

beryl ayn young



# *illuminate*

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*course syllabus*

*Why this  
e-course  
exists*

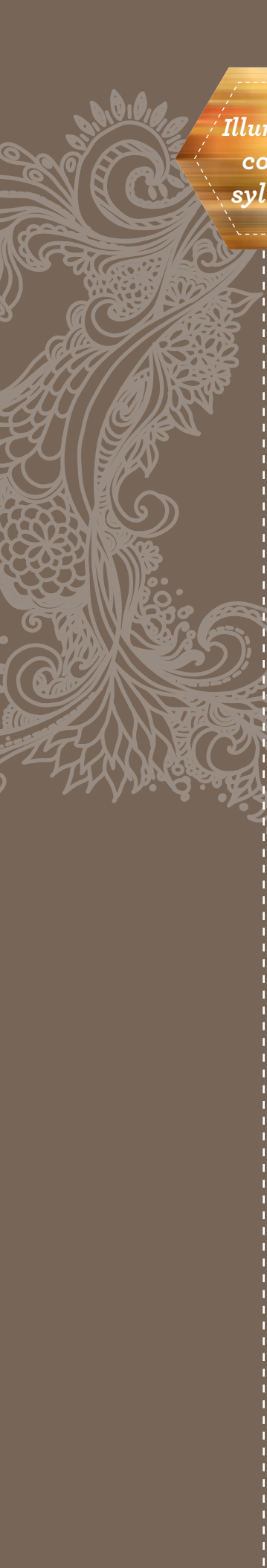
*The Illuminate e-course comes  
directly out of the lessons  
I learned on my own healing  
journey after loss.*

It comes out of my desire to provide a creative experience for others to reconnect with the world around them after the loss of loved one. And it comes from my own love of the art of photography.



*On my own journey I realized that many of the  
key components to taking quality photos can be  
tied directly to our processing of grief.*

I hope that this journey will be one part art therapy, one part learning, one part compassionate support, and one part personal diary.



*Illuminate*  
course  
syllabus

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**ILLUMINATE AT A GLANCE**

*Week One:*

- **theme**—storytelling
- **journal topic**—a letter to my loved one
- **photography exercise**—self-portraiture

*Week Two:*

- **theme**—light
- **journal topic**—finding your light
- **photography exercise**—one of two exercises: quotes, or experiment with light

*Week Three:*

- **theme**—perspective
- **journal topic**—I am grateful
- **photography exercise**—100 steps project

*Week Four:*

- **theme**—inspiration
- **journal topic**—one year from today
- **photography exercise**—letter hunt

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**FIRST AND FOREMOST...**

To complete our class assignments you are going to want a journal nearby. I like the site [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) for setting up a free blog for digital journaling.

Wordpress does a phenomenal job at displaying photos beautifully which is why they are my blog platform of choice. If you desire, you can even make your blog password protected so that you can keep your posts private if you wish.

With a private blog, you are free to remain uncensored, you can keep your emotions and photos safe, and the only people who will see your posts are the people with whom you share the blog link and password.

You also have the option to choose a blog theme that fits your mood and gives it a more personalized

look and feel.

