

364 PHOTOGRAPHY

Capturing Family Moments



by DA Photography by Dragi Andovski

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Hello & Welcome

Over the years I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing Dragi's photography work grow and develop into the product it is today. Without even knowing his clients, I can appreciate the feelings being expressed through his lens. Many times I have been stopped in my tracks by photos of people that I have never met. He knows how to capture the expressions of kids and adults alike to create timeless keepsakes for his clients.

I had the pleasure of being the subject in quite a few photos Dragi has taken. I can assure you, Dragi knows how to keep even the most uncomfortable of clients distracted and content during photo shoots! The photos Dragi has taken of my kids are incredibly accurate, their personalities are always captured. Not to mention, these photos have brought many a tear to my eye!

As a person interested in the art of photography, I have asked Dragi many questions about his work. He has been especially helpful with giving me tips and tricks of the trade. I'm very excited he's sharing these tips with anyone who is interested! He has a no-nonsense approach that makes understanding the concepts of photography easy and relatable.

I hope you get as much out of this book as I did!

Jenn Vardon

Introduction

Life can be hard. Taking pictures of your family doesn't need to be.

You have a digital camera, you read the directions thoroughly and you've snapped some good photos already. But, you ask, why doesn't my photo pop? What am I missing?

By utilizing various aspects of photography you can take photos that will stun your friends and fill-in your scrapbooks beautifully. We've created this helpful, continuously evolving guide to help you take great everyday family photos. We remember getting our first cameras and trying to navigate the sometimes confusing world of digital photography. There's no need to use valuable family time to master a complicated camera. This is a keep-it-simple guide designed to give you only the instructions and tips you need to take fantastic photos.

We're going the extra-mile to make your life easier. Talking openly with our clients, we discovered that you want more than a package of great pictures once per year. You also want to have great photos the other 364 days of the year! Since it's not feasible to hire a photographer daily, the responsibility is up to you to take those photos. This guide will help you take photos that reflect the love you share with your family and friends.



Finding The Light

Chapter One



The absolute, most important element of a photograph is how well lighting is used. You can only capture the expression or detail of the moment you want to forever remember if your photograph is well-lit. It can make a photo that stops people in their tracks. Or create a photo that we keep because it's the only photo to document a moment. It allows you to see the love that radiates in a bride's eyes while admiring her groom. Or even the wonder that is painted across a child's face during an encounter with nature.



Natural Light

It's important to remember that you don't need highly technical lighting to capture beautiful moments. Natural light is often all you need. Natural light is quite simply, the daylight in your photograph. It appears without the assistance of camera flashes or other lighting equipment. Using daylight also gives you the opportunity to create truly magical photos when you take photos around sunrise and sunset. The pros call this "magic hour".



So how do you make sure that your photograph is well lit?

The only sure way to know you're using light effectively is through trial and error. Look through the lens or screen to see where the light falls. Change the position of yourself and your subjects to use the light in different ways. Open curtains and shades and even turn your subjects in different directions to play with your lighting source. Finding and using light is like a dance where you sway and move around trying to find the best illumination for your photo.

Light Sources

In photography it's not about using one type of light or another, but knowing how to use each type to capture your family as you wish. While the most effective, the sun isn't your only source of light. Different photo locations and times of day will dictate what type of light source you use.

Here are a few examples of different types of light.

- Direct or in-direct sun
- Window light
- Flash included on your camera
- Artificial LED light
- External strobe flash



Pro tip: If you're looking for a unique and inexpensive way to add light to a photo you envision, try using flashlights. Flashes and highly technical lighting is expensive. You might not think flashlights will work, but they do! They are a simple and inexpensive fix for a bad lighting situation.

Try it for yourself...

Now that you know the theory behind using light to your advantage, it's time to apply your knowledge. The professionals sometimes referred to this as the "two-thirds rule". By effectively lighting two-thirds of your subject, the final product of your photo will actually be more pleasing to the eye. You can apply this rule with a simple lighting source like a window. Move your family members around in the light to experiment to achieve the effect you want.



When using a flash you are lighting 100% of the subject or scenery. This makes the photo look harsh and two dimensional. The most effective way to use light is to think of it as a highlight to the photo you are taking. If you want your subject's eyes to pop off the page, you can position him or her so that the light highlights the eyes and create a three-dimensional work of art!



Pro Tip: Whenever possible, position your friends or family members in front of a window when taking photos. Always work with this light behind or beside you to highlight your subjects.





Focus, Focus, Focus

Chapter Two

The most challenging part of taking pictures is recreating the image you see in person.

Picture this: Your child is playing with toy trains on the family room table. You see the wonderment in his face. How do you emphasize that facial expression so that when you show the image to others they see the wonderment too? How can you be sure to include the trains in the photo without distracting from your son's face?

The human eye has a natural ability to focus in on one thing at a time. Try looking at a houseplant or a chair in the room. What do you see? The object you are looking at is in full-focus. What about the rest of the scene? Notice how everything else is out of focus and blurry?

The camera is designed to establish the same element of focus as your eyes. It recreates reality so that when you look at a picture your eye is automatically drawn to the main subject of the photo. The photographer (that's you!) decides what he/she wants the viewer's eyes to be drawn to. Your audience can either be moved by or confused by your images.



If you use your focal point to your advantage and highlight an especially moving part of the scene in front of you, your audience will naturally be drawn to the image. It will elicit the feeling you are trying to recreate without having to explain it. However, your camera will choose a focal point for you if you don't yourself. This can confuse your audience if the camera chooses a different point of focus than your son's face or trains.



Compose Yourself!

Now that you have determined your focal point, you will need to think about the composition of your photo. To understand composition, let's think back to your kindergarten days. Do you remember when you worked hard to draw a picture to only have your teacher send you back to fill-in the white space on your page? Our teachers were disliked that white space, didn't they? What they were actually emphasizing is composition.



