



AVOID THE MIDDLE



When you are new at photography - just starting out - it is tempting to put whatever your shooting right in the centre of your frame.

By putting your subject directly in the centre you produce an image that is static, unnatural, pre-arranged and sometimes hum boring.

While some of those characteristics can be a positive in any particular image, we tend to be more attracted to dynamic images in general.

If the subject should be right in the centre, where should it be? Many photography teachers will roll out the “rule of thirds” at this point. I am not one of those teachers and I think the rule of thirds can be useful but overall an overrated approach. The rule of thirds suggests putting a subject one-third of the way from one edge of an image.

Classical photographers suggests using the golden ratio, which would have you place your subject 38% of the way from one edge to another. I say that’s far too much math. Ignore the numbers! Remember when you were a kid learning to ride a bicycle and your bike had training wheels? Well, the rule of thirds is your training wheel.

Instead, move your subject away from the centre of the frame and get a feel for how it



can be balanced with everything else in the scene, including areas of contrasting color or light. As you practice this, you will quickly notice your images will be far more dynamic and the subjects in your photos will be emphasized.

There are no hard and fast rules about achieving this kind of visual balance, but you’ll quickly learn to rely on your instincts. Simply trust when you know when something looks right. Look with your eyes

through the viewfinder. Take some time to look and see what feels right. Your intuition, once you’ve been capturing images for a while, will be a much better guide to composition than any rule of thirds equation will be. I promise you this.

In the next pages we will look at some examples of photos with the subject directly in the middle and photos with the subjects not centre for a better understanding.

# NOTES

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