

OVERCOMING FEAR AS A PHOTOGRAPHER

Quick Guide
Written by Karthika Gupta



Before you dive into this guide, here's a few other free resources to help you learn photography:



What is Your #1 Photography Killer?

Take this 30 second quiz to find out the #1 thing holding your photography back.

[Take Quiz →](#)



3 Free Photography Cheat Sheets

Grab 3 free photography cheat sheets that will help you understand the basics.

[Download Cheat Sheets →](#)



Free Photography eBooks

Free access to our library of 250+ downloadable (pdf) tutorials on everything you can imagine.

[Download eBooks →](#)



Want quick photography tips?

Check out our friends at DailyPhotoTips.com they'll send you 1 solid photography tip to your inbox, 5 days a week. So you can start your day right, with actionable tips to help you on your creative journey. [Subscribe now →](#) (free for a limited time)

This year marks my tenth year as a photographer. It's a career I had no idea I would come to love and appreciate, and one that would take me around the world, get my work published in international magazines and blogs, and allow me to dabble with teaching. What started out as a hobby soon became a way to escape a corporate career and experiment with entrepreneurship.

For the first four years I was a closet photographer – basically someone who worked in photography part time and refused to call myself a photographer because of fear of discovery. I feared that paying clients would discover that I was a self-taught, camera-wheeling fraud who shot in auto mode, and who rented and borrowed gear while learning everything there was to learn about an art form I knew nothing about.

But as the months and years progressed, I found myself letting go of so many of my fears as an artist, a creative, and even as a person. My fear of not being good enough, not being worthy enough, and even not being deserving enough soon gave way to feeling accomplished and deserving. I realized that photography was helping me become a better person because I was developing as an artist and becoming confident enough in myself and my skill to call myself a professional photographer. And now as I end my tenth year in business, I realize that all through this journey, photography has been the one constant. It's helped me get through the difficult times as well as celebrate the good times, in my life and my business.

Today I want to talk about how you can totally transform your life, your relationships, and your work via photography. It isn't a course you can take or a YouTube video you can watch. It's something that's free, powerful, and completely within your control: changing your mindset and overcoming your fears.

Here is what we will discuss:

- The fear of not being good enough
- The fear of never being able to 'make it'
- The fear of being alone on the journey
- How to battle negativity and stay positive
- The fear of never getting any clients

Thinking differently can have a profound effect on your entire life, but in this guide we'll focus on some photography mindset shifts you would need to overcome your fears.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to expand your shooting skills and master photography? Grab our set of 65 beautifully designed and printable Action Cards that will give you over 200 photography assignments to help you take your photography to the next level. [Check it out here.](#)



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

FEAR #1 – NOT BEING GOOD ENOUGH

In any field of work, the only way to produce great work is to actually do the work. There truly is no such thing as overnight success. We might look at someone who seems to have achieved a lot (which is really subjective, by the way) and think that they have it easy. But we don't see the true reason for that success. We don't see the late nights, the hustle, the constant planning and execution, the anxiety over money, the failures, the challenges, and the struggles. We don't see them because they are generally not talked about openly.

So, before you question if you are good enough, go ahead and consistently do the work. Get out there and photograph even when you don't want to. Photograph in different lighting situations to understand light. Work with different subjects so you know how to interact and communicate to get the look you want. I spent many years doing a 365 project. This is basically a project where




Photograph by Karthika Gupta

you photograph at least one image every day. Somedays it was just a photograph of my breakfast, but having that discipline of thinking about photography every day gave me a reason to pick up my camera and take an image. As I watched the days and months go by, I started gaining more confidence in my ability not only as a photographer but also as a creative entrepreneur, and it helped me overcome my fear of not being good enough.

A model roll call led to an incredible shoot that helped me not only add beautiful photos to my portfolio but also helped me understand the importance of culture and diversity in the photography space.

Reach out and connect with other creatives and work together. As a photographer, I love speaking with other photographers and photography enthusiasts about the art of photography. It is something I truly enjoy. I love sharing things that work for me and things that I have struggled with in the hope that it would help someone else who might be struggling. The more I started to do this, the more I realized that feeling I was not good enough was holding me back.

 **Key Lesson:** Always remember that art is very subjective and not everyone thinks a certain way, especially in photography. Yes, there are rules, but rules can also be broken. Learn to appreciate the artistic side and not the technical side.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

FEAR #2 – NEVER BEING ABLE TO MAKE IT

If 10 years has truly taught me something it is this: overnight success is truly a myth. You must be prepared to invest a lot of time and effort to get your work seen and acknowledged. It's highly unlikely that you'll be an overnight success with lots of clients and potential work lining up. I'm not saying it's impossible, but the probability is quite low. So instead of leaving your career to chance, why not take matters into your own hands and have a plan to do the work consistently? Learn all there is to learn about what you want to focus on in your photography and consistently put out good work.

