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The Importance of Constructive Feedback in Photography

Most of us have received critiques of our work at some point of our life. Some of the most subjective feedback is that directed at works of art. Photography is no exception.

With a lot of people picking up photography as a hobby, it's no wonder that a lot of photography related forums are created with the purpose of sharing. And one of the popular subjects of these groups is critique, where members get to give “constructive” comments with the hope that it will help the image maker. The reverse is also true where a photographer posts his best shot and hopes to get constructive and helpful criticism in order to learn from the more experienced photographers.



Photo by [Kim Seng](#).

When I took a course on image analysis with the Photographic Society of America (PSA), when I first started photography, the most important aspect I learned about giving constructive feedback is to put it forth as my own point of view.

Why is this “own point of view” so important?

Photography is so subjective that an image can gather equal amount of “likes” and “dislikes” at the same time. My tutor told me that it is subjective to the point of being ridiculous. Each and every one of us perceives beauty in our own way. Not just beauty, but almost everything in life, right? Some of us like eating steak, while some would rather stay away from meat. Some of us like to remain single, while some would rather marry and have 10 children.

That being said, the image maker, too, perceives beauty differently from the one critiquing the work. To the one posting the image, it might be his best shot and he thinks of it as being perfect. I’ve been there when I started photography. I thought what I’d shot was very good. Boy was I wrong. If I were to look back at my very first batch of photographs, I would be appalled and would give myself the harshest of critiques. But hey, we were all once amateurs. And everyone is learning all the time and wants to improve. So the main thing is not to belittle anybody, because we were most likely in their shoes at some point.

These are our Sponsors, we need to use them if we want to keep them.



Links of Interest:

Viewbug - <http://www.viewbug.com/>

ePHOTOzine - <http://www.ephotozine.com/>

Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - <http://www.photographyNSW.org.au/>

Australian Photographic Society - <http://www.a-p-s.org.au/>

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

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



Photo by [Sakhar Nair](#); ISO 400, f/11, 1/1600 exposure.

So, if we don't have the "eyes" now to critique and comment on our current work, what better way than to ask those who have been there done that. A word of caution: when you put your work out there in the open, be prepared and open minded to receive comments and criticism from those who have *not* been there done that.

Sometimes, you can get ideas spinning off from even those who are very new to the art of photography.

Back to the subject of "own point of view," it's imperative that we start off our critiques with preambles. Not those legal mumbo-jumbo kind of preambles, but something as simple as, "In my opinion..." This is to tell the reader that whatever is going to be said is purely your own opinion. It's nothing personal.

Avoid Rules

What I've learned from PSA is to look at different aspects of photography when giving criticism and comments. And also avoid rules like the rule of thirds. Stay away from these rules of photography when giving comments, because they're not prerequisites when making a photo. Nothing is ever fixed in the world of art. Why should it be? We would live in a world of zero creativity if everything was so rigid. So stay away from giving comments like, "It would be better if you had used the rule of thirds to compose this image."

Oh yeah, and stay away from, "It would be better..." and the super imposing, "If I were you..."



Photo by [Adrian Cabrero](#); ISO 100, f/2, 1/2000 exposure.

What to Look for in a Photo

What are the aspects to look for? Here are some...

- Creativity
- Originality
- Noise and/or Grain
- Composition
- Line
- Eye Movement
- Lighting
- Focus, depth of field
- Exposure
- Dimension
- Perspective
- Tonal Range
- Color
- Impact
- Balance

An advertisement for Daptocameraclub.org.au. It features a laptop with 'DCU' on the screen and a Pentax camera in the foreground. The text reads: 'DID YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE A WEBSITE? YOU DID! BUT HAVE YOU LOGGED IN LATELY.' Below this is the URL 'http://daptocameraclub.org.au/' and the phrase 'Lots of good things there.'

**DID YOU KNOW
THAT WE HAVE A WEBSITE?
YOU DID! BUT HAVE YOU LOGGED
IN LATELY.**

<http://daptocameraclub.org.au/>

**Lots of good
things there.**

During the course, I was asked to comment on one of Henri Cartier-Bresson's most revered images. I didn't know this person or his work at that time. So I just gave my comments. Luckily for me, I started off the critique with, "I think... ", "In my opinion... ", and "To me... " Only when my tutor told me that prints of the image are being sold at galleries for \$10,000 each, and that it is okay to comment as long as it is our opinion, did I begin to reflect upon the fact that art is so subjective.

In essence, write your comments with the preamble, be nice with your words, and never be a jerk.

