

Perspective and Flourishing in Philadelphia

What's poppin, people? It's Dante, and today I'm walking around City Hall here in Philadelphia, thinking about perspective – how everything is, at its core, perspective.

When I think about perspective, naturally, I think about photography. It's looking up, looking out, trying to capture the architecture around me from a unique angle. In photography, the way we position ourselves and our cameras essentially determines the outcome of the photograph. It's a straightforward concept, but there's more to it. How we see and perceive the world – that's what ultimately shapes our view of life. And I mean this both **physically and metaphorically**.

Philadelphia: A City of Contrast and Beauty

To me, Philadelphia is a beautiful city. It's full of grand architecture, filled with amazing people and a unique, diverse charm. Walking down Market Street, I hear the chaos – cars honking, people shouting, others caught in tough situations, smashing and bashing things. There's homelessness, there's addiction, and a rawness that can feel intense. Yet, *perspective* is everything. The way we perceive these nuances in our city, our lives, and our hometowns makes a difference.

I find that **without order, there is no chaos**, and without chaos, there is no order. Thriving in that intersection – balancing the chaos with the order – is where I find my success in both photography and life. It influences how I feel both emotionally and physically. This is my hometown; *welcome to my neighborhood*. People talk a lot of smack about Philly, calling it dirty or drug-ridden.

“Maybe we have to blame the District Attorney, Larry Krasner, sitting inside that office there. But look, what can we do about it but change our perspective?”

Changing Perspective to Unlock Flourishing

Imagine "flourishing" as an attribute in a video game like *Skyrim*. You know how you can level up different traits to 99? What if we could level up our *flourishing* to 99? What would that mean?

- It means looking at the ups and downs.
- It means finding beauty in the ugly as well as the beautiful.
- It means championing every aspect of our environment and seeing meaning in it.

Whether I'm photographing a piece of trash, a crack in the sidewalk, or something people might normally ignore, I try to make those things worthwhile. Photography lets me **shape my world**.

"You can create a new world in a fraction of a second."

Capturing something meaningful through the act of making pictures gives my life meaning and shapes my perspective on what's around me.

The Power of Photography: Creating Order in Chaos

"I don't need to go anywhere in this world but within my own mind, within my own perspective, to make any detail, any moment, any place, person, or thing beautiful – and worth uplifting in a photograph."

This is, to me, the power of photography. It enhances the way I see things. With a camera in hand, life becomes clearer. Without it, maybe the chaos could feel overwhelming. But when I have the camera, I get to **put order within my frames**. I give meaning to life, affirming each moment and every nuance of my city.

Photography as a Superpower

The ultimate superpower of photography? **The ability to create a new world with a camera.** Everything around me becomes infinitely fascinating and worth relishing in. This – this is what it means to flourish. Perspective allows me to see even the most mundane, banal things as interesting, providing an endless *lust for life*.

And that's it. Just a few thoughts I figured I'd share. Maybe some of it makes sense, maybe not – who knows?