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Cover Photographer – **Keith Smith**

Lens-to-Ground is Sound!

The biggest mistake photographers make is only shoot at eye level. If you want your images to stand out, you need to see the world in a unique way - at ground level. Just follow these steps:

1. **Think global.** Find a location with a nice background (i.e. mountains, forest, body of water, clouds, cityscape, etc).
2. **Think local.** Walk around your scene and look for something interesting like a rock, flowers or sticks.. This is your *foreground element*.
3. **Go wide and close.** Using a wide angle lens, hold your camera low to the ground and very close (even a hand's length away) from your subject.
4. **Set your tripod low.** Or place your camera on a rock, backpack, or hold it.
5. **Use a small aperture.** Set your aperture between f/11 and f/22 to get a greater depth of field.
6. **Make your foreground element your focus point.**
Take your shot!



Why Shoot Low & Wide?

You can focus on the details. Foreground elements add texture, color, form, and leading lines that draw the viewer into your image.

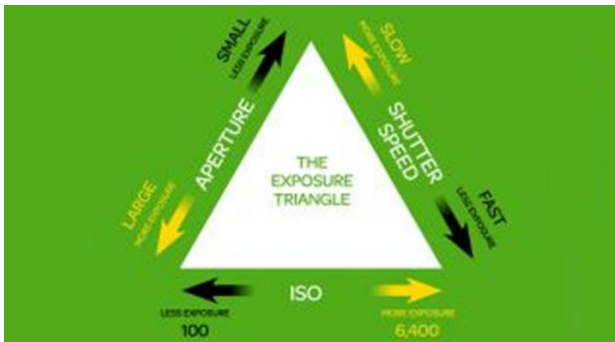
Also, 2D photographs seemingly transform into 3D windows to another world when they have a foreground, mid, and background layer.

This technique also works well for cityscape and architectural shots. In this photo, I used a low point of view (POV) to enhance the reflection and shadows on the floor.



So the next time you take a photo, don't just capture a scene. Make art.

The Exposure Triangle: aperture, shutter speed and ISO explained



By Marcus Hawkins

The Exposure Triangle sounds like the name of a complex spy novel, but in reality this is the term used for the three fundamental elements of exposure: aperture, shutter speed and ISO.

The Exposure Triangle explained

Creating a harmonious exposure using the aperture, shutter speed and ISO is a juggling act. As soon as you make a decision about one element, you'll need to compromise with another.

The trick to balancing The Exposure Triangle is to get all three elements working together so you get the results you want, and not what the camera tells you you can have.

Because of that, it's really worth putting in the groundwork and getting to grips with the basics of shutter speed (how long the camera's sensor is exposed to the light), what an aperture is (how much light the lens lets in, which also affects depth of field) and ISO (the sensitivity level of the sensor). Once you know how to do this, there's nothing you can't do.

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Gurushots - <https://gurushots.com/>

Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all>



In addition to their role in exposure, the choice of aperture, shutter speed and ISO have a significant impact on the look and feel of your pictures.

The shot on the left was taken at f/2.8, while the one on the right was taken at f/5.6

Aperture, as we mentioned above, affects the depth of field, or how much of an image appears sharp. Shutter speed also affects image sharpness, with slower shutter speeds leading to blurred images - whether that's caused by the subject moving or the camera not being held still.

The choice of ISO enables you to use the optimum combination of aperture and shutter speed when the amount of light would normally prevent you from doing so. However, increasing the ISO also reduces the quality of your images.

Use the exposure triangle to decide how to adjust the exposure: the key is that when you increase the exposure for one element (a yellow arrow), you need to reduce it for one or both of the other elements (the grey arrows) in order to maintain the same exposure.

The camera can do this for you in Program, Aperture Priority or Shutter Priority, but it's something you'll need to consider when shooting in Manual mode.

Get the hang of this relationship, and you'll gain much more control over the look and feel of every image you capture.

