

Ascension

When you consider freedom, you may contemplate the idea of free will and the infinite options and choices we have to make in life. What if freedom was the elimination of free will, and we only had one choice?

Should I go left or should I go right?

I do not seek either of these choices. I'm striving to move onwards and upwards.

Charge your battery

Consider the human body as a battery. The sun, our source of life, is the charger. Sleep is where we recharge our battery, replenishing our cells, restoring our muscles, allowing us to wake up in the morning with vigor and vitality. What I find most powerful about sunlight is the direct influence it has on our circadian rhythm, our natural biological clock. When I rise with the sun and allow it to appear through my eyes, I am telling my body that it is time to start the day, extracting power from light itself. Sunlight and sleep seem to be the ultimate determining factors for how we feel the following day.

Before I go to sleep, I want to make sure my battery has been fully depleted. This means I make sure to stay outside for the entirety of the day, standing upright, walking, with a strong gait.

I believe that the only life worth living is a life full of vitality.

Also, consider your social battery and the impact other people have on how you feel throughout the day. Sometimes, other people can drain your battery by speaking negatively, sucking the energy from your soul. This means we must be very mindful of the interactions we have throughout the day and not waste our battery on trivial matters. As unethical as it may seem, when people start to complain, moan, and groan, maybe it's best to just walk away and not allow this negative energy to influence our day. I know that I am very sensitive to the words and actions of other

people, and because of this, I spend the majority of my day in solitude, for at least eight hours, before hitting the streets and surrounding myself with the chaos and hustle and bustle of urban life to practice my street photography.

Let's make sure we start our day off with 100% charge and end it with one percent, plugging our bodies back into bed, charging our souls, ready for the next day to conquer.

Align with nature

What does it mean to align with nature and why does this matter to me?

I believe that aligning with nature starts from the external world around you, by surrounding yourself with natural things, such as trees, grass, rivers, etc. The silence you can find in a park, or the woods, is golden. When all you hear are the sounds of insects humming and birds chirping, and feel the breeze from the wind, with your feet in the grass, barefoot, you have the ideal connection to the external world. Firstly, consider your feet and the connection to the Earth from the ground up. The thick soles of the shoes that our feet have become accustomed to in this modern world are actually very unnatural, ultimately weakening our physical bodies and the connection we have to the external world. Every morning, I make sure to walk along the river, on a nature path, in silence, barefoot, for at least one hour, to simply listen to nature and find myself connected to the external world, in communion with God.

Nature is divine

Aligning with nature is also an internal mechanism, by aligning with your essence, or who you are. To find who we truly are, we must turn inwards. I believe that simply listening to your heart beating, your breath, and being more mindful of each step you take throughout the day goes a long way.

By fasting, eliminating breakfast and lunch from your diet, you become more in tune with your internal self. Just think, if you're snacking and eating food throughout the day, your body is consistently digesting, churning through your gut;

food is breaking down and will impact the connection between your mind and your body.

Listen to your gut

Our gut is more intelligent than our mind. I find that our bodies tell all and are a direct reflection of who we actually are. By fasting, you will increase your vitality and discipline by overcoming the way in which modernity has programmed us to eat throughout the day. I highly suggest you try fasting and see the effects it has on your mind, and how much sharper you are throughout the day. Honestly, fasting seems like a cheat code in life, that makes me so laser-focused, like a hunter.

When I'm practicing street photography, I actually notice how fasting influences the way that I react with my intuition or my gut. I have a much faster reaction time when fasted than when having food digesting in my stomach.

Maybe the ideal way to align with nature is to live like a hunter, always standing, walking, and staying fasted throughout the day, simulating what it is like to actually be on the hunt. I personally rise at dawn, before the sunrise, strap on a 40-pound plate carrier, and march for one hour. From there, I never sit down throughout the entirety of the day, and don't eat until the sun sets.

Don't eat, feast

When I eat, I feast. I've been sticking to a 100% carnivore diet for the past two years, and eat around 3 to 5 pounds of red meat each night. I typically break my fast around 6 PM and sleep around 8 PM. This routine has been my discipline and works for me. I've aligned with nature, my essence, and who I truly am through this daily practice of fasting, weight training, and feasting.

