

Build

My favorite video game of all time was Minecraft. Minecraft is the most sold video game of all time, and I believe this to be the case because of how great it truly is. The world is an endless expanse for the individual user to create and build upon. There are dungeons to conquer and new terrain to explore, in infinite ways. Maybe we should design our lives like Minecraft, where we can terraform real life. I was chopping trees down at work the other day, and it felt this way, as I completely transformed the terrain, the landscape, and the area surrounding a sculpture and garden.

Get outside the box

I cannot be boxed in, to the four corners of a room, to an office, a cubicle, or even a social media platform like Instagram. Consider the Instagram grid, the algorithm, and the way you are locked into this closed system. It becomes more difficult to build, to create anew when confined to the corners of a box. However, with a website, there is an endless expanse for you to build upon. Firstly, if you're serious about photography, delete your Instagram immediately, and start your own wordpress.org website, hosting your firstnamelastname dantesisofo.com on bluehost.com, and install the Astra theme.

Ever since I started my own blog, I feel like I have this endless canvas to work upon. There are so many possibilities for what you can do with the blog, such as presenting your photographs in a portfolio, slideshow, videos, PDFs, digital downloads, blog posts, essays, sharing poems, videos, audio, podcasts, etc.

I suggest everyone get a GoPro Mini and just start recording your own thoughts. When I record my thoughts, I'm essentially just thinking out loud and sharing these thoughts with the world, through a Spotify podcast, uploading it to my blog, and YouTube. By fleshing out my thoughts through speaking, I'm understanding how I think about photography, philosophy, society, and the world in general, by embracing authenticity. To me, this is my core mode of expression, besides photography, as I now start to dabble with writing. It feels like I'm just getting

started, and there's just so much to do. Starting a blog gives you an endless opportunity to create and build upon, to reiterate, and to share your authentic self with the world.

Beyond ordinary

Every morning, I enjoy waking up at 4-5 AM, and go for a morning walk, where I get my steps in wearing my 40-pound plate carrier, with barefoot shoes on, camera in hand, making photographs, and voice dictating these blog posts. If you're going to attempt to build something, to become someone, or to become a certain thing, why settle for the ordinary, or just good enough? If I'm going all in on photography, I'm going to strive to go beyond the ordinary, to become extraordinary, to become the best photographer that I can possibly be. This means I'm going to be photographing as much as humanly possible, as early as possible, by quite literally waking my physical body up immediately in the morning, reaching for my camera, and going outside. Throughout the day, no matter where I am, I will be making photographs. It's funny, lots of photographers ask me, when did you get outside today? When did you start photographing? As if I have a set schedule to practice, which I suppose is technically from 3 to 6 PM during my typical route shooting in the streets of Center City. However, I think it's funny to just respond, 5 AM. As soon as I wake up in the morning, I start practicing photography. Photography is the cup of espresso that gets me up in the morning. I am beyond motivated, passionate, or even obsessed with photography, but have become completely called to it, like a vocation.

My vocation is to be outside.

Ever since I was a little boy, I would spend my days in the Wissahickon forest, chopping down trees, building forts, bridges with stones, and blazing new trails. I would bike endlessly along the Schuylkill River Trail for miles and miles, toward the Valley Forge National Historic Park. I've always been an adventurer, explorer, and builder, since a very young age. While I've enjoyed playing video games like Minecraft, I also enjoyed tinkering in the real world, the great outdoors, where I naturally thrive. I think my intuition, my inner child, told me to return to nature, quite literally. Since working in horticulture, outside in a park for the start of my day, I feel like I finally found my calling in life.

Actually, the real reason why I decided to start working in the park is that last year when I was unemployed, deciding what I wanted to do next, I was spending the entirety of the day in the streets of the city and found it to be quite unnatural. There was a part of me that kept going back to the river, returning to parks, and just naturally gravitating towards green spaces, where I felt like I could not necessarily spend all day on the street as much as I love it. Also, as a man, and somebody who has the instinct to protect and provide, if I want to build a family one day, I could honestly not tell you where a true safe space to raise a child is in the city of Philadelphia. The streets are just too dangerous, and not necessarily a place where I would ever bring a child. However, Fairmount Park is away from the chaos, and a place where I could see a child be raised, growing up out in the open spaces, exploring the trails, and the parks, similar to how I experienced my childhood as a young boy.