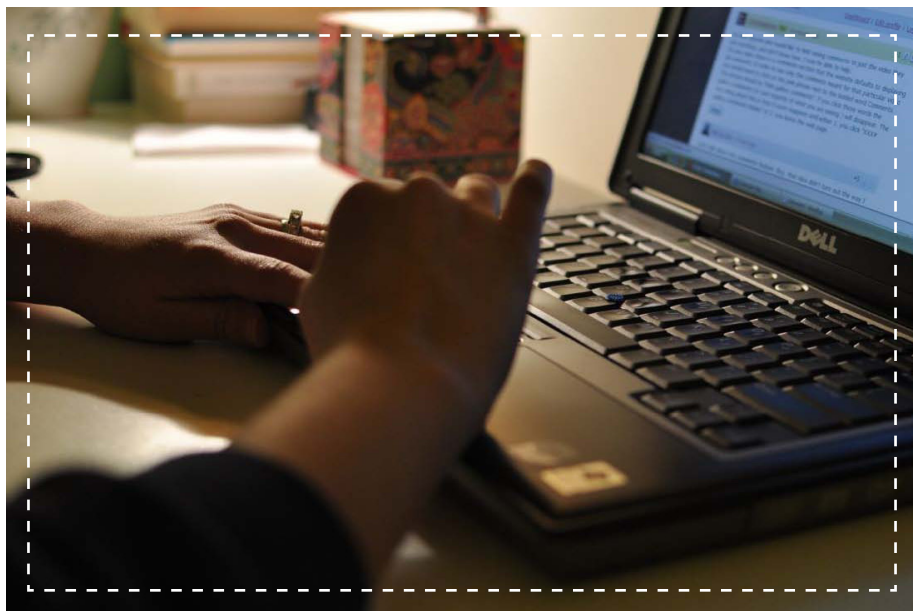
**WHY BLOGGING?**

I prefer blogging as the best vehicle for posting the assignments each week because of the ease in keeping both written and photographic content in one place and the ability to keep a sense of privacy if desired.

**WHEN AND WHERE CAN I FIND MY ASSIGNMENTS?**

Assignments will be emailed to you weekly. You'll be taken to a web link that will house the PDF assignment guide.

*Illuminate  
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syllabus*



#### EXTRA CREDIT

An Extra Credit section has been set up for you where there are additional daily journaling inspirations.

As I've progressed through my own healing journey I've been inspired by the process of daily journaling. I personally set a timer for 10 minutes per day and write whatever comes to my mind. I try to journal at the same time of day every day.

I keep my journal in a private blog, but you may prefer to keep yours on pen and paper. Just choose the best method for you and write. If you don't know what to write, just simply say "I don't know what to write" over and over until something new comes to you.

In this daily journal we aren't looking for award winning content, we aren't looking for correct spelling, or punctuation. It's all about processing the "junk" going through your head.


Get rid of the negative emotions that so easily come creeping in after loss.

*This journal gives those thoughts a place to go and allows you to clear your mind.*

This daily journal should be for your eyes only. You are more likely to be completely candid with yourself if you know it will not be shared.

Starting a daily journal was a daunting task for me, and it may be the same for you. I was afraid of the truths I would share and I was afraid I would run out of things to say or forget to write every day.

I am hoping to keep you journaling during the duration of our e-course by providing you with a list of prompts. I am trying to make the task of daily journaling a little less scary by providing these prompts to you.



*Illuminate  
course  
syllabus*

Print out the Journaling Inspiration page, cut up each prompt into strips, throw them in a fish bowl, and randomly pick one each day. Let the brain dump free the junk, clear your mind, and see where the journaling takes you.

### **SHARING YOUR WORK**

If you are looking for a way to share your Illuminate journey in a bigger way I encourage you to share your blog posts with me once they're complete. You can ALWAYS email them to me at [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram profile [@creating.courage](https://www.instagram.com/creating.courage) and share them with me there.

If you're feeling even braver, why not share them on your own personal social media sites with the hashtag #illuminatephotohealing.

I'm thankful you've chosen to bring me on this healing journey with you and I hope you find the Illuminate course to be a creative way to honor your loss and find your way in the world again.

xoxo

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# illuminate

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*journal inspiration*

inspiration

USE THE PROMPTS BELOW TO HELP INSPIRE YOUR DAILY WRITING.

This daily journal should be kept private, honest, and candid.

Don't do these prompts in order. Print them out. Cut them up. Throw them in a jar. Pick one per day.

Set a timer for 10 minutes and write whatever comes to your mind. Let the brain dump free the junk, clear your mind, and see where the journaling process takes you.

What brings you the most joy in life?

What is something that really bugs you?

What is something that makes you really angry?

What is your favorite time of day?

What is your most indispensable possession?

What is something you do well?

What is something you dislike about yourself?

What is the best advice you ever received?

