

# PBL SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

## SELF CRITIQUE

Critiquing photography is the process of evaluating and interpreting the elements of a photo in order to determine its meaning and effectiveness. It is not something that should be a positive or negative experience. It is simply an analysis of what works and what doesn't work. This helps the photographer to improve their technique and capture better shots. Some simple steps to help you self-critique are listed below:



### 1. ***Does the photo work?***

Decide on what you like about the photo, and think about how you can improve on that. If the answer doesn't come instantly, it's probably not a very good photo. Whatever doesn't add, takes away. Clean up your photo, because less is more, and you don't want to confuse your viewers. For example, is it clear from your photo where/who/what your subject is? Do they receive an appropriate amount of attention, or are there too many distractions?

### 2. ***Do you know what you want to express, and is the message clear?***

Is this more than just a pretty picture? When you look at the photo for the first time, what do you feel? Are you feeling the feeling that you're trying to express?

### 3. ***How the composition?***

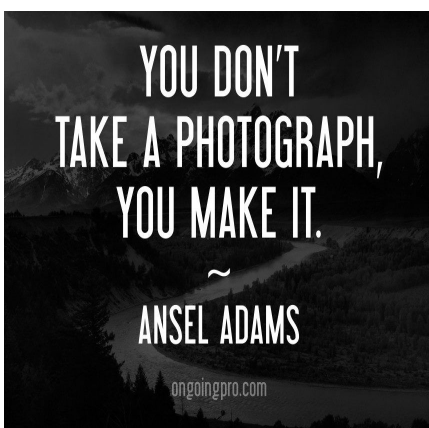
Yes, we discussed the rule of thirds, framing, and using lines but this is also about paying attention to the visual weighting of the composition. Is there too much happening on the left? Is activity in the background taking away from the foreground? Is everything in the photo actually adding to the overall result? Is the eye being led to where you want it to go (i.e. a lead-in line)? Should you have been closer to the subject? Is your horizon straight?

### 4. ***Is the photo correctly exposed?***

Is your photo is too dark, or too bright in places? Can you fix this using some editing tools?

### 5. ***What about the focus and DoF?***

The primary subject of your photo should be in sharp focus. One of the biggest mistakes that people see to make is misunderstanding where they should be focusing in their photos, and how much depth of field they need. If you're shooting landscapes, focus about a third of the way into the frame for maximum depth of field, and if you're shooting a person, focus on their eyes. That's if you want to play by the book – feel free to experiment.



Truthfully, the most important question is whether or not **YOU** like the photo. It's pretty simple and your instinct will give you the answer. I typically take photos until I have to stop, or I'm happy with the results and don't think I'll get much better. If you're happy, then that's all that matters really, because photography is subjective, and if you can please number one, then you're doing alright.

Your journey is yours. You only get out of it what you put into it. It takes practice, determination, and commitment to increase your skills. It might take some time, but the more pictures you take, the more you learn.