

Radical Detachment Will Transform Your Photography

What's poppin', people? It's Dante, currently walking the streets of Philadelphia with the Ricoh GR IV Monochrome.

Today I'm just thinking about **radical detachment from the outcome of your photography** and why this will transform your practice.

I've been photographing with high-contrast black and white on the Ricoh for nearly four years now, and ever since adopting this practice, I've completely reframed the way that I engage with the medium—from my mindset, my philosophy, my technique, and, of course, the output of the imagery.

From Documentary Photography to Life Affirming

I'm coming from a place where I was photographing with the documentary humanist approach to photography, interacting with humanity, traveling the world, and telling stories from the streets of Israel and Palestine to the slums of Mumbai to the villages of Zambia, Africa, and beyond.

I've traveled all over with the hopes of pursuing my next best photo.

However, over the past four years of my journey, I've completely simplified my process to this act of **life affirming**.

The act of me taking a picture is essentially disconnected from the outcome of the picture.

Instead of going out there in hopes of improving my photography or making a great frame, I'm reframing and re-engaging with the medium through simply saying yes to the day.

Through saying yes to life.

When I'm photographing, truly, I'm detached from the outcome. I'm not worried about whether or not the photo will be good or bad.

That's a really liberating place to be because it allows you to simply go out and practice prolifically and endlessly without ever burning out because you're not improving.

What Does Improvement Actually Mean?

For me, improvement isn't necessarily a metric that you can tick off based around your compositions becoming stronger or the impact of your frames becoming more interesting.

For me, improvement in photography is simply **having the curiosity and the audacity to keep going out there and practicing.**

When you reframe the way in which you're engaging with the work through this mindset shift of detachment, it puts you in this flow state of simply making new photos.

And I think that's where we want to be.

Simply on the street, engaging with the medium daily.

I realized over my journey that this is the only path to actually achieving mastery or anything great. It's going to require you making lots of frames and repeating the practice daily without much excuse.

Focus on What You Can Control

Whether or not you come home with a good or bad photo, or whether you see something interesting, is out of your control.

What's in my control is **showing up and practicing daily.**

Walking.

Moving.

Being engaged with reality.

When I frame photography this way, I find more joy and meaning in the act of practicing because I'm no longer dependent upon the outcome.

I'm using photography as a way for me to simply engage with life more deeply—to find more appreciation and gratitude for the experience of seeing new things, experiencing new things, and meeting new people.

Detachment Changed My Technique

This has also unlocked new ways for me in terms of technique.

I'm photographing with macro mode. I'm photographing landscapes, details, textures, and more abstract imagery of simple geometric shapes, shadows, and forms.

I'm not only focused on one way of photographing.

I lend this technique to the detachment because, in the past, I was caught up with ideas that I had preconceived in my head about what makes a great photograph.

It's important to study the masters and to have an understanding of the history of photography, what makes a great composition, and what creates something with impact.

But I think that in order to improve, you actually have to **go beyond that**.

You have to go beyond these basic preconceptions.

I would essentially limit myself with what I photographed previously because I had an idea of what was worth photographing.

But now that I've detached from the outcome of the photography, I'm actually photographing much more differently.

Photography as a Visual Diary

The mindset shift for me has been one thing, but the output and the way in which I engage with the medium is the next.

When I'm taking pictures, **I'm treating it as a visual diary.**

I'm treating it as a way for me to remember the day, a way for me to relive my experiences, and a way to create memories.

As much as I'm photographing and using the external world around me—photographing strangers, people, and things—the photographs I make are a reflection of my internal way that I think and feel about life.

I'm not necessarily looking to make photographs that depict facts.

I'm using photography as a way for me to evoke a feeling and my personal experience of how I think and feel about life.

Through that practice, technique, approach, and mindset shift, I'm now finding endless possibilities with what I'm photographing.

To me, that's extremely liberating.

Photograph Everything

I'm no longer caught up with only photographing when I think something is necessarily interesting.

I photograph everything now.

I photograph whatever catches my eye and don't really think about why.

Just simply start shooting, ask the questions later, and discover what it means through years of repetition.

Now that I'm nearly four years into this practice, I'm noticing the patterns emerge in my work and what triggers me to photograph.

The different kinds of photographs I'm making are intriguing to me, and I'm always becoming surprised by what I find in my frames because I've let go of the outcome.

I'm seeing something new each day through the practice of liberating myself creatively, photographing everything, and not getting caught up with boxing myself into one way of operating.

Cultivate Your Instincts

Being detached from the outcome has a lot of different benefits.

You're liberated from the output determining whether or not you're improving.

You remove these ideas of whether the photo is good or bad.

Then you have more opportunities to photograph freely without hesitating, and you start to cultivate your instincts much more clearly.

Then you photograph differently.

You photograph in a variety of ways.

Through making these kinds of frames that are new, fresh, and interesting, you start to discover new things and increase your curiosity.

Then it becomes this flywheel effect of fulfilling that curiosity, going back out there, and photographing again.

Find Joy in the Mundane

The shift is going from being dependent upon the output or the outcome being great to focusing more on the way in which your internal state is activated through the practice.

Simply cultivating **joy and meaning in the mundane.**

Finding yourself out there walking and photographing.

I think this is where you can start to thrive as a photographer.

It's important to recognize the passage of time and just how much time it takes to find those moments that shine.

Don't get dismayed if you didn't make a great frame today.

Focus on what you can do right now or tomorrow.

Don't get caught up with the frames you made yesterday.

Just focus on what you can do today.

And what's in your control is moving and photographing.

By detaching, you're going to start photographing. I promise you this.

It's the biggest mindset shift that has liberated me, and so I'm just sharing it with you today.

***Let the chips fall as they may. Don't get caught up with the outcome.
Embrace the passage of time and trust in the process.***