

ON RESOURCEFULNESS

EXTREME RESOURCEFULNESS

Dear friend,

One of the secrets to living a happier, more productive life is to learn how to become extremely resourceful.

What is 'resourcefulness'?

First of all, what is 'resourcefulness'?

I would define resourcefulness as:

The ability to maximize your desired effect with what you already have.

For example, as a photographer, being resourceful means to make the best photographs with the gear you already have.

As an entrepreneur, to be resourceful means to use the resources you *already* have, and to exploit those resources to the maximum potential. For example, if you don't have a lot of money, tools, or access to resources -- how can you make the best of what you *already* have?

Maximize your (current) life

In life, that means making the best of what you already have. As FDR once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

For example, I personally love going to the gym and having access to equipment to barbells and heavy weights. I really enjoy doing deadlifts, squats, and heavy dumbbell presses. But when I am on the road, I don't always have access to the

gym. In these situations, I make the best of what I already have -- my own bodyweight. I will do one-handed pushups, dive bomber pushups, one-legged pistol squats, chin-ups, or yoga wherever I am.

In photography, I have actually discovered that by being more resourceful with the equipment you already have-- you can innovate and come up with interesting new, novel, and creative ways to make better photographs. For example, when I was on the road with my RICOH GR II and slower MacBook Air laptop, I was frustrated with the long time it took to process RAW files. Thus, I started to experiment shooting with only JPEG to speed up my workflow (instead of just buying a new, faster laptop), and have sped up my workflow as a consequence.

I am also addicted to coffee, and prefer to drink espresso. But of course, I cannot travel with an espresso machine or a grinder. Thus, I have learned to be resourceful to travel with a 'Clever' coffee dripper, and just travel with our own (pre-ground) coffee beans. All I need is an access to a hot water boiler, and then I no longer need to waste time hunting down hipster coffee shops in town, and usually do most of my creative work at home or at the AirBnb apartment doing work.

You can become an entrepreneur with little money or resources

When I got laid off my job in 2011, I wanted to figure out how I could pursue my passion in photography as a living. I had less than \$1,000 in the bank in my savings, and used my lack of resources in a beneficial way. I thought, "Doing workshops in photography would be good, because the startup costs are pretty much nothing." I didn't waste any money on paying rent in a studio -- whenever I wanted to do a photography workshop, I was able to find a free space (at a gallery or a coffee shop) or pay a small amount of money. I did most of my work from my home, to save money, instead of renting a desk at some co-working space.

A resourceful lifestyle

Being resourceful is a great way to live life. For me, it allows me to be more creative, to make fewer excuses, and to maximize every possible opportunity I have in my everyday life.

For example, whenever I lack access to a certain resource, I always ask myself:

How can I use this disadvantage to my advantage?

Or, how can I be extremely resourceful, and best maximize the tools I *already* have to the maximum benefit, or how can I rely on my own skills and genius to come up with a novel solution to the problem at hand?

How to innovate (from having nothing)

I believe that you can only be 'innovative' if you are forced to. I think there is a reason why many entrepreneurs who are successful have come from poverty or from nothing (consider JAY-Z who came from the projects, and is now a billionaire). JAY-Z was resourceful, because he used his skills of hustling (working hard, and being resourceful), and his skills of rapping/poetry/storytelling to build value. JAY-Z initially grew up where he didn't have access to writing down his rhymes in an unstable environment, so it forced him to memorize all his raps in his head, which helped him massively when he would go to the recording studio (he wouldn't waste time in the studio, because he had all the rhymes memorized in his head already).

How to be more resourceful as a photography entrepreneur

Practical ways you can be resourceful as a photography entrepreneur:

1. If you want to start your own YouTube channel, do it with the equipment you already own. Avoid buying new gear. Use your smartphone, iPad, or digital camera to record yourself. Sound-proof your room by hanging up carpets on the walls, and keep your setup simple (just record yourself against a simple background).

2. Make the best photographs regardless of where you live or are: if William Eggleston can make interesting photographs in his boring town, so can you. If anything, use "boringness" in your advantage-- Martin Parr took photographs of ordinary things and made them look interesting (I recommend his book 'Common Sense').
 3. Think of yourself as an underdog: Even though your camera equipment isn't the best-- how can you make the best possible photographs with the gear you already own? Use your disadvantage in a positive way, and shift your thinking. Don't feel like you're missing out by not having access to the best camera equipment-- you can make even better photographs with the camera equipment you already have, you just need to think hard about ways to maximize the functions and abilities of the camera equipment you already have.
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Maximize your own personal skills/resources

Ultimately, the best resource is you. Not money, tools, or equipment. Your ingenuity, skills, strengths, habits, and ways of seeing the world.

Your skills as a photographer might include your ability to share, teach, educate, interact with people, make your client feel comfortable, being organized, making great photography book layouts, by being able to design a great photography website or portfolio, or your ability to make beautiful images by seeing the world differently.

In other words,

Don't rely on other people, or having access to more money, resources, or tools. Rely on the most important resource: yourself.

YOU GOT THIS. ERIC