You need to take into consideration the background that you're taking the photo against. Have a look around... Is there something in the background that will compete for attention? Look for possible photo-bombing animals, toys strewn around the floor or dirty dishes that you just haven't gotten around to putting away. Moving a few things or changing your angle that you take the photo can easily remove these distractions from your image.

Now what?

You understand the concept of focus now but, how do you apply it?



DSLR Cameras

When taking photos with your DSLR camera, you can choose your focal point manually. By pressing the button that looks like this [---] you can choose where in the scene you would like your camera to focus. Press that button and while looking through your view finder, you can toggle through 3 different focal points (indicated by the red dots flashing in your view finder) to find one that works for you. You can also use a method that the pros employ, called "tricking your camera". By holding your shutter release button halfway down, your camera will skip through a couple of different focal points. Once you find one you like, you can press the shutter release all the way down to take your photo.



iPhone/Smartphone

When taking photos with your iPhone or Smartphone, the camera will automatically find a focal point for you. However, if you want a different focal point, all you need to do is place your finger on the part of the image on the screen that you want to focus in on. Your camera will use AF (auto focus) to measure the distance from the camera to the object/subject you're photographing and it will also use AE (auto exposure) to choose the best exposure based on where the focus is. So, you don't even have to think about it!



All In The Family

Chapter Three



Let's get straight to the point. When setting up your family for a group photo, if you remember nothing else, remember this: affection beats imperfection. Meaning, just as life with family is not always perfect, your photos shouldn't portray perfection either. We might not always know how to express our feelings or treat each other, but as a family we have endless affection for one another. So, why not emphasize that love and affection through photo images? In this chapter we will provide you with ideas, tips and tricks to show the love and affection you and your family possess all while ensuring your images are pleasing to the viewer.





Posing Your Family

Fail to plan, plan to fail.

Before you start setting up your models for their still photo shoot, arrange a plan of attack well in advance. It could be a day ahead or a month ahead, what ever suits your fancy. On the day of the photo you may need to be flexible with your plan. It's hard to fathom working with Plan B when your mind hasn't even figured out Plan A!

Channel your inner Speedy Gonzales.

Set everyone up quickly all while maintaining a good sense of humour. The last thing you want to deal with is an impatient toddler and her mother who's at her wits end! By keeping everyone smiling and laughing, you help set the mood for the photo. When it's time for smiles they will be readily available, not forced.



Snuggle up!

An effective way to show closeness and love within a family is by using a method that resembles snuggling. You don't need to employ the standard sports-team or class photo posing method - taller people in the back, shorter in the front on their knees - when working with your family. You can create a fun and interesting group photo by situating immediate families together in smaller groups. Each family can snuggle in close or stand at various levels/angles.



Capturing the kids.

Holiday parties and gatherings are fantastic events to get the kids together for group photos. However, how many kids do you know that will sit for an hour smiling for a photographer? Yep, that's what I thought, none. With kids comes their short attention span, so be sure to grab a formal photo closer to the start of the event. Once your formal photo is complete use the opportunity to gather journalistic style photos of the kids. This way you can capture the personality and facial expressions of each child at this point in time. Now is the time to capture the small things the kids do, because one day those kids will be teenagers and teenagers are far less cooperative about having their photos taken!

Timing is everything.

If your gathering includes dinner, the last thing you want to do is take a photo after everyone has just finished eating. After you eat, your blood rushes to your digestive system to help breakdown your food. The more food you eat, the more the body needs to work on digestion, which will leave you feeling tired and groggy. You might be sporting a satisfied smile with a full tummy, but it's harder to maintain composure in potentially stressful situations when you feel lethargic. Keep an eye on the atmosphere in the room. Once everyone has arrived and things start to feel comfortable, cease the opportunity to take your photo before the food hits their stomachs!



Go outside.

Hands down, the best place to take a group photo is outdoors (weather permitting, of course). There's much more access to natural light outdoors and the surroundings will remind you of the season, time and place you took the photo. Plus, from a vanity perspective, your cheeks will be slightly flushed which helps you look your most attractive. If there's snow on the ground, even better! The white backdrop allows the colour in your clothes and face to pop, complimenting everyone in the photo. Lastly, we need to take into consideration outdoor photos in the cold. Instruct everyone to put their winter coats, mittens and scarves on in the house to get warm and toasty, then take the outer layers off and run outside for a quick photo!

Technical Tips

We've covered the creative side of taking group photos, now it's time to get technical.



Lighten up!

The wider or greater the aperture is set on your camera, the more light the camera is able to catch. The more light your camera is able to catch, the more people you can get in your photo while also being in focus. Since everyone in your photo is standing or sitting at varied distances from you, your camera will need to capture more light in order to focus in on every face. Otherwise, you will have a photo with anywhere from 1-4 people in focus and the rest of your family will be blurry.

Every DSLR camera is different, but by consulting your instruction manual you can figure out how to set your camera's aperture. The higher the value for the “F” stop means your focus area is greater and more of your subjects will be in focus. Consider matching the number of people in your photo with your aperture setting. For example; if you have 3 people in your photo, your "F stop" should be set at F3.2 or greater.

Don't overlook the background.

You might be so focused on getting everyone in your picture that you forget to look behind them. The first thing to look for if you're taking a photo in an open landscape is the horizon. Make sure that when the horizon is included in your photo that the line of the horizon in the background does not line up with anyone's head in your photo. This line will distract from the people in the image and make it look like the horizon is cutting off their heads! Lastly, make sure that your background isn't busier than the people in the photo, especially if you're photographing a substantial amount of people. Keep the background as simple and plain as possible. The photo will be busy enough with the many loving faces in it!

Having the opportunity to capture a family event through your images will be cherished for years to come. In the present, it provides a fun family activity that forces everyone out of their comfort zones and gives an opportunity for everyone to connect on a whole new level!





Compose Yourself!

Chapter Four

Let's think back to your kindergarten teacher and her insisting that you fill in your artwork with colour and create a background. "Leave no white space!" she would say. We're referring back to this analogy because it's usually the first time in our lives that we learn about composition. And, we didn't even realize it!