Don't run, march

I believe there are a lot of things that go against our human nature in this modern world in the realm of health. Think of running, and how unnatural this actually is. When we were hunter-gatherers, I do not believe that we were running, but simply crafted bows, arrows, and used our ingenuity to hunt our prey. I cannot imagine during these times, when humans were nomadic, that we ran, expending all of our energy, draining our battery right after sunrise. This seems like a very foolish way to live life, to run, “burning calories” so that you can eat later in the day, and feel more virtuous simply because you went running. I believe that running has become a byproduct of modernity and the way that we live life, sedentary, in offices, condos, and spending most of our time indoors. Because we transport our bodies through automobiles, running has become this neurotic behavior pattern for most people, and always looks very strange to me. When I see people running, and I am simply marching, they seem like a lost gazelle, running away from the predator like prey.

The goal is simple:

- March for 30,000 steps each day.

By walking for at least a half marathon each day, I find this to be the perfect place to be, and always drains my battery to depletion by the end of the day. It seems quite foolish to drain your battery through running, but simply marching throughout the day is a much wiser approach.

Increased vitality

With increased vitality, everything will fall into place. When I have a full charge, full power, I can conquer anything that’s put in my way. I believe as street photographers, we must focus on our vitality, first and foremost, before considering the visual arts of the medium.

A photograph is a reflection of the physiological power of a photographer.

Do you have the will to power, the will to photograph? At the end of the day, our body is what moves us through this world. I am not merely motivated, I am driven by courage and curiosity, leading me onto the front lines of life. My feet and two

legs are what guide my body to press the shutter. As much as street photography is a visual game, it's a physical pleasure. **He who walks the most shall win.**

Diseased people?

One thing I've realized with increased vitality is the contempt you begin to have towards those that are diseased. Disease is not necessarily a physiological thing, but also something that affects the minds of people. Consider the body, and the way it looks, in modernity, typically overfat, pale-skinned, and generally anemic looking. While this is obvious and evident, the anxiety that is fueling these bodies is almost more concerning. We become so worried about the perception of other people, whether through social media or even just walking down the street. Many people wear sunglasses, hats, and ugly facial hair. People seem to not want to interact with you, and generally exhibit more antisocial behavior patterns through the implementation of technological advancements like AirPods. These devices, while enticing to utilize, separate us more than ever, and I believe impact our minds, our souls, and make us neurotic and diseased.

Whenever I see a physiologically very healthy person, it puts a smile on my face and actually makes me feel good inside. I believe that there is social contagion, and the impact of ugliness, disease, whether physical or mental, does impact the lives of other people. I know this because the healthier I become, the more sensitive I am to these things. Just think—

What does the average person do on a daily basis?

The average person wakes up, checks their phone, their emails, text messages, social media, and waddles to the kitchen. They probably pop in some bread to the toaster, spread cream cheese on a bagel, and drink some coffee diluted with milk and sugar. Hop in the car, commute for a half hour, and arrive at their workplace. They sit under fluorescent lights, in the comfort of air conditioning, and sit down for eight hours per day. They go to lunch, typically some salad bar, that smells like a dirty locker room, consuming some slop or other meals that have no nutritional value. They hop back in their car, commuting for another 30 minutes, arrive home, turn on the TV, sit on the couch, and eat once again. They probably consume media

for a few hours per night, even after operating a computer for eight hours during their day. They most likely stay up a bit too late, get poor sleep, wake up, and repeat. I believe that this lifestyle is so unnatural and will inevitably lead to disease.

Equality is mediocrity

So, if this is the life that most people lead in their everyday lives, do you seek to be their equal? Of course not; we must go beyond and ascend to a new height. We must separate ourselves from the pack and become the greatest version of ourselves. We compare ourselves to our peers, our classmates, or our coworkers. However, this is basic at best; there is no one in this modern world worth comparing yourself to.

We must strive to become something greater.

Maybe it's best to compare ourselves to Greek heroes like Achilles. *Who can you become in this lifetime? Who do you desire to be, and how excellent are you striving to be?*

Honestly, I feel as though anybody from antiquity would be 1000 times more excellent than your typical above-average person in modernity. If this is the case, then perhaps we should detach from this modern world and become our own Greek hero. Let's carve our own path and create our own Odyssey. This life is way too short to simply be mediocre.

Don't just work, make money, and die. **Let's conquer, create a legacy, and thrive.**

Expend all of your physiological power to exhaustion before you end your day. This is where I believe greatness lies. We should go to sleep each night with an emptied battery, drained. Feast on meat, get good sleep, and repeat. Let's strive to ascend our mind, body, and spirit through the pursuit of excellence in a world of mediocrity.

The only life worth living is a life full of vitality.