Another note in "courteous" critiquing would be to separate our good comments and suggestions. Try to put across all the good points first, *then* give your suggestions. Do not say something like, "I personally feel that the image is well done, but..."

It's the BUT that is the pain in the BUTT.

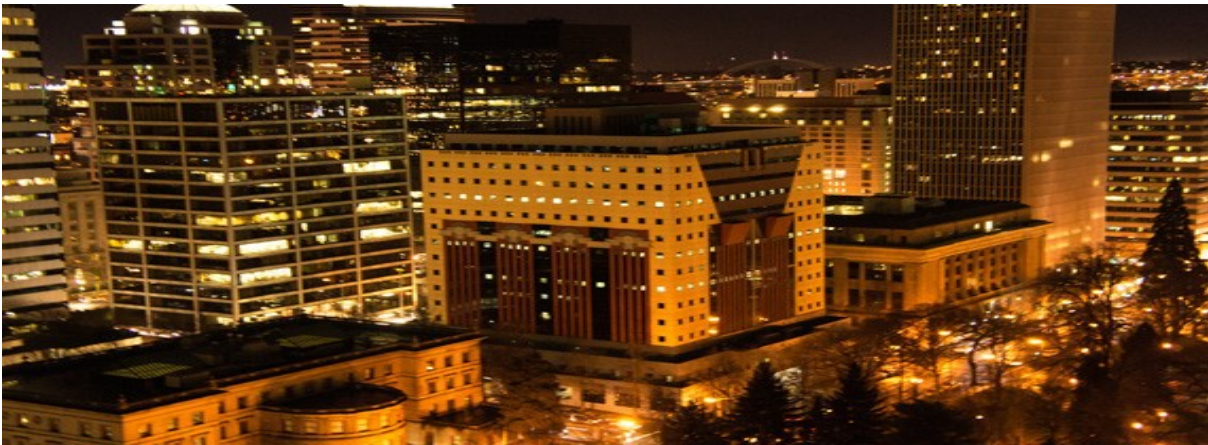


Photo by Flickr user [Roger](#); ISO 1600, f/4.5, 0.4-second exposure.

Say your suggestions separately, so that the image maker can keep all the positive comments and then learn from the critique.

And last but not least, although sometimes it's better to keep quiet if what we are going to say could potentially offend someone, it's also important to note that constructive criticism can teach us a thing or two about our own work. Most of the time saying what we already know reinforces our knowledge and can open doors to new knowledge. Do it with tact and humility. Someone once said that we don't live long enough to be anything but amateurs.

So when putting across what you think, say it like you know it, but make it sound like you know nothing.

Good luck!

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/the-importance-of-constructive-feedback-in-photography/>

Sony a6400 review



Sony's a6400 is a compact 24MP mirrorless interchangeable lens camera with an APS-C sensor that will serve plenty of photographers from family documentarians to pro shooters looking for a lightweight second body. The big news is that it has a new processor based on that used in Sony's sports-shooting flagship a9 which enables 'Real-Time Tracking' autofocus, which is one of the most effective autofocus implementations we've yet seen. It's also among the easiest to use, once you've gotten it set up.

Key specifications:

- 24MP APS-C sensor
- 425-pt phase detection AF system with Real-Time Tracking
- Tilting screen, 180° up, 90° down
- 2.36M-dot electronic viewfinder
- New Bionz X processor
- ISO range from 100-32000
- 11fps burst shooting (8fps with silent shutter)
- Interval shooting option added
- 4K/30p video capture
- Mic input, no headphone output
- 410 shots per battery charge (per CIPA)
- Wi-Fi with NFC and Bluetooth

The Sony a6400 officially replaces the older a6300: it uses the same sensor but comes with some subtle enhancements aside from the impressive autofocus capabilities. It arrives in an increasingly crowded field, though, with cameras like the X-T30 from Fujifilm and the EOS M50 from Canon being similarly priced and with similar sized sensors. Do the enhancements make the a6400 the standout in this crowd? Find out its strengths - and weaknesses - in the pages to follow.

The a6400 is available now for \$899 (€1049) body-only, \$999 (€1149) with a 16-50mm F3.5-5.6 Power Zoom kit lens and \$1299 (€1449) with an 18-135mm F3.5-5.6 zoom.

What is Back-Button Focus?

To begin, we must first understand what back button focus is and then we will go into some of the benefits of why you should use the system.

Back button focus is an advanced way of locking your focus to a subject, without having to worry about what focus mode you are in. You can bypass having autofocus assigned to the top shutter button of your camera.

