

I never want to miss another sunrise again

A radical question on the shortness of life:

How many more sunrises will you see in your lifetime?

I think this lifetime we have is so short, and it's best that we spend our time most wisely. Personally, as a photographer, I find that spending the maximum amount of time outside, under the sun, is the ultimate way to live my life. Because of this, I make the effort to take a morning walk, during dawn, before the sun even rises. I'm just so eager and ready to see the sun peer above the horizon, to pierce through my eyes, enter my body, my soul, and fuel myself with curiosity.

Treat the world like a playground

When you're on the street, treat the world like the ultimate playground, like you're just a big kid, and everything around you—the sidewalks, the storefront, the lamp posts, the cracks in the concrete—becomes a canvas, something novel for us to draw upon. When you're a kid, you have no preconception of right or wrong, and simply respond through your emotional whims. Honestly, this may not be the optimal way to live our lives all the time, but I think when we're with the camera, and we're making art, we should follow that inner emotional child, the irrational side of us, that just wants to play and have fun. Follow your childlike instincts and curiosity!

The moment is all that truly matters

The other day, while lying in my treehouse, sunbathing, I was listening as leaves were rustling and falling from the trees as the seasons changed. In that moment, I had no thoughts, no worries, no ideas about the past or the future, just me, the sun, the sounds, and the feeling of the sun kissing my skin. I could not help but have a huge smile on my face, and feel pure silence and bliss, alone, in the moment. I find that the moment, whether so mundane like a leaf falling from a tree or even rain

tapping on a window, becomes the most infinitely fascinating and important aspect of everyday life. I think it's so important to embrace the small details in life because it really does put you in a state of bliss when you shut everything off, with no distractions, and just enjoy your peace, silence, and solitude.

The correlation between vitality and curiosity

How to cultivate curiosity?

Curiosity is all about vitality.

There is a correlation between vitality, health, strength, and curiosity. In my opinion, with low vitality, you will not possess the curiosity to even go out and make photos, or create anything. In order to achieve a state of curiosity, one must be full of good health, have had good sleep the night before, in order to go outside the door with the power and urge to do something, see something, and make something through that curiosity we possess.

Mood and health

If you get poor sleep, you will have a poor day and a poor mood. I find that we must prioritize sleep first and foremost before considering the visual art of photography or anything that we want to conquer within our days. Personally, I get to bed as soon as I can, anytime between 8 to 9 PM, so I can get a good eight hours of sleep each night. With eight hours of sleep, I find that my battery is fully charged in the morning, ready to move, to see, to take more photos.

Also, consider the correlation between strength and mood. If you're able to pull your bodyweight up for 10-15 pull-ups, or even do 10 pull-ups with a 40-pound weight vest on, you will feel insanely happy and overjoyed by your accomplishment. When testosterone and endorphins are released from within your body, you achieve a natural high, a blissful feeling, and a sensation that carries you throughout the day with an elevated state of mind.

Walking is bliss

The first rule for street photography:

Set your body in motion without preconceived notions.

*What is motivation and where does it come from? **Your two legs.***

As a fun exercise, try to stand and walk for an entire day, week, month, year, and even a lifetime... If you work in an office, just stand at your desk, or request to have one of those desks that elevate your computer so you can stand and use it. If someone tells you to sit down, just don't. Just still stand, and tell them that you have a medical condition that requires you to stand or something, haha. Man has become domesticated like a dog—"Here, boy, sit, good boy, here's a treat!" Welcome to the zoo utopia.

For the past two years, since adopting my new process of photographing using black-and-white, I essentially have not stopped standing and walking throughout the entirety of the day, while barefoot. I believe that adopting barefoot shoes as a part of my daily walks, I am strengthening my feet, legs, core, back, and all the muscles within my body. I have an abundance of power within me and cannot get myself to sit still, to sit down, or be stagnant in any capacity. The more I live this lifestyle of being outside, standing, and walking, the more I'm trying to challenge myself to just keep pushing, to see how long I can go, perhaps never sit down for an entire lifetime? The path to becoming the most prolific street photographer is the path to becoming the strongest version of yourself.

