

Live Dangerously 3

Push Yourself Outside of Your Comfort Zone

In praise of danger

What is danger? The chance of getting damaged.

Why live dangerously? Let me share some personal thoughts.

Love uncertainty

In the end of the (uncompleted, and published after his death book: 'The Will to Power'), my best friend Nietzsche says something like:

What is the secret of life? To live dangerously! Build your homes on the cliffs of mount Vesuvius!

So much of modern humanity is about *preventing* danger. We shirk from danger and potential sources of personal damage. Many of us have been trained to take the safer option in life.

But-- what would life look like, if we took the more dangerous options in life?

Avoid death or permanent disfigurement

When I say live dangerously -- I don't mean you should immediately buy a motorcycle, or start texting-while-driving while high on the 405.

What I mean to say is this:

Take the more dangerous path in life.

This can be applied to anything.

For example, when you have the option of taking a more dangerous turn in your career-- take it! When you see a photo-opportunity that might be dangerous, take it!

Push yourself outside of your comfort zone

Even basic things-- push yourself outside of your comfort zone.

Try new restaurants. Try new dishes. Try new and weird dishes. Try certain cuts of meat which seem a bit 'unusual'. For example whenever I go to a Mexican taqueria restaurant, I love eating tongue (lengua), head (cabeza), offal (innards), etc. I asked a hipster butcher in Berkeley what the most overrated cut of meat was (filet mignon, no taste) and what was the most under-rated cut of meat (tongue and head). As a random note-- try to eat some "head cheese" sometime (ask your local butcher).

When it comes to travel, push yourself outside of your comfort zone. Don't just go to the typical tourist places. Try to travel to places that are less traveled. This gives you the opportunity to go on more epic adventures, to break new grounds! As a photographer, **if you travel to places that are less traveled to, you are actually more likely to make more interesting or unique pictures!**

How can I shoot better street photographs?

Simple:

Shoot photos outside of your comfort zone.

I've personally discovered that whenever I get bored in street photography (or photography in general) it is because I am getting too comfortable. When photography doesn't have enough challenge or difficulty, it gets boring! Just like a

video game-- we must adjust the difficulty level, to that right level. Difficult enough that we can actually beat it. But not so difficult that we never win. But not so easy that we always win. **We must find the optimal difficulty-- which is generally 25% outside of your comfort zone** (I think).

I know that with powerlifting, to get stronger, it is easy:

Every week, add 5 additional pounds to the barbell of your maximum lift.

For example, every week my simple goal is this: add 5 pounds to my maximum 1-repetition deadlift. For example, if my maximum deadlift is 405 pounds, the next week I will attempt 410 pounds. And if I cannot lift the weight, I will just back-track to 405 pounds, and start training harder, eating more meat, resting more, and then attempting the 410 pounds the next time.

I think this is also a good principle for photography entrepreneurship:

Slowly over time, increase the prices of your services and products.

If while you are raising the prices of your services or products, and you stop selling enough-- back-track your prices, and continue focus on building your value.

Takeaways

1. Comfort is bad. When we become comfortable, we become soft, flabby, and complacent. When we find ourselves in a comfortable spot-- let us push ourselves with more difficult challenges.
2. When we are bored, it generally means we are too comfortable and aren't being challenged enough. So a simple principle: **avoid boredom**.
3. Take more difficult pictures. Take more challenging compositions. Don't compare your photos with the work of others; just compete against yourself. Strive to be a better photographer today than you were last week! For powerlifting, I track my improvements and gains week-over-week. Perhaps **as photographers, we can also track our progress week-over-week**.

SHOOT ON! ERIC