Composition doesn't just refer to the "white space" of a photo. It also refers to where your subjects are placed in relation to the background and how your subjects are placed within the entire image.



Three's (Not) a Crowd

In the world of photography there are rules. Some written and some unwritten. One of the unwritten rules pertains to the Rule of Thirds. When taking a photo, divide your image into three horizontal sections, upper, middle and lower. By following this you will create a photo that's pleasing to the viewer. This rule applies to posing your subjects as well as managing the background. The onlooker doesn't realize why the photo is pleasing, they just appreciate the final product.

The Rule of Thirds may also be applied to posing your subjects. The application of this rule involves creating a geometric shape with three sides - the triangle. Triangles may be created with your subject's faces and/or limbs (more often than not, the arms). The triangle you use might be equilateral or even obtuse, it doesn't matter!

Forget About the Middle

In the past, the amateur or recreational photographer seemed to always place his/her subject in the middle of the image. The focus on the average camera used to start in the middle and to change the focus, the photographer needed to do it manually. If you weren't familiar with your camera or thought it was time consuming to change the focus, you just left it. However, modern cameras and those on our mobile devices automatically change the focus to find your subject. If you place your subject in the upper, middle or lower planes of your image, your camera will find your subject and will zero in on it.



Foreground/Background/Subject

When composing your image you want to take into consideration not only your subject but also the background and foreground. By changing your perspective (the angle, distance and position) when taking a photo, you can incorporate all three elements to give your photo a 3-dimensional effect. You can change your perspective by hiding behind a tree branch with fall colours or lying on the ground to get the green grass in your shot.

Basically, when changing your perspective, you can get lower to the ground so that the sky is your primary background or stand up on a picnic table so the grass is the primary background. If you're shooting from behind a bush, you give the viewer the impression that you are in a forest.



Pulling it All Together

Let's recap what information we have covered to date. By recapping what we learned about focus and light, we can provide a new perspective (no pun intended) on composition.

Focus - refers to your subject and your distance from the subject. Distance may refer to the physical space between the subject and the photographer as well as the focus point on the camera itself.

Light - Using light you can hide or reveal what you want the viewer to see.

Composition - The environment does not take over the image, but instead compliments the subject.

Your background should not have too many colours or textures. Since you want your subject to stand-out, you want to be sure the background/foreground isn't distracting. On the contrary, you also don't want your subject and your background to blend in and match the colour of the environment. Think of the colours red, green and blue. When you have a combination of these colours, your photo will pop off the page (or screen!) To apply the red/green/blue colour scheme think of the green grass, a person's skin tone (which no, is not red but, a pigment of red) and the blue sky.

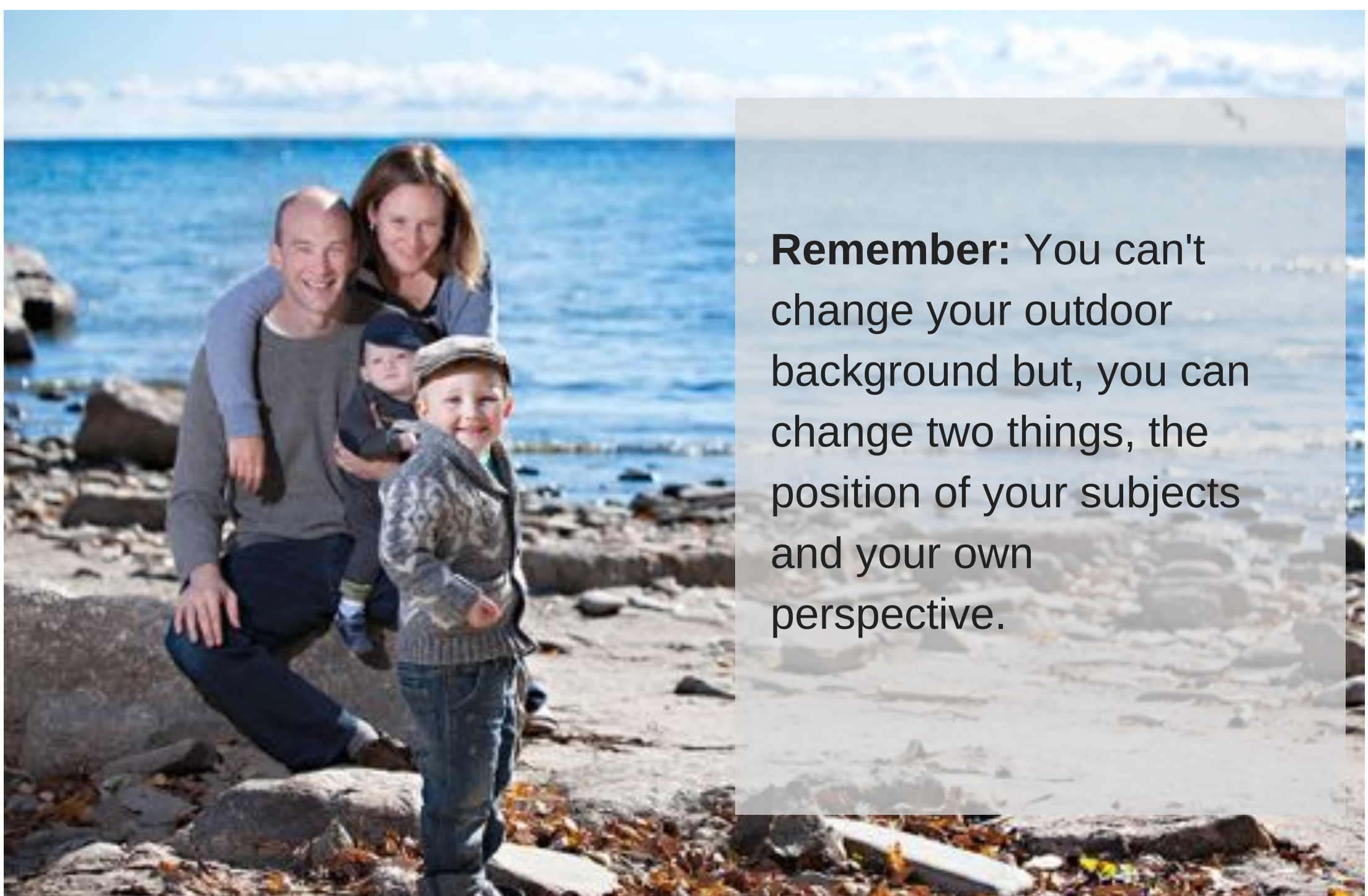
Landscape with People

When working with your subjects in combination with a larger landscape where you can see the horizon in the background, be aware of the horizontal line and where it lies in relation to your subjects. When incorporating the horizon, change your perspective and be mindful of two rules.