The advantage of doing this is you can take photos much faster than before. Simply put, the focus on the back button is the process of removing the autofocus function from the shutter button and replacing it on the rear of the camera.



The way back button focus operates is when you press the dedicated or assigned button, you will activate the 'AF-C' focus mode on your camera. In other words, this mode will keep acquiring focus as long as you have the button pressed down.

Simultaneously, all you have to do then is press the shutter button to take the photo. This is because once you have activated back button focus on your camera, the main shutter button won't control the focus anymore.

Having to press two buttons (dedicated focus button + shutter button) to take a shot, seems more complicated at first thought, but it is the fact that a single button tries handle two different tasks that

give you focus issues in the first place.

How to Set Up Back-Button Focus on Your Camera?

Nikon

In this guide, our goal will be to set the AE-L/AF-ON button as our dedicated back button focus for Nikon. Your Nikon camera menu may vary, so I recommend consulting your manual as well.

Step 1: Press the 'MENU' button.

Step 2: Scroll down to the pencil symbol. The menu associated with this is called the "CUSTOM SETTING MENU".

Step 3: Once you are in the 'CUSTOM SETTING MENU', scroll down to the submenu called 'Controls', then press 'OK.'

Step 4: Then scroll down to 'Assign AE-L/AF-ON button' and press 'OK.'

Setting your back button focus on your Canon is probably just as confusing as a Sony, but the process is worth doing. If you follow these steps and consult your instruction manual, then the process will be much easier.

Canon

Step 1: Press the menu button on your camera.

Step 2: Navigate to the 'Operations Menu'.

Step 3: Scroll down to the 'Custom Controls' and press the 'Set' button.

Step 4: Then a list of camera control symbols will appear, find the one that looks like a shutter button, it should read "Shutter butt. half-press".

Step 5: Press the 'Set' button to open the submenu.

Step 6: Select one of three options to assign. In our case, select 'Metering start' by pressing the 'Set' button.

Basically what you did was turn off the autofocus on the main shutter button. Now your Canon camera will only meter when the shutter button is half-pressed.

Step 7: You should be now back at the 'Custom Controls' menu (the one with all the symbols).

Step 8: Navigate to the next menu option down that displays 'AF:On', then press the 'Set' button to open the submenu.

Step 9: From the 'AF:On' submenu, select one of eight options. In our case select 'Metering & AF start' by pressing the 'Set' button.

Step 10: Now the two modes have been set, half-press your shutter button to close the menu. Back button focus on your canon camera is now in operation.

Sony

To set the back button focus on your Sony camera navigate through these steps. Please note, your Sony camera may differ from the process outlined here, so I recommend you consult with your manual as well.

Step 1: Press the 'MENU' button.

Step 2: Then on the camera icon with the '1' next to it, navigate to page 5. Look for a menu item called 'Focus Mode', then press 'OK'.

Step 3: Make sure you select AF-C and then press 'OK'.

Step 4: Then go back to the main menu (Camera symbol with a '1') and navigate to page 6 from the same main menu as before.

Step 5: Look for 'AF w/ shutter', then press 'OK' to select the menu item.

Step 6: Turn the 'AF w/ shutter' to 'Off' and select 'OK'.

Step 7: Then go back to the main menu (Camera symbol with a '1') and navigate to page 7 from the same main menu as before.

Step 8: Look for 'Pre-AF', then press 'OK' to select the menu item.

Step 9: Turn the 'Pre-AF' to 'Off' and select 'OK'.

Step 10: Then go back to the main menu (Camera symbol with a '1') and scroll to the right to select the Camera symbol with a '2'.

Step 11: Scroll down to the submenu and navigate to page 8 and look for a menu item called 'Custom key' and select 'OK'.

Step 12: Go to tab three and look for a menu item called 'AEL button' and then select 'OK'.

Step 13: Then select 'AF On' from the submenu and press 'OK' to confirm.

Step 14: Then scroll down to 'AF button' and select 'OK.'

Step 15: Now select the same submenu item as Step 13, 'AF On' and select 'OK'.

What you have essentially just done is disable the autofocus on the camera's shutter button and moved it to two different buttons. You now can press and hold either the 'AF On' button or 'AE-L' button to focus. Just use whichever button is more comfortable.



How to Become a Cosplay Photographer

BY JULES KELLER

With the popularity of cosplay always increasing, cosplay photography is also quickly gaining popularity. It's an exciting and rewarding niche. If you're wondering how to get started with cosplay photography, then this article may come in handy.

