

The Philosophy of Strength

This morning, I looked out my window, noticed it was raining, and contemplated whether I should go for my march with my 40-pound plate carrier on. I'm currently walking, rain splashing on my phone as I write this, with my barefoot shoes, ready to get wet. Maybe strength isn't just a physical thing; there's also a mental toughness required, through discipline. **Physically and mentally, we can become excellent.**

How I Became So Strong

Since I was a young boy, exploring the woods by myself, skateboarding on large concrete obstacles, playing every major sport, to my late teens and early 20s of lifting weights consistently for a decade, I've become strong through discipline. Even when I traveled to Jerusalem, I made sure to hit the gym every morning before I went out and photographed. When I was in Zambia, Africa, I purchased dumbbells, gymnastic rings, and a variety of fitness equipment to use, off the grid, by throwing the rings up in a tree. I even started my own little youth fitness program with a group of locals that would come and work out with me each morning.

Strength is built through simply taking action, without hesitation. It's very similar to the photographic practice of photographing every single day, with vigor, that helps the photographer get closer to seeing results. I correlate the strength of my photography to the strength of my physical body.

It's OK to Be Excellent

In a world of mediocrity and equality, I believe it's time to strive to go beyond the basics. I think it's OK to be excellent because in today's world, if you shine too bright or stand out from the crowd, you're often told to quiet down, to come back down to the base level. **Set high standards, and strive to go beyond yourself.** It's inevitable that you're going to fly alone, like a wolf without a pack, or an eagle in flight. The path to excellence is lonely because not everybody has the drive, the will to power, to become the greatest version of themselves. However, it's OK to take the path alone, the path less traveled, the path to excellence.

Why I'm So Prolific

I'm such a prolific photographer because I do not make excuses. I'm always photographing, throughout the entirety of my day. From the moment I wake up at 5 AM to the moment I step inside at 6 PM, I'm moving my body, camera in hand, making something from nothing. **Photography is like breathing, it's second nature, and there is no hesitation between me and pressing that damn shutter.** I am prolific because I have the work ethic of a Spartan and the discipline of the United States military.

What Makes Me Such a Great Photographer

The reason I'm so great at photography is because **I was born to make.** From my earliest memories of organizing warrior figurines from Italy in detailed stories with complex compositions of battle scenes, to building tipis, blazing paths and trails in the forest, and my earliest memories of learning photography in high school when I was 16 with my great-uncle's Leica M3, all roads led me to greatness.

The first major city where I worked on my photography was Baltimore, specifically in a very dangerous neighborhood in Sandtown-Winchester. In this neighborhood, nobody would photograph, and I was typically one of the only people walking on the street, as most of the buildings were abandoned, or filled with people dealing

drugs. I have no fear, and I've always been a courageous adventurer. **This courage is what made me the photographer I am today.** The courage to throw myself onto the front lines of life, despite the circumstances, city, or location. I can enter any room, any city, any location, and conquer it with my camera.

My foundation built me—a foundation of courage, audacity, and a daring nature to photograph the impossible.

Learning Is Remembering Who We Are

While I know I am excellent, strong, and great, I also know that **I know nothing**, and that I'm continuously learning each day. I think that the path to learning and growing, with a childlike amateur mindset, is what brings us closer to God. When we are children, we have zero preconceptions of the world around us. We are not hardened by societal norms and expectations. We know no idea of right or wrong. A child reacts through emotional whims. **Through this intuition, this childlike curiosity, we find ourselves—who we actually are, at our core—an ancient soul.**

We Are Ancient Souls

Let's consider our soul has had a life of its own one time in the past. Perhaps my soul was that of an angel, an archangel, with sword and shield, on the front lines of battle in heaven. Maybe my soul is one that was in war, one that was fed to the lion's den, thrown into the dungeon, to rise up again. Perhaps my soul was on the front lines of battle at Thermopylae with the 300 Spartans.

The more I go through life and recognize how I love danger, remembering my passion for courage, exploration, and adventure, **I find myself closer and closer to who I truly am—an ancient soul, a warrior from a past life.**

Why I'm Confident That I Am the King of Philadelphia

I know that I am the king of Philadelphia because I am the only one awake at 4 AM, strapping on my weighted vest, working toward building strength. I do not need shoes, or even food. I fast until the sunsets, and eat only meat before I go to sleep.

