4 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE PHOTOS

A GUIDED WORKBOOK
BY JOSHUA CRIPPS

INTRODUCTION

When I first started photography I had no idea how to take a good photo.

I was on an 18-month, round-the-world trip after college and I was experiencing the most incredible moments of my life. I was so blown away by the amazing things I was seeing and feeling that I wanted to learn how to capture those experiences in photos. I bought a DSLR and started devouring articles and videos about photography. But you know what happened? My photos SUCKED! In fact, even after trying to learn all that theory on my own, I was taking worse photos with the nice camera than with the the point and shoot I had been using previously.

It took me years to figure out why: it turns out it's almost impossible to learn photography on your own by absorbing random tidbits of theory. Instead, if you want to learn to take better photos, you need a structured path to follow and a knowledgeable guide to help you along the way.

In the years since coming to this realization I've been able to improve my photography skills so much that I've been featured places like CNN and NASA, I've won major photo competitions, grown a thriving audience online, given presentations and done global marketing shoots for Nikon, and I've been able to turn my passion for photography into a full time profession. I can't tell you how fortunate I feel to be in this position.

I've also been teaching landscape photography for over a decade and I've realized that it's not just me who loves to learn photography through a clear and simple approach. If you're here I'm guessing you feel the same.

What we cover in this eBook are step-by-step photography lessons for people like you and me.

I'm a normal guy. I wasn't born with some unusual gift for art. I'm not a photography prodigy. I'm simply a regular dude who wants to shoot photos that make me happy. And I believe that's what photography should be for you too: it should be fun, it should make you happy, and it should help you build a deeper connection with Mother Nature.

Since sharing my method of learning with my students, thousands of photographers have learned to shoot photos they love far more quickly and easily than they ever thought possible.

Do you want to take better photos as well?

Then let's get started.

STORYTELLING:

A FRAMEWORK FOR BETTER PHOTOS

Before we begin, you need to know this: The most important part of taking any photo is first understanding what YOU are trying to convey in the image. This is the essence of photographic storytelling.

Whether you realize it or not, storytelling is EVERYTHING in landscape photography. And yet, most photographers never consciously think about the story they want to tell when creating a photograph. They simply think “oh, that’s pretty.” And *CLICK!* hit the shutter...

Photographers who are able to understand the story they want to tell automatically create more personal, beautiful, and meaningful images.

Telling a story in a photo may seem like a daunting challenge at first. But believe it or not, the story you want to tell in your photographs is already there inside of you, lurking in your subconscious. It’s simply a matter of asking the right questions and creating a simple framework in order to bring that story to life.

When that story becomes clear in your conscious mind, you will be able to make better decisions in the field with everything from your composition and lens choice, to your camera settings, to even the light you shoot in. And when every decision you make supports the story you’re trying to tell, you will create powerful images. These photos will not only make people say WOW, but they will also be images that you love and will be proud to hang on your wall.

This eBook will provide you with a simple step-by-step process (something I like to call a Photo Recipe, you'll hear me say that a lot) for understanding the story of your photos. You can use this approach to analyze your old photos, or to understand photos online that you admire. But most importantly you can use it today to start creating stunning landscape photos that you love.

Now that you understand all that, let's dive into our 5 steps...

STEP 1:

LEARN THE "GOLDEN RULE" OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Over the past decade of shooting and teaching photography, I've come to realize that every single photo is made from the same four essential elements: a subject/story, the composition, camera technique, & light.

What makes a *good* photo is when it uses each of those four elements to their full potential. In other words, if you have a **fascinating** subject, a **compelling** composition, **great** camera technique, and **interesting** light, then I guarantee you have a killer photo. ***If you take nothing else away from this ebook, take that.*** Write it down on a sticky note and slap it on your bathroom mirror. This is the #1 most powerful Photo Recipe I can teach you, which is why I call it "The Golden Rule of Landscape Photography."

You can look at it kinda like the four columns you need support a killer photo:

On the flip side, if you are missing any one of these four essential parts your photo won't work. If you've ever looked at an image of yours and thought it was missing something, or seemed lifeless or boring, it's because it's lacking one or more of these four essentials.

So now we know that in order to succeed every photo needs a strong subject, a good composition, intelligent camera technique, and powerful light. But what exactly does it take to make the most of each of these four essential supporting elements? Let's find out by taking a look at each one in detail.

