Redefining Success and Overcoming Fear 🌲

Hey, look — a pine cone.
What's poppin', people? It's Dante.

This morning I've been thinking about these modern notions of success — in life, in photography, and even deeper, in the spiritual sense. It's wild how much we let these ideas control us. Most people weigh success on a purely material plane: the possessions they acquire, the money they make, the attention they get, the status they hold. Whether it's a published photo book, a sponsorship deal, or just views, likes, and comments online — that's what we're told success looks like.

But as artists, I think our goal is much simpler.
It's to remain in a **perpetual flow state** throughout the day.

For me, success is just having the enthusiasm to wake up early, catch the sunrise, and play with my camera. It's about staying curious, staying open, and doing the work because I *love* doing the work — not because I'm chasing anything. That's what it means to live **autotelically** — to do things for their own sake, without regard for outcome.

When you reframe success this way, you can find peace and clarity in the process. You stop looking for validation. You stop needing approval. You just create — freely.

But then there's **fear** — the thing that holds most people back.
Fear of rejection.
Fear of failure.
Fear of confrontation.
Fear of not being "good enough."

When I think about fear, I think about death.
Because really, that's where all fear comes from.

Have you ever tried walking along a curb — just balancing yourself, step by step, without falling to the left or the right? Now imagine placing that same curb across the top of the Comcast building here in Philly, stretching it to the next skyscraper. Could you walk across it? Physically, yes — it's the same curb. But the difference is **fear**.

If you could remove the fear of death, you could walk across effortlessly.

That's the metaphor.
When you realize you are divine — that there's light within you — and that this life isn't the end, fear starts to dissolve. And when fear dissolves, **everything becomes possible**.

So my thought for the day is simple:
Detach from the material plane.
Detach from the fear of death.
Detach from these illusions of success and failure.
Overcome these ideas through **mindset**.