

Become a Creator

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What does it mean to be a creator?

I remember as a child, I would explore the woods, build forts and teepees with sticks, sharpen spears, pretend to hunt deer, build bridges with stones, and cross streams with my friends. I was always an explorer and a creator since an early child. Perhaps, in order to become a creator, we must also become a child again.

The World of Dante

When I consider any creation that I make, I like to think that it encompasses **the World of Dante**. When I'm looking at the world in front of me with my camera in hand, I am responding to life with my intuition, my soul, which is then revealed within the frames I create.

I believe that through the power of photography, we can reveal the **soul of the street** and the external world around us. Not only do these photographs become an instant sketch of life, but they also reveal the soul of the photographer. My photographs become the world that I create.

I curate what I put inside my frames. What you choose to exclude from the frame is just as important as what you decide to include in it. **Create your own world through the medium of photography.**

Authenticity

Authenticity is a value that I deem critical to consider.

As an artist, we must remain true to ourselves, and not cater too much to an audience. When we rely on external validation or praise for our work, this removes authenticity from the equation as it's much easier to be someone you are not in front of others.

Everything is a Copy of a Copy

Ultimately, **everything is a copy of a copy**. A photograph is a copy. Fashion trends are copies. Technology is always copying. Even films, TV, architecture, become copies of past works over and over again.

On our path towards authenticity, let us not be bogged down by basic notions of identity. Memes are like genes in our body that encompass our DNA. Just as genes replicate during biological reproduction, memes are shared culturally through ideas and behaviors. **Be authentic**, but recognize that it's nearly impossible to be 100% original.

Jesus is the Best Male Role Model

If there's anybody that we should replicate or copy from, perhaps it's wise to view **Jesus as the ultimate male role model**. He valued courage, conviction, integrity, honesty, forgiveness, love, and self-discipline. Let's take the teachings of Jesus and his values by applying them to our everyday modern lives.

The American Empire

Let us consider the **United States of America** similarly to the Roman Empire. Our military conquest and dominance throughout the entire globe is certainly similar to the presence Ancient Rome had.

Wherever I travel, American and western culture is everywhere. I've even seen American culture and ideas being spread in remote villages in Zambia, Africa. I'm proud to be an American and believe that if there's anything I personally identify with, it is my nation first and foremost. I am glad I was raised saying the pledge of allegiance before class in school because now as an adult I still have a sense of pride for where I was born and raised. Perhaps it's wise to consider **America first**.

Spartan

I'm currently reading *The Spartans* by Paul Cartledge. I'm interested in the Spartans as they were **warriors** that had an extreme toughness that inspires me. Studying how ancient cultures lived is perhaps better insight than any modern lifestyle or way of thinking. **Learn from the past** and move onward with courage into the future.

Share Your POV

The ultimate goal of an artist is to **share our perspective**. By using a GoPro, and speaking directly to the camera, I put the viewer in my shoes. Maybe the GoPro is the best camera to use in terms of video production, as it enhances your ability to become yourself and express yourself authentically.

Imperfection is Perfection

Nothing in life is perfect.

You are not perfect and neither is your artwork—and I believe it shouldn't be! Just let the chips fall as they may, embrace the spirit of play, make a mess, and clean it up again. Don't be caught up in perfection in any endeavor. Whether you're making videos, photos, or even writing, **stop trying to be so perfect.**

Make Something New

My ultimate goal is to **create every single day**. I find this is the way to stay alive as a photographer. I want to make something new each day because it keeps me interested in life itself with curiosity at the forefront. By carrying the camera with me at all times, there is really no excuse for me not to make something new each and every day.

The Real World

Photography is the ultimate medium to practice, because it allows the practitioner to **explore the real world**. We are not confined indoors to a certain canvas, but the world is our canvas. I find this to be the most liberating and exciting aspect of photography. Explore the real world more and treat life as a video game for you to enjoy. **Have fun, but just don't get killed...** maybe you don't respawn in real life.

Avoid Negative People

Negative people are like leeches that get stuck to your skin after swimming in a pond. It seems that misery loves company and people really do enjoy complaining and letting their emotions out onto you. If you experience this situation, I believe we must ruthlessly pick these leeches off of our skin and move on. **Let the cave dwellers chase the shadows** as you just follow the light. It's inevitable that you will blind them with how bright you are. Avoid negative people like the plague.

Fortify Yourself

I believe it's our duty as men to **be strong**. Weightlifting is a simple solution to fortify your body and becoming the greatest version of yourself. I prefer a simple routine that encompasses a farmer's walk, pull-ups, and push-ups. Perhaps it's wise to create your own home gym and do your fitness routine first thing in the morning without even having to travel anywhere. **Be hard in a soft world.**

How to Curb Your Anger

Anger is an emotion that is inflicted upon everybody, but I find there are ways to curb it and **channel this negativity into positivity**. As a man, we naturally have higher testosterone levels. I believe the more you increase your testosterone through eating meat, the less prone you are to experiencing anger. There is a sense of calm you feel when you are satiated after eating meat. It's much more difficult for you to get angry about petty things. If you feel angry, channel that emotion into weightlifting, long walks, and always hold your tongue. **The higher your testosterone, the less sensitive you will be.**

Laughter is Contagious

Laugh in the face of chaos.