Shout out to Spencer, the number one dad in the city of Philadelphia, who is honestly the only man I ever see with his child every day, who walks the streets shooting street photography with his baby strapped to his chest. It's quite a strange world when you can see only one family per day, and the rest are just stuck inside offices and the children are stuck inside daycares.

The goal of humanity

The more I contemplate human nature and society, I believe we are either going on decline, or on incline. Is society collapsing, or rising? Frankly, it seems more on the decline, considering the lack of population growth and innovation in real life. The problem with innovation is that it is all occurring within the digital spaces. Everybody is looking down at their phones, listening to their AirPods, and not necessarily in tune with their actual surroundings in the physical world. What this means is, there is nothing being built in real life, nothing being done to innovate the streets, the infrastructure, the architecture, and the places that we actually inhabit. We are responding to technology, and modernity, by innovating within the digital world, and that will inevitably lead to the decline of the physical world.

Have you ever seen the movie Ready Player One?

In the movie, this community is living in complete poverty, in tin shacks stacked on top of each other, like a refugee camp. Despite the poverty and the ugly environment that they are faced with in real life, they have modern technology, such as virtual reality, and the ability to enter a new world by simply strapping on a headset, glazing over their eyes with an LCD screen. Part of me feels like this is happening in real life, where we inhabit digital spaces throughout the day for work, play, entertainment, and even social communities now when it comes to making friends or forming relationships. If the physical world around us is crumbling, I don't believe we should lock ourselves into a matrix world, pretending that the real world is fine and without need for building or repair.

Speed is important

When I would play Tony Hawk Pro Skater, I always maxed out my speed and air stat points right away. Why? I knew that speed was the most critical attribute to acquire within the game, to unlock new locations, to reach new goals, to find the secret tape, to advance within the game itself.

I believe we should focus on speed, especially within the realm of photography, as this will enhance our ability to improve at a rapid rate. By using a compact digital camera, such as a Ricoh GR, and removing the viewfinder, focusing solely on using an LCD screen, we will become more in tune with this flow state of production, where we liberate ourselves, and snapshot our way through life. Always having a camera in your pocket, there is no longer an excuse for you to not practice your photography. I enjoy treating photography like a personal diary, as a way for me to remember the day, and to create visual notes or instant sketches of life.

I highly suggest every photographer to purchase an iPad Pro.

When I hit the streets, I make photos quickly with speed. Towards the end of my walk, around 5:30, the Wanamaker Organ sounds inside the Macy's building. I bring my iPad along with me, importing my photos from that very walk, directly into my iPad Pro's built-in Photos app from the iOS that's preinstalled, and go through the photographs with speed. I simply tap on the thumbnail, viewing the photographs at a 3 x 3 grid, favoring them, and throwing them into a selections album. This way, I can go back out, photograph for another half hour, come home, and then back

everything up immediately to my Google Photos Drive, and publish the photographs directly to my blog. This workflow provides me with the ultimate speed, staying on top of my archive, and always making the effort to cull immediately, provides me with less of a headache down the line when I actually come to want to make real keeper selections.

Quit film photography

This workflow is phenomenal, as the small JPEG file, with high contrast, black-and-white baked in, with the contrast cranked to the maximum, provides the quickest way to make a photograph in the current year of 2024. The problem with film photography is how slow it is, from the time it takes you to load the film in the camera, to line up your composition with the viewfinder, to set your camera focus, to press the shutter, to then send it to a lab to be developed, to have it returned to you, to go to a dark room, to print it with chemicals and then finally scan it and have a digital file.

By the time it takes you to get the photographs from a roll of film to the final product of a print or a digital scan, I have already made a month's worth of new work and photographs. He who makes more photographs will ultimately make more successful photographs. At this rate, who is going to succeed more, innovate more, and improve more, within the realm of photography?

Person A: Shoots one roll of film per day

Person B: Shoots 1,000 photos digitally per day

I think the answer is obvious, and we all know that person B will ultimately be the better photographer, in every single way. It's up to you to decide whether you want to become extraordinary with me, as we can all thrive together, or remain ordinary, and just good enough. Get over the romanticization of film photography, the tactile feel, the print, the gallery, the blah blah blah. It's all over, done with, in the past, and time to move on.

Money, money, money

I remember being a young boy, watching TV shows like American Idol, and I believe before American Idol would come on on a Friday night, The Apprentice by Donald Trump would come on. I remember the theme song played some song that went along the lines of, “money money money, moooney” in a sort of jingle.

