

A Photographer's Point Of View: Love Has Taken Its Toll



It was suggested that the content of this month's submissions to Align Body & Soul be related to love, since Valentine's Day is right around the corner. I can't remember the last time I wrote something about love, so I had to think on this for a while. I find it interesting that the creative process often leads to manifesting signs and messages from seemingly random sources once you set your mind to an idea. As I started to put some thoughts together, I came across a meme in my Facebook feed that contained a quote attributed to the Book of Prosperity. It was just what I needed to get started on this article.

"Cause in the end, all we want is to do things we like with people we love."

Since I'm not currently in love with someone and my memories of past loves are fading, this quote made me think of a recent road trip and how much I love taking people to places they can fall in love with.

Since taking time to ponder is another part of the creative process, I decided to do some pondering while running some errands today. My friends know that I listen to episodes of [my](#)

[radio show, 3rd Groove](#), while I'm driving around because I know I'll always hear good music without commercials, and it helps me improve my radio voice when I listen to myself speak. The episode that happened to be in the queue was a Valentine's Day special in which all of the songs have the word "love" in their titles. How serendipitous. The title that stuck with me the most was Foreigner's "Love has Taken Its Toll." I immediately thought it would be a great title for this article, even though it doesn't have much to do with the words I'm writing. I'm really good at coming up with titles based on things I hear people say or sing.

Anyway ... Back to the subject at hand. I feel it's appropriate to share a quote from [Wayne Dyer](#) about photography from one of his books. I sent Dr. Dyer a photo collage a long time ago and got the chance to briefly meet him after one of his lectures. I told him that I sent the collage, and he immediately said without hesitation, "It's beautiful! I have it in my sacred space and look at it every day." I was rendered speechless, especially knowing he had said this about photography ...

"Photography is a form of energy reproduction, and every photograph contains energy. See for yourself by strategically placing photographs taken in moments of happiness, love and receptivity to spiritual help around your living quarters, in your workplace, in your automobile and even on your clothing or in a pocket or wallet. Arrange [photographs of nature](#), animals, and expressions of joy and love in your environment, and let their energy radiate into your heart and provide you with their higher frequency."

I will take his quote further by saying that if you spend time in beautiful places that you love, those places will fill you with their higher energy. Looking at photos, sharing them with other people and seeing their reactions will bring you to a higher frequency as well. Bringing people to these locations, especially those you love and care about will also allow this energy to radiate into your heart.

The photo that accompanies this article was taken on the road trip I mentioned earlier, which was my photography group's annual visit to [Eleven Mile Canyon](#). It's one of the places I love to visit, especially in the winter, and I love creating memorable experiences for people to enjoy through their photography. It felt good to read the comments as members of my group shared their photos online. One person was so impressed with this location that he went back the very next day.

So when you're in a place you love, especially with someone you love, take photos so you can feel that energy again when you view them later or share them with others.

And by the way, if you want to listen to the "Love" episode of 3rd Groove so you can be inspired, it's available on Mixcloud at <https://www.mixcloud.com/3rdGroove/3rd-groove-love/>.

A Photographer's Point of View: Looking Forward Into 2019



Fireworks on top of Pikes

Peak, taken by Mike Pach

A new year is beginning. That not only means it's time to look back at what's happened in the last 12 months, but it's also time to look forward to the next 12 in anticipation, with a new outlook and new plans for the future.

2018 has been an amazing year for me. It's been a record-breaking year in more ways than one. Not only did my photography and my business reach new levels, I literally photographed two record-breaking moments. The first came when Romain Dumas broke the 8-minute mark during the [Pikes Peak International Hill Climb](#). The second was when Megan Kimmel broke a decades-old record for being the top female finisher in the [Pikes Peak Marathon](#).

The past year hasn't been without its low moments either. The loss of two things that were very important to me had a very negative impact on my mental health. I have not kept it a secret that I struggle with depression. I didn't know how deeply the first loss was affecting me until my therapist pointed it out during one of our sessions. The second loss hit me even harder, and I was depressed for weeks because of it. I was afraid that I would slip into a very dark place, but it helped a lot that I simply kept pressing forward.

A couple of weeks ago I visited a friend of mine who works in the photography industry. We had a great chat, and he paid me some very nice compliments about my skills and about working with me. Later that evening, I felt happy for the first time in what seemed like forever. I came to the realization that I needed to switch my focus from this negative experience that was weighing me down to the people who shared my friend's sentiments about me and my talents. I started thinking about all of the clients I had worked for in the past year and all

of the students that attended my [classes and workshops](#). I quickly recognized that there are a lot of people who feel the same way my friend does about me, and that I had good reasons to stop ruminating on the reasons for the losses in my life.