Describe the perfect vacation.

What do you think about when you can't fall asleep?

What do you think makes a good friend?

What do you think makes a happy family?

What things do you think are beautiful?

What do you think your friends say to each other when you're not around?

What do you like most about yourself?

What do you like to do in your free time?

What makes your feel safe?

What makes you laugh?

What would you invent to make life better?

What talents do you have?

How do you feel on a warm sunny day?

How do you feel during a thunderstorm?

I wish I could see... because...

I wish I never... because...



*inspiration*

I wish I could go to...  
because...

I wish I could give...  
because...

I wish I could learn...  
because...

When are you  
happiest?

When do you  
feel proud?

What quality do you  
like best about yourself?

What makes your best friend  
your best friend?

What is something you  
are pessimistic about?

What is something you  
are optimistic about?

Describe your favorite room in your  
home. Why is this your favorite?

Describe something that  
makes you feel peaceful.

What is your favorite color?  
Why?



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# illuminate

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*preview week: color your world*

*“The soul  
becomes dyed with  
the color of  
its thoughts.”*

Marcus  
Aurelius

*I will never forget the silence  
in the room as Bella was born  
sleeping at 20 weeks.*

She arrived in a dimly lit room at 6 in the morning. My mind was incredibly fuzzy from the all the pain meds pumping through my IV, but one thing was perfectly clear. It felt as if in that moment everyone was holding their breath and wishing to be anywhere else but in that room. And I think anyone in that room in that moment would also agree that the dim lights and heavy hearts of everyone there drained all color from that space, and all we could see were black and white and shades of gray.

**Once Bella was gone, those shades of gray remained for a very, very long time.**

For someone like me who typically views the world as “glass half full” and as a “rainbow of color,” losing Bella was like taking a trip to a foreign country where I didn’t have a map and didn’t speak the language.

In situations like this, non-verbal communication is imperative to survival. As I journeyed down the lonely road of baby loss and realized that friends and family were unwilling to listen to my stories of our beautiful Bella, or just simply didn’t understand the pain and the hurt I was going through, it became my mission to help them understand by using my camera to express the pain and hurt of this new world.

Processing my photos in black and white after her loss usually felt “right” and was what I did. When your baby



dies, the world just doesn’t feel colorful anymore.

**I needed people to understand that.**

And my images were a powerful reminder to those that viewed them that even though I may appear bright and cheery

## color your world

and “normal” on the outside, there was still a road of hurt I was traveling.

But, eventually there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon that brings some color back to a gray world and it’s our job to do a little work to find our color and take a little time to embrace it.

**This week I want you to give color a chance and try it back on for size.**

But before you go out and begin shooting, let’s pick just one color to focus on this week.

When we’ve become so accustomed to seeing our world in shades of gray we can’t just expect to be able to flip a switch a re-discover our world as a rainbow.



So, this week we’re going to pick one color and stick with it. Use the color chart on the next page to help pick the hue you’re most drawn to.

## *Your assignment*

Now I want you to sit down with a journal to write in, your favorite writing utensil, a beverage of choice (mine is a steamy frothy vanilla latte), and take some time to write about your color of choice. What made you choose the color you did? Why were you drawn to it? Does it remind you of your loved one in any way? Or does it represent an emotion you are currently feeling? What makes this color special and uniquely you? Don’t have a journal? You’ll get a notes area at the end of this week’s guide.



After your journal entry is complete you’ll be taking a photo walk. Seek out your color. Snap photos of objects or scenery you find that contain that color. Your goal is to come away from your photo walk with 5-7 images of your color. Images you’d be proud to print and display on a wall in your home. Or images you’d love to use in the header of your blog or social media profiles.