Rule 1: Do not let the horizon land in the middle of the image. This distracts the viewer from the focus of the photo - your subjects.

Rule 2: Do not let the horizon land in the middle of your subjects' heads. This gives the impression the horizon is "cutting off their heads".

Think back to the Rule of Thirds. By keeping the horizon in your photo to the top third or bottom third of your photo, you will create an image that is not distracting and highlights the focus of your photo.



Remember: You can't change your outdoor background but, you can change two things, the position of your subjects and your own perspective.

Managing Indoor Photos

The worst place to take a photo in terms of your background is indoors. When shooting indoors there are a lot of distractions and objects that have the potential to change the focus of your image. For example; if your subject is wearing black pants and there is a black chair behind him, given the right (or wrong) angle, the guy and the chair will blend together and it will look like the chair is a part of your subject. The 'Guy with the Chair for a Leg' will distract the viewer from what's really important, the guy's face.

Be mindful of your subjects' heads and what is behind them or in front of them. If there's a vase of flowers behind your subject and they're placed in the incorrect spot, it will look like those flowers are growing from your subject's head. Planning ahead and taking the initiative to move these objects will limit the distractions and make your indoor photo much better.



Now that you understand the various concepts of composition, you can take your latest photograph to your kindergarten teacher and show him/her how well you've filled in that dreaded "white space"!



Travel Photography

Chapter Five

The Essentials for Photographing Your Vacation or Stay-cation

The lengthy Canadian winters drag on and can make us feel lethargic, especially when we're housebound due to extreme weather! It's been scientifically proven that even the simple act of planning for a vacation gives us something to look forward to and lifts our spirits. Whether you plan a wintry stay-cation or an elaborate trip South to warmer shores, you will need to prepare in advance to ensure you take amazing photos. We compiled a list of things to remember as well as helpful tips for photographing your vacation.



Plan Ahead

Before you begin to pack your photography gear for your vacation or stay-cation, you will need to do your research and begin an intimate relationship with Google. Research where your hotel is located in relation to your site-seeing destinations. If you plan to visit a water park or will be swimming in the ocean, you will need to think about preserving your camera from the effects of sand and of course, water. The same is applicable if you plan to go skiing close to home. Protecting your camera is of utmost importance.

Storing Your Photos

If you plan to upload your photos to an online server like iCloud, be sure to call ahead to your hotel and figure out what kind of internet connection you're working with. If your internet connection is slow, then you will need to find an alternative source to save your photos. Other options include using your laptop itself, a thumb drive or a DVD but, keep in mind these sources have limited storage capacity.



Protection is Key

Figure out how you're going to carry your camera around. If you plan to sit by a pool deck and chill-out for the length of your vacation, then your standard camera casing that houses all of your equipment will suffice. If however, you want to do a lot of site-seeing, then you will definitely need to bring a second camera case that houses only the necessities for day trips.



Get the Munchkins Involved

Use an old camera or purchase a cheap one for the kids to use during your vacation. Our little angels may be budding photographers and we will never know if we don't let them behind the camera! Besides, it's pretty cool to see what our kids are taking away from the experiences we create for them. If you give them their own camera to use, your kids will show you what aspects of the trip were most impactful to them.

Check Your List

A checklist isn't only helpful for remembering your unmentionables, it's also your friend when it comes to ensuring you have all your photography equipment. Here is a checklist for you to use to make sure you have everything you need.

- Camera battery and back-ups
- Plug-in charger
- Lap top to download images daily
- Check the memory, save old photos to your hard drive or online server and clear it to add more
- Proper casing to house all of your equipment and a smaller one for daily excursions
- Camera for the kids to use



12 Tips for Taking Vacation Photos

When vacationing with your family on sunny shores or wintry wonderlands, it's important to know a few things. We don't want to bombard you with rules since vacation time should be spent relaxing so, we're referring to these as "tips" for taking better photos with your family.

1. Try using an underwater casing for your camera or purchasing a water-proof camera to capture your whole trip, above and below water level.
2. If you have an interchangeable lens, don't take it to the beach. Sand can penetrate the lens and will prevent it from opening and closing.
3. Rotate your family members as photographers to make sure you get photos of every one you're traveling with.
4. Don't be afraid to take pictures of your food. If you're at the restaurant with the "best burger in town" or devouring an exquisite appetizer from a high-end restaurant, you will be happy to revisit that picture in the future. You never know when it might be the topic of discussion in your family.
5. Take photos of the scenery, the exotic animals and flowers. You may have a great memory, but it doesn't hold a flame to a detailed image.
6. If you have a collapsable tripod that packs well, make room for it in your luggage. This way, you can take at least one photo of your whole family together. Tripods are also helpful when taking landscape photos. If you are taking pictures in the snow, be sure to bring a tripod with long legs.

7. You won't always have the opportunity to bring your DSL camera with you on daily outings but, be careful about using your cell phone to take pictures. While they are convenient devices, they also make it super convenient to check your email or update your Facebook status - which puts a damper on family time.

8. The advantageous side about using your camera phone is that there are under water housings for them that are relatively inexpensive yet, very useful.