STEP 2: THE SUBJECT AND STORY

The subject and story is THE MOST IMPORTANT part of any image. If you don't have this you don't have a photo.

A good subject or story is anything that you find interesting, beautiful, or unusual about the scene in front of you. Anytime you catch yourself thinking, "hey, isn't that cool?" you have the potential for a good subject. It's also critical that your subject is something that you care about. The more you care about your subject (which is to say, the more it makes you feel an emotion, whether it's awe, serenity, or apprehension) the more you will engage with it. The more you engage with your subject, the more time you will spend with it and the more you will be drawn to photograph it. The more passionate you are about your subject, the more that will translate into your photos, and the more other people will engage with your photography as well. So yeah, a good story is crucial.

In order to identify the story of a photo I use a simple exercise I call The Three Questions.

The Three Questions: What, Why, and How

When you're out in the field you should start asking these questions before you even get your camera out of your bag. That's because the answers to these questions will shape every decision you make from this point forward about your photography. Here's how it works:

Question 1: What?

First you ask "What?" - *What am I drawn to in the scene in front of me?*

This is the simplest, most superficial question of the three. Your task here is simply to look at the entire scene you're in and identify what specific things speak to you the most. Are you drawn to a specific rock, or a mountain top? Perhaps there are some frost-covered leaves at your feet that are calling your name. If you're at the coast maybe it's the waves hitting rocks on the shore. Whatever it is that's calling to you, this is the starting point for your story.

> Tip: If you're not sure what's calling to you, pay attention to where your eyes linger. If you find your attention repeatedly drawn to one thing in the scene, make a note of what that is. Another effective tactic is to picture someone who's never been to the place where you are, and imagine what you would tell that person about that place: "Oh there are these cool rocky towers that stick out of the ground, and these beautiful bushes, and a river flowing through it all." Ding ding ding! Now you know exactly what is most interesting to you.

Out of all the stuff that makes up the scene in front of you, pick out just 2 or 3 things that you are most drawn to. This will help keep your photo simple. If you find that you are drawn to many many different things, it simply means that you should create many many different photographs. Don't try to create a single image that contains EVERYTHING you are drawn to. It will be too chaotic and the viewer won't know what was *most* important to you.

For example, here's a beach in Davenport, California. You can see there's a lot of stuff in the scene: sand, patterns, a seastack, rocky shelves, reflections, waves, flowing water, cliffs, the sky, etc. Because of that, the story of this specific image isn't clear. If I ask myself what I'm truly drawn to in the scene I come up with five things:

- The Seastack
- Waves
- The Rocky Shelves
- Reflections
- The Sky

I don't necessarily want to put *all* of these things in my photo because it could still be too much stuff. I know I love the seastack, the waves, and the sky, so those are 100% going to be in my story. Which means I need to choose between the reflections and the cool, rocky shelves. Since I find myself drawn to both the reflections and the shelves, that's a huge hint that I should actually take two different pictures to capture two different stories.

Now it's your turn:

EXERCISE #1

WHAT DO YOU LIKE?

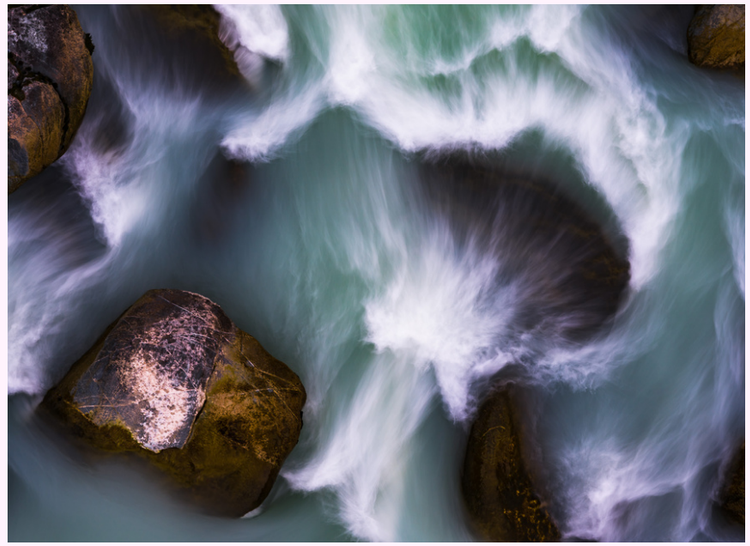
Your first exercise is super simple: the next time you are out photographing, look at the scene in front of you. Don’t take your camera out yet, but simply ask, "What am I drawn to in the scene in front of me?"