color  
your  
world

## colors and their meanings

red

joy, happiness, optimism, idealism,  
imagination, hope, sunshine, summer, gold,  
dishonesty, cowardice, betrayal, jealousy,  
covetousness, deceit, illness, hazard

excitement, energy, passion, desire,  
speed, strength, power, heat, love,  
aggression, danger, fire, blood, war,  
violence, aggression, intensity

orange

energy, balance, warmth, enthusiasm,  
vibrant, expansive, flamboyant,  
demanding of attention

peace, tranquility, calm, stability,  
harmony, unity, trust, truth, confidence,  
conservatism, security, cleanliness, order,  
loyalty, sky, water, cold, technology

green

nature, environment, healthy, good luck, renewal,  
youth, vigor, spring, generosity, fertility,  
jealousy, inexperience, envy, misfortune

romance, love, friendship, femininity, truth,  
passivity, goodwill, emotional  
healing, peace, calming, affection,  
caring, nurturing, delicate

purple

royalty, spirituality, mobility, ceremony,  
mysterious, transformation, wisdom,  
enlightenment, cruelty, arrogance

earth, hearth, home, outdoors,  
reliability, comfort, endurance,  
stability, simplicity, comfort

yellow

blue

pink

brown





color  
your  
world

## *extra credit*

The websites [www.pixlr.com](http://www.pixlr.com) or [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com) are great free tools you can use to display your images in a beautiful color collage. And I'd love you to create a collage and share it with me when you're done.

Let's paint a rainbow together and re-color our world.

I'd love to hear from you and have you share your blog posts with me at [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram page [@creating.courage](https://www.instagram.com/creating.courage) and share them with me there.

If you're feeling even braver, why not share them on your own personal social media pages with the hashtag #illuminatephotohealing.

xo

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# illuminate

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*week one: telling your story  
through self-portraiture*

*“One of the ways  
to reincarnate  
is to tell  
your story.”*

Spalding  
Gray

*Welcome to Week 1 of our  
Illuminate e-course. I know  
you must still be feeling a  
little anxious.*

This is a new experience, you have new concepts to learn, you'll be processing your hurt, and feeling emotion. It creates an uneasy feeling, I know.

Thank you for trusting me with your feelings and trusting yourself enough to try a new way to heal your heart.



For the next four weeks, we are going to be using loss as a way to fuel photographic creativity. You'll learn new techniques for taking pictures while also sharing your loss story and your emotions.

I imagine you are here because you are hurting still. You've just experienced the painful loss of someone you love.

***Loss is a part of life and even still it blindsides us every single time.***

No matter the age of your loved one, whether you knew them only a few short weeks or they've been a part of your entire life, the pain of losing your loved one feels unbearable. You feel like the universe has let you down. Like the plans and hopes and dreams

## telling your story

for your life have been ripped from you. And I bet you feel alone.

That's how I felt when we lost Bella, and I want the Illuminate community to break this barrier of loneliness.

Those of us who grieve share one thing in common, we all understand what this pain feels like.

**We know that our loss will always be there. It's now a part of us.**

And even though we may be able to bandage the pain and numb feelings over time, they will never, ever go away.

*I turned to my camera to start healing*

*from the pain of loss and found that thinking creatively and having something to "hide behind" allowed me to begin interacting with the world again.*

If we begin to share our stories visually, remember our loved ones, and create beauty from behind the lens of a camera, we might just start to feel safe and secure again in the world.

Each week during this e-course we are going to be focusing on one of the key photographic elements to help improve your photos. Some of the elements we discuss will be more creative and some will be more technical.

## questions to ask

*Think about the following when observing and creating images:*

- 1. WHEN WAS THE IMAGE TAKEN?** What was the time of day, what was the weather like? How do these elements tie into the story of the image?
- 2. WHO IS IN THE IMAGE?** Is there only one person? Or multiple people? What is the relationship between the people in the picture. Are the number of people or who is there important to telling the story?
- 3. WHERE WAS IT TAKEN?** Was the image taken indoors or outdoors? Are any props used in the location to help enhance the image? Is the location important to the story being told?
- 4. WHAT IS GOING ON?** What action or occasion is happening in the photo? Is it a special event? Or is the focus primarily on the people involved?
- 5. WHY WAS THE IMAGE TAKEN?** What is the purpose for this image? Every picture has a purpose, especially self portraiture. What emotion is felt from the expressions on the faces, the location, the time of day, and the colors and tones and camera techniques used to create image? Those things may be the key clues to identifying why a particular picture was taken.