9. In sub-zero temperatures, your camera's battery will not perform as long as it does in normal temps. It's important to bring a back-up battery or even two to be sure your memories are recorded.

10. When you travel from the indoors-out or vice versa, be sure to give your camera time to adjust to the temperature change. If not, condensation will find its way into your lens and will leave a residue that affects the clarity of your images. This is true for sunny vacations as well since hotels and restaurants are air conditioned and the warm air outside is a contrast.

11. In cold temperatures, be sure to bring (and wear) your gloves! If your hands are cold and you have them stuffed in your pockets, the last thing you will want to do is take them out to press the shutter release.

12. In both warm and cold climates, it is especially important that if your camera happens to get wet by snow or the ocean, be sure to let it dry out before touching any buttons! If possible, place your camera in a tub or large bowl of dry rice to soak up the water.

Capture Every Memory

Lastly, it is important to document every thing! You can always delete any extra pictures when you get home but, it's not feasible to make a return trip to get the photo you missed. Even if you have a day of relaxation at the Scandinavian spa in your ski resort or if you spend the day poolside soaking up the sun, you are creating memories for you and your family that you want to revisit one day. Include pictures of the rest and relaxation days included in your vacation to tell a more complete story.





Preserving Memories

Chapter Six

Let's step away from the technical aspect of photo taking and delve into the reasons why we take photos at all.



Living in the Present

Life isn't as long as we'd like it to be. When we're waiting for a call back from our doctor with test results, time stands still. When we're having a great conversation with a best friend, time flies by. In the end though, life is short.

When I look back to the day our son was born, it feels like a distant memory. Some mental images are clear and concise, others are faded and others have been forgotten altogether. I love to look back at our son's pictures of him as a newborn. He may not be a baby anymore, he's a big four-year old boy now, but when I look at those pictures, I can smell his baby smell. I can hear his baby giggle. I can feel his soft baby skin and pudgy legs.

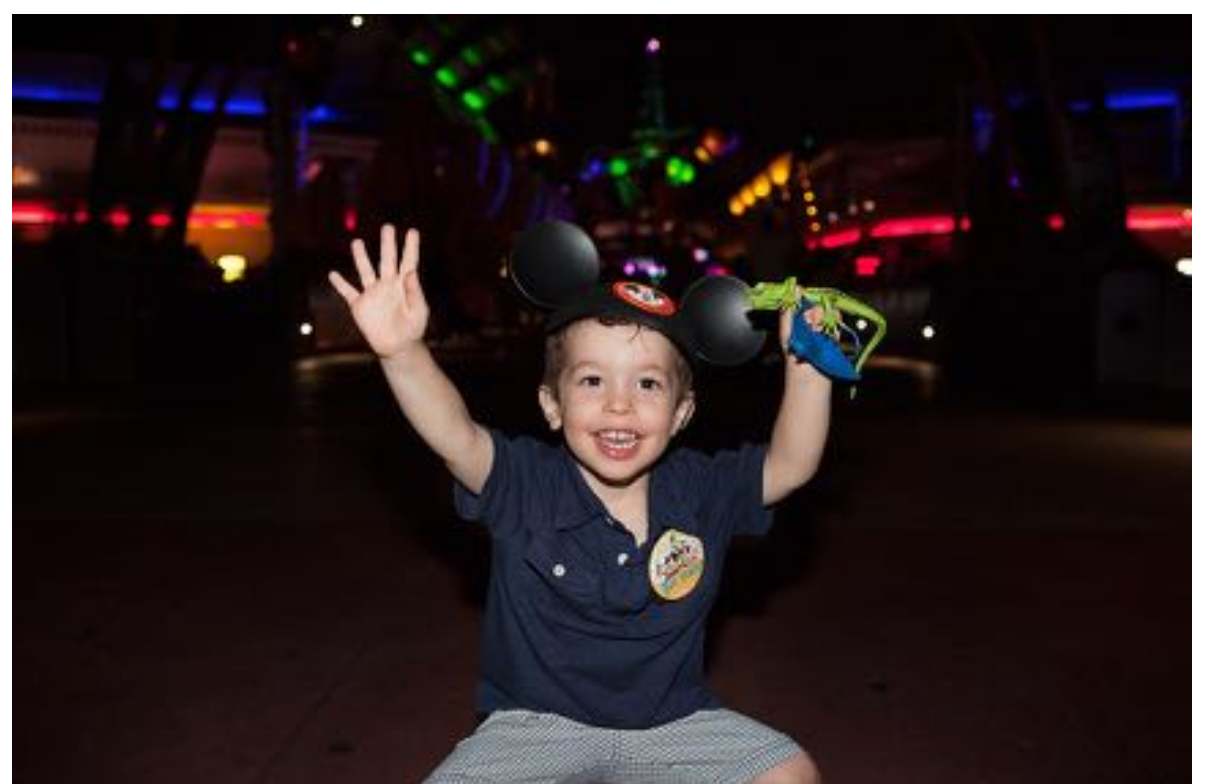


These photos bring back my vivid memories of being a first time father to a newborn baby boy. They remind me of how much he's grown since. How fast the time seems to have flown by. It reminds me not to think of the future, to relish in the present. To be thankful I have the time I have with him now. To enjoy his four-year old scent, his four-year old skin and his four-year old voice. When I drive him to college one day and I return home, I'm going to look back at his four-year old picture and I'm going to think back to this day and be grateful that I took the time to cherish him.