Practice does make perfect. There really are no two ways about this. The best way to get better at something is to do it over and over again. The more you get out there and photograph, the more you'll understand what you like, what makes you happy, and what areas you need to improve in. Want to understand light and how it affects photos? Go out and photograph in different kinds of light. Want to photograph people? Set up shoots and practice photographing people. The more you do, the more you create and the better you become.




Photograph by Karthika Gupta


In my opinion, the sweet spot in photography is not just making the money but deriving creative satisfaction from your work and your art.

It's taken me several years and thousands of photos to train my brain to recognize light and create a story before I even click the shutter. This is one of my favorite photos that I call 'Light and shadow: Ride and rider.' To me, it shows the symbiosis between these two pairs. Practice also makes you more confident. Now, when I see a story play out, I'm not afraid to ask my clients or strangers to be actors in the story.

Playing with film photography has been an incredible way to really slow down and connect the dots between the technical and the creative for my personal photography growth.

One of my goals is to better learn film photography. I have an old 35mm Canon AE-1, and I have run several rolls of film to try and get images that I love. The first time I used that camera, I didn't even wind the film correctly, so I ended up sending a blank roll of film to be processed. That was \$20 well spent, right?

 **Key Lesson:** Be comfortable with your style of photography but also experiment with trends and styles. This will help you perfect your art and, who knows, you might also find some tips and tricks that help you.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to expand your shooting skills and master photography? Grab our set of 65 beautifully designed and printable Action Cards that will give you over 200 photography assignments to help you take your photography to the next level. [Check it out here.](#)



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

FEAR #3 - BEING ALONE ON THIS JOURNEY


Photography in itself is quite a solitary activity. Depending on how you feel, that might be a good thing or a bad thing. I am very much an introvert by nature, so, for me, photography gave me a chance to be by myself and get lost in my own thoughts and emotions while walking around and photographing things. But I quickly found that I was very miserable when I would do that over and over again. I felt isolated. I felt alone and I felt neglected. So instead of viewing photography as a solitary activity, I set out to make friends in the industry. And by friends, I really mean friends who were photographers or interested in photography. I stopped viewing other photographers as competition and instead started viewing them as peers, friends, and fellow creatives.

In any given industry there's always competition. Sometimes the competition plays fair, and sometimes it doesn't. I'm not pointing fingers at anyone or anything. I'm just stating the obvious.

Most people who pick up a camera and intend on becoming a photographer do it for the money, the fame, or some combination of the two. Learn to play well with your competition. What sets you apart isn't your skill or technique. Anyone can learn to do something if they put their mind and effort into it. What sets you apart is *you* – your style, your aesthetic, and the way you view something is unique. There will be clients who love what you do because of the way you do it, and there will be those who'd rather go with the other guy. That's just part of the game. Accept it and make friends with your competitors. It's better to have friends in the industry you're playing in than enemies.

Double exposure, as seen on the previous page, is a lot of fun and brings so much more to an otherwise 'safe' shot.

I'd heard of double exposure before, but I never understood it until a friend and fellow photographer sat down with me and explained it step by step. Now it's one of my favorite ways of creative photography, and my clients love it. Without befriending another photographer, I might never have learned this new technique.

 **Key Lesson:** Think of other photographers as friends and not competitors. Friends make any journey more fun and interesting, and that goes for photography as well.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta


FEAR #4 – NEGATIVITY VERSUS POSITIVITY

One of the biggest lessons life teaches us is that our journey is a reflection of our attitude. Without even noticing, it's easy to become negative and bitter towards the world and, specifically, the photography industry. Why are some people more successful than us? Why do some photographers get all the jobs? Why can't I book more clients? The questions can go on forever.

Not only does a negative attitude stop you from enjoying your life, but it can also have a significant impact on your work and your craft. After all, you love this art form. That's why you're here, right? You want to learn, engage, and get better at it. The energy a person brings with them is contagious. We all have bad days, no matter how people portray themselves. Every time I feel angry or jealous of someone else's success, I remind myself that just because I can see what they've accomplished doesn't mean I know what they've gone through and sacrificed to get there.

One of the most practical ways of switching your mindset from negative to positive in your photography is to ask for genuine feedback. Oftentimes, we tend to see our work as less rather than as sufficient. However, by asking for feedback, we can see our work as others see it. Feedback can be formal by entering contests or informal by asking our clients for comments on their experience. Regardless, feedback is a great way to learn what you are good at and what you can improve on.

And remember, one of the best things you can do for your passion for photography is to have a positive attitude.

 **Key Lesson:** Always, always believe in yourself. Talking badly or negatively about yourself will lead you down a path of self-destruction. Don't give up. Instead, find creative ways to make it.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta


FEAR #5 – NOT GETTING CLIENTS


You can have the best portfolio, the best website, and the perfect studio space, but it all means nothing if you are not getting a steady stream of inquiries and clients.

And the only way to really get clients and bookings is to actively go seek them out. One way to seek new clients is to put yourself out there as a photographer/creative artist. Network with people from different industries, pitch your work to your ideal clients, and market your work effectively and the inquiries will come. Sure, this will take time, but if you are in this industry for the long game then take the time to make a mark with your work.