It's also worth remembering that at one time, shutter speed and aperture were the only exposure variables you could change from one shot to the next as the ISO was set by the type of film you were using, but the introduction of digital cameras has made it possible to change ISO on the fly rather than unloading film or switching bodies.

Photographers now have more control over exposure than ever before.



Now, let's take a look at some of the common questions new photographers have about exposure...

Understanding exposure in photography

Exposure - allowing light to hit the camera sensor to record an image - is measured in what's commonly referred to as 'stops', with each stop representing either double or half the level of exposure of the adjacent stop. Increase the exposure by one stop, and the camera sensor receives twice the level of exposure. Decrease it by one stop, and the exposure level is halved.

The three camera settings that give you control over the exposure - aperture, shutter speed and ISO - can each be measured in stops. For instance, a shutter speed of 1/50 sec is one stop slower than 1/100 sec, which means the sensor is exposed for twice as long. However, the same 1/50 sec shutter speed exposes the sensor for half the time of a shutter speed of 1/25 sec.

ISO is similarly clear-cut, with an ISO of 400 one stop more sensitive than ISO 200, but one stop less sensitive than ISO 800. The relationship between the range of apertures available on a lens is similar, but the numerical sequence is more confusing: the fact that f/5.6 is one stop smaller than f/4 but one stop larger than f/8 takes a bit of getting used to.

What's a correct exposure?

Once you activate the camera meter by half-pressing the shutter release, the camera will suggest an exposure based on the brightness of the area being metered. This is usually expressed in the order of a shutter speed value at a given aperture and ISO - say 1/60 sec at f/8, ISO 200.

In the camera's automatic and scene modes, that's about as far as it goes. Just shoot. The semi-automatic exposure modes - Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority and Program - give you more control over how you expose the shot, each in a different way; while Manual mode gives you full responsibility over aperture, shutter speed and ISO.

EXPLAINED ONE EXPOSURE, THREE WAYS

There are three camera settings that enable you to control the exposure of a picture: aperture, shutter speed and ISO. All three elements need to be balanced to produce an acceptable exposure. This is where thinking about exposure in terms of stops helps, as you can see in our examples of 'exposure maths'. The three exposures below would produce three images that have the same level of overall brightness; it's just that each will look slightly different to the others.

Aperture	Shutter	ISO	Aperture	Shutter	ISO	Aperture	Shutter	ISO
f/2.8	1/30	3,200	f/2.8	1/30	3,200	f/2.8	1/30	3,200
f/4	1/60	1,600	f/4	1/60	1,600	f/4	1/60	1,600
f/5.6	1/125	800	f/5.6	1/125	800	f/5.6	1/125	800
f/8	1/250	400	f/8	1/250	400	f/8	1/250	400
f/11	1/500	200	f/11	1/500	200	f/11	1/500	200
f/16	1/1000	100	f/16	1/1000	100	f/16	1/1000	100

This setting offers a reasonable depth of field with some risk of visual noise. Increasing the aperture to f/4 means the shutter can be open for less time. Alternatively, a slow shutter speed means a smaller aperture is possible.

Although there might be a preferable exposure, there are a number of ways in which to achieve it. It's all about balance: if you increase one of the three settings that control the exposure (aperture, shutter speed or ISO) then one or both of the other settings have to decrease

by an equivalent total to maintain the same overall level of exposure.

For example, an exposure of 1/25 sec at f/16, ISO 100 is equivalent to an exposure of 1/400 sec at f/2.8, ISO 100. Because the shutter speed has been reduced by four stops (1/25 - 1/50 - 1/100 - 1/200 - 1/400), which means less light is being captured, the aperture has to increase in size by four stops (f/16 - f/11 - f/8 - f/5.6 - f/2.8) to allow more light in - otherwise the picture would be four stops darker.

Which combination you choose is down to the look you want to achieve: do you want a large depth of field or a shallow one? Do you want moving objects to be razor-sharp or have motion blur?

That's a lot to think about...

