

A person is walking away from the camera on a set of train tracks that curve into the distance. The person is wearing a dark jacket, dark pants, and sneakers, and is carrying a camera in their right hand. The background consists of bare trees and a hazy sky, suggesting a winter or late autumn setting. The overall tone is moody and contemplative.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S MANIFESTO

The Real Photographer Within You is Waiting...

By Brendan Hufford

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THE CHARGE

One Foot In Front Of The Other

Join the Community

Share This Manifesto

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

THE FINISH LINE

I'm a **photographer**.

I love to document.

I love the art.

But mostly, I like to take photos that get me paid.

And my ego
around my photography was strong.

I tried, in vain, to force others to love my art.
For a decade, I tried and it's impossible.

So... I quit.

I'm falling back in love with the business of
photography.

With the craft.

I'm learning to shoot photos for others again.

And not the disease of applause.

Not at the cost of my creativity.

People will see my shots.

But they'll also **see me.**

This has been a challenge.

And I'm learning,
slowly,
that there are lots of other
photographers out there
who feel the same way.

Photographers who want to do
independent
creative work.

Not focused on the hearts, likes, or pins.

Not just photography.

Photographers who want to
get paid
and take care of their family.

Focused on blending art and work.

Not just business.

This manifesto is my outstretched hand reaching to support you, **my friend.**

To one who also feels the pull of personal and public satisfaction.

If this rings true for you, **read on.**

Casual Reader Beware
(You've Been Warned)

Be prepared to be challenged.

The manifesto that follows will ask you to do the **right** things, and for the **right** reasons.

Onward.

A REBEL YELL

Photographers don't just work to work.
Nor do they work
for fast cars
or big houses.

They work for another reason.

This is the first and only lesson
every photographer must learn.

Real photographers
don't build a business for a paycheck.

They don't do it
for a large Instagram following
or other notoriety.

They do it because **they can't not.**

They are destined
by their creator
to get the shot
and save that moment forever.

**They
must dream,
must build,
must shoot.**

They wake up every single morning
with a mission and a vision.

The gear is irrelevant.

They are **disciplined** in their pursuit.

They are no stranger to working hours
usually reserved for gravediggers

and creatures of the night.

When questioned
about how long
they must toil

and to what extent,

they stare back unphased.

To which days they work, they reply,

“All of them.”

To which days they don't,
the answer is the same.

What matters most is that **they never quit.**

They rise daily,
compelled to create
in the only way they see fit for their lives:

Visually. Creatively. Independently.

They yearn to make
art that tells a story.

To pick up on a whim
and travel with their family.

To provide for their family
with so much more
than they ever could in cubicle nation.

It's never been about the money.

But sometimes it is.

And should that motivation
reach high ground,
it must be rewarded
with death.

While money or fame is the ultimate goal,
it is ultimately corrupting.

The goal has never been
to do *whatever it takes*
to get rich or popular.

A true
photographer
knows

that **they are not alone.**

A true
photographer
shows up **daily**
to do the work.

Whether or not
it works
is unimportant.

A true
photographer
feels a *force*

that wakes them up
in the morning,
motivates them,
and forces their hand

when they don't want
to do the work.

Because that's the **only** way forward.

The path to freedom
is *not* paved

with new lenses,
with editing,
with ideas.

It's paved with **DOING**.

This is your calling.

This is your Rebel Yell.

Honor the gift
and make great art
even when nobody is watching.

As in war,
there is never
endless time
to wait.

Planning to get started *some day*.

Nothing is rewarded in this line
other than **doing the work**.

They will ignore
you.

They will scoff at your “hobby.”

But those aren't excuses to wait.

It won't always
make money.

It won't always
be great.

But those aren't excuses to wait, either.

One day
you'll be rewarded
with the *freedom*
you desire.

The freedom to travel, play, work,
and share **this vocation** with pride
at family gatherings.

“I am a **professional** photographer.”

But until that day,

You and I are not excused
from **doing work that matters.**

THE ART OF THE START

The best day to start was yesterday.

Today is your time.

It is your time to show up
and start doing the real work.

Not checking
your newest lens or
your Instagram likes.

Not worrying or
planning for what
will come next.

Stop.

Pause.

Take a deep breath.

And start **making**.

Your job every day
is to show up

and **make something**
to serve your clients,

even if they don't know you yet.

Even with no acclaim,
no likes,
no shares, and
no clients.

All that you're promised
is a journey of work.
And more work after that.

But hear me clearly,

Photographer,

your work
will eventually
change the world
for you and your family.

That world awaits...

As does the real photographer within you...

It's time to get started.

THE CHARGE

ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER

This is *my* manifesto.

This is *why* / take photos.

It's time for *you* to find *yours*
and start making.

I know you will.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

To get involved in a thriving community of professional photographers, [visit this page](#).

The two keys to succeeding in your photography business are:

solid education and **community**.

Get both [here](#).

SHARE THIS MANIFESTO

Of course, you're welcome to share this manifesto with other photographers.

Please don't sell or change it in any way.
Here are some great ways to share:

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Comments](#)

SHARE THIS MANIFESTO

For more ideas on how to share
this manifesto
and to offer feedback,
visit [The Photographer's Manifesto](#) page.

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He lives outside Chicago, Illinois with his wife, Lizzy, his sons Evan and Finnley and dog, Bean, and knows just enough Jiu Jitsu to be dangerous.

Read more at PhotoMBA.net/about.

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