

## Why You Should Ask for Permission in Street Photography

### **What's poppin' people? It's Dante.**

Let's talk about something *sacrilegious* in the street photography world: **asking for permission.**

Yeah, I said it. Asking. For. Permission.

But listen — I think this “taboo” idea might be one of the most powerful tools you're not using. It might even be the *superpower* that unlocks your best work. Because here's the truth:

***The secret to great street photography has more to do with sociology than photography.***

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## Photography is Just an Excuse

Photography? It's not about gear. It's not about specs. It's not even about the picture.

It's about **how you engage with life** — with real, breathing people. And your camera? That's just the excuse.

***Photography has everything to do with how courageous and curious you are.***

You don't have to run around like those degenerate New York flash bros getting in people's faces. You don't have to be invisible. You don't have to be stealthy. You can show up like a full human — open, curious, and real.

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## Permission Deepens the Moment

A lot of folks think asking ruins the moment. They say it kills the spontaneity. They'll say, "That's not real street photography."

But they're dead wrong.

***Asking for permission can actually deepen the moment.***

When you ask, you're invited in. You get to stay longer. You get to *work the scene* — shoot multiple angles, recompose, refine. You're not just hunting for one quick snapshot. You're building trust. That's when the good stuff happens.

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### Example: Napoli and the Watermelon Moment

I was in Napoli with my brother, just chillin' on the rocks by the sea. We weren't on a photo trip — just sunbathing, living. Then this dude starts pulling a watermelon out of the sea. He cracks it open. We're watching, hanging, eating, swimming. I had my camera with me.

Boom — moment unfolds.

Because I had **spent time there**, because I had **permission**, I could recognize the elements lining up:

- The man cutting the watermelon in the foreground
- Another man in the middle ground
- A swimmer in the background
- A spiral rhythm in the composition
- Clean background, no horizon line
- Elegant simplicity, strong layers

***Foreground. Middle ground. Background. Rhythm. Respect. Presence.***

That's how the shot came together — not from “hunting” but *being*.

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## Human First, Photographer Second

You don't need to be a stealth ninja with a camera. Be a human. Smile. Ask questions. Open your body language.

***Be human first. Photographer second.***

In Mumbai, I was walking through the alleys of Bandra. Saw a man selling tea. Smiled. Open posture. He gave me tea for free. We shared a moment. I photographed another man nearby — no words exchanged, but everything understood through body language and presence.

This is real street photography. Not some soulless run-and-gun.

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## The Instax Technique

Here's a pro tip: **carry an Instax camera**. Early in my travels — like when I was studying abroad in Jerusalem — I brought one along, thinking I'd make memories.

But then I started **gifting prints to strangers**. It became my superpower.

- It broke cultural and language barriers.
- It built trust.
- It invited me into homes.

I've been invited to drink tea with Palestinian families. I've climbed the Wadi Kelt mountain range in Jericho with brothers I met at the mosque. I got to photograph life most people will never see.

And it all started with a **gift**.

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## **Visual Puzzle: Foreground, Middle, Background**

Let's break down a photo I made on that Jericho mountain ride:

- Car breaks down.
- I jump out.
- First frame falls flat.
- Then I include the broken-down car in the **foreground**.
- The men gathered become the **middle ground**.
- The mountain range is the **background**.

***One, two, three. Foreground. Middle ground. Background.***

That's the puzzle I'm solving with my eyes.

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## **The Playground Mindset**

This is my philosophy:

***The world is a playground. Go play.***

Be like a kid waking up eager to explore. Don't put on your "serious photographer" hat. Don't overthink it. Just show up with curiosity and joy.

I played cricket with kids in Mumbai. I didn't know the rules. I didn't care. I swung the bat. We laughed. Then I made a photograph.

That joy? That presence? That's what will guide you.

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## Emotional Closeness > Physical Closeness

There are guys out here trying to get *physically close* with their wide lenses but they have **no emotional closeness** to life.

***Emotional proximity beats physical proximity every time.***

You can be a foot away and still be disconnected. Or you can be across the room and completely *in tune*. That's what matters.

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## No Rules. Just Play.

There are no rules in street photography. None.

***Someone needs to give you permission to ask for permission – so here it is.***

You don't need to shoot like everyone else. You don't need to play their game. You can do this your way. With heart. With curiosity. With soul.

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## Use Photography as a Vehicle

Use your camera as the excuse to:

- Explore the world
- Connect with strangers
- Create memories
- Experience magic

And you'll come home not just with images — but with *stories you'll never forget*.

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## More Free Guides and Tools

If this resonated, check out my website:

👉 [dantesisofo.com](https://dantesisofo.com)

Under the **Books** tab, I have:

- 📄 **Contact Sheets Guide** – Behind-the-scenes breakdowns
- 🛠️ **Ultimate Ricoh GR Guide** – Settings, technique, philosophy
- 🧠 **Mastering Layering** – The foundation of composition

All free. For you.

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## Final Word

*Photography is a reflection of your courage and your heart.*

So go out there. Ask for permission. Be real. Be open. Be human.  
And explore the front lines of life.

Peace,  
**Dante**