Showcase the kind of work you want to photograph and do it consistently. This helps you develop a style, create a brand, and in turn attract the kind of work you want to produce.

I wish someone told me this when I first started my business. I was caught up in perfection – the perfect logo, the perfect website, the perfect portfolio, a printing vendor, business cards, etc. I spent so much time making sure all my ducks were in a row that I stalled the process more than I helped it along. I was not putting myself out there using what I already had versus waiting to have it all and then showcasing my work.

 **Key Lesson:** Perfection is a myth. Take baby steps and move forward towards your goal and keep a working list of things you want to achieve. If you wait until you feel you are ready, you will be waiting a long time.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to expand your shooting skills and master photography? Grab our set of 65 beautifully designed and printable Action Cards that will give you over 200 photography assignments to help you take your photography to the next level. [Check it out here.](#)



Photograph by Karthika Gupta



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

CONCLUSION

Sometimes it's good to take a step back, figure out what the big picture is, and then keep moving along to achieving it. Just keep moving along towards your goal by taking a step forward every day and things always work out exactly how they are meant to in the end.

I hope these tips were helpful and shed light on some of the commonly expressed fears that we, including myself, regularly experience.

Please remember that you are not on an island without any help nor are you the only one going through all these emotions and feelings of anxiety around your work. We all face these same issues time and time again. The key is to objectively work through them and come out stronger. If you are truly passionate about photography and want to make it a career, keep up the hard work and the fruits of your labor are bound to be as sweet as can be.

Self-Check Quiz:

- 1) What is a 365 project?
- 2) Are other photographers your competitors or your friends, and what benefit can you get by making friends in the industry?
- 3) Why should you experiment with different editing styles, and how will that help you perfect your craft?
- 4) Self-critique your own photos, but challenge yourself to note more positive feedback than negative.
- 5) Can you list two to three industries to network in that work well with your genre of photography?



Hey there!

Let's get real for a minute... Learning photography can be super challenging! But we're here to help you every step of the way! Here are 3 of our most useful (*and FREE!*) photography resources:



3 Free Photography Cheat Sheets

Grab 3 free photography cheat sheets that will help you understand the basics.

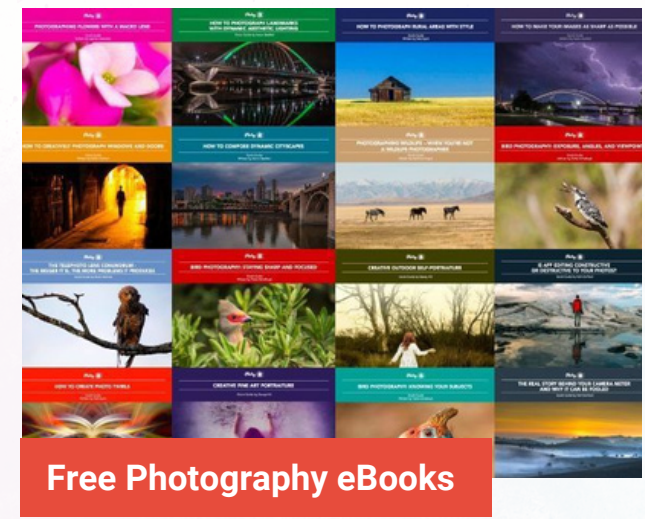
[Download Cheat Sheets →](#)



What is Your #1 Photography Killer?

Take this 30 second quiz to find out the #1 thing holding your photography back.

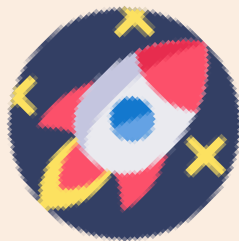
[Take Quiz →](#)



Free Photography eBooks

Free access to our library of 250+ downloadable (pdf) tutorials on everything you can imagine.

[Download eBooks →](#)



Want quick photography tips?

Check out our friends at DailyPhotoTips.com they'll send you 1. solid photography tip to your inbox, 5 days a week. So you can start your day right, with actionable tips to help you on your creative journey. [Subscribe now →](#) (free for a limited time)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Karthika Gupta is a wedding, lifestyle, portrait, and editorial photographer based in Chicago. Her style of photography is fun, fresh, and organic. She strives to capture authentic emotions and interactions among her clients and emotive imagery in her commercial work.

She loves connecting with other creatives and photographers and is always ready for an engaging conversation about photography and the art of storytelling.

She can be found online at www.karthikagupta.com and on social media at:

Instagram: www.instagram.com/karthikagupta

Facebook: www.facebook.com/memorablejaunts

Twitter: www.twitter.com/karthikagupta

Congratulations! You've completed this Photzy guide!

If you liked this photography tutorial, check out our set of 65 beautifully designed and printable project sheets that will give you over 200 photography assignments to help you take your photography to the next level: [Action Cards](#).



**IF YOU'D LIKE TO CONTINUE
LEARNING AND IMPROVING
YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY PLEASE
VISIT PHOTZY.COM**
