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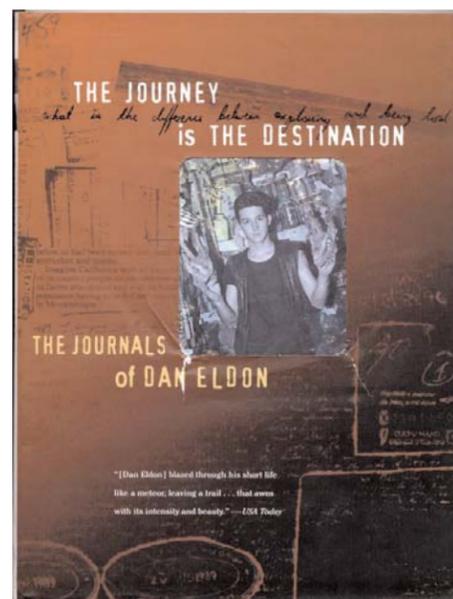
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# The Art of Exploration

EXTRAORDINARY EXPLORERS AND CREATORS INSPIRE US ALL TO REACH OUR OWN POTENTIAL

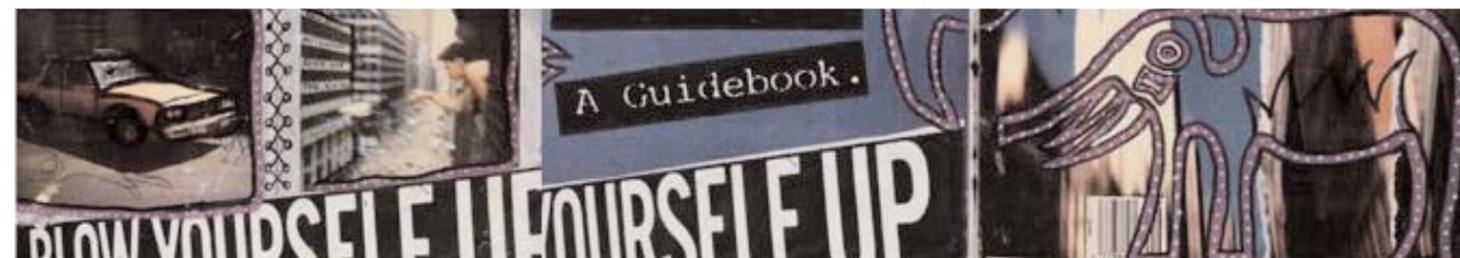


## DAN ELDON



Dan Eldon was born in London in 1970 to an American mother and a British father. Along with his younger sister, Amy, Dan and his family moved to Kenya in east Africa in 1977. Kenya remained Dan's home for the rest of his life, and though he traveled often - visiting more than 40 countries in 22 years - he always considered Africa home.

Dan's father led the east Africa division of a European computer company and his mother Kathy, an Iowa native, was a freelance journalist. Kenya was a popular destination in the late 1970s and 1980s; it was more politically stable and economically secure than most African nations, and the bountiful wildlife and perfect climate made it all the more appealing. Dan and Amy grew up with a constant stream of interesting visitors at their dinner table. Frog researchers, opera singers, filmmakers, reporters, and politicians were just some of the people who populated the Eldon household.





By the time Dan was in high school, he had begun to make his collage journals, something he started as an assignment for an anthropology class. Sometimes, he shared these with guests at the house. The journals were the perfect catch-all for his interests in travel, photography, and art. For the rest of his life, he would religiously keep these visual diaries-cum-art experiments.

As a high school senior, Dan told the guidance counselor that he was planning to do an internship at a magazine for a few months and then travel through southern Africa. "Oh, you're taking a year off," the counselor asked. "No," Dan replied, "I'm taking a year on." He lived by this concept for the next five years - education through travel and firsthand experience. Although he enrolled in several colleges for a semester or two, his primary activities were travel, photography, and entrepreneurial schemes. Many of the latter were philanthropic in nature.

From a young age, Dan had a knack for raising money. As a teenager, he sold the jewelry of a Maasai woman, helping her to support her family, and he held large dance parties to help a classmate fund an operation. In 1990, two years after graduating from high school, he planned his biggest adventure and fund raising effort to date. Along with 13 other young people, all of whom were under the age of 21, he raised nearly \$20,000 which the group delivered to a refugee camp in Malawi.

Two years later, Dan had an opportunity to fly to Somalia, Kenya's northern neighbor, to witness the civil war and famine. The three-day visit had a major impact on Dan. He saw that his work as a photographer could have a huge impact; few journalists were covering the story at the time and humanitarian relief was desperately needed. He also realized that he would be good at this line of work; his years of travel along with photographic skills would come together. Soon, he was a stringer for the Reuters news agency - someone whose photos are promised to one agency but who is not a permanent employee of that agency.

He spent the next year in Somalia covering the famine and the arrival of both UN and US forces to the country. He underwent depression, shocked by the horrors of war and the death of so many of his fellow Africans. But he also shined as a young correspondent, loving the people he met and the pace of the work. By spring of 1993, his photographs routinely appeared in major newspapers and magazines. When Dan was killed on July 12, 1993, at just 22 years of age, he'd achieved more success in a competitive field that many do in an entire career.



## WORDS OF WISDOM FROM DAN

There is little difference between being lost and exploring.

Mtu hujua atokako, hajui aendako.  
(One knows where they are coming from, not where they are going.)

- Swahili proverb



## KEEPING A JOURNAL

Dan started keeping a journal when he was 15 for a school assignment. He very quickly realized that a journal could serve as a travelogue, anthropological field log, diary, and photographer's portfolio. Dan loved to travel and made an adventure out of even the seemingly smallest, day-to-day expedition, such as a trip through Nairobi. Along the way, he took photographs and collected things: newspapers and magazines with funny or eye-catching material, egg shells and bird feathers, foreign coins, candy wrappers. Everything was fodder for his journals.

Keeping a journal can help you train your eye. Being alert to your surroundings is equally important if you want to enter into the sciences, the arts, or journalism. When you go on walks, think like an explorer: look for things you haven't seen before. Challenge yourself to look in new directions. Take a camera along to practice seeing through a different eye.

As you go, collect things like Dan did, then come home and make a page or two based on your outing. Add writing - or not. The practice of putting down your experience will help you to improve your vision the next time