Network

First off, you have to network. Networking is essential in any area of photography you do. Look on Facebook for cosplay meetups in your area. These are typically photoshoots, and they are great networking opportuni-



ties. You can build your portfolio, as well as converse and make friends with cosplayers and other photographers.

You can also volunteer at your local anime and pop culture convention. This is a great way to network. You can make friends with cosplayers who may not be so local, which is a great way to get your foot in the door to another market area. A lot of conventions offer a free weekend pass if you volunteer, although you will probably have to cover your own hotel room.

Research the Characters

There is a ton of anime out there, and what others enjoy you may not. That's why you should always research a character if you don't know who they are or what they're from. Even if you do,



refresh your memory. That way you can plan out the poses and get the best possible images.

If a cosplayer is dressing up as an OC (original character), ask detailed questions. Get a feel for their character. Not only will the cosplayer appreciate that you asked, but you'll also get some amazing images.

Learn Photoshop

A lot of the characters people cosplay are from fantasy and dystopian worlds. If you can find a location that matches the theme of the cosplay, great! If you can find a location free of any distracting elements, even better!

However, most of the time you will have people walking around or a car in the way. In extreme cases, you may not be able to find a location that fits the character at all. This is where the removal of a background in photoshop can come in handy.

Likewise, if a cosplayer is dressing up as a character who is supposed to have magic, one word comes to mind. Photoshop. Learning how to create an energy ball or lightning bolts will make the photo, and the cosplayer, look that much cooler.

Equipment

All you need is a camera and a flash with a diffuser! You can really do a lot with a little. Especially if you're on a shoestring budget. I would recommend getting a light dome if you have your flash on camera. That way you don't get harsh shadows.



If you want to go all out, however, I would recommend getting yourself a couple of battery powered strobes and some coloured gels. Those will take your cosplay photography to a whole other level.

Have Fun

Lastly, if you want to be an amazing cosplay photographer, you have to remember this simple rule. Have fun. Cosplay photography is a unique niche and, in my opinion, it's one of the best niche to be in. The people are amazing and they don't take themselves too seriously. Joke around, make funny faces, don't be afraid to act silly. If you do, you're bound to get some awesome, genuine reactions from the cosplayer, and those are the best photos.



How to Spring Clean Your Memory Cards

By: Nikole Bordato

Start With a Memory Card Inventory

Take the time to survey how many cards you have and what state they are in. This is especially important if you have multiple types of cards floating around. Ensure that there are no stragglers hiding in a camera bag pocket or at the bottom of a lens case. My tip: I write numbers on my memory cards so I can double check I have all my cards before leaving a location.



Back-up Images on Your Cards

Do you ever snap a quick photo but forget to move it off the card? Now is a great time to move those images over to your computer, leaving room on your memory cards for new photos. Here is another great tip: delete images from your card in a batch. Limiting the amount of times you change data on your memory card will help extend the life of your cards. So choose to delete the images off your card in one format, either in your camera or on your computer, instead of deleting single images as you shoot. Better yet use “Format” to wipe and reformat the card in camera.

Store Your Cards Properly

All memory cards, no matter the type, have delicate parts. Keep your cards safe and dust free by storing them in a container designed for memory cards. There are a ton of memory card wallet options available. Take a few minutes to think about what your memory cards go through and then look for a container that will work for you. Do you need a waterproof case? Are you a wedding photographer who carries around more than a few cards? If so, this is a worthwhile investment for you.

Write Your Name on Your Cards

We’ve all seen the Facebook posts of an image being shared around the web off of a found camera or memory card, in an effort to return the device to its owner. Don’t let that be your photo!



Write your name and contact information on your cards. Losing a memory card is a downer – they aren't cheap and those images could be lost forever. Simply including your email address, website, or phone number along with your first name, may increase the odds of having a lost memory card returned.

Label Used Cards

Come up with a system to label used cards. It happens – you start taking photos, and forget which cards you've used and which you haven't. You then have to do the classic move of putting the card into your camera to check if it is full. Skip this step by coming up with a way that quickly identifies which cards are full. If you've numbered your cards, you can keep track of the numbers. My personal system is to put used cards into my card wallet backwards. A quick glance tells me which cards are ready to use.

Manfrotto Super Clamp: More than a Tripod Alternative



\$26.00 au

<https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/Manfrotto-Super-Clamp-035-Superclamp-Supa-Universal-Clamp-M035-35-M35-Ftc/27365987758?eid=1325192318&hash=item3fb766597e:g:wqoAAOSwWE9bPfQY&frcectupt=true>



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