

## **Why I Choose a Life of Leisure**

In 2020 I worked on the Biden campaign. I've experienced what it's like to work in politics—always being on call, in meetings, talking to thousands of people—and ultimately felt extremely drained at the end of this experience. I had hardly any time to work on my personal photography, art, read, write, or do anything for myself. As an artist, I very much realize that this lifestyle, of *negotium*, or attending to business affairs, is absolutely not for me.

## **Follow Your Inner Child**

Even when I worked as a photographer for the city, I found it extremely unfulfilling, because I had to make basic and boring portraits or pictures of events. This was around the time that I said to myself that it's time for radical change, and just started shooting high contrast, black-and-white—basically putting a stamp on the timeline that says I'm now pursuing photography as an independent artist.

And so I'm sharing this with you today because I believe that maybe something I say—or just by simply sharing my personal journey—can inspire you to think radically different about how we approach life. I feel like life is the ultimate video game, and it's up to you to decide how you wanna play the game. You don't have to live by the same rules, guidelines, or strategies that other players adopted.

For instance, I worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia, simply due to my intuition telling me to do so—it was like my inner child who explored in the forest wanted to go for another adventure. I volunteered on a kibbutz in Israel and lived amongst a Palestinian family in Jericho, sleeping on the floors of mosques and traveling all throughout the desert with a group of brothers. Inspired by my experiences tending the garden of a stranger's home in Jericho, or even on the kibbutz and my time in the Peace Corps, I realized how much joy working with my hands in the soil brings me.

When I was a little boy, I loved to explore the Wissahickon forest on my own in solitude. I would build teepees with sticks, sharpen spears, attempt to hunt deer, climb trees, swing from vines, and build bridges with stones—exploring the unknown, blazing my own trails and paths in my backyard. And now, as a 29-year-old adult, I placed a stone in a creek that I cross every day when I walk to work.

By remembering and following the thread of my inner child, in solitude, I found my path. I now work in horticulture—tending gardens, spending my time in the park, doing a lot of hard labor to be honest—chopping down trees, lugging thousands of pounds of wood to the recycling center, watering plants, digging holes, getting dirty, and working hard throughout the day. But here’s the thing—**everything feels like play to me.**

### **Everything Should Feel Like Voluntary Play**

I think the tragedy of the modern world and society in general is that we get our inner child sucked out of us. We start to involuntarily play the game when we’re supposed to voluntarily play.

***Think of a child. A child doesn’t need to be forced to go to the playground. A child simply wakes up, eager for the sunrise, ready for the day, ready to hit that playground.***

And so that’s how I look at the world these days—in the street as my ultimate playground—and I’m just a big kid running around with my camera in my pocket. This is also how I feel in my work life, where I go to the garden to play during the day. Despite how hard it may be, it’s genuinely something that’s calling me and bringing me that sense of childlike joy in my life.

Think about play more, and how you can create a life of play—or what I like to call *leisure*—rather than involuntarily forcing yourself to do something because you feel like you should or have to. You should only do things because **you want to.**

## **A Life of Perpetual *Otium* Is My Goal**

If you think about ancient Athens or Greece or Rome and all these beautiful city-states where philosophers would gather in the Agora or spend time under the Plato tree to just discuss philosophy and life and things—they actually had the leisure and free time to think, read, write, and discuss amongst each other.

Now, time is the ultimate currency. **How you spend your time, and what you're paying attention to, is what truly matters the most in life.**

We basically spend 99% of our time doing things because we think we *should* or we *have to*, and this leads to a lack of leisure, a lack of freedom of the mind.

I ultimately find that by prioritizing the freedom of my mind, I'm able to evolve at a much more rapid rate than I otherwise would if I was attending to business affairs. I designed a lifestyle where I have the freedom to think throughout the entirety of my day—to attend lectures online, read ancient philosophy, or even read the Gospels and contemplate theology, make art, write poems, and go for walks in the woods.

