

Steve McCurry shares his rules for a long life

Posted on November 8, 2026 by Luca Moretti

PORTO CERVO, Sardinia — As Steve McCurry still intensely travels the world on his international news photo shoots, which the 76-year old American photographer credits to a plain routine. “Exercise, walking, eating well, not drinking too much wine, two or three glasses a day,” he said.

“McCurry’s emphasis on walking and eating well is consistent with what we know about healthy aging, although there’s no compelling evidence that drinking wine improves longevity,” said Jordan Weiss, assistant professor at the Optimal Aging Institute of NYU Langone Health. “Teaching nutrition in schools makes sense because the foundations of healthy aging are laid decades before we grow old.”

Age has not slowed him. McCurry photographs “every day, without fail.”

Faces remain his subject, as they have been since Afghan Girl, his 1984 portrait of a refugee in Pakistan. “It is not necessarily about beauty, it is some other quality,” he said.

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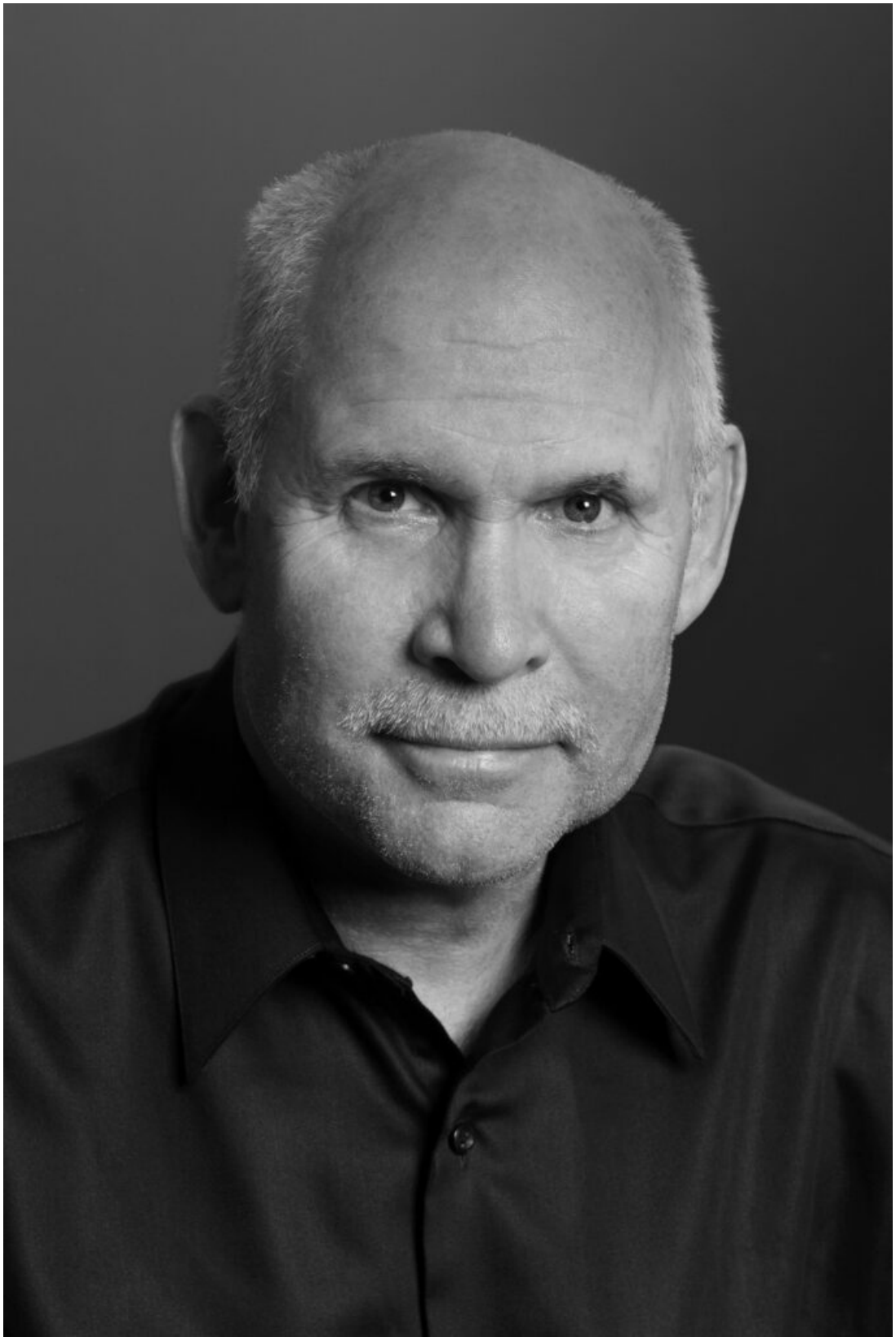
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Various Italy by McCurry (*Credits: Studio McCurry*)

McCurry made the comments at the Longevity Fest in Porto Cervo, Sardinia, organised by the Consorzio Costa Smeralda, part of the Territori di Eccellenza network last month, where he also received the Longevity Award Costa Smeralda 2026.



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Porto Cervo (*Credits: Studio McCurry*)

“McCurry’s emphasis on daily walking and a predominantly plant-based diet aligns with the scientific evidence on healthy ageing, particularly for cardiovascular health, metabolic function and disease prevention. However, eliminating meat is not essential for longevity,” said Mark Kovacs, an exercise physiologist heading the Kovacs Institute.

McCurry’s motto is in fact “everything in moderation.”

“The important thing is to understand nutrition and understand that you have to move,” he said. He does not eat meat and buys organic vegetables whenever he can.

“Sardinia’s real lesson is that longevity emerges from an entire way of life, where food traditions, movement, social connection, and daily rhythms are shaped by a particular ecology and culture, something we cannot simply export as a universal Mediterranean diet,” said Oscar Trelles, founder of Breathing Flame.

“The real lesson from Sardinia is consistency over years, not any single habit,” said Luke McCormack, co-founder of AEVUM, a UK longevity supplement brand.

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Health over wealth

McCurry is blunt about the alternative. “Most people have no interest in nutrition or health in general,” he said. The scant time schools devote to nutrition and health is, he said, “frightening.”

“What is more important in your life than health?” he asked. “Not having a certain amount of money in your bank, or where you live may be an issue, but being able to walk and be healthy is of the utmost importance.”

Sardinia makes a fitting stage for the discussions. Researchers first mapped a Sardinian Blue Zone (an area of exceptional longevity) in 2004, and the province of Nuoro has Italy’s highest concentration of centenarians, 78.7 per 100,000 residents, according to Istat (Italy’s national statistics institute).

Asked what keeps McCurry working after 50 years, he mentioned neither prizes nor fame. “I think I am curious,” he said. At 76, the answer to a long life and a long career turns out to be the same.

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