

Designing Your Life

What's popping people? It's Dante. This morning started off here in **Fairmount Park, Philadelphia**, as I headed to work at the **Horticulture Center**. My job? Tending plants, clearing land, pruning, deadheading, planting, shoveling dirt—getting my hands dirty.

Today, I thought about this idea: *designing your life*. What does it mean to design your life, and why does it matter?

A Life of Curiosity and Exploration

I've always been a curious person, someone who loves to explore. I've traveled the world, volunteered on a kibbutz in **Israel**, worked with farmers landscaping, gardening, milking cows. I've spent time with a **Palestinian family** at their hostel, where I shared meals of hummus, eggs, dates, chicken, pigeon, rice, and potatoes. After breakfast and family time, I'd work on my personal photography.

I even spent time in **Zambia** as a Peace Corps volunteer in aquaculture, learning fish farming. I love being physical—gardening, farming, landscaping. I love seeing the world change and grow, knowing I had a hand in it.

Self-Sufficiency and Unconventional Paths

“The experiences we have along the journey in life are ultimately what we'll look back on before our deep sleep of death—not the things we've acquired.”

In my 20s, I followed an unconventional path. I spent most of the decade **volunteering without pay** and working on my personal photography. I was self-sufficient—washing clothes by hand, cooking over fire, slaughtering chickens and goats, digging fish ponds, and learning new languages like **Ichi Bemba**.

I integrated myself into communities and tribes, experiencing life in its rawest form. This journey might seem foolish to those who value money as the measure of success, but for me, the memories and experiences are what truly matter.

Returning to Philadelphia

Now I'm back home in **Philadelphia**, the city where I was born and raised. It's been hard to find my place here, especially when it comes to work. Finding something worthy of my time—something interesting—has been a challenge.

Working in **horticulture** has been uplifting. It's seasonal, so I've been at it since May. It's December now, and while my time here may be temporary, it resonates deeply with me. There's joy in the solitude, in cultivating plants, and in seeing the fruits of my labor.

At the same time, I get to work on my photography—taking macro shots of plants, enjoying nature walks, and letting my mind wander. I listen to podcasts and lectures about **Bitcoin**, ancient philosophy, and history while I work.

Designing My Everyday

I've realized that life isn't about the money or the things you acquire. It's about the **everyday lifestyle**—the process, the journey.

“If I were retired today, how would I spend my time?”

That's the question I asked myself. The answer led me here, working in the park, creating, and learning. I'm not working for money—I'm working because I genuinely enjoy my day.

Lessons in Simplicity

Here's the truth:

- **Money doesn't define success.**
- **Happiness comes from joy in the process.**
- **Invest your time wisely.**

For me, it's not about maximizing income but about maximizing **creativity, learning, and flourishing.**

“Design your life in a way that allows you to learn, grow, create, and flourish.”

What Works for Me

By designing my life around what brings me joy, I've found a balance: working in **horticulture**, enjoying nature, and creating art. This might not work for everyone, but it works for me.

Find what resonates with you. Life is too short to spend it chasing things that don't matter.