How to restore your body

One of the most useful ways to use ChatGPT is to simply ask for the etymology of words.

*The word **restaurant** comes from the French verb **restaurer**, meaning “**to restore**” or “**to refresh.**”*

In 18th-century Paris, the word *restaurant* was first used to describe healing broths that were sold by street vendors and used to restore strength. Considering the etymological meaning of *restaurant*, to restore, I'm highly critical of places to eat in the city of Philadelphia. In my opinion, the only real restaurants are Vietnamese locations, like Pho 75, Cali Pho, or Pho Street. *Why?*

Vietnamese pho contains bone broth, beef, tendon, and organ meat such as tripe. Pho is very rich in collagen, a protein that contributes to joint health, skin elasticity, and tissue repair. Actually, one day after working, cutting some trees down, and exhausting my physical body, my leg was stiff and sore, and I cut my skin on my face. That evening, I decided to eat calf liver and even had a bowl of pho, and within the next two days, the cut was restored, and my leg felt back to full strength. I make the effort to eat organ meat and pho once per week, usually on a Saturday. I realize that calf liver is so good and tastes delicious with onions, garlic, and olive oil.

Another great way to restore your body is by taking hot baths with Epsom salt. On the weekend, Saturday and Sunday, I actually start the day off early in the morning with an extremely hot bath, to relax my muscles for at least a half-hour. Every morning during the week, I stretch my entire body through yoga for 10 to 15 minutes. Daily stretching makes a big difference in how you feel throughout the day, and I think focusing on the strength of our legs is most critical.

And of course, prioritizing sleep is our natural steroid that will build our muscles and replenish our cells. When you get good sleep, your body is repairing the damaged cells and tissue in your body, which plays a vital role in healing wounds and overall physical recovery.

Spartan austerity

Currently, I'm reading about Sparta, by Plutarch, and really like the idea of how Spartans lived in austerity. Essentially, they spent their entire lives training for battle, as warriors. When the boys became warriors, during their training, they trained in the Agoge program, without shoes. I feel like I'm in my perpetual Agoge training, with barefoot shoes—the Vibram FiveFingers EL-X Knit version shoes are amazing. By going barefoot, I'm becoming more disciplined and strengthening my entire body throughout the day.

I think the most interesting aspect of the Spartan lifestyle is their self-sufficiency, where they simply rely on their physical strength. They're essentially ready for battle or war at any moment. They view luxury, material wealth, and possessions as things that lead to weakness. In terms of our home, let's just treat it like a bunker. Let's never be inside, and only use our house for sleeping and eating. Also, when you eat, just use your hands and cut your meat with scissors.

Forks and knives are for losers.

As street photographers, just think, doesn't this make the most sense anyway? We want to be out there making work the maximum amount of time possible. If you're a young single guy like me, who doesn't have anything scheduled, no plans, no obligations, just become a Spartan of the street and march on repeat.

As I'm currently writing and walking this blog post, I'm walking with my 40-pound plate carrier strapped to my shoulders, on my chest and my back. The other day, I actually wore it for two hours straight, practicing street photography, and it was the ultimate challenge. Once you get around the two-hour mark, you really start to feel the effect of the weight on your muscles, your body, and it makes you think about the physical strength a Spartan must've had to wear a full suit of armor during war. By walking barefoot with a plate carrier every morning for at least one hour, I'm treating it like my Spartan Agoge training. Throughout the entirety of my day, you can know, with 100% certainty, that Dante is outside somewhere, standing, walking, photographing, contracting his physical muscles.

I refuse to remain stagnant, both physically and mentally. I'm always marching onwards, into the unknown. I will march until the sun rises, and until the sun sets, every single day, for the rest of my days. For this is the ultimate joy in life: to stand, to walk, and to move, to be physical. By increasing our physical strength, we increase our curiosity, and by focusing on strength and vitality, we can ultimately become better artists. With increased vitality comes an increased lust for life. With an increased lust for life, it is inevitable that you will never want to miss another sunrise again.