Perhaps finding the absurdity or chaos of life to be funny is the source of all humor. Whenever I see somebody laughing or smiling, I feel like it's the most attractive and beautiful thing. It becomes contagious to the point where you can't help but smile and laugh with them. **Smile more, laugh more**, and recognize how much more beautiful and attractive you are when you are happy.

The Art of Compliments

One simple thing I've been adopting in my everyday life is **giving compliments to strangers**. Whether it's their outfit, smile, hair, or just some action or job that they are performing, give them a compliment, and pay respect to your neighbors. There really is something special about small acts of kindness that I believe become a ripple effect in the world and make somebody else's day. It also helps you gain confidence in confrontation and interacting with others in the public space. As we embark on our personal journeys of self-discovery and improvement, don't become a social outcast that doesn't engage with people. **Embrace others with a spirit of kindness and openness** without the need for anything in return.

Stand Tall

Posture is important in this modern world that has many people sedentary or sitting down all day. When you walk on the street, stand tall. Keep your head up, chest open, shoulders back, and walk with pride and confidence. It may seem ridiculous at first, to be concerned with the way that you are standing or sitting

down, but once you recognize that it is something that affects your physical health and well-being, you start to take it much more seriously. I prefer the farmer's walk in the gym as it increases my grip strength and ultimately enhances my posture.

Why Kill Your Ego?

Maybe it's wise to **have an ego**.

When you remove your ego from the equation, perhaps you merely are just a walking being floating through life. Give yourself a sense of importance and duty for humanity as a collective through improving yourself and working towards your own personal goals. Perhaps this is the only way forward to making any real positive change in society, or the world at large. **Wield your ego wisely**. Perhaps killing it is a denial of your life.

The Future is Bright

Optimism beats pessimism. When I look outside and see the sunrise, I find myself wondering what's beyond the horizon. The future is bright, and there is so much to do and so much to see in this life of ours. Find yourself waking up in the morning, ready to conquer each day with your eyes wide open, curious about what's out there like a child. Return to that spirit of play like a child would be and realize that it's critical for you to stay optimistic in a world that promotes such degeneracy and negativity through the media. Avoid these things at all costs. I say, **create your own media, create your own world**, or your own empire. Welcome to the World of Dante!

Embrace Change

As an artist, **change is necessary**. It's important not to get caught up with one way of doing things, and to break free of any past notions of what you deemed to be "success." **Create your own values** and way of doing things. Focus on making new things and embrace change openly. Challenge your own ideas each and every day. Don't stay stagnant, and just keep moving. **Embrace chaos and change** every single time you set out to make anything.

Solitude and Soul

I think I've always been a misfit. In high school, I would skip class, and explore the neighborhood outdoors instead of sitting down and learning in the classroom. I've always felt like I needed adventure to learn. To this day, I prefer going for **very long walks by myself**. I find this to be a way to discover my true self on a deeper level and my connection to the universe. Embracing **solitude** is my voluntary decision to discover my soul.

Societal Norms

Don't become constrained by the norms that society imposes upon you. Create your own game to play and embrace yourself to the fullest. It's hard for me to try to even pretend to be "normal" sometimes. I have to speak my mind, share my perspective, create, make art, destroy things, and rebuild again. It's difficult for me to become confined to any indoor space, whether it's an office, classroom, or even my own home. I need to think outside the box and quite literally remove myself physically from the box in order to be my truest self.

Content from Within

Don't depend on external circumstances for happiness. What I realized through solitude is the fact that true happiness and bliss come through finding beauty in the mundane. There is an art to walking, observing, talking, thinking, and exploring that I believe we overlook in modern society. We often turn to stimuli on our phones, TV, and computer screens, but realistically, **the ultimate entertainment is out in the world itself.** My favorite thing to do these days is to simply walk on a grass patch, look at flowers, look at trees, throw rocks around, be by the water, and just contemplate. There really is a special connection that we have to this real world that has nothing to do with man-made things such as technology or media. Don't rely on any of these distracting external things for your happiness. **Seek joy from within** and appreciate the simple things in life such as sunlight, meat, and water.

Becoming Abundant

Perhaps **to be selfish is to be selfless.** Focus on yourself and you will positively impact others. I believe that everybody on earth has their own vocation, or calling, that they must work on. For me, it's photography. The more I work on my photography, the better I become as a person and the more I have to offer to others when I engage with people.

Boundless Freedom

Untether yourself. When you walk on the street, recognize that the path is infinite, and endless. This earth is so open and there is so much to see. Imagine this, you could live until you're 120 years old, and still not see everything on this planet. Allow this feeling to flow through you and unshackle yourself from your hometown, culture, beliefs, and free your mind, body, and spirit, to become more.

Follow the Light

At the end of the day, we photographers **paint with light**. Let us follow the light as our guiding force in life. Through light, we can create art. We possess the superpower to abstract the world around us through the medium of photography, using sunlight as our ultimate source of power. When I photograph under the sun, I can't help but to feel this sensation of power. It's something unique, special, and different from any other form of art.

Wield that camera as a sword, strike through the heart of chaos, reveal the soul of the street, and create visual order and harmony through the light of life.