

## What Does It Mean to Be Inspired?

When you look at the etymological Latin root of the word *inspiration*, it derives from:

***inspirare* – to breathe into**

• ***in-*** = into

• ***spirare*** = to breathe

Originally, it referred to a divine or supernatural being breathing life or wisdom into a person. In religious contexts, it described how **God inspired prophets by filling them with the Holy Spirit.**

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## I Simply Returned to the Source

When I look at trees, I find they're very similar to human beings. Their branches extend upward into the sky, resembling the lungs within our bodies. Trees *literally* breathe life into us through the oxygen and clean air they provide. And when we breathe out, we give carbon dioxide back to them—a sacred exchange of breath between body and Earth.

Trees have roots planted deep within the soil, competing with others in their environment to grow larger, to reach the light. The more time I spend in nature—among the trees, plants, and especially under the sun—the more alive I feel. **I feel connected to the divine, to the source of all creation: God.**

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## God Created All Things

Have you ever watched a spider weave a web?

As soon as a spider is born, it has the innate ability to create intricate and patterned webs—structures that are not only aesthetically beautiful but functional. The web becomes a shelter and a trap, allowing the spider to survive.

The more time I spend in nature, surrounded by God's creations, the more I appreciate the **delicate, intricate design of everything**. I listen to lectures on astronomy and biology, I read philosophy, and I simply *contemplate the nature of existence*. Through this, I become inspired—not from a vague idea, but because **the world is literally breathing life into me**.

*The trees are breathing life into my soul.*

The spiritual nourishment I feel in solitude with God fuels me with vitality. When you recognize that *God created all things*, you draw closer to the source.

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## My Search for Inspiration

As a street photographer, I was initially inspired by the great masters like **Alex Webb**. His complex photographs—filled with rich color, strong shadows, and striking light—felt like the highest form of photography.

Later, I discovered one of his influences: **Ray Metzker**, who photographed primarily in my hometown, Philadelphia. Metzker's use of **high-contrast black-and-white** photography, with crushed shadows and exposed highlights, dances between documentary and abstraction. Inspired by these aesthetic choices, I began exploring similar techniques in my own work.

During this time, I often found myself at the **Wanamaker Building**, listening to the world's largest pipe organ under a beautiful bronze **eagle** sculpture. I would cull my black-and-white photographs there daily, surrounded by grand architecture and sacred music. That trifecta—**architecture, sculpture, and music**—is, to me, one of the highest forms of divine art. It encourages the viewer to strive upwards, to ascend beyond.

***It felt like my soul was climbing Jacob's ladder.***

I quit my photography job for the city. It didn't fulfill me. I wanted to pursue photography *as a pure artist*, not out of obligation.

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### **Returning to Church, Rome, and the Source**

Around this time, I returned to church and reconnected with my Catholic upbringing. I traveled to **Rome**, where I prayed in cathedrals and visited the **Castel Sant'Angelo** every day outside the Vatican. There, I memorized the **Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel**, drawn by curiosity and instinct. I had never learned it as a boy.

I also found myself gravitating toward churches housing paintings by **Caravaggio**. His use of *chiaroscuro*—high contrast lighting in biblical scenes—produced some of the most powerful works I've ever witnessed. These were not just technically stunning; they were **spiritually igniting**.

In 2023, I took a short trip to Paris and *stumbled upon* a sculpture of **Saint Michael**, with a **rainbow** arcing above him. The night before, I had dreamt of a **clouded dragon chasing me**—which transformed into a rainbow. I called my godmother, a nun for forty years, and she told me:

***"That's a wink from God."***

That day marked my spiritual rebirth. I became a **disciple of Christ**.

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## Living as an Artist in a Sacred Space

Back in Philadelphia, I needed a way to live that reflected my philosophy. I now work in the **Centennial Arboretum**, one of the most historic parks in the world. It spans 27 acres of beauty—woodlands, trees, exotic plants, a Japanese house, sculptures of composers and thinkers, and a fountain depicting **Rebecca at the well** from Genesis.

This is my **symposium among the ruins**.

I walk, read philosophy, prune dead leaves, and design gardens. It feels like **play**. As a child, I wandered the Wissahickon forest alone, sharpened sticks, built tipis, climbed trees, hunted with my imagination. And now—*I do the same*. I've returned to that childlike state of awe.

***“Follow your inner child,” they say. I did.***

Success to me isn't money or status—it's waking up with joy and **vitality**, eager to breathe fresh air, watch the sunrise, stay fasted, and **create from a place of leisure**. I no longer find inspiration in photography itself. I've gone beyond—to the **Creator of all things**.

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## God Is My Source of Inspiration

Every morning, I walk alone in the park, birds singing around me. I sing **The Lord's Prayer** aloud. I thank God for my health, my breath, the spirit within me. Yes, I have food, shelter, and water—but without being *tapped into the Source*, I truly believe it is **impossible to thrive**.

Now I treat each morning like a **miniature birth**, and each night like a **miniature death**. I rise with gratitude. I let the sun pour into my eyes. I sing, I dance, I play like a child.

***I am no longer hardened by society.***

*I've reached a pure state of knowing, because **I know that I know nothing.***

*We are all children of God.*

And **He is my ultimate source of inspiration.**

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