

Notes from our individual photography lesson  
Wednesday, July 29, 2020

1. Depth of field

Continue to practice making images where just one part of the image is sharp (like the engraved plaque on the picnic table) and the background is soft.

After doing a photo like that, do the opposite, that is adjust the aperture so that the entire scene is sharp.

There are three ways to control your depth of field but we only used aperture today. For next time, we'll add the other two factors. When you use all three factors, you have maximum control of depth of field

2. We also worked with shutter speed at the water fountain. We froze the action of the water with a fast shutter speed and slowed it down with a slow shutter speed. Do this when ever you can.

3. We played with shooting through. This is a powerful compositional tool that allows you to have a very soft frame for part of the picture. Shoot with a wide open aperture and allow something like grass or a flower to almost touch the lens, while still allowing the main subject to be unobscured.

4. The starburst effect is when you play "peek-a-boo" with the sun. You need to be at f/16 or higher to achieve this.

5. To really make progress, try to make 100 photos per day. It isn't as hard as it sounds and can be done in 30-60 minutes. Even a few times per week is helpful. You'll gain control over your camera so that it does exactly what you want and you are quick and efficient with it. Your camera is nothing more than a tool that helps you record what you see. You must master it.

6. Composition: nothing matters if the composition is not compelling. A few things we discussed:

- use of a leading line to lead the eye through the image
- creating a visual journey for the viewer within the image space
- simplifying the composition to eliminate *everything* that isn't essential. We did this at the end of the session with the tree that had flowing trunks.
- move beyond point and shoot and embrace 'Think and Shoot'.

7. I've added a few photos that illustrate these points.



Notice how the line of lights lead your eye through the image.



The shutter speed here was 2 seconds, camera on a tripod, to create the water flow.



Shallow depth of field (f/2.8) was used here to draw the eye to the singer.



Shooting through the foliage, which was just inches from the camera lens, allowed me to create a soft frame for the scene.