

## Three Key Traits to Become a Successful Street Photographer

**What defines success?** I believe a successful street photographer is someone who is simply making new pictures. To be in a state of production is the ultimate goal. I often get bored when I look back at my old photographs because I'm always looking for something new. At the end of the day, we want to focus on longevity and making pictures for the rest of our lifetime.

**How can we achieve this?** Here are three key traits to becoming a successful street photographer that will keep you going back out there for more.

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### Curiosity

The etymology of *curiosity* traces back to Latin and Middle French origins. It comes from the Latin word *curiositas*, meaning “carefulness” or “inquisitiveness,” derived from *curiosus*, meaning “careful” or “curious.” This Latin term is related to *cura*, meaning “care.”

The evolution of the word reflects a blend of careful attention and a desire to learn or know more.

**First and foremost, curiosity is key.** When it comes to street photography, our curiosity is what guides us out of our houses and onto the streets. Treat the camera as an excuse to go out into the world and see what's going on. When you're making photographs, you're asking questions about the world. Pay attention to what triggers your attention and follow those desires.

Every morning when I wake up, I like to think of it as a new day to go out there and play with my eyes wide open. I'm basically just a big kid with a camera. To remain forever curious, I believe we must return to a childlike state. Forget everything you think you know, and remain as open-minded as possible.

**Embrace chaos and the unknown.** Through our curiosity, we can uplift the mundane and create something out of nothing. Everything and anything can become photographable when you raise the camera to your eye. You just have to look at things like you're seeing them for the first time.

*Before you go outside, ask yourself this question:*

***What will reality manifest to be in a photograph?***

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## **Intuition**

The etymology of *intuition* is rooted in Latin. It comes from the Latin word *intuitio*, meaning "a looking at, consideration," which is derived from *intueri*, translated as "to look at, consider." This word is formed from *in-* (meaning "at, on") and *tueri*, which means "to look at, watch over."

The word encapsulates the idea of "looking into" or perceiving something instinctively.

### **Street Photography requires a strong visual acuity and sensitivity to things.**

Intuition is that God-like feeling you get from your gut that tells you to press the shutter. To capture spontaneous moments, you must remain on your toes at all times, ready to pounce on the hunt.

- Don't overthink, just shoot.
- The less you think while on the street, the more you tap into your intuition.
- Follow your desire, and whatever interests you will appear within the frames you create.

**Street photography is a zen-like meditative practice** where intuition and spontaneity take over. It's liberating because it keeps you in the present moment. You forget about the past and don't worry about the future. The only thing that matters is the *now*. I say, let the chips fall as they may. Follow your gut and shoot

more carelessly. Take more pictures than you think you should and approach subjects from all angles. A lot of the time, the first shot you take will be the best because *intuition is king*.

Street photography is an artistic approach to the medium. It's a blend of documentary and surrealism. When reviewing your photographs after a day of shooting, consider this:

***What you see isn't what you get. What you get is what you didn't see.***

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## **Courage**

The etymology of the word *courage* traces back to the Latin word *cor*, which means "heart." Over time, the concept of courage became associated with qualities of the heart, such as bravery and steadfastness.

The evolution of "courage" from its Latin roots to its modern usage encapsulates the idea of inner strength and bravery as qualities of the heart.

A famous quote about courage from the "Rocky" film series, specifically from "Rocky Balboa" (2006), is:

*"It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward; how much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!"*

**How much heart can one have?** Street photography tests your courage. It's not necessarily easy to photograph strangers on the streets candidly. You must be bold and daring. Street Photography requires a bit of risk-taking to get the shot. I find this to be an exhilarating feeling that fuels my lust for life itself.

### **How to Build Courage in Street Photography:**

- **Ask for permission:** If you're nervous, start by asking people if you can photograph them. It helps break the ice.
- **Use an Instax camera:** Gift a small print to a stranger after you take their photo. It's a great way to connect and build confidence.
- **Get used to rejection:** If someone denies you, see it as a good thing. It builds resilience and humility.

**Remember, we photograph people because we love people.** Confrontation creates humility and allows you to fuel your courage and confidence to actually go out there and do the thing. You must recognize that you're not doing anything wrong when you're making pictures of people on the streets. Embrace your passion with an open heart. Wear a smile on your face when on the streets. Say hi to people and give them compliments. Be the tourist in your hometown. Sometimes, the more you stand out, the more you blend in.

**Ultimately, the amount of courage you exude on the street will determine the results of your photographs.** Strong pictures are the results of a strong photographer. One question I like to ask myself about my photographs is this:

***Did the photograph require courage to make, or not?***

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### **Conclusion**

In the end, street photography is about much more than just taking pictures. It's about being present, curious, and courageous. By embracing these traits, you'll find yourself constantly drawn back to the streets, ready to capture whatever reality manifests. It's a lifelong journey, and the goal is to keep walking it, camera in hand, with a sense of wonder and a heart full of courage.