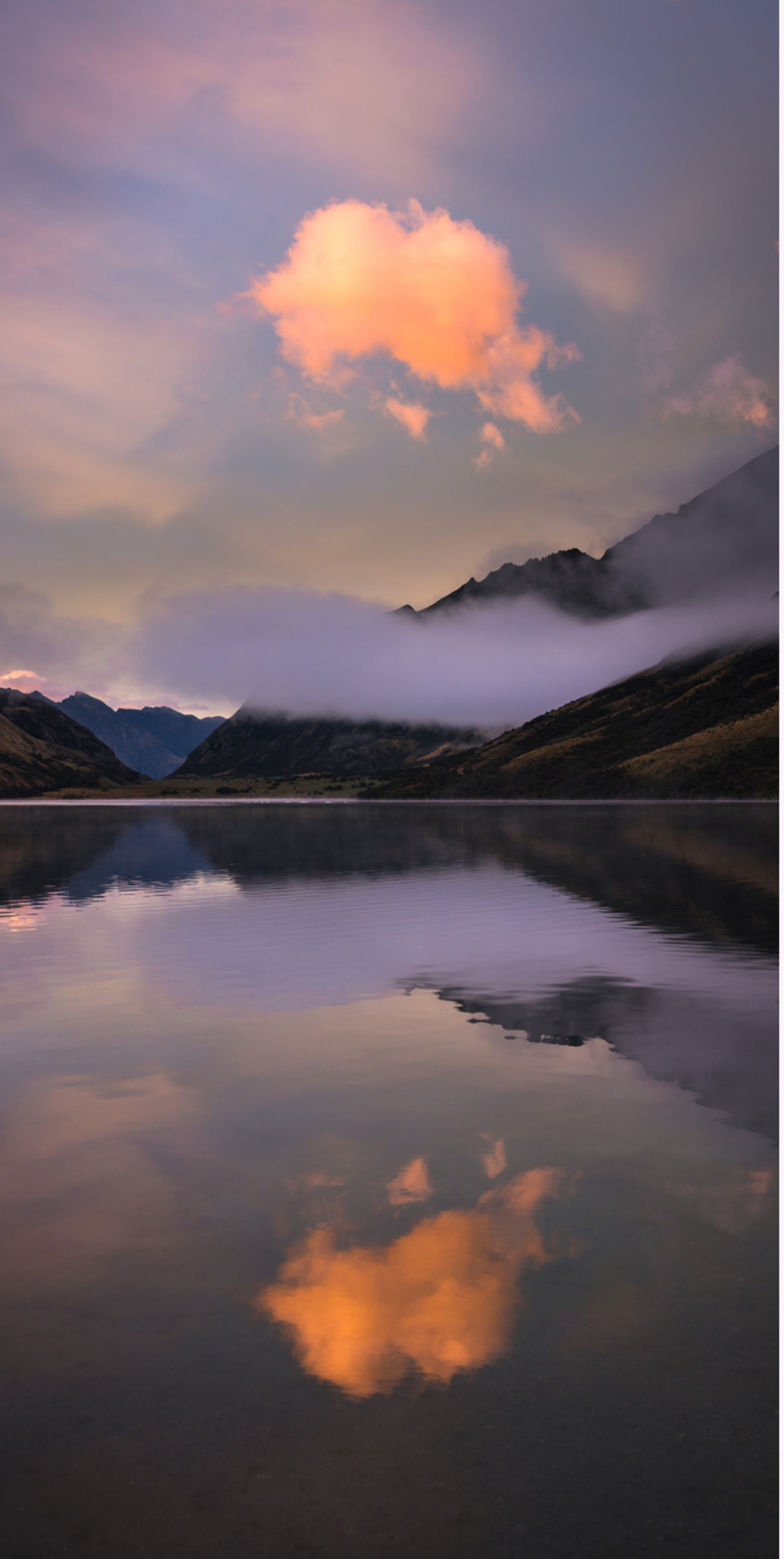
List out 5-10 things that you find compelling in the scene in front of you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Now, out of those 5-10 things, dive deeper and choose the 2-3 you are MOST interested in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





Question 2: Why?