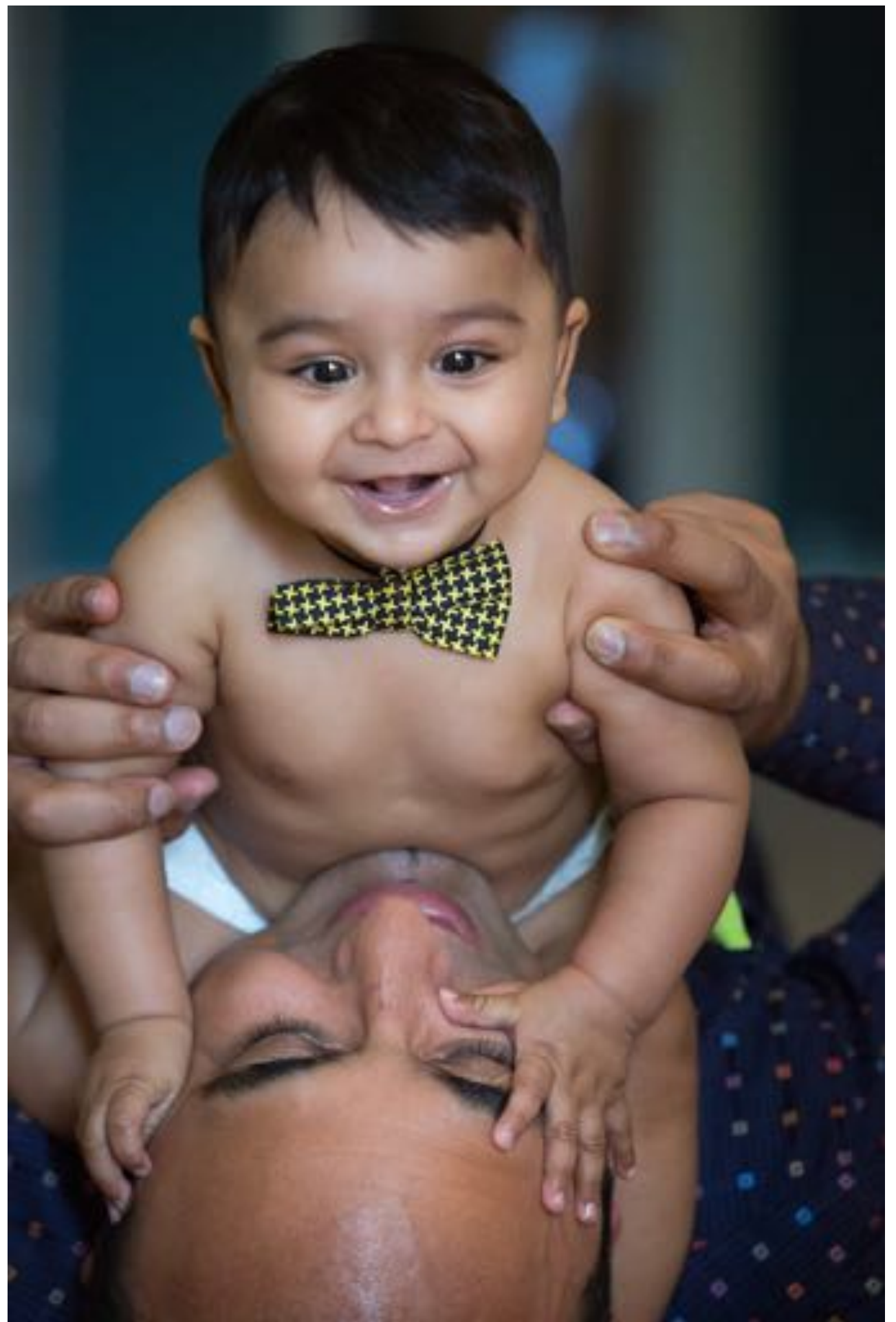


Printing Pictures

Since the era of cell phones with cameras, we've been taking selfie after selfie, pictures of our dinner and funny photos of our cats. Besides these intricacies, we capture the beauty of everyday events as well. We have photos of our kids playing amidst piles of Legos. We catch the thoughtful look on our kids' faces when they're in the middle of figuring out a puzzle. The little things in our lives are important to appreciate and remember. We share those photos with the masses on Facebook and Instagram but our loved ones not on social media? And realistically, how many times a day or week do we revisit the pictures we take on our camera phones? Having printed and framed photos of your loved ones displayed on your walls and shelves keeps the important people in your life, front and center.



The proof is in the pudding. When my wife and I visited our son's daycare for the introductory meeting, his teacher asked us to provide a picture of the three of us for the daycare wall. The reason? This reminds the children of their loved ones for the feeling of support throughout their day. It creates a feeling of family and comfort within the daycare community. Adoptive parents and blended families should display photos of the kids within the home to help them feel accepted within their new family structure.



Photojournalistic Photos

There are posed, family portraits and then there are photojournalistic photos. Life isn't perfect and these types of photos help illustrate the beauty of being imperfect.

Photojournalistic photos are taken spontaneously and emphasize an emotion or a moment. During a wedding, a photojournalistic image can be taken of the bride's parents when they see her in her wedding dress for the first time. Or it can capture the look on a grandmother's face the first time she meets her grandchild. Candid photos are special beyond words and priceless keepsakes that will be cherished for years to come.

Relax, It's All Good!

The best subjects for photojournalistic photos are seniors and children. While on opposite ends of the age spectrum, kids and seniors have an uninhibited approach to photos. Seniors have a "been there, done that" kind of attitude toward life and subsequently, picture taking. They're at a point in their lives where they are comfortable in their skin. Being young, kids aren't aware of their surroundings and the perceived negative aspects of photos. They are themselves, free of worry. Both age groups tend to produce beautifully natural photos full of emotion.



Generally speaking, from the teenage years to the young parent stage of life we experience an array of insecurities. Pre-teens and teens are trying to find their voice, their look. We've all been there and it's a tough process. Trying to become comfortable with ourselves as a new extension beyond our parent's influences. Then, as parents of young kids we're not only worrying about ourselves, but also about our kids and what they're doing during the photo-taking process. Is Junior playing with his nose? Is our baby's outfit clean? There's so much to consider that we just don't have the ability to relax and take a good photo.



Accepting ourselves as we are, in this moment in time, is the key to letting go of our inhibitions. If you've suffered through your teenage years, then you know you made it out alive and well. Perhaps you look back at photos from when you were a teen fondly and remember both how hard it was but, also how rewarding it is to be on the other side. The same goes for parenting. We weren't perfect teens and we probably won't be perfect parents or the perfect subjects for a photo shoot. But, that's okay! We will look back on this one day and be thankful that we stepped in front of the camera and took a chance, regardless of the result.