Don't panic! If you choose to shoot in one of the semi-automatic modes, the camera does most of the donkey work for you. Once you set an aperture in Aperture Priority mode, for example, the shutter speed will be set automatically. If you decide to change the aperture, the camera will adjust the shutter speed accordingly to maintain the same exposure.

It's a similar story with Shutter Priority mode: you set the shutter speed, and the camera attempts to match this with an appropriate aperture. You can even use the Auto ISO option to let the camera handle that choice of sensitivity too. In Program mode, you can simply shift the combination of aperture and shutter speed with a spin of the camera's control dial.

Of course, all of these adjustments rely on the camera having achieved the optimum exposure reading to begin with - and, as we learned last issue, this doesn't always happen. This is where exposure compensation plays a part.

Exposure compensation

Exposure compensation can be applied in Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority or Program mode. It's also measured in stops: the exposure indicator scale you see in the viewfinder or on your camera's rear display has stops clearly marked on it. You can usually increase or decrease the exposure by up to five stops.

You'll see that there are smaller marks on the scale, too. These represent half-stops or third-stops, depending on how your camera is set up. Although exposure can be shifted in full stops, you get much finer control by adjusting the exposure in these smaller increments.



<https://www.techradar.com/au/how-to/photography-video-capture/cameras/the-exposure-triangle-aperture-shutter-speed-and-iso-explained-1320830>

How to Make An Inexpensive Light Tent

By: Darren Rowse

Note: while this is a great DIY tutorial that thousands of our readers have used – Amazon has many inexpensive Light Tents here that will get you some great results.

If you're like me, you don't want to spend money if you can do it yourself and yield the same results.

One day I was at my local photography store I saw one of these "Pop-Up" light tents. It consisted of a collapsible white fabric box with a hole in the front and 3 lights – used for photographing small objects in photographic studios.

I was going to purchase it until I saw the \$100 price tag. No way I am going to spend \$100 on some fabric and 3 lights when the material costs far less. So I set off and built one of these light tents and it did not come out bad at all.



Materials Needed:

1.) A Box – It could be any size you want as long as you can light it! I prefer it to be as square as can be. You can find boxes anywhere for free. I got mine from work in which they throw out anyway. You can also find boxes in the back of strip malls, grocery stores, appliance stores or basically any place that makes or sells products. Thicker the better! (Free)

2.) Fabric – This again could be any type. In my box I used white muslin fabric that is found at your local arts and craft store. Buy enough to cover the entire box. (\$4.00 US or \$1.99 a yard) People suggested

other fabrics like White Nylon and white fleece. If your extremely cheap and have some white under shirts laying around. Cut up the sides to where you have two halves of the shirt. If you use multiple shirts, be sure that the color matches or your end result may not turn out as you like it

3.) Tape – I use tape to secure the fabric to the sides of the box. Reason being is that In-case you want to try out different fabrics. I use regular masking tape. (\$1.00 US A Roll)

4.) Glue – You can use a "Glue Stick" (\$1.00 US a Stick) or spray adhesive (\$5.00 US per Can) to stick the lining in the box.

5.) White Bristol board – This will line the inside





of the box and will also serve as your back round (.50 a sheet X2). I would suggest to buy 2 or 3 sheets as you will be cutting up two to line your box (Could be more depending on the size of your box) and one for the back round. Bristol board is a heavyweight paper (.006" Thick) that is used in drawing/art. The name came from where it was originated, Bristol England. If you wanted a different back round you can also pick up different colors.

6.) Lights ‘ You will need to light this box and this could be the most expensive part of the box unless you already have the lights. In my opin-



ion lighting is the most important part of this box. Without it you will not get the picture you desire. I went to my local hardware store and picked up some “Daylight” Bulbs. Using regular light bulbs will cast a yellow light and should be avoided. I purchased “n:vision” 90 watt equivalent compact florescent bulbs (\$7.00 US). Basically any “Full Spectrum” light bulbs will do.

