

## How to Find Pure Inspiration in Photography – Return to Your Inner Child

What's poppin', people? It's Dante.

Welcome to the Centennial Arboretum. The leaves are changing, the air feels crisp, and it's a beautiful autumn day here in Philadelphia.

Today's thought is about *photography* and how to find inspiration in it – not just from the external world, but from within.

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### Studying Photo Books and the Masters

We have so many sources of inspiration: **photo books, galleries, zines**, and all kinds of printed works that photographers before us have created.

But when you study these, don't just flip through them – *study the frames that resonate deeply with you.*

Ask yourself:

- What is it about this frame that I love?
- Is it the **composition**?
- The **subject**?
- The **use of light and shadow**?
- Or maybe just the *feeling* it evokes?

Pull together a few photographers from the past – work from 30, 40, 50 years ago – and look at their images as *finished bodies of work*, not trends still in flux.

Books like **Koudelka's *Exiles***, **Larry Towell's *The Mennonites***, **Alex Webb's *La Calle***, or **Todd Papageorge's *Passing Through Eden*** are incredible starting points.

And then there's **William Klein**, who first inspired me to hit the streets. I remember watching *The Many Lives of William Klein* on YouTube years ago — his gritty, raw attitude toward photography was electric. It showed me that *the photographer's attitude itself* can be inspiring.

From **James Nachtwey's** courage documenting war, to **Sebastião Salgado's** epic storytelling of miners, oil fields, and landscapes — these photographers shaped how I see the world.

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## Reality, Abstraction, and the Poetry of the Street

Street photography sits at the intersection of *reality* and *abstraction*. It's factual, yet poetic. Documentary, yet lyrical.

A photograph isn't merely *what is* — it's *what could be*, filtered through your interpretation of life.

**Henri Cartier-Bresson**, though often seen as a journalist, was really a *surrealist*. His photography was personal, spontaneous, and rooted in curiosity. That's what makes street work so special: it's not constructed like a painting — it's *life itself*, caught candidly, elevated into art.

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## Shoot More, Think Less

For me, photography has become a process of **intuition over intellect**. I carry my camera everywhere — in my front right pocket — and shoot from instinct, not rational thought.

The best photographs aren't made from overthinking or trying to perfect composition.

They're born from **gut feeling, play, and spontaneity.**

Shoot more. Think less.

The art is not in the technical mastery — that's easy.

The art is in letting your *spirit* appear in the frame.

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## The Inner Adventure

As a child, I was fearless.

I would climb trees, build teepees, carve spears, and play alone in the forest.

That same spirit — that adventurous drive — pushed me to explore the world with a camera.

From **Baltimore** to **Zambia**, from **Israel and Palestine** to **Mumbai, Mexico**, and **Hanoi** — all of those journeys came from that same inner curiosity.

Street photography is the modern extension of that exploration.

It's how I continue to discover both the world *and myself.*

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## Inspiration Comes From Within

The more you photograph, the more you discover *who you are.*

Your unique perspective — your voice — emerges naturally through **doing**, not overthinking.

We can study photo books, analyze greats, build visual palettes, but the purest inspiration comes from within — from the *inner child* that still wants to explore, play, and create for the joy of it.

As kids, we didn't make art to impress anyone.  
We created because it was fun.  
We failed, we tinkered, we learned — and that process was enough.

That's how it should still be.

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## Turn Inward, Not Online

We live in an age of **image overload**.  
Instagram feeds, galleries, contests — it's constant noise.  
Most of it doesn't nourish your soul.

So delete your Instagram.  
Stop chasing validation.  
Go to the **source** — to the wisdom of the past and the stillness of nature.

Visit your library. Buy photo books. Walk alone in the woods. Listen to your inner voice.  
That's where true inspiration lives.

For publishing your work, build your own home:  
**WordPress.org** + **Bluehost** + the **Astra theme** — just like I do on [dantesisofo.com](http://dantesisofo.com).  
You don't need social media. You need freedom.

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## The Spirit of Play

At the end of the day, photography is an act of play — a dialogue between the world and your soul.

Return to your **inner child**.

Let go.

Photograph freely.

Document the facts, but let your emotions guide the abstraction.

When you create without attachment to outcome — not chasing likes, not chasing perfection — you enter a flow state where art becomes prayer.

That's when you're alive.

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**Create because you love to create.**

**Photograph because you love to see.**

**And through that process, you'll rediscover the joy of being alive.**

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