

When I look through the viewfinder of my well-used Pentax camera, I feel like a student learning from the wise teachings of Mother Nature herself. The lens becomes a portal transporting me into her vibrant classrooms - lush forests, towering mountains, and serene cosmic spectacles.

On a recent expedition to photograph the Milky Way, I trekked miles down an unmarked trail carrying pounds of equipment. As the inky night enveloped me, my senses heightened to the nocturnal symphony of scurrying critters and the crisp fragrance of pine needles. Finally reaching the clearing, I marveled at the glittering celestial tapestry stretching endlessly overhead. For hours I waited, adjusting settings until the precise moment to capture the spinning galaxy's iridescent wisps before they smeared into oblivion.

Other times, I've followed the light's golden path into morning meadows, lying in stillness as hummingbirds and butterflies flitted around me without fear. Once, I even witnessed an intimate encounter between a coyote and her newborn pups tumbling playfully through lupine bushes. My presence disappeared into the landscape as I became an unobtrusive observer of the natural cycles unfolding.

Through the camera's tunnel vision, the chaos of the modern world existing outside the viewfinder melts away. An almost meditative state emerges as I enter a symbiotic flow with my surroundings, becoming intimately attuned to the nuances of my subject - feather textures ruffling in the breeze, sunbeams refracting through translucent wings, ombré skies morphing with each passing cirrus wisp.

This patience to simply watch and wait for the perfect shot has seeped into other areas of my life too. I've gained deeper mindfulness to live in each present moment rather than rushing ahead. Frustrating obstacles become soft challenges motivating me, like adjusting lens stops, to find creative solutions that reveal hidden beauty in unexpected places.

More than just chasing pretty pictures, photography has granted me an appreciation for nature's raw artistry and wisdom. Every image's frozen stillness communicates the

complex environmental balances and eternal life cycles sustaining our world. With my camera, I feel like an eternal student of Mother Nature's systems of perpetual motion, interconnectivity, and renewal - always unfolding new spectacles to admire and lessons to absorb.