Lastly, years of taking photos taught me many valuable lessons, one being that your pictures will always reflect how you feel. If you feel nervous, your picture will reflect that. If you feel good, you will look good, guaranteed!





Displaying Your Perfect Picture

Chapter Seven

Now that you have taken the perfect image, it's time to share it. You're proud of the hard work and dedication you put into capturing the right image at the right time. Your image is well-composed, well-lit and makes a statement about you and your subject. It's time to share but, before you start posting to Facebook or throwing pictures up on your wall, there are a few things to think about.



Sharing on Social Media

As a society, we are contributing more and more to social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and whatever new avenue for sharing bits and pieces of ourselves becomes available. We can become inundated with information, pictures and status updates. It's so easy to be lead astray from our work day or household chores when there are so many social media outlets to compete for our attention. Be a good citizen, share your pictures appropriately for the ultimate viewing experience for your friends and followers.

Too much of a good thing is not a good thing.

There's no need to display the 5 photos you took of your baby on the swing. Pick the best photo and delete the rest. Your friends and family are forced to click endlessly through your online photo album when you display every photo that you have taken. Besides, deleting the not-so-great photos from your hard-drive altogether means you will have space to store even more new photos!



Treat your social media account like a business.

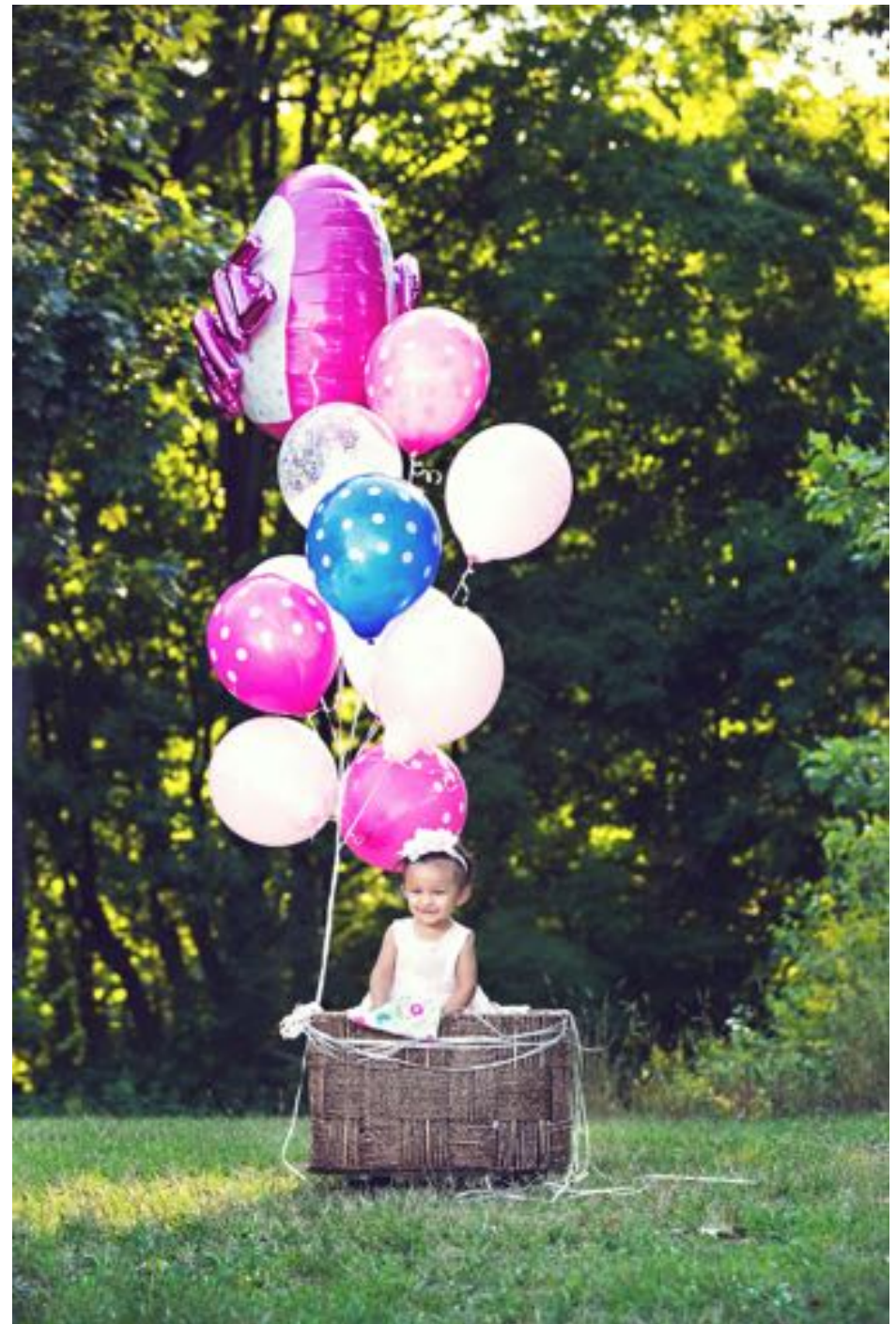
Social media is a marketing tool. You might not be running your own business but, you can use concepts like niche marketing and demographics to make sure your friends see what they want without spamming their newsfeed. Just as businesses develop products or services for niche markets, you can decide which people on your friends' list are going to see what photos. If your coworkers are on your friends' list, then you will want to share only a few pictures with them, but your family on the other hand, may want to see every photo of your precious offspring.

Resolution is key.

Printing pictures from a social media site like Facebook, sacrifices the quality of your print. Try using an online storage service like DropBox or iCloud to share special images with close family and friends for optimal printing.

