

Previsualizing and Planning

I FIRST LEARNED the term *previsualizing* from studying the writings of Ansel Adams, and it has certainly paid off over the years. Adams used the term to describe the act of allowing yourself to imagine, ahead of time, what kind of photograph you are most interested in capturing. Instead of simply responding to events or scenes as they present themselves, the idea is to think ahead about what visual goals most inspire you.

This previsualizing challenges you to anticipate what could happen and how you might control your camera to create new, unique, and satisfying images. Even though something different might (and probably will) happen, and you could likely end up with a completely different photo than you had envisioned, this process opens up hidden wellsprings of inspiration. By simply putting thought into what you would like to capture, you make it that much easier to achieve your photographic goals.

This creative visualization is both fun and rewarding. Allow yourself to get playful and excited, thinking “outside of the box.” Sit down and brainstorm about potential photographic subjects, as well as about how to capture these subjects in unique and attention-grabbing ways. And, trust that you will be provided with everything you need to achieve your photographic goals. All you have to do to realize those goals is to sit down and define them.

As soon as you have a rough idea of what you would like to photograph, go somewhere. Simply head out the door for a day trip, or take a long trip. Either way, get out to a new and exciting place. The idea here is to go places in order to find subjects that inspire you to photograph. You may not need to go far. In some cases, taking your kids to the park will be all you need to get the creative juices flowing. At other times, in order to feel totally inspired and stimulated, you’ll need to go somewhere you’ve never gone before.



Don't hesitate to help a photo along if it needs a little something extra. No one's going to judge you if you take proactive steps to get exactly what you want. For this photo, I put a yellow rain slicker (that we had been carrying with us throughout England) on my son, gave him a tourist brochure, and asked him to "mail it." As he tried, I quickly backed up and shot several images using a fairly wide-angle setting on my lens. I placed him in the lower right of the composition to get as much of the charming Cotswold neighborhood in the background as I could.

1/250 SEC. AT f/8, ISO 100,
16-35MM LENS AT 16MM