



Therapy?

While sitting with a psychologist friend over the holidays the following discussion took place. The quotes are very loose, but the gist of the conversation is accurate.

"I've found that photography is extremely therapeutic. When I was younger, I enjoyed taking photos and I've accumulated thousands of them over the years. I never really got around to organizing them, but last spring when we redid our family room I came across quite a stack of them. I started looking through them for what seemed like 15 minutes.

Over 2 and a half hours later I realized more than 15 minutes had flown by. I felt kind of mellow throughout dinner and Kate (the psychologist's wife) mentioned how quiet I was.

Next morning I felt a little more refreshed than usual. After work I looked through a few more rolls of photos. Kate joined me, wondering what I was doing so quietly for so long - a little over an hour. She joined me and we started talking about people and events from the past and shared a few good laughs."

"That's not too hard to do," I interjected.

"No. But I couldn't remember the last time I'd done it - especially with another person. After another 'few minutes', we put the photos back in the

box & read for awhile & went to bed, feeling strangely content.

About a week later, after an excruciating day at work, I was really in a mood when I got home. I sat down in the family room, put the tube on and started watching reruns of M*A*S*H. I'd seen the episode recently and impatiently started switching channels, and found nothing of interest. I got up and was going to the kitchen when I caught sight of the box of photos behind the table across from the TV. I took out a couple of rolls at random and started thumbing through the prints until I saw Gremlin."

"Wasn't Gremlin your beagle?" I asked.

"Yep! We were at a picnic, but I couldn't recognize some of the people at the table. I knew I should have, but I didn't. The print was too small to get a good look at the tiny faces, so I turned on the computer, put the print in my scanner and scanned the photo. I opened the picture file in the scanner's software and said, 'Man, do those colors s*%k.'. But I was able to magnify the faces enough to be able to recognize some of the people. Too many faces were so dark that they seemed like just shadows.

I remembered you telling me that it was really easy to lighten or darken a photo, so I gave it a try. You were right, it was that easy. And I was able to name everyone in the photo. Smug I was - for the rest of the evening.

Next night after dinner I went right

to the carton of photos, which I'd moved from the family room to the computer desk in my office. By the time I looked at the third print, I started to think about how therapeutic these photographic experiences were.

It hit me that all these photos were taken of people and events that made me happy at the time. All the photos were of positive experience. It occurred to me that most people don't take photos of things they dislike or that they find distasteful. It was like looking at photos I'd taken released endorphins or something.

During the next couple of weeks I suggested to some of my regular clients that they bring some old snapshots they'd taken with them to their next session. Each of them was very upbeat when describing the people or places in the pictures. With each client there was a mood enhancement."

I felt like the psychologist now, listening to a patient spill his guts out to me. His mom was a pretty good amateur photographer - she was the family chronicler and I felt pretty certain that some of the photos were hers, but some were undoubtedly Kate's and his. "Do you or Kate have any hobbies?" I asked.

"No, not really".

"Photography is a different kind of communication because it involves several senses and transcends both time and place. Those are some of



the reasons I got involved with photography years ago. What you were experiencing using your scanner and computer is similar to the euphoria of the old darkroom. It's where the magic was - and still is, in fact".

"I'll bet that working with photos could probably lower someone's blood pressure, at least for a while. I'm going to check out some journals online later to see if there's any evidence. No wonder you got into photography back in school. How come you never told me about all this?" he asked.

"I did. A long time ago. But we were different people then. You were always the more fact based of the two of us. I was a little more creative and visual. Your vision, however, seems to be changing a bit. You 'mind's eye' seems a bit keener."

"You might be right. This idea of photography as a therapeutic benefit is something I want to investigate. Its effect is so strong and soothing - and it's something everyone can do.

"Can I get you another glass of wine?", he asked.

And the evening wound on...

(We'll keep you informed as this further develops.)

New Products

Nikon announced several new products in Las Vegas earlier this month, followed by Canon, Olympus, Sony and a company named Kodak.

Nikon announced 2 versions of the D5, its flagship model weighing in at \$6500 for the body without lens. It is rumored that they will ship at least one camera before the end of March, 2016.

Also announced is the D500, replacing the D300/D300S introduced in August, 2007. They claim this is the best DX (APS-C) camera ever made. A relative bargain at only \$2000 plus lens. A companion flash for both cameras, the SB-5000, was announced as well. The D5 has an ISO sensitivity of 100-102,400 and with software assistance the ability to shoot at 3,280,000. If you want to take pictures inside a black hole, this is the camera for you! The D500's sensitivity is one stop less. Both cameras also shoot 4K video at up to 30 frames per second.



The new Nikon KeyMission 360 will compete with GoPro and similar cameras. Tough and waterproof to 100', it shoots 4K video. Nikon is waiting to see what the market will bear before announcing price and availability.

Canon brought out 2 new superzoom and 3 (relatively) inexpensive Elph point and shoot cameras. It is anticipated that there will soon be other introductions...

Olympus inaugurated a new 400mm f/4.0 telephoto lens for the OM-D series cameras. Without clouding the issue with physics and math, the benefit here is that the average person can hand hold the equivalent of an 800mm lens for 1/10 second without the user's or camera's movement affecting the clarity of the photo.

Also displayed was the new TG-870 with hinged back and improved GPS service. They claim it can satellite link in under 10 seconds, anytime, anywhere.

And then there's the company called Kodak... Later this year Kodak will begin shipping their new Super 8mm movie (film, not digital) camera. Even though the movie is recorded on film, a digital screen on the camera will display the footage just shot. So far, 5 different films are in the pipeline, in 50' cartridges, each recording for about 180 seconds. The camera is rumored to sell for between \$450-\$750. A cartridge of film, including processing, is estimated at this time to be about \$75.





Snap Shots

We are working on the Winter-Spring 2016 Saturday Morning Seminars schedule and topics. Some suggestions have been:

- Shutter Speeds and Apertures-what they do
- Fill-in flash
- Basic Composition
- What different lenses do (why there isn't just one lens to do everything)
- Close-up picture taking techniques
- Preserving old photographs

Is there something you'd like to add? We welcome your input. We are also considering several venues for our late spring photo field trip. Is there a place within an hour's drive you'd like to photograph? Let us know. Drop an email to either staff@madisonphoto.com or staff@photosummit.com.



Especially in temperate climates, this is a very good time of the year to take photos of the exterior of your home and yard. Most of the trees, shrubs, etc. aren't in leaf yet, so there's better lighting for getting detail on foundations, pathways, window framing, etc. for insurance records or other considerations. Taking pictures now may well prevent a leaky basement in June.



Most cameras will work in sub zero° weather. Most batteries will not. When outdoors in such weather (usually below 14°F) keep your camera inside your clothing, or keep a second battery inside & switch it with the one in the camera as needed. Keeping one of them warm is an easy solution to the problem.

As we feel cold we shake. When we shake and are holding a camera, it obviously shakes as well - often beyond the range of the image stabilization circuit in the camera. If you use a pocket sized camera, a phone or anything with a touch screen, you're probably already aware of the problem. 2 solutions are...

Use a very small flexible tripod to hold the camera in your left (gloved) hand. Use a collapsed selfie stick with remote switch to operate the camera or phone with both hands gloved.

Neither solution is perfect, but both result in sharper photos.



Enjoy the winter. Last August many of us wanted weather like this. Take pictures. They're fun! We'll be back next month.

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