

## Autotelic Street Photography

In the past year, I've stumbled upon a philosophy that has transformed the way I approach street photography—a mindset that has brought more **joy**, more **curiosity**, and more **freedom** than I ever imagined possible. This philosophy is rooted in the concept of an **autotelic** approach to street photography, and it's been one of the greatest gifts I've discovered.

### What is Autotelic Street Photography?

The word **autotelic** comes from the Greek *auto* meaning “self,” and *telos* meaning “goal” or “purpose.” At its core, autotelic street photography is about creating purely for the sake of creation—finding joy and fulfillment in the act itself, without seeking external validation or reward. It's photography **for the sake of photography**. Nothing more, nothing less.

### The Joy in the Process

Street photography has always been about **discovery**—the beauty of the unexpected, the moments that unfold in the rhythm of city life. But embracing an autotelic mindset has deepened this experience. When you're no longer chasing approval, you can immerse yourself fully in the process of making pictures. Each moment becomes an opportunity to explore, to be curious, and to see the world with fresh eyes, much like the way a child sees everything anew.

*"Every day feels like an adventure again. I walk the streets with my eyes wide open, eager to see what image will emerge from the chaos."*

This mindset has reignited the curiosity I had when I first picked up a camera. The results? They've been **more authentic**, more meaningful—because I'm not shooting for anyone else. I'm creating for the sheer pleasure of it.

### A Question to Consider

Here's something I want you to think about: **Imagine no one ever sees your photos**. Imagine you never share them, that they remain solely for your eyes. Would you still take photos? If your answer is yes, then you're already in tune with

the autotelic mindset. The joy comes from within—it's the act of making pictures, of being out there on the streets, that fuels you.

This approach **frees you from the constraints of validation**. It's not about likes, comments, or recognition. It's about something deeper: the satisfaction of knowing you're creating for yourself, because you have to, not because you're chasing anything.

### **Practical Tip: Create Your Own Space**

If you do choose to share your work, do it on **your own terms**. Create a space that belongs solely to you, where your photos can live and breathe independently of social media metrics. Consider getting a simple domain with your name, setting up a WordPress site, and using a clean theme like Astro. This way, you have an archive, a place to reflect on your growth, and a home for your images that's free from external influence.

### **The Liberating Nature of an Autotelic Approach**

To adopt an autotelic approach in street photography is to **liberate yourself** from the weight of expectation. It's the purest form of creation, where the act itself is the reward. As long as you're curious and engaged with the world, the joy will always be there, waiting for you in the streets.

So, step outside, **eyes wide open**, with no goal other than to see what reality will manifest in a photograph. Be curious. Be bold. And remember: the ultimate reward is in the process.