

## Taking It Back to Basics: Lessons Learned from a Decade of Street Photography

Today, I want to share insights gathered over ten years of street photography. These aren't just techniques—they're philosophies that shape how I see the world through a camera.

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### The Camera is a Passport

Your camera is *an excuse to see the world*. Think of it as a key unlocking doors, stories, and places you'll encounter along the way.

*"Be a tourist in your own town, detached from any outcome, simply wondering what's out there."*

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### Be a Tourist

A tourist is always excited and curious. When traveling, I wake up with my eyes wide open, eager to explore. Apply this mindset to your daily photography practice: **Slow down, appreciate details, and see each day as your first with a camera.** Walk familiar routes with fresh eyes, read signs, visit parks, and embrace each scene.

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### No Preconceived Notions

*Street photography demands an open mind—no preconceived notions.* Forget researching locations, weather, or events. Instead, **let your intuition guide you**, embracing the unknown as it unfolds.

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### **The World is a Canvas**

The beauty of street photography is that **the world is our canvas**. The street becomes a stage, where strangers are actors, dancing upon the concrete. We, as photographers, are the directors of this spontaneous drama, capturing moments that tell the story of the street.

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### **Mind, Body, and Soul Photography**

*Ground yourself in the now.* Street photography is a zen practice. For me, fasting while shooting keeps my mind clear and my body connected, allowing me to see with laser focus. *Each photo reflects both the life before me and my inner state.*

*“The photos are not only a depiction of life in front of me; they turn inwards as a reflection of my soul.”*

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### **Hand-Eye Coordination**

The camera should feel like an extension of your eye and body. Street photography requires **quick hand-eye coordination**—seeing, moving, and snapping at the perfect moment. I practice with a Japanese Kendama toy, which has strengthened my reflexes and lets me shoot with intuition, often without even checking the screen.

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### **The Name of the Game is in the Mundane**

Street photography is about *embracing the mundane*. **Find beauty in the banal.** Walking the same route daily lets you see the extraordinary in everyday life, recognizing beauty in places you might otherwise overlook.

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### **Sharp Visual Acuity**

A strong photographer observes the world with **sharp visual acuity**. *Laser focus is key*. This means observing every detail, every fleeting moment, and all the nuances in between. Our ability to spot patterns and focus on what's essential is what shapes our photographs.

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### **Pattern Recognition**

One of the most crucial skills in street photography is **pattern recognition**—observing the rhythm of both nature and human behavior. Notice how people move, how light casts onto sidewalks, and anticipate the moments unfolding ahead of you. *Get in tune with the beat of the street.*

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### **Repetition and Practice**

Walk the same street, daily. The more I walk, the deeper my connection to the street. Following familiar routes helps me learn the nuances of each corner at different times of the day. *Repetition and consistency bring results.*

*“When I follow the same route for weeks, months, or even a year, I begin to know the street like the back of my hand.”*

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### **Composition Through Intuition**

The best compositions happen when they follow intuition. **Overthinking leads to stiff, over-posed frames**. Stay loose and natural. Even when compositions align perfectly, it's often instinctive. *Less thinking, more shooting.*

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### **An Instant Sketch of Life**

A photograph is an *instant sketch of life*. Don't treat each shot as a masterpiece; it's all practice, and each image captures life as it unfolds in a fraction of a second.

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### **Imperfection is Perfection**

Nothing is perfect, nor should it be. Embrace imperfections in life, in yourself, and in your photos. Let frames tilt, let subjects overlap. *Imperfection brings life to a photograph.*

*"Allow frames to tilt, subjects to overlap, and conventional rules to be broken. Imperfection is perfection."*

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### **Uplift the Discarded**

Everything is temporary. Embrace this by photographing things left behind. *Capture the trash, textures on walls, wrinkles on faces.* Highlighting life's impermanence adds depth to your work.

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### **Photography as a Personal Diary**

Photography is my personal diary—a visual record of moments, emotions, and memories. *Capture your family, friends, and surroundings.* There's beauty in simplicity; make a body of work from the everyday.

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### **A Universal Language**

Photography is a universal language. Like music and dance, it crosses cultural boundaries and connects people. When I travel, I bring an Instax camera to gift prints to strangers, bridging language gaps through images alone.

*“Photography transcends language and touches souls worldwide.”*

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### **Champion Humanity**

Photography has the power to uplift humanity. Look at people on the street as champions of their own lives. **Hold life up high, capturing what it means to be human.**

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### **Detach from the Outcome**

Photography should be *autotelic*—done for its own sake. The word “autotelic” comes from Greek: “auto” meaning self, and “telos” meaning goal. Make photos because it brings you joy. Let go of external validation, and experiment freely. **The process is the purpose.**

*“Imagine if nobody saw your work. Would you still photograph?”*

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### **Greatness Takes Time**

Great photography takes time. Street photography is slow; it’s normal to come home with one great photo a month or even a year. Don’t let this discourage you. **Just keep shooting.** Your work will come together over years, not days.

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### **Be Limitless and Courageous**

Street photography demands courage. **The street is your arena.** Enter it without fear, and make the photo without hesitation. *Confrontation teaches you how to handle the street.* Walk confidently, head high, and approach life boldly.

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### **The Frontlines of Life**

Photography isn't just about the image—it's about courage and curiosity. *Do you throw yourself onto the frontlines of life?* Do you wake up eager to see what's out there? Strong photography requires an engaged spirit.

*“Do you wake up each morning with your eyes wide open, wondering what's out there?”*

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### **Forever an Amateur**

Forget everything you think you know. Embrace the amateur spirit daily. Stay curious, stay open, and keep learning. *Feed your childlike curiosity each day as if it's your first time with a camera.*

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### **The Art of Street Photography**

Street photography isn't a genre; it's a philosophy. We're not just bystanders—we're participants in life itself, capturing chaos with clarity. *The essence of street photography is in documenting the complexities of everyday life.*

*“Street photography isn't just a genre; it's a way of seeing and doing things.”*

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### **Give Life Meaning**

Photography affirms life. It reminds us to appreciate the mundane and see beauty in repetition. *Each moment has meaning if you're willing to see it.*

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### **Lust for Life**

Your photographs reflect your *lust for life*. Photography fuels my desire to experience more and see more. Each day, it gives me fresh eyes and a renewed drive to reach greater heights.

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### **Painting with Light**

Photography is **painting with light**. Use sunlight to your advantage. Rise for sunrise, embrace golden hour, and follow the light. Shadows and light will guide you to beauty.

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### **Curiosity is the Goal**

The ultimate goal of street photography is to stay curious. Every photograph you take opens a new world. Step outside, camera in hand, and *exist outside time*.

*“Before you head out, ask yourself: What will reality reveal in a photograph today?”*

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### **Key Takeaways**

- **Treat your camera as a passport** to see the world with fresh eyes.
- **Embrace the mindset of a tourist**, even in familiar places.
- **Let intuition guide you** rather than preconceived ideas.
- **Stay connected to the moment** with a clear mind and sharp focus.
- **Practice daily** to connect deeply with your surroundings.
- **Appreciate imperfection**—it brings life to your photos.
- **Photography is a universal language** that transcends words.
- **Let go of outcomes** and embrace photography for its own sake.
- **Practice patience**—great photography takes time.
- **Approach the street courageously**, letting curiosity drive you.

*Street photography is a lifelong practice of seeing, feeling, and engaging with the world. Keep your curiosity alive, photograph freely, and allow each image to sketch a moment of life.*