Making Prints Pop

The decision has been made... Not only is your image good enough to post online, it's also good enough to make "The Wall". Your picture will add to the homeliness feeling in your house and will give your guests a glance into the type of person you are and what you deem important in your life. Here are some tips for highlighting your images instead of muting them.



Mix it up. If you have a few pictures and frames you want to mount, you can skip the rules and use colour as well as black and white prints to make a collage with depth. Your guests will automatically be drawn to the colour photos because they pop against the black and white. However, they will be drawn in a little closer by the black and white photos to appreciate their detail.



Keep it simple. Your frame should not over-power your photo. Choose a simple, plain photo frame without bling or carvings and stick to one colour. Black is always easy to match to various photos and the contrast of a white border will draw attention to the eyes of your guests.



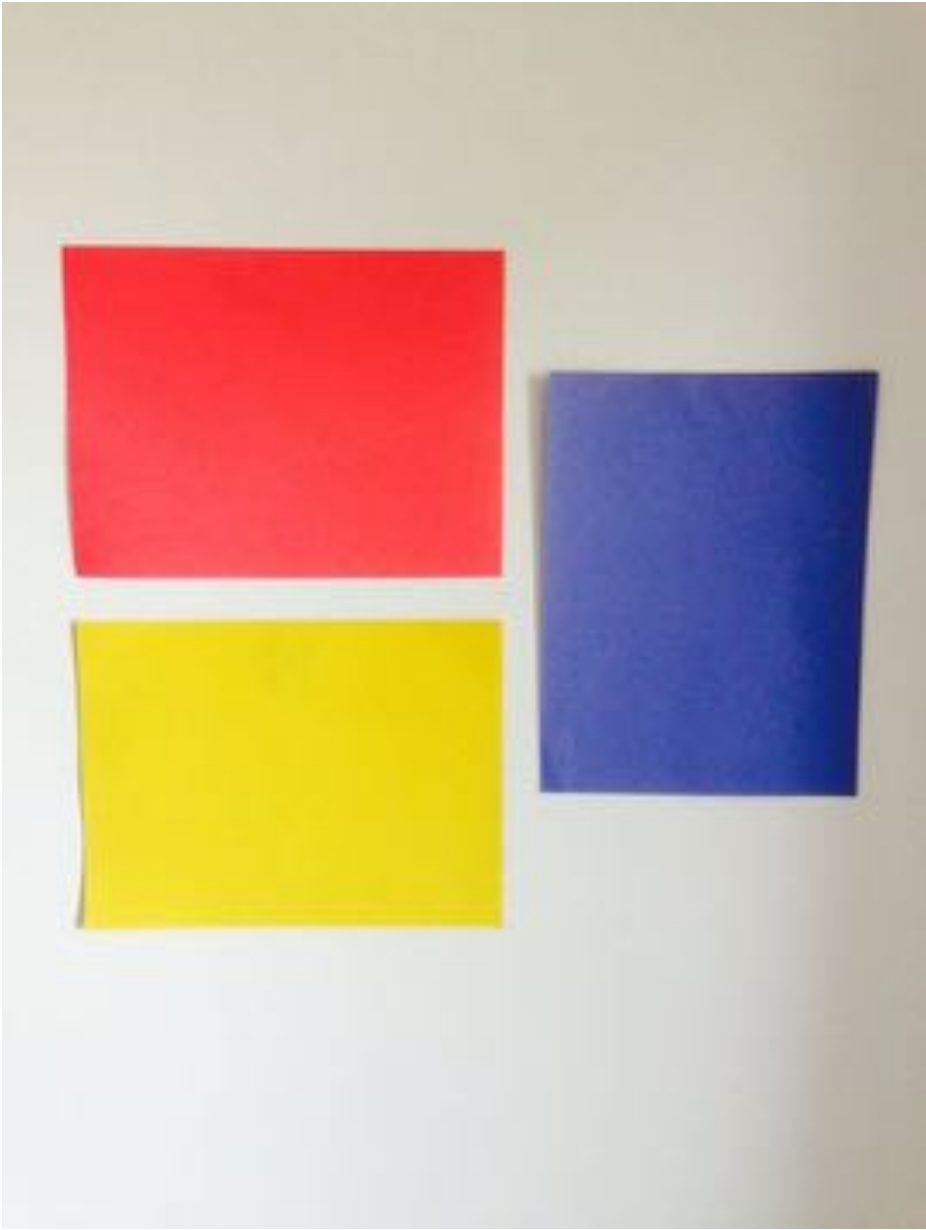
Keep it real. So, black frames with a white border isn't your style? No need to worry. You can use multiple frames in your favourite colour. If the colours in your picture clash with the colour of your frame, convert your photo to black and white. Just be sure the photo you choose looks just as good in black and white as it does in colour.



Ready to Display

It's time to make a commitment and put that picture on the wall! What? You don't have enough hands to help with measuring or holding the frames so that you can stand back and see how straight the picture is? Here are some easy ways to hang your pictures on your own, measuring tape and stress-free.





Creating a collage.

Using cardboard or coloured paper, trace the outline of the picture frames you want to display and cut them out. Place the cut-outs on the floor to organize and re-organize the cut-outs until you find a pattern you want. You can either keep your angles straight and the distance between your pictures all the same. Or, you can harness your creative side and make your display a little more eclectic by using different sized frames, larger and smaller spacing, depending on what you think looks best. Once you find a pattern that you like on the floor, use painter's tape (so as to avoid removing paint from the wall) to hang the cut-outs on the wall. Once you have the cut-outs where you want them, it's time to start making holes in the wall.

Nailing it.

There's no need to measure the distance between the hook(s) on the back of your frame with the sides of the frame. Using a piece of painter's tape, place a piece of tape the width of your frame at the top, over the hook. Use a permanent marker to draw a dot where the hook is. Place the piece of tape on the wall, use a level to make sure it's levelled, then either drill a screw or hammer a nail right through the dot.



Voila! Now that your picture is taken, printed and displayed, you can sit back and enjoy the finished product. It takes effort to create such a piece and you did an amazing job!