I became motivated to think of ways to replace what was taken from me, and I made some decisions. I'm going to reboot one of my [radio shows](#) in early January, and I will start coaching people on how to bring their photography skills to the next level.

I'm reminded of a quote from [William Blake](#). He said, "Expect poison from standing water." Although I moved slowly, I kept moving forward with the hope that something would give. And it did. Now my thoughts of worry about the future have been turned into thoughts of excitement and discovery.

Sometimes the Universe takes things away from us in order to push us in the direction we need to go. Here's to breaking records in 2019.

A Photographer's Point of View: Same Tree, Different Day



With the holiday season in full swing, it's no surprise that it has me thinking about things I'm thankful for and reflecting on the past year's photography adventures and assignments. I am grateful to help people learn and create amazing experiences through my classes and workshops, and I am grateful to be able to capture people at their best, whether having fun at events like the Bear Run at Bear Creek Park or volunteering to feed the less fortunate on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

One of the things I'm most thankful for is the continued opportunity to inspire others by sharing what I learned while photographing a tree behind my home every day for a year. I call this project "Same Tree, Different Day." On a January day in 2015, the idea for this project came to me out of the blue, and I'm glad I was open to receiving and acting upon it. What started out as an exercise in creativity turned into an experience that taught me valuable lessons in mindfulness, achieving goals and managing mental health.

I am posting the photos daily on my [Instagram account](#), and the photo I am sharing with this article was taken on November 24, 2015. I regularly lecture about this project, and I use this image to make a point about mindfulness. The space that I captured in every picture measures approximately 50 feet wide and 33 feet high. If you consider how small of an area that is on our planet, it is amazing to look at all of the photographs

in the collection and realize that many of us miss the wonderful things that are happening around us because we're not paying attention. I wonder how many people who went shopping on Black Friday for the best bargains were living mindfully.

When I give my lectures, one of the questions I get asked is if I am working on another project. I can now say that the answer is yes, but I am saving that announcement for another time. My most common response is that this project is not finished. Although I'm finished taking pictures of the tree, I'm far from done when it comes to sharing what I learned. My current goals are to complete a DVD that will contain a slideshow and a documentary, and become a speaker at the 2019 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) convention.

So the next time someone steals your parking spot at the mall or grabs the last of what you were looking for off the shelf, take a look at this photo and remind yourself that there are beautiful things happening around you every day. Pay attention to those things, and you will be rewarded.

If you'd like to learn more about Same Tree, Different Day, please visit <https://sametreedifferentday.wordpress.com>

A Photographer's Point of View: The Wise Spider

As I write in the dark on this cold Halloween night and think about the things going on in my life, it's clear that this photo is fitting in more than one way. Yes, spider webs are connected to Halloween, but what's not immediately obvious is

how the story behind this spider web is a useful metaphor for our lives.



Photographers see differently than most people. We can find fascination in the mundane or beauty in things that others find creepy or spooky. A friend once told me that it must be great to see the world the way I do as she looked at some of my photographs.

Many of you would probably freak out at the site of a spider web. Most of you would probably kill the spider that made it. Some of you might walk right into one without ever seeing it. This web appeared just outside my patio door, and I was amazed by its beauty as soon as I saw it even though it was blocking me from getting into my yard. My first thought was that I needed to photograph it, but because of my busy schedule, I didn't take the time to do so. It was there for three weeks, and during that time, I kept telling myself I had to get some pictures of it before it was gone.

At one point, I noticed that a hole had formed in it about the size of a golf ball. I was disappointed because I thought it was ruined and that I had missed a great photo opportunity. Much to my surprise, within a couple of days, the spider repaired the hole, and the web was as good as new. Does that

remind you of anyone? How many times have you had a hole blown in you by someone you knew or because of an injury or unpleasant experience? Did you think you were ruined or did you fix the hole?

This second chance motivated me to take some photos of the spider web, but I really needed to get into my yard. After taking some pictures, I destroyed it with a broom handle and felt awful about obliterating such a fine piece of artwork and craftsmanship. About a week later, there was a new web in the same place. This is a resilient spider, and a very wise one at that.

A week ago, someone suddenly took away something very important from me that I built from scratch. I was crushed. I hope that I can take a lesson from this spider and rebuild what I have lost.

A Photographer's Point of View: A Moonlit Night in the San Juan Mountains

Here's a beautiful photo for your viewing pleasure.

A Moonlit Night in the San Juan Mountains



Photo by Mike Pach, 3 Peaks Photography