper" photos might still be rare. This reinforces that the process, not the product, is what matters.

Would you continue to make photographs if you didn't get to share or print them? If they never made it into a book or an exhibition? It's a question worth asking. For me, photography is a journey, not a destination.

Redefining Success in Photography

Success in photography doesn't have to mean gallery shows, accolades, or social validation. Hosting images on a personal website, sharing them in a private sketchbook, or directly with family and friends can be fulfilling in its own way. There are many ways to share photographs that go beyond conventional measures of success, and they're worth exploring.

Photography is an ongoing journey, one where there's no final destination. Each image leads to the next, a continuous process of growth and exploration. The freedom of letting go of the need to make "good" pictures has been the most liberating part of my journey. I'm now more interested in making images that challenge me, even if they don't appeal to an audience.