The next step is to ask “Why?” - *Why am I drawn to these specific things?*

Here your goal is to understand why the things you picked out are calling to you. What is it about those things that specifically interests you? That is, what are the specific characteristics of those things that you find compelling? You can answer these questions by filling in the blanks in this sentence:

I like the_____ because it _____ .
I like the *thing* because it *has this specific characteristic or quality*.

Here are some different ways of how you might fill in that sentence, depending on the scene in front of you:

- I like the waves because they crash over the rocks with power, sending spray flying into the air.
- I like the waves because after they crash over the rocks they flow back down in beautiful cascades.
- I like the waves because they rush up the beach toward me with energy.
- I like the clouds because they are full of beautiful patterns and textures.
- I like the clouds because they are pink and the sky around them is blue.
- I like the clouds because they are so smooth and contrast with the details of the landscape.
- I like the clouds because they are moving overhead so quickly and really show the power of the wind.
- I like the clouds because they are so dark and ominous.
- I like the flowers because they make me feel happy.
- I like the mountain because of the way it looms over the land.
- I like the mountain because it’s huge and makes me feel small.
- I like the mountain because its northern face is full of incredible patterns.
- I like the mountain because it’s catching the last red light of the sunset.
- I like that rock because it’s bright white and contrasts with the green grass around it.
- I like that rock because it has cool patterns on one side.

You see what's happening here? Not only are we identifying what we like in a scene, but also *why* we like it.

The more deeply and specifically you can identify the characteristics that draw you to the things you're interested in, the more clearly you will be defining the story of your image. This also allows your viewer to more clearly understand what you felt was important about that place in that moment.

As an example let's look again at that same beach in Davenport, California. I went back at sunset and the sky was full of cool clouds. Even though the reflections were nice, I decided I was most interested in the sky, the rocky shelves, the seastack, and the waves. Here's what the answers to my "Why" question looked like:

- I like the shelves because they are full of beautiful potholes, textures, and smooth lines.
- I like the shelves because they are dark brown and make a beautiful contrast to the crashing white water.
- I like the waves because they have a softness to them.
- I like the waves because they make a great contrast to the sharp details in the seastack.
- I like the seastack because it stands up tall completely by itself out of the ocean and seems to be a lone figure.
- I like the sky because it's full of colors (especially red and orange).

By creating this simple list I am consciously thinking about WHAT I'm most interested in in the scene, as well as WHY it's interesting to me. This is what forms the backbone of my story, as well as what I want the viewer to take away from my photo.

EXERCISE #2

IDENTIFY SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS

For the list of your 2-3 “Most Interesting Things” from Exercise #1, look deeply at each object and ask yourself why you’re drawn to it. List out as many reasons as you can for each, using the formula:

“I like the _____ because it _____.”

Try to come up with at least 5-10 of these for your scene.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Question 3: How?

Have you noticed that we haven't mentioned your camera or even photography in the last few pages? That's because up until to this point we have been focused on building the elements of our story. Now we get to translate that story into a photograph by asking "How?"

How Can I Exaggerate The Characteristics or Qualities of the Things I'm Drawn To?

This question allows us to build a framework (AKA a Photo Recipe) that will determine all the remaining decisions we make for our photo. A good landscape photograph is like a caricature: it simplifies and exaggerates. So your task is to think about how you can exaggerate the characteristics of the stuff you want to put in your photo.

We do this by first taking every sentence from Exercise #2 and pulling out the quality or characteristic. For instance, if you said "I like the clouds because they are moving quickly overhead and that motion shows the power of the wind." Then the specific characteristic you are drawn to would be "the motion of the clouds and how it shows the power of the wind."

You then take that specific characteristic and figure out a way to enhance or exaggerate it in your photo, and then fill in this sentence:

I can exaggerate _____ by doing _____.
I can exaggerate *the characteristic* by doing *this with my composition, camera, gear, timing, etc*.

Here are some examples of what you could do depending on your scene:

- I can exaggerate the motion in the clouds by using a 10-stop filter and a long exposure to show their movement over a long period of time.
- I can exaggerate the blues in that iceberg by choosing a cool white balance.
- I can exaggerate the cracks in this stone by using a wide angle lens and getting really close to the rock.
- I can exaggerate the ominous feeling of those clouds by underexposing the photo to make them even darker.
- I can exaggerate the happy feeling of those flowers by making the photo brighter.
- I can exaggerate the detail in the bark of this tree by making the background soft and out of focus by contrast.
- I can make the mountain feel even more huge by putting a person in front of it and shooting it with a telephoto lens from a distance.
- I can exaggerate the lonely feeling I get from that single tree by making it small in the frame and including a bunch of negative space around it.
- I can exaggerate the soft light on this plant by waiting till the plant goes into shadow.
- I can exaggerate the power of the waves hitting the rocks by using a short shutter speed to freeze the action, and timing my shot to catch the biggest wave.