I know that I am the king because I need nothing. In terms of photography, there's not a single soul that could ever keep up, that could ever match my passion, my drive, or my work ethic. **I am the king of the streets of Philadelphia.**

I Traveled the World

Throughout my early 20s, I traveled the world. I've taken the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and all throughout Israel and Palestine. I've volunteered on a farm on a kibbutz, working with cows, tending gardens, landscaping, and practicing horticulture. I packed up my bags in the middle of the night without leaving a notice, taking the bus from the north all the way to the lowest elevated city in the world, arriving at midnight, knocking on the door of a Palestinian home, being invited inside, and spending the next few months sleeping on the floors of mosques, traveling from mosque to mosque, photographing Palestinian life.

My adventurous spirit led me to become a Peace Corps volunteer, where I spent time off the grid, in rural villages, working as a fish farmer in Zambia, Africa. I documented funerals and baptisms, and even conflict in Israel and Palestine. **I've seen so much in this world, in such a short amount of time.** At this point in my life, I dive within my mind, and travel endlessly here in my hometown, Philadelphia. Now at 28 years old, I conquered what I needed to, by traveling these various locations, experiencing life in the great unknown, and I'm now home, back in my essence, back in my hometown.

I Make Art 24/7

When you have a camera that can fit in your front right pocket, **you enter a perpetual flow state of production**, through the creation of art, throughout the entirety of the day. Also, with an iPad Pro, and the Procreate app, I have the ability to remix images, to create visual art, and to expand my street photography from mere photographs to collages, montages, and remixes that give me even more opportunities to create throughout the day.

I use the iA Writer application to write essays like this one, simply going for a walk, voice-dictating my thoughts. I recently started writing poems, making calligraphy drawings, and even consider my new GoPro POV audio podcasts to be art. **My life is art.** By live streaming my life, I'm sharing the evolutionary journey of myself.

Spartan Elite

The path of strength and greatness requires Spartan training every day. **Just go barefoot and don't look back.** The agoge training that boys went through in Sparta to become warriors should be our blueprint to strength training. They would train without shoes, bathe in cold water, deprive themselves of food, and lived an extreme austere lifestyle. Through physical pain, strength building, and discipline, **you create mental toughness.**

How to Restore Your Muscles

When you consider the etymology of the word restaurant, meaning to restore, perhaps it is most wise for us to find true restaurants in the city of Philadelphia that can help restore our bodies. In 18th century Paris, restaurants were healing broths sold by street vendors that restored the bodies of the people that consumed the broth. **Actually, the Spartans consumed broth as their primary food source.**

Vietnamese beef pho is the only true restaurant in the city of Philadelphia. The reason being, it contains so much collagen, a vital protein that helps replenish our cells in our body. Filled with bone broth, organ meat like tripe, and beef, this dish is truly medicinal.

For instance, if I ever feel sore, stiff joints, or a cut on my body, I always turn to organ meats or Vietnamese pho as the solution. Once per week, at least, we should consume organ meat, such as beef liver. It truly does restore your body. Also, I believe that **sleep is our ultimate way to recover and build muscle**. By getting at least 8 hours of sleep, and sleeping as early as possible, we set our days up for success, and restore our bodies, recharging our human battery to 100%.

What Is So Special About Nature?

When you're comfortable in your own skin, confident, and courageous, you can spend lots of time in nature, in peace and solitude. There's something so special about listening to nature sounds, enjoying open space and fresh air, by yourself, turning inward, removing all of the external distractions from modern life. **I believe we should go for daily hikes in nature**, as a way to connect with something greater than ourselves, like God, the universe, and find out who we truly are, in silence.

Striving for Something Greater

I noticed in the village of Zambia, Africa, the hierarchy between God, tribe, and land. In the village, everybody has a role to play. The women wake up early in the morning, with babies on their back and firewood on their heads. The men are building churches and homes. The boys are building bricks with sand and mud, and the girls are sweeping the floors and preparing food for the day. **In the center of the village, there is a church, where everybody comes together to learn of the story of Jesus.**

At the center of the church, there is an altar, where sacrifices are made, and we remind ourselves of the archetype, the hero, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. By following the teachings of Jesus, or any mythos for that matter, whether it be an ancient Greek myth of Achilles in the *Iliad*, or even following the teachings and stories of Prophet Muhammad or Moses. The thing we lack most in modern life is **a myth, an archetype—something greater than human potential to strive for**. I believe we must release the inner mythos within us, creating our own legend, our own odyssey in our own lifetime.

My Life Is a Vacation Every Day

The word vacation means to be empty, to be free, to be at leisure. My thought is, if you have the strength and military power of a Spartan within your physical body, **everything you do in the day becomes leisure**. There's no such thing as "work." This work-hard, grind-hard mindset is a slave mentality. When you're full of vitality and physical vigor, nothing is work—everything is leisure, and **freedom truly is physical**.