***It's a tragedy that we no longer have free time. But more specifically, the lack of freedom of mind is the ultimate tragedy.***

Because what I realize—even if I'm working hard labor, which I absolutely enjoy and find so much meaning in, and feel aligns with everything I could dream of in a lifestyle—even if we consider myself as an ancient Roman slave, toiling in the soil with knees on the ground and back bending: **a life of physical slavery is at least much more interesting than this modern world of sedation.**

I'd rather be enslaved in my body and have freedom of the mind than be enslaved of the mind and what I'm paying attention to.

***I'd rather be an ancient Roman slave than a modern-day slave.***

## **Think Like an Ancient, Live Like You're Amish, But You're Already in 2045**

Cattle was one of the earliest forms of wealth. The word *capital* derives from *cattle*. When you think ancient, you unlock a new perception of reality.

Simply by studying the etymological root of the words you use daily, you can discover the truth. You don't even need ancient books—just type the word into ChatGPT.

My philosophy: **think like I'm an ancient, live like I'm Amish, but operate like I'm already in 2045**. A simple life—spending time outside in the sun, upright, working with my hands in the soil, going to bed early, waking up early around 4:30. I keep a natural circadian rhythm all year round.

I like waking up and praying, ending the day with gratitude, and living that simple Amish life. Honestly, I just returned from Amish country in Lancaster, PA, where I purchased hundreds of pounds of beef. I bought a half cow, stored it in a deep freezer, and now have a decentralized food supply in my home—no longer dependent on corporations and grocery stores to feed me. I literally handshake a farmer and they provide me with the highest quality meat in the country.

Now that I've thought about the world ancient, and recognize the power of cattle, I take it seriously.

While I live like an Amish boy in the city, I'm also stacking sats in cyberspace, buying Bitcoin while the entire world is asleep to the future of money. I'm using AI daily while innovating in photography.

**This is my approach to the video game**—voluntary play, childlike joy, the life of an ancient philosopher amongst the ruins of an urban jungle, frolicking around with my meat and Bitcoin.

Maybe I should just get a bowl cut next.

## Walk Barefoot Like Socrates in the *Symposium*

I've been walking barefoot for over two and a half years now, and I find it interesting how many people comment on it. Even my godmother showed me an ad saying barefoot shoes are better for the elderly. People are starting to wake up.

But for me, it's gone beyond physical reasons. It's become **philosophical**, even spiritual. I used to work for a union, wearing steel toe boots on hard floors. I developed plantar fasciitis. But now, my posture is stronger, my back is better, and I feel adapted.

There's also a *mental* component to this. It's radical. It's different. Walking with your toes out in these weird little finger shoes—it's like rebuilding a video game character from the ground up.

***When you start a game and you design your character, you pick shoes, hairstyle, outfit—but walking barefoot is stripping to the default character on the loading screen.***

That's why I wear all black, black barefoot shoes, tape over logos, no visible brands. It's a rejection of identity through consumption. I don't identify with the things I buy.

Instead of owning a car, I walk barefoot and take the bus. It's like playing the video game on hardcore mode—but little does everyone know, **I've got the cheat code.** Because I'm becoming stronger, wiser, and freer—not owned by the things that people think they own.

## How the Village Transformed My Life

When I lived in the village in Zambia, the first thing my host family presented me was a goat hanging from a tree to slaughter. After I slaughtered it, we feasted on the meat all week.

I fetched water from a well, lived under a thatched roof, worked a farm, learned a new language—and realized something profound.

Despite all the modern amenities, technology, and material things we have in cities, they **don't bring happiness**.

People say wealth brings joy. But I beg to differ.

I'm not romanticizing the hardship. They deserve better—running water, proper plumbing, and waste disposal. But they have **spiritual nourishment**, unlike anything I've ever witnessed. They orient themselves *upwards*, not horizontally, where everyone is just grabbing for more.

Everyone lives **selflessly**, for the tribe or community.

And through that selfless way of life, they find joy.

Maybe that's why we're so depressed here. Because **we're so selfish**.