At this point I'm sure you see exactly what is happening: we're using the characteristics we like about the things in our scene to inform the actual choices we need to make for our photo. If every choice we make supports the story we want to tell, then it allows us to create more personal and more meaningful photographs.

For our example, let's go back to the Davenport Beach scene once more. Here are the specific characteristics I liked that I identified in Exercise 2:

- The beautiful potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves.
- The contrast between the shelves and the crashing white water.
- The softness of the waves.
- The contrast between the waves and the sharp details of the seastack.
- The solitary nature of the seastack.
- The bright colors (reds and oranges) in the sky.

And here are some ways I can exaggerate or emphasize those characteristics:

- I can exaggerate the beautiful potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves by getting close to them with a wide angle lens.
- I can exaggerate the contrast between the shelves and the crashing white water by waiting for a wave to fill up one of the potholes.
- I can exaggerate the softness of the waves by using a long shutter speed to smooth them out.
- I can exaggerate the contrast between the waves and the sharp details of the seastack by shooting when the tide is high enough to completely surround the base of the stack.
- I can exaggerate the contrast between the waves and the sharp details of the seastack by making sure the stack is in sharp focus.
- I can exaggerate the solitary nature of the seastack by isolating it in my background, with nothing else on the same plane in the photo.
- I can exaggerate the color in the sky by waiting for the sun to go down farther because it's more likely to create richer colors.
- I can exaggerate the color in the sky by using a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.
- I can exaggerate the reds and oranges in the sky specifically by shooting with a warmer white balance.

(Spoiler alert! You will be able to see the result of this in just a few more pages)

EXERCISE #3

EXAGGERATE

First, take your list from Exercise #2 and pull out the specific characteristics you like about the elements in your scene.

The characteristics I specifically like about the things in my scene are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Now think of a way you can exaggerate each of those characteristics through your composition, camera technique, timing, use of light, etc. List these out using the formula:

"I can exaggerate _____ by doing _____."

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

You see just how cool and powerful this is, right? Simply by deeply understanding our story of a place, many of our photographic decisions are made for us. You can also see that the story of our photo is now spilling over, not just into the literal stuff we want in our frame, but also into the composition we choose, the camera settings and gear, and the timing of when we shoot. So let's take a deeper look at each of those things before we circle back and tie everything up into a neat, little package.

STEP 3: COMPOSITION, TECHNIQUE, AND LIGHT

Thankfully we've done all the hard work already by identifying the stuff we want in our photo, what characteristics we like about that stuff, and how we can exaggerate those characteristics. This makes it 10 times easier to make a strong composition, to choose the "right" camera settings and gear, and to shoot at the right time.

Here's how it works:

Composition

The goal of your composition is to show off the most interesting attributes of your subject/story. If you love how huge a mountain is, your composition should show that hugeness. If you love the way the ocean rushes up the beach right at you, your composition should show those waves in an immersive way so that your viewer can feel like they're standing there.

The simplest way to do this is to ***fill the frame with what you like***.

This is the #1 rule of composition and one that should never be broken. This is another "write it on a sticky note and slap it on your bathroom mirror" moment.

And although it's implied, it's also worth stating that the flip side to this rule is you should exclude things you don't like (or just aren't interesting enough to you).

Let's look again at the Davenport Beach scene. I most like the seastack, the shelves, the sky, and the water. So I want to fill my frame with that stuff AND NOTHING ELSE. No cliffs, no sand, no beachy reflection. All those things are distractions which take away from the main story of the image, and so they should be excluded. Filling the frame with just the four important things gives me an incredibly strong start to make a compelling composition.

This gives us the first goal with the composition for this photo: *Create a frame that contains the seastack, the shelves, the sky, the water, and nothing else.*

The next step is to go back to our list from Exercise #3 and find the sentences that are relevant to composition. For this Davenport Beach example those are:

- I can exaggerate the beautiful potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves by getting close to them with a wide angle lens.
- I can exaggerate the solitary nature of the seastack by isolating it in my background, with nothing else on the same plane in the photo.