## telling your story

You do not have to have a big fancy camera to participate in these exercises. Use your point and shoot compact camera, use your iphone, or use a big fancy dslr. *The choice is yours.*

This course is all about using what you have, being comfortable, and thinking creatively.



Have you ever looked at a photograph and wondered the story behind the image? Or seen a series of photos that perfectly tell the story of an event?

Do you ever find yourself asking:

- *What is the story behind this image?*
- *When was it taken?*
- *What time of day?*
- *What was the weather like?*
- *Who are the people?*
- *Are they friends? Lovers? Brother and sister?*

**Questioning an image in this way is a clue that it's a high quality story-telling image.**

What emotions do you feel as you look at the image above? What do you

think she is feeling as she stands over an empty crib? What is she thinking?

As photographers, we have the creative power to tell a story via the images we create.

To give you some insight into that image, it is January 23rd, 2010.

### ***Bella's due date.***

Her crib and the beginnings of her nursery still in tact.

**I was looking to memorialize the baby that we would never hold. Never bring home. And never share a life with.**

This was the end of a chapter for our family and this photo brought some closure as Bella's due date was passing.

## telling your story

What do you see in the image to the right? What do you feel? What emotions bubble up to the surface for you? Is this image full of vibrance and life? Or is it dark and dreary?

This photo was taken only one month after we lost Bella.

Our wounds were still fresh.

My husband and I took time off of work to visit friends in Florida. He and I were in much need of a retreat from the norm.

By this point in our loss journey we were both back to work, but completing daily tasks was still mentally exhausting. This trip allowed us time away to reconnect with one another, and find solace in the tranquility of the ocean.



*This sunset at the beach reminded us that even in the loneliness of our loss we still had each other.*

## Your weekly assignment

This week you will be telling your story. To get the ideas flowing for your imagery, begin your assignment by journaling. By journaling, we are able to open up the flood gates of creativity. Emotions surface and we are able to get some of the “junk” out of our brain and clear our head of some of our emotional baggage.

Our weekly journal topic for this week is “A Letter to My Loved One”. I want to hear your loss story via a letter to who has passed. This journal will be the perfect springboard for planning your self-portrait images.

The photo exercise this week will involve experimenting with self portraiture throughout the week. Grab a friend or loved one and ask them to push the shutter button for you. Balance your camera on a table, or get really adventurous and use a tripod. If you go this route most cameras have a timer feature where the shutter will go off after 10 or 20 seconds. Use a mirror.

Or simply turn the camera on yourself and shoot.

I’ve got some tips and guidelines to help you on the following pages.

telling  
your  
story



## *how to tell your story via self-portraiture*

*Think about the following as you plan your self portraits for the week:*

- 1. ENVIRONMENT** Where do you want to take your self portrait? Inside or outside? Or perhaps a special room in your home?
- 2. PROPS** Is there anything special you may want in the picture to help tell your story? Jewelry, accessories, furniture, or books?
- 3. CLOTHING** Do you want to look more formal and dressed up, or would a more relaxed look and feel be appropriate for your image?
- 4. EMOTIONS** What emotion do you want your viewer to feel when they look at your image? Happiness, sadness, uncertainty, contentment, etc.?
- 5. PROCESSING** What do you want your final product to look like? Does your image scream for color? Or would black and white be more fitting? Or would a more washed, faded, or vintage treatment go for the look you desire?

## week one assignment: self portrait

*This chart may help as you are planning for your self portrait exercise for the week.*

Take at least three to five different self portraits. Try varying your locations, poses or perspectives for your photos. Pick your favorites from your experimentation and post those to your blog along with your weekly journal and any other observations you'd like to share about the self portrait creation process.

*first*

### **JOURNAL...**

A Letter to my Love  
One is your journal  
topic for the week.

