

Photography as Therapy or One Good Image is Worth a Thousand Bad Novels

Therapy should make us feel better, or at least that's the idea. That's why it makes good sense to shoot photographs. Photography gives us something to do, it costs little or nothing, doesn't interfere much with other activities of daily living and can even be fun. Sometimes. Ever notice how many mental patients carry around their therapy cameras? It's for a good reason. The camera makes us appear grander than we really are so it helps poor self esteem. It also keeps us in touch with reality and away from spending too much time in places like Narnia. Besides, pretty colors are subjective and anything subjective stimulates human interaction. What's pretty for me, isn't necessarily pretty for you. It gives me validity and increases my self esteem when I can say, 'my ugly colors are every bit as ugly as your ugly colors'. Or something like that. And then one day you realize the colors on your jumbo laptop are prettier than those in real life, whatever that is. What really matters now? Speaking of self esteem problems, they do come on with age and memory loss. The problem with age is that one forgets just where one has been; photographs help refresh the memory. The problem is if the photo is not identified, then it could be from anywhere or 'try real hard to remember where you have been'. First look at where the other or surrounding pictures are and the odds are, though there is no guarantee, they will be all from the same place. That's using your noodle! This works well except when you can't remember where any of them come from...then you start to wonder if you have really been to too many places after all. If you do decide to take up photography as therapy, be sure to take lots of pictures of those folks you cannot stand. It will do wonders for your self esteem. Now is the time to seek that sweet revenge that Buddha warned us about. Shoot lots of pictures of your enemies especially when they are eating, yawning or at the tail end of a mighty guffaw. Pick the goofiest expressions and upload them with glee. Your close friends will whisper 'how did you get that ugly picture?' and you just simply reply 'it's knowing what you are after that really matters in the net net...' Or something obtuse and heavy like that. But hey, let's not get ahead of ourselves and let all the cats out of the bag, eh? One of the most important things about being human is that we can fake ourselves out with false hopes. It's a survival tactic and one that is sure to turn up as a future numero uno on the human genome charts; sort of express false hope mutations if you will. And finally, through your photo albums you can let the new you come out and blossom. You can through your skewed and biased perceptions change the true nature of any thought or emotion evoking image. So be it. It is your fate. Welcome and relish the opportunity much as you would relish the relish on your favorite hot dog. Only you can take advantage of this opportunity; just try not to cower in fear. Perhaps a switch in perspective is all that's really needed. For instance, a cool guy needs a cool photo gallery, no? It can show the hard, tough side but also the gentle and considerate side, such as sensitive rodeo photos. But let's face it; we love it because in the end the perspective is just all about us, no? Beyond that, it just doesn't matter because it just doesn't. The gods know there certainly is enough to be afraid of. The truly scary realization is that if we are what we perceive, then as a consequence we must be what we look at. Oh my gods, just think of it! But keep the faith! Good therapy spooks just enough to give you a good jolt but not to cause a complete shift in your Gestalt. But then again, who can argue with results? So go ahead, just shoot that photo...come on now, like Granma said it's not the time to be shy.

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