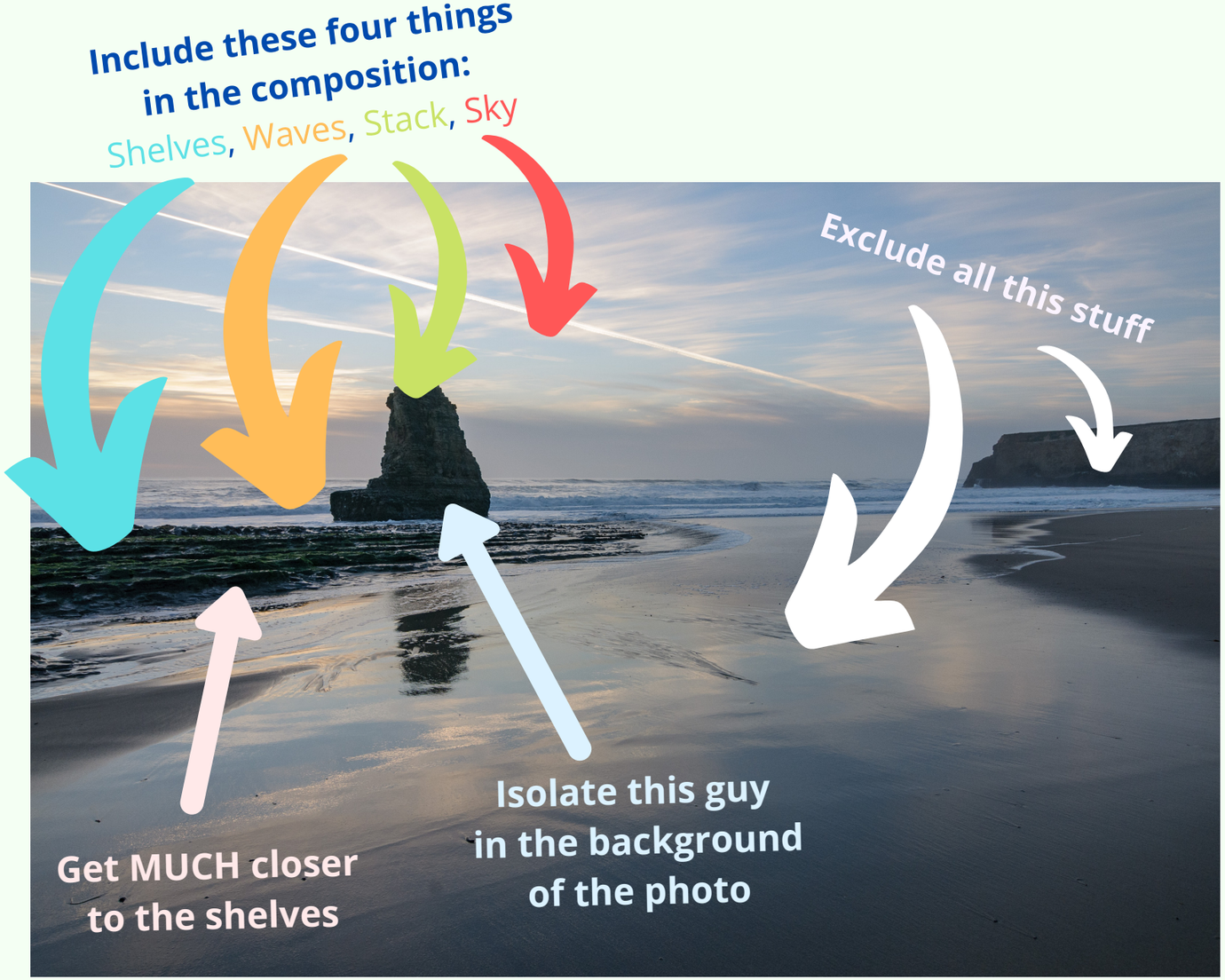
Then rewrite those as additional goals for the composition:

- *Get close to the potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves with a wide angle lens.*
- *Isolate the seastack in the background, and make sure nothing else is on the same plane.*

Now we can make a list of those three strong goals to accomplish with our composition:

1. Create a frame that contains the seastack, the shelves, the sky, the water, and nothing else.
2. Get close to the potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves with a wide angle lens.
3. Isolate the seastack in the background, and make sure nothing else is on the same plane.