Also suggest a lighting fixture. If you have a one of those desk work lamps, It will work fine. If you don’t I suggest getting a “Clamp On Work Light”.

At my local home depot they only had two kinds, A smaller reflector dish (5”) for \$5.99 (US) or the 10.5” reflector for \$11.99 (US).

7.) Miscellaneous Tools ‘ Tape ruler, Ruler or any straight edge, scissors and knife

Now that you have the Materials I will show you out to make a light tent step by step. When your done you can take nice clean and crisp product shots.

Step By Step Process:

A) Take your box with a tape ruler and marker and measure in 2” from the side of the box marking multiple points with your marker. When your done you will see your border, connect the points using your straight edge to where you should have a nice looking square/rectangle in the middle of the box with a 2” border around it. Leave the top and bottom of the box alone as you will not need to mark it

B) Cut out the boxes you’ve drawn. Repeat that to the sides of the box where you have drawn the boxes. When you’re done, cut off the top of the box or remove the flaps on the top of the box. **LEAVE THE BOTTOM INTACT!**

C) Now take your Bristol board and make lines with your marker for every two inches 16 times. Then proceed to cut out 16 strips with your scissors.

D) Glue the paper strips into the box. Make sure the side with marker goes against the cardboard

so it can not be seen.

E) Take another piece of Bristol board and cut it so the width is the same as the inside of the box and the length is much longer than the box.

F) Place the long piece of Bristol board into the box to where the piece curves to the bottom. Avoid creasing as it will show up in your photo. Cut off excess paper that is sticking out the top.

G) Cut your fabric to where it will cover the holes. Then cut a big piece to where it will cover the top of the box.

H) Tape the fabric to cover the holes in the box except the one that is facing your background. Then tape the top piece on.

YOU'RE DONE!

Now all you got to do is light the top of the box and start snapping away!



There are many variations you can do to get the photo you want. If you're having a shadow problem I suggest lighting the other sides of the box. If you're getting vignetting I suggest a lens hood or moving the lens more into the box. Photoshop could be a handy tool also! Since my lens and camera are not the cleanest I tend to Photoshop the dust that is sitting on or in my camera. I also adjust the levels so it's brighter.

An Intro to HDR

By Michelle Ecker



There is a common misconception among the photography community that HDR photography is in poor taste. Many people wrongly associate HDR with oversaturated and unrealistic, sloppy-looking images.

However, there are plenty of ways you can use HDR photography to seriously enhance and improve your shots- it would be a waste to write it off as a cheap technique or to ignore it altogether. Used professionally and with good technique, HDR offers wonderful results. Here are some tips on how to best capitalize:

First of all, HDR stands for high dynamic range, with range referring to the difference between the brightest and darkest spots within your picture.

Sometimes, particularly when it comes to nature and landscape photography and especially when influenced by certain lighting conditions, it can be hard to do justice to an outdoor image when you're forced to choose between your shadows and your highlights, when really it's the contrast and combination of the two that makes the scene so special.

That's where HDR photography can be a true lifesaver. If you're worried about the image looking too saturated, this is a great time to take advantage of your camera's bracketing feature.

Put simply, bracketing for exposure produces both lighter and darker versions of the same exact scene, which can be really helpful if you want to make decisions to help avoid a really deeply saturated look.



Once you've used the bracketing to your advantage to avoid that jarring, too-colourful look you might associate negatively with HDR, you'll truly see the advantages it offers when used well. <https://www.nyip.edu/photo-articles/photography-tutorials/an-intro-to-hdr>



How to Photograph Sunsets



If you ask me, there's a misconception about capturing high-quality photos at sunset (and sunrise, for that matter)...

Is it a little more challenging than a normal landscape photo? Yes.

But does that mean that it's so hard that you should just give up on getting that magical shot of the sky on fire? No!

With this quick guide, I present a few tricks that will help you learn how to photograph sunsets the right way.

Let's get to it!

