

Alignment

It feels good to be back in my normal rhythm in Philadelphia after my two-week trip to Tokyo. While in Tokyo, I did absolutely zero physical exercise. I completely neglected my body on that trip. I was so immersed in the creative process that I couldn't even get myself to sleep.

I was waking up extremely early, photographing throughout the entire day, staying up late editing pictures, packing everything up, and moving on to the next day. I basically spent my days from sunrise to sunset—and beyond—completely locked into the creative flow.

And so, I neglected my body. I couldn't even get myself to stop to eat. Of course, I still made my pitstop beach day to the all-you-can-eat yakiniku meat joint, where I would feast each evening.

Even though I neglected my body, upon returning home and going back to the gym, it only took me a few days to get back into alignment.

Ashtanga Yoga

I've been practicing Ashtanga yoga since around May 2025. I joined a boxing gym, started taking heavy bag classes, tried to learn technique, even did HIIT training. On top of that, I started learning yoga.

But after a few months, I fell in love with the yoga practice and completely eliminated all the other options.

The reason yoga is my main focus right now is because I genuinely believe this is the most physically demanding thing I've ever embarked on in my entire life. Not only is it physically challenging, but it demands intense mental focus and discipline—simply showing up every single day with consistency and repetition.

This kind of practice is perfect for someone like me who practices street photography.

With street photography, you have to show up with discipline no matter how mundane it feels—doing the same thing over and over again, often without seeing immediate results. Yoga mirrors this exactly. The results come with time. There are weeks where you hit the same wall in the same pose, day after day, sometimes for a month or more, until a breakthrough finally happens.

Street photography is the same. You grind. You put in the time. And only occasionally do you come home with a truly decent photo.

This ashtanga yoga practice is strict, structured, and demanding. There is a proper sequence you must memorize and follow. Each movement is synced with the breath. You must pay attention to posture, rhythm, and the flow between poses—it becomes almost like a dance.

Sometimes the teacher comes over and places her hand on my arm or back, gently but firmly guiding me into proper alignment. It's not force—it's a reminder. A correction. A return.

For instance, in warrior pose, she ensures my legs are aligned and strong so that the tension runs through my entire body. When my arms are perfectly aligned—one forward, one back—I feel ready to strike. Tuned. Like a bow pulled back, aimed directly at the bull's-eye.

And as I stand there in alignment, I can't help but wonder:

Who is the guiding hand in our lives?

Beyond Good and Evil

Nietzsche speaks of going *beyond good and evil*. This isn't a rejection of morality itself, but a rejection of *slave morality*—a morality rooted in fear, guilt, shame, and herd behavior.

His critique is largely aimed at organized religion and how it controls the masses.

What I find interesting is the irony of Jesus as the Shepherd and us as sheep within the flock. And maybe, as much as I align with much of what Nietzsche says, there is wisdom in being the *black sheep*—the one meant to be in the flock but destined to stray, because you know you're meant to carve your own path anyway.

When I think about good and bad—moral and immoral—I don't believe we're meant to see things so binary.

Take selfishness, for example. It's often labeled immoral. But ironically, the more selfish I become, the more selfless I become.

The more I focus on myself—cultivating my virtues, my moral compass, and pursuing the things that bring me joy—the more abundant I become. And the more abundance I have, the more love I can give. I become selfless *through* selfishness.

Yesterday, I spoke with a coworker about this idea. He brought up Robin Hood and questioned whether he was good or evil—stealing from the rich to give to the poor. Whether that would land him in heaven or hell.

But when I think about it more critically, I don't believe hell exists as a place.

Hell is a state of mind.

A place you dwell when you are misaligned.

If I take fiat currency from the modern money lenders—who devalue my purchasing power daily through money printing, war funding, and destruction—and I flip their tables by converting that currency into Bitcoin, am I evil?

Jesus warned us not to store grain in barns. But what if digital money, AI, robotics, and technology actually free humanity from consumerism and the worship of the golden calf?

Everything around us—advertising, music, film, television—is propaganda designed to make us consume. Noise. Distraction. Endless striving.

What's interesting about Bitcoin is that the more I acquire, the less I consume. The less I desire to buy. And the more I simply want to *create*.

We Are the Creator

The great tragedy of the modern world is being told that we must labor endlessly for money—only to use that money to consume.

The irony is that the true currency is time itself.

We spend our lives denying our bodies and our souls in pursuit of abstract digital numbers on a screen. And beyond food and shelter—what more do we really need?

When you stop consuming, you remember that you're here to create.

You're here to dance.

To see.

To explore.

To make mistakes.

To embrace imperfection while striving for perfection.

And maybe—just maybe—through art, we can commune with the divine.

The more I show up to work each morning, the more it can feel like a prison. But that prison is of the mind.

What if you already had the key?

What if the prison could become a playground?

The more I cultivate the garden within my mind, the more the prison dissolves. I crawl through bushes, run through forests, and exist freely within a society obsessed with striving.

I'm not hardened by norms or expectations of who I'm supposed to be.

I remind myself:

**I'm just a big kid.
A child who knows nothing.**

Photography becomes my superpower. Even while showing up daily to a job, I can still create. I carry a small camera in my pocket that brings me joy—enough joy to keep pushing my rock uphill while returning to the playground.

Solitude, Rome, and Tuning the Instrument

When I quit a job that left me unfulfilled, I had no grand plan. I only knew I needed to go to Rome—to be alone and pray in churches.

Through solitude, I found myself alone with God.

With all distractions removed—no social media, no texting, no phone calls—just me, my camera, and God, I felt myself tuning like an instrument returning to alignment.

I finally became who I was meant to be.

Heaven on Earth

When I returned to Philadelphia, I began a new job working in a park. It was humbler. Harder. More physical.

I spend my days tending gardens, digging holes, planting, cutting trees, chopping logs—doing demanding physical labor.

And yet, the closer I am to the ground, the closer I feel to God.

Knees in the dirt. Crawling between bushes. Studying leaves and patterns in silence.

Ironically, when I go to church, I often feel furthest from God.

There's something about hierarchy—the pope, bishops, priests—that feels like submission through structure. I don't think it's evil. It's necessary for some people.

But I know God is found directly—through experience.

The most judgmental people I've encountered are often the most religious, instilling fear, guilt, and shame.

I've been told I'd be a better Catholic if I stopped eating meat because of my carbon footprint. I later realized the community had replaced God with ideology.

I was also told by a former monk that you're only Christian if you attend mass.

And so, the more I walk my own path, the more I understand why Jesus warned us about wolves in sheep's clothing.

Now, with my hands in the soil most of the day, I feel closer to God than ever.

God is not distant in the clouds. God is found in gravity—in bleeding, sweating, lusting, failing, longing.

Our imperfections are what make us divine.

Beauty exists through joy and tragedy, pleasure and pain.

It's our *thumos*—our spirited irrational fire—that drives us to create.

Freedom and Fate

We're told we have free will. I believe something slightly different.

True freedom is the elimination of choice.

The highest freedom comes when you no longer resist your path.

You control your destiny by surrendering to it.

You are not meant to invent your life.

You are meant to live it.

Sin

The word *sin* comes from the Greek **hamartia**—
to miss the mark.

An archery term.

To hit the bull's-eye, everything must align: posture, breath, tension, focus. If any element is misaligned, you miss.

Sin is not about morality.

Sin is misalignment.

We are imperfect by design—and that is what makes us divine.

Freedom is found through alignment.

And alignment is individual.

There is no one-size-fits-all path.

Each of us carries a blueprint—a pattern meant to reflect the divine.