In this modern world, where we print money ad infinitum, with a brilliant implementation of the Federal Reserve's power of money printing, inflation is inevitable. This means, the value of our dollar is decreasing every single year. If the value of our dollars is decreasing every single year, what is it that we should do with our money? Should we keep our money in our bank account, allowing the bank to borrow it? Or, should we invest our money in a scarce asset, like gold? Or maybe we should invest in the Fortune 500 companies, as these will increase our capital gains over the years at a steady rate. Honestly, none of these ideas seem too great. Holding money in the bank, allowing the bank to simply borrow my money, using it to pay off loans, or even better yet, fund the endless wars occurring overseas, that I want nothing to do with. It seems like the only option is to take self-custody of our money, and put it in a true scarce asset. It seems that there's only one true scarce asset that is currently being built within our modern world, being Bitcoin. Bitcoin is cryptographically proven to be a scarce asset, whereas gold is not. You could tell people to go out and mine gold, and they will find more gold, endlessly. However, there are only 21 million bitcoin that will ever be produced, making it the only real scarce asset. When my ancestors arrived from Italy and entered the United States of America through Ellis Island in New York City, they had the opportunity to purchase property before the bank started to own everything. They built their families, through the baby boomer generation, having the ability to raise a family with one income, own a home, have multiple children, and have a thriving life. Now, in this modern world, my generation, Generation Z, frankly does not possess the ability to rise to the occasion, raise a family on one income, purchase property, own a home, a car, etc. However, we were born with iPhones, and all this technology, allowing us the ability to own property digitally, where there is nobody in between us and acquiring it, besides our open minds and our ability to adapt to modern times. We may not be able to own a physical block in Manhattan, but we can own a digital block like in Minecraft, or cyberspace.

I first learned about Bitcoin when I was walking down the street on Market Street here in Philadelphia, looking at the electronic billboard, at the beginning of 2024, that was describing the ETF, where you can purchase Bitcoin through the bank. From there, I started to do my own research, and came to the conclusion that Bitcoin is the only option if you want to hold your money, and have it increase in value over time.

At this rate of inflation, the average worker has to work for an hour or two, just to be able to afford to eat an ice cream or a roll of film. The strategy? **Don't buy film, but BTC.**

A lot of people can't even afford to have three square meals per day. So what can we do about this? Stop buying food. Stop buying anything. Fill your freezer with meat, don't eat breakfast or lunch, and eat the most satiating food before you go to sleep. Increase your physical strength, buy Bitcoin on Coinbase, and just chill. The number in your bank account means nothing anymore. In the future, the real flex will be how many Satoshis you have. If you can even get to 1 BTC, you will be a legend.

If you want to learn more, I've basically gone through every single video from these two websites:

- [Hope.com](https://www.hope.com)
- [Michael.com](https://www.michael.com)

The series on "What is Money" with Michael Saylor is a must-watch. I will link it here:

- <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2jAZ0x9H0bQFY6wIbQfnrnIlqMcSHd6X&feature=shared>

I've also read Saifedean Ammous, *The Bitcoin Standard*:

- <https://a.co/d/e4lD80y>

I just gave my copy to my engineer friend, who for the past year was mocking me about Bitcoin being stupid, and is now reading my book. We will all get Bitcoin at the price we deserve.

I believe in this future of decentralization, where the individual holds their private keys and their personal bank. I think if George Washington was alive today, he would also partake in Bitcoin. I think Bitcoin is hope, and ultimately allows the individual to think more about the future optimistically. If my money will go up in value over the next 20 years, I will simply hold my money in that asset that will allow for this, giving me hope for the future, to pass down wealth, generally, to think more about family, and how to build a future. In today's world, we're so consumer-driven, because the value of our dollar is decreasing, we're spending the dollars endlessly, on things that truly do not matter. We live in a consumer age, where we follow our base whims and desires, purchasing random junk. Because the purchasing of our decreasing, we're simply spending it with a pessimistic view of the future. I believe that the money problem is also a reason why we are seeing a decrease in population and families forming. However, Bitcoin reframes the way that you think about money, where you simply make money, and don't spend it, giving you an optimistic outlook on what is to come, rather than what there is here, right now, to purchase. It essentially reframes the way you think about money from instant gratification to delaying the gratification.

I believe that the present holders of Bitcoin will be the future builders of the world. If you want to build a future, we need hope, we need a life raft, something that can get us out of this sinking ship, and build a new world together.