### **REVIEW...**

Your journal and start  
gathering ideas for  
your photo exercise.

*next*

### **PLAN...**

Decide on how you  
want to set up your  
shot(s): location,  
time of day, props

### **PREPARE...**

Get your shot(s) ready.  
Figure out if you  
plan to use a tripod  
or want a friend to  
assist in pushing  
the shutter.

*last*

### **SHOOT...**

Go capture what  
you've worked so hard  
to plan and prepare!

### **REVIEW...**

Take your photos  
from camera to  
computer. Choose  
your favorites  
from the week.

### **PROCESS...**

Decide if your pictures  
need additional editing  
work. Post to your blog  
along with the letter  
to your child(ren).



telling  
your  
story

## *Turning the camera on ourselves and taking our self-portrait is scary.*

This first assignment may push you out of your comfort zone a little or a lot.

But keep in mind, if you are not yet ready to share your lovely face, a self portrait can be many different things. Maybe you want to tell a story by sharing an image of your feet firmly planted to the ground. Or of your hands clutching someone's hand as a way of feeling safe and secure. Or you may want turn your back to the camera as you weather the storm of emotion that comes with grief and loss.

This week I want you to share a vision of yourself and I want to hear your story surrounding in the imagery you create.

I'd love to hear from you and have you share your blog posts with me at [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram page [@creating.courage](https://www.instagram.com/creating.courage) and share them with me there.

If you're feeling even braver, why not share them on your own personal social media pages with the hashtag #illuminatephotohealing.

xo

*Beryl*

telling  
your  
story

*notes*

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# illuminate

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*week two: using light to create mood*

*“Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into light.”*

**Helen Keller**

*Losing Bella was basically how I imagine it would be if one were to be sucked into a black hole.*

I had entered unknown territory, the atmosphere felt unfit for human interaction, I was constantly short of breath, and the lights had all gone out. Most days I'd use the following adjectives to describe how I felt: dark, unpredictable, grey, dreary, stormy, depressing. And just as those adjectives imply, most of my photos during that time took on a darker tone, or were processed as black and white.

**However, every now and then I'd find a glimmer of myself somewhere amongst the shadows.**

On brighter days I'd be drawn into the sun's rays, washing a glow over the plants blowing in the breeze. I liked to imagine those rays of light were Bella calling out to me and telling me things were going to be ok if I was gentle with myself and gave myself the time I needed to heal.

This week our topic is going to be all about light. How it affects our camera, how it creates mood in our photos, how it affects our own mood, how we can look for light to create our photos, and how we can then process our photos to be lighter or darker in order to imply the mood we are wanting to convey.



## light for mood

I take all my photos without a flash. Even in a dark room, even at night. I like the natural feeling conveyed by photos that don't get washed out by the flash on the camera. I challenge you to also attempt your photos with the flash turned off and decide how you like the results.

## Why is light so important?

If you didn't know it already, our cameras thrive on light. That is why the flash on our camera even exists. It

provides us with an extra light source when an area is too dark. Without light our camera can not do its job.

Have you ever been so frustrated to be attending a big event indoors in the evening. Maybe it was a wedding, or a special dinner party and every photo from the event turned out blurry? It's due to the lack of light available to the camera. No light means your camera's shutter can't move quickly. When the click of the shutter is slow, you get blurry pictures.

On the flip side, too much light can also prove to be problematic for taking photos

## quick light tips

*Our cameras thrive on light. Light comes in through our lens, hits a sensor in our camera, our camera processes what it sees and an image is created. Here are some suggestions for making the most out of available light and your camera:*

- 1. TAKE PHOTOS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING OR JUST BEFORE SUNSET** These are typically called the "golden hours" because of the gorgeous golden light the sun provides as it rises and sets.
- 2. FIND SHADE** During harsh mid day lighting conditions outside, look for shady spots to take your photographs. Your subject will be evenly lit, with no harsh bright spots or shadows.
- 3. LOOK FOR NATURAL REFLECTORS INDOORS** Find light colored walls and windows indoors to bounce natural light around the room.
- 4. SHOOT TOWARD THE SUN** We can create some awesome flares and lighting effects when we point our camera towards the sun. Try it.
- 5. USE A STEADY HAND** Indoors at night, try to find the best lit room as possible by lamp light. Low light can cause a slow shutter speed and blurry photos. Try balancing your camera on a table or tripod and use a timer. Or if you're really brave, use a very steady hand when you take your photo.

