

## **Wu Wei Changed My Street Photography**

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

Today I want to talk about **wu wei** and how it completely changed the way I approach street photography.

Wu wei is a concept from Taoism that essentially means *effortless action*. And this is something I've really integrated into my photography process. It's allowed me to work in a flow state—where I'm not forcing, hunting, or searching. I'm just there, responding with my camera as life unfolds in front of me.

### **Effortless Action on the Street**

When I'm out on the streets making pictures, the process feels natural. Things come toward me, and I respond. I'm not running and gunning. I'm not chasing moments. I'm allowing the flow of life to come to me.

Daoism is all about *the Way*. Think about water—it flows in one direction. You don't fight the current. You move with it. That's how I think about street photography now. I don't want to go against the stream of life. I want to flow with it.

People pass by. Moments arise. And I let those moments be what I photograph.

### **Integrating Photography With Everyday Life**

In my everyday practice, I use a Ricoh GR. It fits in my pocket. That's critical for me.

Having a camera that small means there's really no excuse not to photograph. Photography becomes part of my everyday life, not something separate from it. I'm not going out to photograph *something specific*. I'm just living my life—and bringing the camera along for the ride.

I don't have a project. I don't have a theme. I don't have a checklist. I don't have a list of shots I'm trying to get.

I just let whatever I encounter in my daily life be what I photograph.

That's how I enter the flow state naturally.

## **Photography as an Everyday Practice**

Photography is something I do everywhere.

I make photos out the window of the bus on my way to work. When I arrive at work, I make photos. I photograph during my commute, walking home, going to the grocery store—wherever I am.

Some of the photos you're seeing were made in the greenhouse where I work.

To me, the ultimate challenge of the photographer is to **articulate the world**, especially in familiar places. No matter how mundane life may seem, there's always something there if you're present.

I don't separate life from photography. I integrate them seamlessly.

## **Presence, Flow, and Detachment**

Presence is about forgetting everything you think you know.

I detach from outcomes. I detach from ideas of good photos or bad photos. I'm not trying to make great photographs. I'm responding intuitively to what's in front of me.

I enjoy the sights, the sounds, the smells of the street. I'm grateful to be alive here, now.

***The ultimate gift in life is the present.***

To activate the flow state, you need presence. Phone off. Mind quiet. Body, mind, and soul aligned at the moment you press the shutter.

Detachment is a mindset shift. I let go of control. I embrace the process. Just going for a walk, bringing the camera, making photos—that's the meaning. That's the purpose.

If you ask me what success in photography looks like, it's not the book or the gallery. It's embodied reality. It's responding to life with your camera.

## **Letting Go of Control**

Letting go of control is huge for me.

I set my camera to automatic—AV mode or program mode—so I can respond instantly. By removing control over settings, I make it easier to enter flow.

If you're thinking too much about settings and compositions, you're controlling too much.

I keep the camera off. When I see something—boom. Camera on. Shutter pressed. No thinking.

Photography becomes meditative. I photograph from instinct, not analysis.

Later, I can organize, think, and contemplate. But in the moment, I just collect.

## **Day One Philosophy**

Day one philosophy is critical.

I never want to feel like I've seen it all or mastered photography. I treat myself like an amateur. I photograph because I love to photograph.

Every night before I sleep, I treat it like a miniature death. When I wake up, I'm reborn. Blank slate. No expectations. Like a child, seeing everything anew.

Each day is a lifetime. Each photograph could be your last.

That mindset brings enthusiasm. Curiosity. Joy.

### **Trust the Process**

Trust the process.

Photography takes time. Great photographs are rare. If you come away with a few strong images after a year of shooting every day, that's incredible.

All you control is movement—walking, seeing, observing, being present with your camera.

Over time, things compound. Improvement happens naturally.

When you stop forcing and start flowing, photography becomes inevitable.

### **Gratitude and Abundance**

I treat photography as a way of saying thank you to life.

Thank you for the day. Thank you for the streets. Thank you for the people. Thank you for the sunlight on my skin.

Even walking the same blocks every day, there's gratitude. There's abundance.

I love humanity. I love society. I love being out there with my camera.

That feeling—subtle, sublime—that’s what I hope comes through in the photographs.

## **Final Thoughts**

Wu wei—effortless action—has completely transformed my street photography.

The philosophy you cultivate matters more than technicalities. When you understand *why* you photograph, authentic expression follows.

The more you force, the less authentic the work becomes. The less you try, the better your photographs get.

That’s really it.

Just some thoughts on wu wei, flow, and effortless action in street photography.

Thank you for watching. I’ll see you in the next one.

Peace.