

SOMETHING ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

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By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

A number of you have messaged or emailed me about how I do my photography, so here are a few notes:

Photography is easy to do and hard to do. It is easy to take snapshots of this and that, but harder to take carefully composed and light-balanced shots. The learning curve is rather long to good photography and few would want to put in the hours necessary to climb that curve. Wanting to take 'nice' photos or a desire to show your friends what great photos we take is not the kind of motivation that will go the distance. It takes a little more than that.

For one, it takes practice, but practice is something few people like to do unless they actually really want to learn something. And technical proficiency by itself is not all there is. We have to have an eye for composition and what is "beautiful," and that is very personal to each of us. If 'WE' like the photos we shoot, that is enough. What others feel about our photos is not important because few people in the world want to see more than a few of our photographs. My family begins to roll their eyes after maybe ten photos. For some reason they don't want to see the hundreds of thousands of photographs I have taken. I can't understand why. <G>

My point is that usually 'we' are the primary viewers of our own photos. I can't remember a time that one of my kids has come and asked me to show them my nature photos, at least not lately. I can remember many times I have asked them if they would like to see some photos. I have more or less stopped asking. My wife Margaret? Yes, she sometimes likes to see photos because she loves nature, but again: never as many as I would like to show her.

My point is that (at least in my opinion) there is very little chance of anyone becoming skilled at nature photography unless they love nature (a lot) and are inspired to actually get out there and photograph. For example, one year I watched the sun rise every day it was not raining from around May through October. That means I was out in the fields and meadows in the dark at dawn for half a year, usually soaked to my waist in cold dew, down on my stomach, crawling around, and so on for hours at a time. Who on earth wants to do that? This is what I am talking about. It takes that kind of 'crazy' to get enough experience to get better at it.

As for the intention and motivation, for me the mixing of photography with my mind training is a major driving force to go out and take photos. I have written a whole book on mixing my dharma practice with photography. The book is called "Experiences with Mahamudra" and it is a free e-book here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

If you want to know how I go about photographing nature, I have a one-page free ebook called "Small Worlds: My Key to Photography in One Page." It is here, along with some more technical e-books on photography:

<http://macrostop.com/>

As for equipment, good equipment does help, but it is expensive. You can do a lot with less

expensive equipment if you have the will and motivation to practice. Most skilled photographers I know either use Nikon or Canon cameras. I happen to be a Nikon user and am glad of it. I have a bunch of Nikons, including the D1x, D3s, D3x, and D7000.

More important to me than the camera is the lens. I have a lot of close-up and macro lenses and have studied fine lenses to a considerable degree. The lenses I use most are not Nikon. The finest forum and photo site for lenses that I have found is Nikon Gear, where I am also the official mentor of the macro photography forum. You can find that site here:

<http://nikongear.com/live/>

There is a little on photography for starters. If you have other questions, I am glad to try and answer them or work up a more technical blog than is this one.