Sa-weeeeet!! This is going to be a fantastic comp. Now it's your turn:



EXERCISE #4:
COMPOSITION

First, look at your list from Exercise #3 and pull out all the entries that are related to Composition. List those here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Next, rewrite those sentences as shooting goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Camera Technique

Good technique is about so much more than just putting your camera on a tripod and getting a decent exposure. It's about making choices with your camera settings, your gear, and the timing of your shot that further support the story you want to tell. For example, if you really love the blue in an iceberg but choose a white balance that turns the iceberg muddy brown, that choice is not supporting the story of your photo.

So how do we know which choices are the "right" ones? Again, all we have to do is go back to Exercise #3, grab the answers that are relevant to our technique, and rewrite them as goals to accomplish. Using the Davenport Beach example, we have:

- I can exaggerate the contrast between the shelves and the crashing white water by waiting for a wave to fill up one of the potholes.
- I can exaggerate the softness of the waves by using a long shutter speed to smooth them out.
- I can exaggerate the contrast between the waves and the sharp details of the seastack by shooting when the tide is high enough to completely surround the base of the stack, as well as making sure the stack is in sharp focus.
- I can exaggerate the bright reds and oranges in the sky by shooting with a warmer white balance, as well as using a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.

Now I just need to rewrite those into goals for my technique:

1. Wait for a wave to fill up one of the potholes.
2. Use a long shutter speed to smooth the waves out.
3. Shoot when the tide is high enough to completely surround the base of the seastack.
4. Make sure the stack is in sharp focus.
5. Shoot with a warmer white balance.
6. Use a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.

This gives us an amazing and easy guide to follow to ensure that the technical choices we make enhance the story of our photo. Give this a shot in the following exercise....

EXERCISE #5:

CAMERA TECHNIQUE

First, look at your list from Exercise #3 and pull out all the entries that are related to Technique. List those here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Next, rewrite those sentences as shooting goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Light

Light is one of the most powerful elements in our story. It's so powerful that it can make a bad photo seem good. And if you actually have a good photo with a strong foundation, good light will make it legendary.

So how do we find good light and corral it into our photos?

First off, you should be looking for anything out of the ordinary. Any light you find interesting, beautiful, uncommon, or unusual is a good candidate. This is why landscape photographers LOVE shooting around sunrise and sunset. This is when you get light that is more colorful and more dramatic. And yet it's also softer and more flattering on the landscape.

That's not to say you can only find good light at those times, but if you're not sure where to begin, that's a great start.

And, as with everything else we've discussed so far, you should always be asking the question, "how does the light help or hurt the story I'm trying to tell?" For example, if you're shooting in a field of wildflowers and you are feeling happy and joyous, you should strive to shoot in light that gives the same feeling: perhaps on a sunny day with fat, puffy clouds in the sky. If you shoot that field of flowers under the ominous darkness of a monsoon thunderstorm, that light is contrary to the feeling of brightness and joy you want to convey.

Oftentimes the light itself is part of the story. This is usually the case at sunrise and sunset: there are beautiful colors and textures in the sky, and it's 100% totally OK to let your viewer know that. Remember: if you're drawn to something in your scene, include it in the story your photo is telling.

Exactly how you include light in the story of your photo is part of the process we've been learning so far. Just like with composition and technique, we can use our answers to Exercises 1, 2, and 3 to better understand the light in our scene, as well identify some ways we can emphasize it in our photos.

Heading back to Davenport Beach, let's look again at the answers to Exercise #3 and grab the ones that are relevant to light:

- I can exaggerate the color in the sky by waiting for the sun to go down farther because it's more likely to create richer colors.
- I can exaggerate the color in the sky by using a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.
- I can exaggerate the reds and oranges in the sky specifically by shooting with a warmer white balance.

We can then rewrite these as a series of goals to accomplish:

1. Shoot around sunset when I'm more likely to see beautiful colors in the sky.
2. Use a warmer white balance.
3. Use a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.

You can see that in this case there's a fair amount of overlap with our Technique section. That's totally OK. Sometimes you'll have this overlap, sometimes not. That's why it's important to go through these exercises fully each time.

