Unleash Your Creativity with Mindful Photography

Mindfulness is about more than just sitting down to meditate. The wonderful thing about mindfulness is that it can be used to enrich all aspects of life, including our hobbies and creative pursuits. With smartphones and compact digital camera's now being common place, it's never been easier to get into photography. By adding some mindfulness into the process, we can not only start taking more interesting pictures, but can also start to see the world around us from a fresh perspective.

Be Present with What You See

In our daily routines, we may spend little time really noticing what's around us. When we're walking, we tend to have a destination in mind (work, the bus stop, a shop, etc.), rather than contemplating the many sights along the way. However, by setting aside some time to go out and take photographs, we can give ourselves an opportunity to be more present with our surroundings. By not having anywhere that we have to get to, we become free to explore our world.

Before we start taking photos, we first need to look around and seek out interesting things. Many of us don't do this often, so we may be pleasantly surprised by what we find! It could be some unusual architecture, a street view, the sky, a tree, or something more abstract like the play between light and shadow on a pavement. We can experiment with different angles, discovering how common sights look from new perspectives. Trying to look at something as if we've never seen it before can help us to truly see it, rather than seeing our pre-conceived idea of it.

Things To Look Out For:

Colour – This could be single blocks of colour or contrasting shades. They could be beautiful hues that remind us of some happy memory, or colours that make us wonder what people were thinking! Notice how different colours affect your mood. What thoughts arise as you look at them? Can you get across some of those emotions through your photography?

Texture – In a city or town you're bound to find some interesting textures on buildings or concrete. Chipped paint, cracks in a pavement or even a pile of litter could make a great

photograph if captured at the right angle. Nature can offer other types of textures, such as the bark of weather-beaten tree, a feather or lush green mosh on a stone. Get up close! Notice every little detail.

Shape – Traffic signs, curbs, fencing, and corners of structures can all create fascinating shapes for us to photograph. Try looking down from a window or balcony to discover shapes that we can't see from the ground, or kneel down and look up for another fresh perspective.

Movement – Movement will be trickier to capture, but is worth experimenting with. A bird mid-flight, a twirling dancer, a flowing waterfall or your best friend laughing. Look for the life around you, and capture those precious, fleeting moments to remember forever.

Let Yourself Play

Taking a mindful photography trip can also be a good opportunity to notice how we may limit ourselves when it comes to being creative. We may find that we hesitate about being too experimental, or notice that we have some thoughts about only wanting to take 'good' pictures. These things can block our natural curiosity and creativity from flowing freely, but when we notice them we can start to consciously let them go.

Digital cameras make it super easy to take lots of photographs, so if we later don't think they're good enough to keep, we can just delete them. But whilst we're out and about we can feel free to try out new things, and just take photographs of anything and everything that grabs our attention. Whether we show them to anyone else is entirely up to us. Mindful photography isn't about being good at it or not, it's all about the process of seeing, exploring and experimenting.

Happy snapping!