How to Photograph Sunsets: Plan Ahead



I fully admit that I'm not a very good planner. It's just not as fun as actually being out with my camera taking photos. However, planning is an essential component of getting a successful sunset photo (well, *most* successful photos, really).

Sure, there will be times when you're spontaneously in the right place at the right time, but those instances are few and far between.

Instead, give some thought to where you want to capture a sunset shot, and then plan out your shoot to maximize your results.

That means looking for spots to set up your camera to take full advantage of the colours in the sky.

Look for land features that you can highlight in the shot as well, like a mountain peak, that bring interesting silhouettes into the image.



A little cloud cover makes for a far more interesting sunset photo while fog or mist in the morning help make sunrise photos a little more interesting as well.

When planning a sunset shoot, consult things like Sun-Calc, which gives you the precise sunrise and sunset times at your specific location, as well as the position of the sun relative to your location. Armed with that kind of information, you can plan ahead, know when you need to be at your desired spot, and frame up the ideal sunset photo.

I like to keep an eye on the weather when I head out for sunset shots, too.

Tips for Taking Sunset Photos: Invest in a Reverse Grad Filter

1

If you've never used a reverse graduated neutral density filter for your sunrise or sunset photography, you're missing out.

That's because these filters help manage the biggest problem of taking photos at this time of day - the wide dynamic range.

Naturally, at sunset, the area of the sky just above the horizon will be very bright. Meanwhile, the foreground will be dark and the background will be somewhere between the two.



In many cases, this dynamic range is too much for your camera to handle, so you end up with a shot that's well-exposed in one area and not well-exposed in the others.

A reverse ND grad solves that problem, though.

That's because reverse ND grads like the Formatt-Hitech 3-stop reverse grad shown here are darkest in the middle to correspond with the very bright sky just above the horizon, darkening them and bringing the dynamic range to manageable levels.

Then, moving upward, the filtering power diminishes gradually, that way the brightness of the rest of the sky can be managed as well.

The bottom part of the filter has little or no filtering power, so the already dark foreground doesn't become any darker.

The result of using a filter like this is unmistakable - you get a well-exposed image throughout right then and there, with no need to blend exposures in post-processing.

Reverse ND grads come in a variety of sizes and strengths, and usually offer from 1-stop to 3-stops of filtering power.

By and large, they are hard edge filters as well, meaning that the transition from filtered to unfiltered areas is quite abrupt.

This type of filter is ideal for situations in which there is a definite horizon, like the image above taken looking out toward the ocean.

Sunset Photography Tips: Take Your Time and Look Around!



One of the best things about photographing sunsets is if you wait a few minutes - or seconds, even - you can get a completely different looking shot.

Clouds move, colours change, and the sun's position changes as well, and all of those factors lead to a wide variety of looks and feels for your sunset or sunrise photos.

So, just like you need to plan ahead, you also need to plan to hang out for a while! Get to your designated spot early and stay there late to maximize your opportunities for taking photos.

Something else you can do to maximize your photo-taking ability is to look around.

Sure, the best show might be looking toward the sunset or sunrise, but you never know what kind of show is happening behind you if you don't turn around. It could end up being the best view!

<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/8841-how-to-photograph-sunsets>

Talk on Street Photography

One of the common mistakes I see in street photography is that photographers only take 1–2 photos of the scene, and move on (because they are either too self-conscious, nervous, or impatient).

Try this instead: work the scene. Take multiple photos of the scene. Preferably 15–20 (more tends to be better).

Why? The more you “work the scene” the more likely you are to make a great photograph. Sometimes a subtle difference between what is happening in the background, the eye contact of a person, or a hand gesture is what makes the photograph.

Think of the analogy of baseball— the more times you swing your bat, the more likely you are to hit a home run.

There is a saying: “The eyes are the windows to the soul.” I feel that by getting eye contact in your photograph, the viewer feels a lot more connected to your image. It almost looks like the subject of your frame is looking directly at the viewer.

The stronger the eye contact, the more emotional, and more memorable the photograph generally is.

