

Why Street Photography Changed How I See Life

I've hopped off my golden chariot and arrived in the Garden of Eden.

What's poppin, people? It's Dante, getting my morning started with the Ricoh GR IIIx tucked right into the front right pocket. First photo of the day. Snapshot. Boom. Done. That's it. Call it a day.

Seventy-one millimeter crop. Get close to the trees. The light. Dial down the exposure. Whoa. This is good.

Today's thought is about **finding joy through the medium of street photography**.

The medium itself comes from the streets. Photography is about being outside, in the open world, in embodied reality. And is that not the ultimate privilege in the modern world? To be outside, under the sun, with freedom of movement in your physical body.

The ethos of street photography, to me, is exploration. Wandering. Curiosity. Moving through the world.

I treat photography as a way of being.
A way of seeing.
A way of living my everyday life.

Because without a camera, life can feel mundane. Same routes. Same routines. Same tasks. The hamster wheel of time. Wake up, go to work, check things off the list.

But when I have a camera in hand and I'm moving my body through the world, I step outside the passage of time.

The past dissolves.
The future dissolves.
There is only now.

And when I make a photograph, I say **yes** to life. I affirm the mundane nature of existence and find meaning within it. And finding meaning within the mundane is what brings joy.

Every morning I see the same squirrels jumping from tree to tree. And yet it never gets old. It's the most beautiful way to start the day.

Photography gives me an excuse to look more deeply.
An excuse to live more meaningfully.

With a camera in hand, I find more meaning. I find more joy.

You could throw me anywhere in the world, at any time of day, and I'll find something to say. I'll find a way to play. I'll create on the canvas that is the world.

That's why I love photography.

It gives me infinite possibility for exploration and curiosity through how I see and interact with life.

The places I've been.
The people I've met.
The things I've done.

None of it would have happened without a camera and the audacity to go out and see.

The camera gives me permission to leave my hometown. To explore unfamiliar places. To move with the flow of life.

I think back to my time in the Peace Corps. Living off the grid in Zambia. My first night in a mud hut. Opening the door to find a scorpion inside. Sleeping under a mosquito net, staring at spiders, listening to insects outside the walls.

Waking up thankful I was still alive.

Riding a bike along dirt paths to new villages. Learning Ichibemba. Working with fish farmers. Cultivating land. Worshiping outdoors under a church built of sticks and tarps, thousands of people gathered beneath the open sky.

Lying under the stars, talking about the meaning of life, staring into the galaxy, I found clarity. Peace in the unknown.

Those experiences — those stories — are where meaning lives.

Photography gave me the ability to experience life more openly, more deeply.

It's the antidote to modern monotony.

There is no finish line in photography.

No peak.

No final story to tell.

The photographs we make are simply a record of the life we lived during our finite time on Earth.

When we die, the titles don't matter. The money doesn't matter. The career ladders don't matter.

What lasts are the moments.

The quiet mornings.

The shared glances.

The lived experiences.

Knowing that I will die helps me cherish these moments while I'm alive.

I don't need validation.

I don't need fame.

I don't need success.

What I need is curiosity.

Photography gives me an excuse to be curious. To step onto the front lines of life.
To engage with humanity. To play.

And that's why photography brings me so much joy.

It gives me permission to play.