Think of the modern workplace, spent inside, for eight hours per day, sitting down at a computer. To me, this is the ultimate tragedy, where man has become domesticated like a dog. It does not matter how much money you make within that office building, for you may be making millions of dollars, but if your time is sacrificed being distracted and bombarded with phone calls, Zoom calls, text messages, and emails, **you are not a free man**.

Modern-day freedom is physical, being outside, moving, contracting your muscles. Modern-day slavery is a sedentary lifestyle, trapped indoors, in a box. The new Spartans are outside and the helots are inside. The Spartans didn't see any value in material wealth. The helot hamster wheel? **Vacation is a mindset, a lifestyle, a philosophy**. Vacation is having free time to think, to read, to write, and to make art. One radical thought I have is, does anybody even have any time to read books anymore? Time is the ultimate currency.

Recently, I've been gliding through lots of ancient texts, and feel like this is the ultimate privilege in a modern world full of distractions. **Vacation isn't sitting on a beach with a martini, eating yummy food.** Vacation requires not a single dollar to be spent. Vacation is simply being outside, without any distractions of the mind, particularly in nature.

If You Feel Low Energy, Just Hit the Ground and Do Some Push-ups

The quickest way to boost your energy in the middle of the day is to continuously work out. If I ever feel low energy randomly, I'll hit the ground and do some push-ups, stretch my body with some yoga techniques, or just do something physical. **You actually increase your energy the more physical you are.** The more you sit around, the more you're going to start to yawn, and feel your body shut down. Just keep moving. For the past two years, I haven't sat down for the entirety of the day. My new radical thought is, can you go an entire lifetime without sitting down? If you take the bus, just stand up.

Can you continuously walk throughout the entirety of the day, standing, and always moving your physical body? I feel so much better when I use all of my energy throughout the day, pushing my body to the limit, to the point of physical exhaustion in the evening, where my body shuts down, and gets great sleep. **My biggest flex is that I know for a fact that I walk more than 75% of Philadelphia in an entire day before 6 AM even hits.** The idea: let's keep marching until the day that we die.

Posture First

The most critical thing that we should focus on within our health and fitness journey is strong posture. **A strong posture will lead to a strong gait, stride, and strengthen your legs.** Every morning, do a farmer's walk with two heavy dumbbells at your side, head up, shoulders back, chest open, and simply walk them out. Get a

weighted vest, and walk for an hour each morning. Strengthen your core, your feet, legs, back, all of your muscles. The most important factor of our strength should be having **a strong posture, standing tall, with a dominating presence.**

Lose Body Fat

It's so simple to lose body fat: just start fasting. **You don't need breakfast or lunch.** Also, what I've realized is that the more I've adopted a carnivore diet and fast throughout the day, **the more beautiful I become.** By losing body fat from my face, I have a much more pronounced jawline, and a beautiful face in general. **Maybe as men, we get more handsome as we age?** Or maybe it's just our lifestyle choices, what we choose to do and not do. Fasting with the carnivore diet has proven to not only make me stronger, but has given me a more beautiful face and physique. **It has made me more happy, intelligent, confident, courageous, and creative.**

The Trend Toward Ugliness

Is it just me, or do you also notice a trend toward uglification of the physical body? Whether tattoos, piercings, steroids, Botox, or this new strange thing I learned about in Miami—the Brazilian butt lift??? Just go for a walk in the mall in Miami, and look at the people... People don't look like people anymore. People look very grotesque, not human. Perhaps this is a product of social media, and the way that we share ourselves online. **We keep striving for more beauty, bigger butts, bigger boobs, bigger lips, bigger muscles,** and all of this exotic, unnatural stuff that is ultimately ugly?

The City Is Turning Into an Open-Air Flea Market

Every day I walk down the street, and notice how the city is becoming like this open-air flea market. People pitch tents and sell palm readings? There's a guy that literally sells turtles... People are selling drugs openly, holding them in the air, without a care. People are selling cologne that they make homemade at home. They run around saying "smell good." **The irony of this notion of smelling good is amusing** to me, as somebody who does not wear cologne, and finds it to be repulsive.

I can't stand the smell of cologne or perfume, and find it to be very unnatural and disgusting. How are we letting our city become an open-air flea market? It's almost like nobody cares. Also, public smoking is disgusting, and I cannot stand getting smoke blown in my face when I'm practicing street photography. And another random thought—why the hell do people spit in public? What are you spitting up? Why do you spit everywhere? I even see these people in the street, the "Hebrew Israelites," spitting as people walk by at their feet.

