

On Becoming a “Better” Photographer

I think what we want is to become “better” photographers. What does that really mean?

1. Becoming a more productive photographer

The first thought is in order to become a “better” photographer, it means to become a more productive photographer, which literally means to produce more photos.

What does that mean? In a single given day, how many photos do you shoot and make?

For example the other day I shot 850 photos in a single day, just in the boring suburbs.

How did I do this? Simple idea: set your camera to manual focus, and set the focus at .3 m, and just shoot a lot, everything with that pre-focused distance.

2. Compositions which excite you?

Another big thing about becoming a “better” photographer is seeing and making compositions which are more interesting and exciting to you.

For example, the ability to see layers and photos. Also, shooting photos which are unexpectedly interesting.

3. A billion photos?

It seems that the new funny goal that we have in life is to become a billionaire. However, this is not in our control. You could be the smartest most industrious hard-working person in the world and in the universe, but it's not guaranteed that you'll become a billionaire. However one thing you could control is aspiring to shoot 1 billion photos in your lifetime before you die.

How could you do this? Maybe just using your smartphone whether it be an iPhone, normal iPhone, iPhone Pro, or even a Google pixel. Or maybe using a Ricoh GR digital camera and just shooting extra small JPEG.

This is the big innovation I have discovered:

*The best camera is the camera which supports and allows for the greatest number of photos being made in a day, **quantity**, not quality.*

4. Quantity in Photography

Quantity is objective, quality is not. A simple goal is to increase the **quantity** of photos you make, in a single given day, in a week, a month and a year in your lifetime.

A simple assignment I have is 1000 photo challenge. That is, in a single given day, just shoot 1000 photos.

5. On becoming a more motivated photographer

How does one become a more motivated photographer? Some thoughts:

First of all, allow yourself to become more childlike. That is shoot like a child or shoot like a kid. No obstructions, no biases.

6. Art inspirations?

Cinema.

Nowadays, I don't really find much inspiration from other photographers. In fact, I think the best places to observe great cinematography and composition is from cinema and movies. Even watching the new trailer for John Wick four I am inspired.

7. Gym?

You can also shoot street photography at the gym. Photograph other people working out without permission or with permission.

You can get friendly with some members, and shoot street portraits of themselves in the gym.

Street portrait manual PDF

8. Extra small does it

What is the best iPhone? For photography? The smallest most compact one. That is either an iPhone mini or an iPhone SE. Not the iPhone Pro.

Why? Because the iPhone Pro is bigger and heavier and more obtrusive, you will shoot with it less.

Also with cameras, the best camera is the one which allows you to shoot the most. That is the smallest most compact camera possible. Either a Ricoh GR three or 3X. Between the two, 3X is better.

Also, just shoot extra small JPEG. This will allow you to shoot faster, shoot more, download your photos quicker, and also upload your photos quicker.

9. Write books

What is a big field still awaiting disruption? I believe the photo book market, especially the educational one.

Why? Honestly, all of the photo books out there suck. And all of the educational photo books also suck.

Why?

First of all, everyone seems to love giving head to Susan Sontag On Photography, which I consider one of the worst books on photography ever written. It is full of pompous, constipated thoughts on photography, from a writer who herself was not even a photographer.

In terms of her personality and character, just read the encounter Nassim Taleb had with her.

Also, these books are often written by photographers whose photos aren't really that interesting. I suppose the tricky thing is that the best photographers out there are just too busy out making photos instead of educating and writing. I think a lot of these famous photographers like Alex Webb or Steve McCurry teach workshops reluctantly, simply as a way to pay the bills, fund their travels etc. So to meet a photography teacher or educator who is both passionate about teaching and photography is rare.

Also, the issue with most photo books is that they are focused on highlighting great photos, rather than talking about how to do it, how to imitate, and how to make good compositions.

Remember when I was starting off in photography, and I just wanted to learn how to make better photos, I could not find a single book which was useful at all.

ERIC KIM BOOKS as the panacea

10. Keep traveling

Traveling is one of the best stimuluses for photography.

