PHOTOGRAPHY FAST TRACK

WORKSHOP SERIES: TOP 3 PHOTOGRAPHY FAST-TRACK SECRETS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LIGHT.

The first fast-track secret is of the EASIEST ways to improve your photography, and it doesn't even have anything to do with all of those buttons or menus on the back of your camera! All it takes is teaching yourself to slow down and notice the light around you. Have you ever taken a photo that just seemed like something was 'off' about it - but you couldn't quite put your finger on what was wrong? Well, chances are, it might be as simple as needing to find better light.

HUGE DIFFERENCE:

In these images, everything comes down to the light. The image on the left is very unflattering light, because the sunlight is wrapping around her and hitting her cheek and forehead. So with one SMALL change (having her shift her body slightly), the new image is so much better! Now we have beautiful and even, soft lighting hitting her face - which is so much more flattering. Isn't this such a huge difference?! And all it took was me turning her slightly, looking for the light, and changing my shooting position. Such a simple fix - but with dramatic results.

2. FILL THE FRAME

WHAT'S IN YOUR SHOT?

When you look through your viewfinder, how do you know what to include in your photo before your snap that shutter? Would your image be more powerful if you were to move in closer and "Fill the Frame" with your subject?
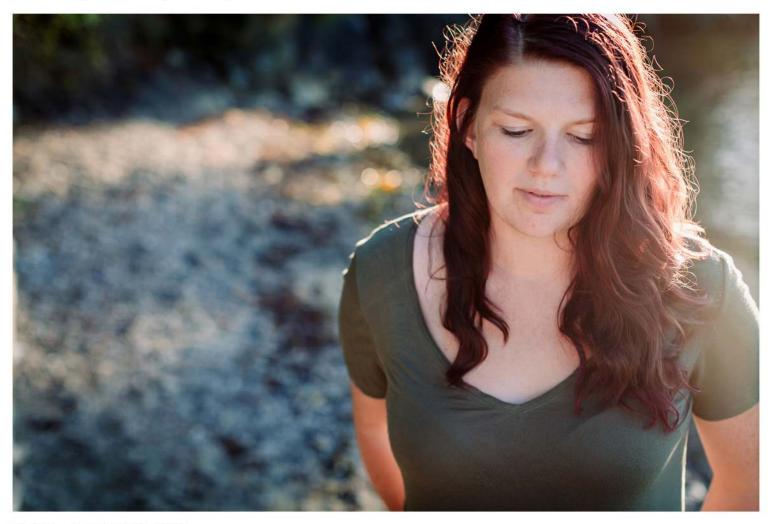

In this image on the left, there is just too much 'unnecessary stuff' in the frame. But then in the image on the right, I've filled my frame, so that your eye is drawn immediately to my subject now. So when we fill the frame with our subject, it removes all of the other distractions from the photo. Instead of our eye going all across the picture, this takes out those things that just aren't necessary - and gives this image so much more of an impact.

LOOK LIKE A PRO

And now for my last fast-track secret. And this is a huge one - because it's something that will instantly give your images that extra 'wow factor.' You know how professional photos always seem to have that awesome blurry background? Well, you don't have to be a pro to get that look - it's actually super simple. And the easiest way to get that blurry background is by adjusting something called your aperture.

LENS APERTURE

inside of your camera's lens, there's an opening that lets light come through - and that is what we call your lens aperture. Now, this opening can either be a large opening, or a small one. And depending on whether it's large or small, that will either let a LOT of light, or just a little bit of light, coming through your camera.

3. BLUR THE BACKGROUND

OPEN YOUR APERTURE WIDER

Now remember, this is a little confusing - because the actual numbers themselves are getting smaller, but the opposite is actually happening with the lens - the lens aperture or opening is actually getting **wider**. But do you see the cool thing that's happening? As I open my aperture wider, the background is getting more and more blurred out behind my subject. Here are some images to compare:

F16   F10   F4   F2.8   F1.2

NUMBERS GET SMALLER
BUT - APERTURE IS GETTING WIDER/LARGER

WIDER APERTURE = MORE BLUR

I love using a wide open aperture, especially when I'm taking pictures of people, because it causes the entire focus on the image to go straight to your subject. In the shots where the background was in focus (like at F16), the image was just ok - but once I made that background really blurred-out, all of a sudden my images look so much more professional, and they have a much greater impact - because your eyes are immediately drawn to the subject.

ACTION STEPS

1. FIND THE LIGHT

As you're taking photos, I want you to train your eye to be aware of the light around you, and to notice the light that is hitting your subject's face. If something feels a little 'off' about a picture you're taking, stop and ask yourself, 'what could I do here to find better light?'

2. FILL THE FRAME

The next time you grab your camera, I want you to think about the scene before you as if it's going to fill a picture frame hanging on your wall in your home. What would you want to fill that frame with? What can you crop OUT of your photo, so that it's not distracting? Is it better to zoom in on what you're really trying to capture? If so, then fill the frame and let the focus be all about your subject.

3. BLUR THE BACKGROUND:

My last action step for you here is to get your camera out, set it to aperture priority mode (which is the A symbol on a Nikon, or AV on a Canon)... and then I want you to take your aperture down to the lowest number it can go to (remember, that actually means it's a WIDE or large opening, even though it's a small number). Then I want you to head outside in nice lighting, and experiment with your camera set to that aperture. Take some photos with this new setting - and see if you can notice a difference in the way your background is more blurry than when you just shoot in auto mode.

ONLY THE BEGINNING...

This isn't the end - in fact, I hope this is only the beginning of your journey toward taking better photos consistently.

If you want to pick up your camera with confidence, and know that you're going to get killer images every time you take a photo, then check back with our next video, because I'm going to show you exactly how I can help you get to that point. See you soon!   -Kimberlee