

Flow State Photography: Day One Philosophy

It's Dante, getting my morning started with the iPad Pro, thinking about **flow state photography** — not as a technique, not as a method, but as a *way of being*. For the past three years I've been shooting high-contrast black and white with the Ricoh GR, living with the camera as an extension of my hand, my eye, my heartbeat. Photographing has become the way I move through the world. It has transformed my life, my philosophy, and the way I experience light itself.

To enter the flow state, you don't hunt for pictures.
You **live**, and the pictures arise.

Entering the Flow State

Flow isn't something you force. It comes when you **let go of control**.

As photographers, we love the illusion of control. We try to place ourselves perfectly, align the foreground, middle ground, background, and hope the universe cooperates. But the breakthroughs come when we release that impulse entirely.

Letting go is the gateway.

Flow begins when you:

- forget everything you think you know,
- move slowly,
- allow life to approach you,
- and respond instinctively.

Photography becomes a practice of **non-action** — *wu wei* — allowing the moment to reveal itself without your interference.

Light as Subject, Light as Teacher

At some point I realized my true subject was never people, streets, or moments.
It was **light**.

Light is always changing, slipping, reshaping the world. We cannot control it, predict it, command it. That lack of control is liberating.

To photograph is to wield light.

To enter the flow is to let light guide you.

I wake up excited not for the photograph I might make, but for the *light itself* — how it will cast on surfaces, people, textures, how it will render through the tiny Ricoh sensor into something unexpected.

Photography surprises me when the camera shows me something I could never see with my own eyes. That surprise is the magic.

Knowing Nothing: The Power of Beginner's Mind

Technology tricks us into believing we know everything. We can Google anything.
We have infinite information.

But the photographer must return to **knowing nothing**.

This is the essence of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*:

“When you do something, you should burn yourself completely, like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of yourself.”

Every morning is **Day One**.
Every picture is **Day One**.
Every street you walk is **Day One**.

The flow state comes when you destroy the expert inside you — *the part that thinks it understands photography* — and return to the childlike state of tinkering, curiosity, and exploration.

The child doesn't make "good" or "bad" pictures.
The child follows the pull of the moment.

Photographing from the Body, Not the Mind

Photography isn't mental.
Photography is **physical**.

It's the positioning of your body in time and space — that is composition. The framing is simply a consequence of where your feet take you.

The real photograph is the embodied moment:

- the step forward,
- the angle of your posture,
- the courage to raise the camera,
- the instinct to click.

You don't photograph with your eyes.
You photograph with your **heart**.

The word *courage* comes from *cor* — **heart**.
Courage is the virtue that gets you out the door. Without it, nothing happens.

Flow as Self-Destruction

To become an artist, you must first destroy yourself.

You must drop the identity of “photographer.”

When you take yourself too seriously — when you believe your images will change the world — you burden your practice with ego and expectation. Flow dies.

But when you photograph simply because the act itself brings you joy, your images become purer. Lighter. Freer.

I’ve made pictures in Palestine, on the front lines of conflict, but even then I wasn’t trying to say anything profound. I was following my **thumos**, my spiritedness, my internal pull.

The photograph is always a reflection of your **courage**, not your intention.

Creative Constraints as Liberation

For three years I’ve shot:

- high contrast
- black and white
- small JPEG
- automatic settings
- LCD screen
- snapshot mode

All the constraints are baked into the file at the moment of creation.

These limitations **set me free**.

They force me to:

- play,
- tinker,
- make mistakes,
- destroy perfection,
- and embrace imperfection as part of the aesthetic.

I'm unlearning photography by photographing.

Deleting the World to Create Your Own

When you stop consuming —
when you delete Instagram, silence the noise, retreat into your cocoon — the world becomes yours again.

Your pictures become your own ideas, not echoes of the algorithm.

Joy returns.

Meaning returns.

Flow returns.

The goal is not the book, the zine, the show, or the applause.

The goal is found **within the act of photographing itself.**

If you make a new picture today, you've already won.

Photography as Life Affirmation

After a decade of shooting every single day, photography has become like:

- walking

- breathing
- praying

It is my lifeline.

Each click of the shutter affirms life.

Each moment photographed is a reminder of the fleeting present — the only thing we truly have.

We are imperfect.

We are mortal.

We are bound to gravity.

But through the act of photographing, we strive toward the divine.

The photograph becomes:

- a mirror of the soul,
- an extension of the self,
- a fragment of light that will outlive the body.

Maybe you can't live forever —

but your light can.

And that is why I photograph.

That is how I enter the flow state.

That is how I affirm life.

Every day is Day One.

Every picture is a new world.

Every click is a heartbeat.

Return to the moment.

Return to the child.

Return to the light.

Return to the flow.