It could be far or close. It could be a road trip, it could be a cruise, even taking a national flight or a domestic is good, as well as international.

Some places that I personally love include Cuba, Mexico City, New Orleans, Dubai, Hanoi, Bangkok, Saigon, and Phnom Penh Cambodia.

The more I think about it, truly the best lifestyle is to have no baggage, literally and metaphorically, which allows for maximal personal freedom in your life. In fact, the ideal life or lifestyle is not towards owning a house or home but instead, to **permanently live in hotels, or Airbnbs.**

Even something I learned from my neighbor Jim is apparently kid rock just bought a pre-fabricated trailer, kind of like a motorhome, and just built it on top of the hill. He used to own a bunch of mansions but he found the maintenance to be a nightmare.

I found this very interesting, because then the goal is to have a maintenance free lifestyle.

EK EXPERIENCES

What can you become?

- May 6th (Saturday): CREATIVE CONFIDENCE ONLINE WORKSHOP (9am-11:30am, Online via Zoom)
- May 20th: DOWNTOWN LA ART WORKSHOP (Saturday, 11am-4pm) @ Verve Coffee
- May 27th: Downtown LA turbo thinking workshop, details to be posted soon.

- July 29-30th: SAIGON VIETNAM EPIC STREET PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
(Details to be announced).

[Witness new EK WORKSHOPS >](#)

EK SHOPPE

The tools to conquer:

1. [HENRI SHOULDER STRAP](#): STAY STRAPPED.
2. [HENRI NECK STRAP MARK IV](#): LEGENDS NEVER DIE.

[Discover all >](#)

Random thoughts on my mind

1. Function must always come first. For example, assuming you live in Southern California, just think about the days when it is 110°, do you really want a black car?
 2. Lululemon is the new Nike. Especially for men's fitness clothing (all compression clothing everything)
 3. [Powerlifting is for courage augmentation.](#)
 4. [Apple is the future of photography.](#) stop buying those RICOHS
 5. I really hate the fake brown wood dash trim in Tesla model 3/Y— this alone makes me not desire to buy one. Why can't there just be a simple "all black" interior?
 6. The ultimate focus on driving with yoke steering— I love it! Ultra red looks great on Model S Plaid.
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Next

1. Upload your best photos to arsbeta.com
 2. Upload your photos to your own blog
 3. Keep shooting!
 4. Watch John Wick 4 when you got the chance.
 5. Hit the gym at least once everyday! Or just go for the hot sauna.
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Photo assignments

1. Shoot 1,000 photos in a day.
 2. Just use Provoke cam on your iPhone and flash, or the noir with rich contrast photo style mode on iPhone
 3. Start vlogging and uploading to YouTube for fun
 4. Curate your photos and keep re-uploading them
 5. Try blogging from your iPhone with the WordPress app—insanely great!
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The best current camera?

Maybe [iPhone Pro](#)? RICOH GR IIIX is technically the best, but longevity is insanely poor — only 1 or 2 years before mine broke.

Kid ideas

1. Swift playgrounds on iPad insanely great for kids — Seneca learning how to code at age 2 years 2 months old!
 2. GarageBand also for beats on iPhone and iPad — Seneca has already made over 100 beats since age 1.5 years
 3. Playgrounds suck, but physical training is great for kids. Spartan training for kids? I also give Seneca cold showers to toughen him up!
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Consult with EK

For big thinking:

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Thinking thoughts

1. What if 80% of our days was full of physical training and only 20% mental?
2. How to do good: build free weight lifting gyms in the hood.
3. Bring back physical education?

Spartan thoughts

1. A hard lifestyle is the best lifestyle.
 2. The ancient Greeks and Spartans saw (too much) armor as cowardice.
 3. Movie 300 and king Leonidas are my goals and mentors.
 4. Watch “Ninja Assassin” with the Korean singer Rain for visuals on good child rearing
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The best car?

Tesla Model S Plaid in Ultra Red

Lamborghini is for losers

Revuelto looks like a Corvette.

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Life is all about courage.

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