

Return to Play: How Your Inner Child Fuels Creative Inspiration

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

Today I've been thinking about how we can use our **inner child** to cultivate inspiration in our art.

We often look outward for inspiration — a film, a book, a song, a photo exhibit — but the **purest source of inspiration** isn't external. It's internal. It's that **childlike curiosity** we all once had — the one that led us to explore, play, and create without overthinking.

The Spirit of Play

When we were kids, creation was *voluntary*. We didn't need a to-do list or a reason. We just went outside and **played** — following our instincts, building imaginary worlds, climbing trees, exploring caves, inventing tools, and discovering the unknown.

That **spontaneous spirit** — free, audacious, unburdened — is the essence of creativity.

But as we grow up, we tend to trade that *voluntary play* for *involuntary work*. We start creating based on schedules, expectations, and checklists.

I say nay — I say **play**.

Because the real act of creation begins the moment you let go of the outcome and return to curiosity.

The Inner Child on the Street

For me, that inner child still lives on when I photograph.
When I walk through the city streets with a camera, I'm not thinking — I'm *playing*.
That same courageous, curious spirit that guided me as a kid in the woods now
guides me through the noise and chaos of the city.

It's the same energy that's taken me everywhere —
from the **mountaintops of Mexico**,
to the **slums of Mumbai**,
to the **front lines of Palestine**.

Every photograph is an act of **obedience to intuition** — an invitation to play, to
explore, to rediscover wonder.

Be a Big Kid with a Camera

The goal is simple:
Create for the joy of creating.

Not for likes.
Not for validation.
Not for some societal definition of success.

Just because you *love it*.

That's what I call an **autotelic state** — doing something for its own sake.
When you can create like that, you're just a big kid again, exploring the world with a
camera in your hand and a sense of wonder in your heart.

Final Thought

Remember who you were before the world told you who to be.
Return to that place of curiosity, freedom, and joy —
and watch your art come alive again.

Obey your inner child. Play. Create. Explore.