But how do you get eye contact when you’re shooting on the streets? My suggestion: get close to them, and keep clicking, until they notice you and make eye contact with you. The second they make eye contact, that is when you click.

We often talk a lot about trying to capture the “decisive moment” (the moment something interesting happens). However I also suggest to try to capture the “unguarded moment” (the moment when someone forgets about you, and drops their guard).

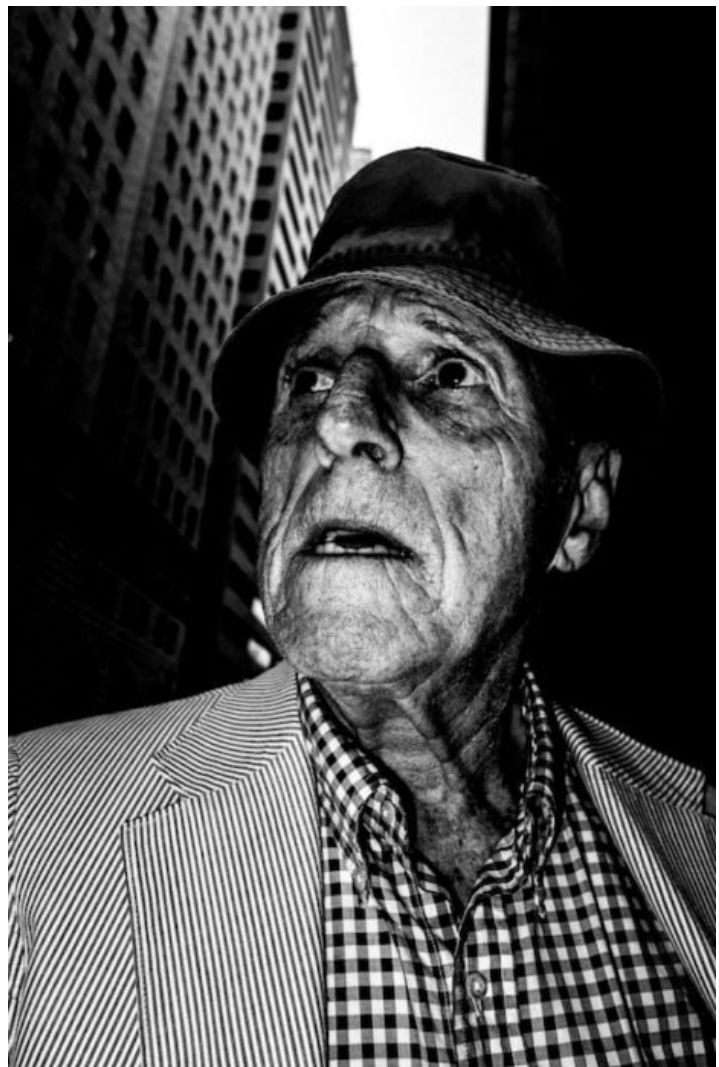
I like to ask to take photographs. What I try to avoid is having someone just look at me and pose for me with a peace-sign. What I try to do instead is to capture an “unguarded moment” — a moment when they forget me, forget about the camera, and show a little bit of their soul.