*light  
for  
mood*



too. In the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead, or if we place our subject where the light isn't ideal, our light source can create harsh light spots or dark shadows on our pictures. Photos of people may have squinty eyes if they are staring into the sun or the light may not be even.

When taking photos outside, the best scenario for our camera involves taking photos either when the sun is just coming up in the morning or when the sun is just about to set in the evening. Another ideal scenario would be to try taking photos on a cloudy day when the harsh sun light is being diffused by the clouds. If we take photos during the day, it's always a good idea to try and take photos of our subject in shade.

However, on the opposite end of the spectrum, indoor photos require finding as much light as possible. Look for light colored walls and windows that have natural light streaming in. Light walls will allow the light to bounce all around and reflect favorably onto

whatever it is we are trying to photograph. Each of these scenarios will let our cameras perform in the best way it possibly can.

**The fun comes in when we learn to recognize the different types of light sources, the direction light is coming from, and how that affects our photos.** We are going to explore a few scenarios today that you may want to play with as you go through your photo assignment this week.

This could happen indoors away from windows, on a cloudy day outside, or when taking photos in a large patch of shade. The interest in the photos truly comes from the subjects or objects in the photograph and not from the light. The challenge can be trying to avoid a blurry picture because our camera shutter moves slower.

Try keeping your hand very steady and still when you shoot a photo in a flat light scenario, or balance your camera on a table or tripod and set a timer to keep everything as still as possible.

## light for mood

Another tricky lighting scenario can be **Incandescent Light**. This is the light we get from lamps in whatever location we are in. Many times our photos will take on a more yellow cast or yellow tone if we have turned the

flash off. If you do not like the yellow cast, the photo can always be converted to black and white later on. Just as with Flat Light, we may have the challenge of blurry photos from a slow shutter speed.



### INCANDESCENT LIGHT: HOW DID SHE DO THAT?

This photo was taken during the holidays. The blur in the background is a technical effect I did with the camera.

An easy way to try this on your own? Set up some Christmas lights and plug them in. Get another object you can place at least 5-10 feet in front of the lights (or more).

Put your compact or digital SLR camera in Macro mode (the tulip flower type image) and try taking some photos.

Or, if you use manual modes, put your camera in Aperture priority (A or Av) and set the lowest aperture possible.

Make sure your focus point inside the viewfinder focuses or lights up on your object and not on the Christmas lights. If you are successful, your object will be nicely in focus, and the Christmas lights should be a glowy blur.

Next let's talk a little about **Window Light**. Window light can be great to play with and has a lot of potential for creative effects. When you face your subject directly towards the light (subject is parallel to the window) you get a nice evenly lit palette for whatever it is you are photographing.

When your light is coming in from the side (subject is placed perpendicular or 90 degrees to the window) you can work with shadows to create a more moody photo. Finding window light can be tricky. But try to observe daily how light streams in through windows or how it shines on plants and trees.



*"Window light can be great to play with and has lots of potential for creative effects."*



## light for mood

What is the mood you feel when looking at the photo on the right? Which way is the light coming from?

As you may have guessed the light is coming in from a window on the right side of the frame and only lights that side of my face. Would this photo have as much impact if my face was evenly lit? Or is the mood intensified by the shadow caused by the side lighting?