EXERCISE #6:

LIGHT

First, look at your list from Exercise #3 and pull out all the entries that are related to Light. List those here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Next, rewrite those sentences as shooting goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Putting It All Together

Now we've gone through the four essential elements in detail to see what makes each tick and how you can use your own artistic vision to create a photographic story that is personal AND beautiful. The final part of this process is simply to assemble all our shooting goals in one master list, and then actually go take the photo!

We know our Subject / Story from Exercises 1, 2, and 3. We grab our Composition Goals from Exercise #4, our Technique Goals from Exercise #5, and our Light Goals from Exercise #6. Put all these goals into action in the field and you will have a killer shot.

To show you how this works, let's take a final look at that Davenport Beach scene.

Here is the Story I'm telling the viewer:

"There is a beach that has these amazing, dark-colored rocky shelves that are full of beautiful patterns, potholes, and lines. When the waves crash over the shelves it creates an incredible contrast between light and dark. Off in the distance is a fascinating seastack the rises from the ocean like a lone sentinel. And on the night I happened to visit this lovely beach the sky exploded in fiery reds and oranges." That's not a bad story, is it?

Here's how I tell that Story through my Composition:

- Create a frame that contains the seastack, the shelves, the sky, the water, and nothing else.
- Get close to the potholes, textures, and smooth lines in the shelves with a wide angle lens.
- Isolate the seastack in the background of the photo, and make sure nothing else is on the same plane.

Here's how I tell the Story through my Technique:

- Wait for a wave to fill up one of the potholes.
- Use a long shutter speed to smooth the waves out.
- Shoot when the tide is high enough to completely surround the base of the seastack.
- Make sure the stack is in sharp focus.
- Shoot with a warmer white balance, and use a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.

Here's how I tell that Story through my use of Light:

- Shoot around sunset when I'm more likely to see beautiful colors in the sky.
- Use a warmer white balance and use a filter to darken the sky and make it more saturated.

To the right is the final photo I created that night using this process. See how it accomplishes all the goals we set? Before you started this eBook you might simply have said "nice photo" and moved on. But now you understand the conscious decisions that went into creating an image that tells the story I wanted to tell. And more so, you are now able to use this same process yourself to create incredible photos! How awesome does that feel?!

EXERCISE #7:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

For this Exercise, simply grab your answers to Exercises 1-6 and assemble your shooting checklist.

Here is the Story I'm telling the viewer (Pull this from Exercises 1-3)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Here's how I tell that Story through my Composition (Exercise 4):

- _____
- _____
- _____

Here's how I tell that Story through my Technique (Exercise 5):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Here's how I tell that Story through my use of Light (Exercise 6):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

And there you have it! Now you can take this checklist and create your own work of art. Have fun!!!!

STEP 4: APPLYING THIS TO YOUR OLD PHOTOS

Up to this point in the workbook we've only talked about using this process to tell better photographic stories when you're actually out shooting. But the cool thing is that you can use the same steps to look back at photos you've already taken to understand them more deeply.

The process is essentially the same, you simply need to approach it with a mindset of "What could I have done...?" Look at a photo you've already taken and go through the process:

Again, you start with the story: "What 2-3 things did I really like about this scene?" Then, "What specific characteristics did I like about those things?" And finally, "What could I have done to exaggerate those characteristics?"

As you ask that last question you can compare the choices you made when you took the photo to the choices you would make now having gone through this eBook. And that gives you a clear idea about what you should do the next time you go out to shoot.

Creating that kind of feedback loop for yourself is an invaluable learning tool, one that will quickly improve your photographic skills, help you understand your own vision better, and develop your own photographic style.

Old

New

EXERCISE #8:

LOOKING BACK AT AN OLD PHOTO

For this Exercise, look back at an old photo you took. It can be a favorite or one you're not sure why it doesn't work. Go through the whole process to identify your story and how you could have told that story today if you had an opportunity to shoot it again.

Here is the Story I wanted to tell the viewer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Here's how I could have told that Story through my Composition:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Here's how I could have told that Story through my Technique:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Here's how I could have told that Story through my use of Light:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Did this help you understand your photo better, along with the choices you did make, and the choices you would make now if you could shoot it over again? I bet it did!

CONGRATS!

You made it to the end of the eBook. Good on ya for working your way through it! I hope by now you see how easy it can be to learn landscape photography using this concept of Photo Recipes.

Stay tuned; I've got even more stuff coming your way soon about how to create landscape photos you love.

Until next time, have fun and happy shooting,

Josh Cripps
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