

Sun Power

Our bodies are the battery, and the sun is the charger. Consider the iPhone at 1% charge. You rush for your charger, plug in the iPhone, with a sigh of relief. When you feel tired, do you ever ask yourself why?

Personally, I feel most tired when I'm sitting down, stagnant, not moving. However, if I'm walking, standing, lifting weights, or under the sun, I feel like I have an abundance of power. Certainly, I wake up super early, but I also go to bed at around 8 PM every night. I get eight hours of sleep, and it is very deep, and I always wake up feeling refreshed. Sleep is the most critical thing to consider first and foremost when it comes to power, but we must not neglect the sun itself.

Modern Day Privilege

The modern-day privilege is simply your body, standing upright, under the sun. Why?

Considering the way in which we work now, in offices, from 9 to 5, sitting down, under the air conditioner, it's quite jarring and unnatural. However, human beings are designed to be outside, grazing freely, and openly, under the sun itself. When I hear people come out of the office around 5 PM, they often come out of the cold and crisp, dark air conditioner, exclaiming how disgusting it feels outside, how hot the sun is. However, what I always think of in my head is:

We are currently standing on a spinning rock, moving into the void, darkness, orbiting around a big ball of fire. This big ball of fire is keeping us alive and why we are here in the first place.

However, we deny this big ball of fire, the sun itself, and replace it with fluorescent lights and air-conditioning systems. We are denying our physical bodies, for what? For the pursuit of material wealth? To me, this is denying our purpose as human beings, as we are the ultimate creators.

We Are the Creator

You may think of God, the ultimate creator. Or, you may be an atheist and see that there is no higher power and that life is merely random. However, we are the universe, we are the ultimate creator here on this earth. The human being is designed to produce. We have two legs, two hands, two arms, we stand upright, we have a brain, and consciousness. Humans have used their ingenuity and wit to create tools, build cities, and civilization itself. We have spread our DNA far and wide throughout the globe, scattering tribes through our various countries.

Our DNA is critical to consider, and the way in which we evolve over time can potentially be jarring considering the way we live these days.

When you look around in the city, don't you ever notice how people are hunched over, with pale skin?

A lot of people ask me if I was on vacation recently, such as where I was if I was on an island or something, but I just say no, Philly. Who knows, maybe our bodies are becoming so used to the system, indoors, that it's more difficult for our skin to tan? Is this a genetic thing? I don't know. All I know is, I've been outside all of my life.

Consider the average city dweller, spending 75% of their time inside. This is certainly going to have negative effects on our physiology and our bodies. Sitting down is not healthy. Sitting down is modern-day slavery. However, consider yourself privileged if you are outside, remaining physical. I believe that the new luxury is not sitting on your butt in some loser car, or in some ivory tower, but it's simply standing upright, in the open and fresh air, under the sun.

The power of the sun is overwhelming to some people. I would say that the majority of people don't appreciate the sun as much as I do because of the way we've been accustomed to the indoors. Most people prefer to be comfortable, inside, and this is simply a byproduct of modernity. Sure, you could say that there has been a heat wave recently, and the summers do feel slightly hotter than before. But, my body is built to adapt to the environment, and so is yours.

Let's spend the maximum amount of time possible outside, and say no to a life squandered indoors.

Strength in Solitude

Ever since I was a little boy, I would explore in the forest with my bike, or simply go for a hike, building forts with sticks, bridges with stones, sharpening spears with sticks, attempting to hunt deer, fishing, exploring caves, and riding my bike for miles on end towards Valley Forge National Historic Park, where I would spend my summer days alone, exploring the monuments, bunkers, and log cabins. When I was a kid, none of my friends could keep up with me on my bike, and would not want to travel as far as I did, so I would mostly spend my time by myself, biking on my own.

As a Peace Corps volunteer, I spent a year on my own, in the village, surrounded by a community of people that do not speak English. I've spent months in Jericho, sleeping on the floors of mosques, with people that do not speak English, alone, and thriving. I've never really needed much and could survive and get by each day with just a few scraps of pita bread and hummus or find a family who was willing to share a meal with me.

Even to this day, I thrive on my own, with strength in solitude. I have this call to adventure within me, and most modern people or other people, in general, just hold me back. This is the unfortunate truth, but the times that we live in are softening our men. Yes, I want to remain hard and push forward with strength. But, I've never found another person in my entire life with the same drive as I do. It's just the truth, so I have a tight circle with two friends that I've known since I was a little kid, since the days we would explore in the woods together. Those are the only true friends I need; everything else is superfluous. When you are committed to a purpose in life and have a calling to do great things, the modern world just holds you back. There are too many distractions, too many advertisements, too many TV shows, too much social media, too much gossip, too much drama, and too much division.

So, how can we thrive on our own?

Is there a formula to this madness, are there any traits that you must possess? I'd say drive, commitment, resilience, and courage are required to thrive in solitude. To me, it's bliss. Having zero distractions and zero text messages coming in is heaven on earth to me. If anything, making plans, texting, blah blah blah, it's all such a waste of time, just meet me at the Eagle. I have zero idea how anybody has the

time to chitchat and just sit back and relax. I need to spend every waking moment of my life doing something, making something, or even just thinking about things. Sure, I can shut my mind off, go for a bike ride, or whatever, but I seriously thrive in the chaos of production, with whatever it may be. Whether I'm tending a Japanese tree with my pruners, writing this stupid essay, or making photographs, I love making things.

To thrive on your own, you have to be working on something that's greater than yourself, striving for something beyond human capability. The best part is, I don't even care if I ever reach the goals I set. I'm just striving towards the unattainable, the impossible, moving forward, into the unknown. My ultimate goal is to just become one percent more curious each day, to become the best artist that I could possibly be during the short period of time while I am alive. During my lifetime, I will create the archive of my hometown, Philadelphia, that can be referenced for hundreds of years to come. What this means is, I must spend the maximum amount of time alone, working on my craft, and moving towards these seemingly unattainable heights. There is no finish line, there is no end goal, there is just movement, focus, and my body being driven by courage.

I love to start my day off at an elevated vantage point, behind the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where I stand upon a cliff, looking out towards the horizon.

When I have an elevated view, a Panopticon view of the city, where I can see 360° around me, clearly, I feel like I can conquer this world. Perhaps there is no more land for men to conquer, and there is no more need for an Alexander the Great. However, we can conquer within the realm of art and photography, in the digital world, and become the next Diogenes.

Intuition

As a photographer, we must see clearly. What this means is, you should see and predict the patterns in both nature and human behavior before they even happen. You must possess strong visual acuity to things. When I look at the world around me, everything becomes a potential photograph to make. Look at life as the canvas

itself, draw upon it. When you sharply attune your vision to the details, life and the mundane become not what it seems, it becomes a dream. Follow that gut feeling, that God-like intuition that we all possess within our souls.

You are your soul. And the things that you put within your body become a reflection of your soul.

So cut through the noise, remove the distractions, stop consuming junk, both physical junk, like food, and metaphorical junk, like media. Turn inwards, into your soul, shed your skin, and become the greatest version of yourself.