



From that point forward I changed my path to focus on creating meaningful, authentic images with artistic intent.

In 2015 I started a personal photography project called [My Captured Life](#) in which I blogged daily images of my life with the aim of capturing the beauty and art in the everyday. I now describe most of my work as 'storytelling photography'.

## *What is storytelling photography and why shoot it?*

People have been telling stories for thousands of years – transmitting information from one person to the next. Storytelling is not a new concept for humankind and has been crucial in shaping society and culture. One need only look to ancient Aboriginal rock paintings to see some of the first examples of visual storytelling. In the modern age, photography is the most powerful medium we can use to recall an event or convey a feeling.

Storytelling photography is literally telling stories through photographs. To me, storytelling photography can be represented on a continuum. Sometimes it is 100% photojournalistic in nature (usually referred to as documentary photography) and at other times it may be subtly directed or manipulated erring more towards what some might term lifestyle photography. Regardless of the direction behind the image, when I photograph my aim is to tell a story that makes you feel something while capturing the character and spirit of the subject. Each step I take away from the poses and the fake smiles makes my heart feel more whole.

How many times have you heard the old adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words?" I hear a lot of people applying this saying to storytelling photography. But not all storytelling photographs have to tell complex stories. The term 'story' can be a bit misleading - the image doesn't need to convey an intricately detailed novel. In fact the story can be something as simple as an emotion or mood through to a complex commentary of events.

The key question to ask yourself when reviewing an image is *'Does this photograph communicate something meaningful to the viewer?'.* A good storytelling image will captivate the viewer by speaking to their hearts and minds. It should inspire them and stir their creative juices.

*So if storytelling photography is just telling stories through images it must be simple, right?* Being a technically proficient photographer does not necessarily make you a great visual storyteller. While we often associate documentary photography with spontaneity, the best visual storytellers are intentional. That is the moment may be spontaneous yet it is captured in a calculated manner.

What sets a good storytelling image apart from a snapshot? On several occasions I have heard photographers dismiss documentary photographs as merely 'snapshots'. But a good storytelling image is not a snapshot - it is a powerful work of art. It is an image that speaks to our senses and provokes emotion. It uses the elements of photography such as light and composition to amplify a moment.

My goal for this workshop is to get you thinking about the purposeful decisions you can make to capture authentic, spontaneous moments and show you creative techniques to transform those snapshots into great storytelling images that engage the viewer and stimulate their heart and mind.





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