

Return to Day One: Why Photographers Should Embrace the Amateur Mindset

What's popping, people?

It's Dante. This morning, I'm walking around Center City Philadelphia along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway — just came from Logan Square's fountain. Very beautiful place to start the day. Yeah.

Barefoot Shoes That Don't Look Ridiculous

Quick note —

If you're curious about **barefoot shoes** that don't make you look like a cartoon character...

Get the Vivo Barefoot Primus Lite All Weather.

They feel like Vibram Five Fingers (the ELX model) but look like normal sneakers. I wear them to work too. Just feels proper having closed-toe shoes on the job, but I still get that barefoot connection with the ground.

Thought of the Day: Return to Day One

Alright, now to the real reason I'm walking and talking — photography.

Here's what I've been reflecting on:

“Every day should feel like Day One.”

This is straight-up *Zen* in practice.
It's how I try to operate as a human being.

The Red Ring of Death Philosophy

Every night, I assume I'm not going to respawn.
Like, imagine you're in some ultra-hardcore video game. You put your character to sleep...
but maybe the game just crashes for good. Red Ring of Death. You're done.

So when I wake up in the morning?

It feels like I've been born again.
Miniature birth. Blank slate. Everything is new.

And when you live like this —
You move through the world with childlike curiosity. You seek the sun. You drop down to study the cracks in the sidewalk. You see the glimmer on a pothole.

Infinite Curiosity = Infinite Photography

With this mindset:

- The mundane becomes mesmerizing
- Scratches on a street sign become art
- Light glancing off a bench is enough

“Through childlike curiosity, you can infinitely photograph and find meaning in life.”

Forget the Checklist. Empty the Mind.

We know so much about photography in 2025.
Photo books, gear, techniques, scenes, locations — it's endless.

But the real canvas is **internal**.

“Detach from the output. Turn inward. Empty the mind. Return to Day One.”

This is where authentic photos come from.
Not from striving to be some capital-P Photographer.
Just from *being*.

Love Thy Neighbor

I passed this sign:
“Love Thy Neighbor”
Simple. Profound.

Philadelphia — *phílos* (love) + *adelphós* (brother).

That's the Quaker philosophy this city was built on.
That's the teaching of Jesus. And honestly?

“Love thy neighbor as thyself is the law that replaces all laws.”

If people actually lived by that...
We wouldn't need systems, bureaucracies, rulers.
We'd bring the kingdom to Earth.

Stop Taking Yourself So Seriously

Photography doesn't need to be this calculated, strategic act.

I don't make checklists.

I don't have "projects."

I don't decide to go to 15th & JFK to shoot a theme.

I'm not covering a "topic."

I'm not trying to *say something*.

I'm just walking, being present, and snapping what moves me.

Kill the Notion of Style

Style? Forget it.

Look —

Caravaggio had chiaroscuro.

Gilden had harsh flash.

Alex Webb has lush layers and wild color.

But the **future photographer** isn't chasing style.

"The future photographer empties themselves and becomes a vessel for the medium."

No seeking. No striving. No becoming.

Just *being*. Just *seeing*.

Be a Vessel for the Medium

I'm not trying to make a photo that screams, "Dante took this."

"I don't care if it looks like my photo. That's not why I'm making it."

So stop striving.
Stop branding yourself.
Stop chasing identity.

Just empty yourself like a Zen monk.
Let go. Be curious. Walk slowly.
And become a vessel for the medium.