Another question: what causes children to litter so much? When I walk around, I notice how much more litter is on the streets, as school is back in session, and the kids just throw their trash—candy wrappers, Popeyes chicken—everywhere. I guess it's just how they're raised at home, and it transfers into the streets. **Is society on the incline, or decline?**

Why Modern Art and Contemporary Galleries Are Terrible

During a recent trip to New York City, I visited some art galleries. Most of the art was ugly, with no inherent beauty in the pieces themselves. They heavily relied on long-winded descriptions about identity, and how they are struggling to fit in within society. **Honestly, identity politics is the most divisive thing in society right now.** I even saw some ugly photos of statues being torn down, graffiti, anarchist stuff, with long essays about who is being oppressed in society. I'm pretty sure it came from a Magnum photographer, too. **Looks like Magnum is dead, and modern art**

too. Somebody hijacked the gallery and the art world, and it's time for us to take it back, through owning our own platforms, and staying clear from these contemporary spaces.

Stores Don't Accept Cash Anymore?

I recently went to make a purchase in a store, and they accepted zero cash. They only had those iPads, and accept card payment. Even during my recent experiences in airports, I noticed that I could never get enough change, or they just didn't have any change. Also, when I was in Miami, I saw robot dogs delivering food, and coffee shops only accepted card. **What does this mean for the future of capital, money, and wealth? Digital is the future?**

AirPods in Public?

When I'm on the bus, I'd love to shoot the shit with people and chat, but I noticed that most of them have AirPods in. **Honestly, every single one of them has headphones in, or is glued to their phone,** watching some TikTok, or swiping on some dating app. It's amusing to observe the way people interact with media, and I think it tells a lot about who they are, and where society is headed.

Another strange trend is sunglasses when it's not even sunny outside. **This is such a weird behavior, and very off-putting in my opinion.** People are becoming more closed off, more sheltered, more in their own bubble. I guess we should just leave them alone. However, I believe that **people with phones to their ears are not free.**

Military Power

USA, baby. America is the greatest country in the world because of our military. I'll never forget every morning, saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag before reciting the Our Father prayer in Catholic school. I have great pride in my country, but personally, I would never join the military. I contemplated it after my Peace Corps service, but realized that **dying in a war that I have nothing to do with is quite meaningless** and not a great way to go forward in life.

At this point, modern wars are fought with drones and technology, and I'm frankly seeing this headed toward dystopia. If a kid with an Xbox controller can control a drone, and drop a bomb on a city, killing innocent people, without being physically close to this country, I think that's pretty fucked up. **Of course, war is brutal, and will always be fucked up.** Maybe I just don't want any part of it?

Maybe after all, I just want our military to support our borders, protecting our country, and stop meddling in other peoples' affairs. I guess Israel's army is pretty much just the American army at this point. When I was in Israel, all of the soldiers spoke English, Hebrew, and even Arabic. The closer you get to Gaza, the larger the weaponry becomes—assault rifles now have grenade launchers attached to them. **Honestly, the only question I have now with war and technology is, what is the ethics of using drones in war?**

Why Share?

As I finish up my rant for the morning, I just wanted to quickly express why I'm so passionate about sharing for the past two years. I find that through sharing my thoughts candidly, in a raw and unfiltered approach, I'm being more in tune with who I truly am. I think when you disconnect from the world, and turn inward, through contemplation, writing, and even speaking, **you figure out what you deem worthy of your time, your preferences,** and even just find more joy in your everyday life.

I absolutely love using a GoPro to share my POV, my thoughts, through video and audio, as a way to augment my mind, my thoughts, and my life. I find that it gives my life deeper meaning, and through sharing my experience, maybe I can impact the lives of other people, even if it's just one person. I think **there's power to the individual, and it's never been easier to share your voice.** With the implementation of technology like iPhones, cameras, and websites, the power is within our hands now.

We can become our own media empire, our own local news organization, and share our own thoughts without any intermediary or censor. I see a future with artificial intelligence, and this I am very fond of as well. I find that by using ChatGPT, **I can enhance my ability to learn, to think, and even to create.** However, with the implementation of this artificial intelligence, perhaps the traditional approach to YouTube or media production is not worthy of our time. I think sitting in front of a camera as a talking head, inside, with perfect lighting, will be done perfectly by artificial intelligence.

If the future of information is artificial, and just already here, perhaps it's best for us to start sharing the authentic human experience in its raw and unfiltered form. By sharing my voice, through photography, video, audio, writing, etc., **I'm giving my life more meaning, documenting my evolution, creating a legacy, and augmenting how I perceive the world around me.** Maybe my new superpower is **not giving a fuck what people think about me.**