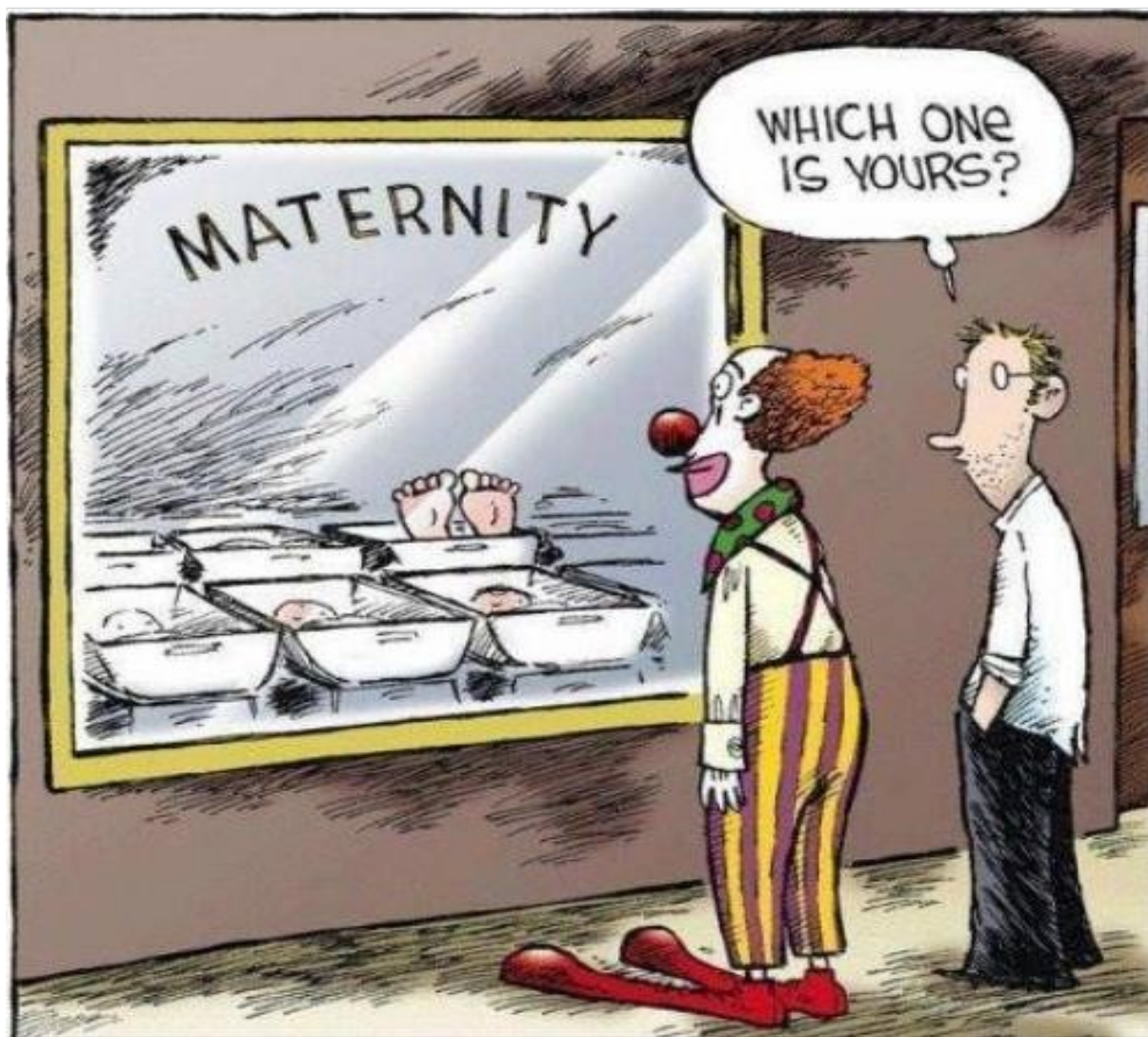
How do you capture the “unguarded moment”?

Well— you can either ask them open-ended questions like, “What are your plans for today? Where you from? How would you describe your personal style? What is your life story”? And then when people start to talk and get into “story-telling mode” — you can capture more authentic moments that aren’t as “pose-y.”

If you ask for permission from your subject, know that you can also direct them. I generally ask them to stand against a simple background, and try to get them to do an interesting hand-gesture.

To get a subject to do an interesting hand-gesture, I ask them about their sunglasses, their hair, or even their watches. I will ask them “Where did you buy it?” and when they start talking, they make hand gestures— that is when you should shoot.





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**WEBSITE
of the MONTH**

SunCalc



SunCalc is a little app that shows sun movement and sunlight phases during the given day at the given location.

<http://suncalc.net/>

For Info or Contact - dcc.newsletter.editor@gmail.com