**Backlight** is one of my favorite kinds of light to work with, but it can also be one of the trickiest. Backlight occurs when the sun or light source is directly behind whatever it is we are taking a picture of. Backlight can provide us with a beautiful sunset of colors at the end of a day, a shroud of shadow when we shoot towards a window, or a burst of sunlight when we look up and shoot at the sun. However be prepared to have your camera struggle. Sometimes when we turn our camera directly toward the sun it can be difficult for our camera to focus (especially with a dslr) and it may not want to take our picture. Be persistent. Set up your shot a little differently and keep trying. Sometimes all it takes to master backlight is a little practice and a lot of patience



*“Backlight occurs when the light source is directly behind what we are photographing.”*

## *This week is your chance to “Find Your Light.”*

Pull out your journal, or use the notes provided at the end of this week’s guide, and start writing on this prompt. What does the light or darkness mean to you right now? How does the world look to you? Do you see shades of gray? Or do you see glimmers of sun peeking through? Does light or darkness hold any special meaning? What kind of lighting do you feel the most drawn to for taking pictures this week? Flat Light? Incandescent? Window Lighting? Side Lighting? Back Lighting? Or, maybe even no light at all? If your light leans more towards darkness right now, how might you get back to the place of seeing more glimmers of sunlight?

This journal may give you some clues for observing and finding light to prep

## light for mood

and plan your photos this week. Watch the sunrise as you drive to work. Keep an eye out for how the light moves through your house during the day. Track where the sun sets as you wind down for the evening. This week you'll want to track the light so you'll be able to complete our photo assignment for the week. And this week I'm giving you two options for taking photos that experiment with light. Pick the one that better suits you and your needs.

## Your assignment

### Option 1:

Use quotes to help springboard ideas for photos having to do with light. Simply open up Google (or a search engine of your choosing) and if you type in "quotes about light," or "quotes about darkness," or "quotes about mood," or any other word that is personally inspiring to you, and it should come back with sites of quotes containing that word.

### Option 2:

Find an object that has special meaning to you on your loss journey, or an object that represents who you are as a person. Use that object as you experiment with different types of light this week. Take pictures of that one object in a few different light scenarios. Notice how the light affects your object in each photograph. How did your view of that object change in each lighting scenario?

## my wish for you

Even though the days may seem dark right now, I hope you are each able to find a glimmer of light in your camera lens, radiating through the shadows as you take your photos this week. Just imagine your loved one, showering you with some shimmers of hope, and bringing you a bit of happiness as you progress through this exercise.

I'd love to hear from you and have you share your blog posts with me at [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram page [@creating.courage](https://www.instagram.com/creating.courage) and share them with me there.

If you're feeling even braver, why not share them on your own personal social media pages with the hashtag [#illuminatephotohealing](https://www.instagram.com/illuminatephotohealing).

xo

Beryl



*light  
for  
mood*



*notes*

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# *illuminate*

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*week three: gaining a new perspective*

*“Time puts things in proper perspective.”*

Cameron  
Crowe

*Up until Bella’s passing I had been very blessed to not have to deal with much tragedy.*

I grew up with a loving family, I went to college, found my soul mate, had a stable career. *Life was on the right track.*

Our friends began to have babies and we followed in suit by starting to plan for our family. As a side note, our main challenges came from carrying our share of obscure medical issues. Because of this, we used to joke that we were sure to have a less than picture perfect road to parent hood—but we never truly believed what we said. We never actually thought we’d carry the title of **Baby Loss Parents**.



Then there was the day the high-risk ultrasound technician looked me in the eye at Bella’s 20 week anatomy sonogram and said the five words that would change my perspective forever:

*“Your baby has multiple problems.”*

The way he said it, so cold, so frank, so heartless has forever changed me.

To him I was just another patient, just another number.

*To me, to us, this was our daughter.  
And our worst nightmare coming true before our very eyes.*

Bella had none of the major chromosomal disorders. We were told she was a “genetic fluke”. She was missing vital

*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

organs. Her umbilical hadn't formed properly. And she was losing the fluid so important to her survival.

Ultimately she would not survive, and my rose colored view of the world would be gone forever.



**Even though each of our stories of how we've come to this place in the loss community is so different, we each know that feeling.**

That moment. That minute our perspective of the world was flipped upside down. And the thread that connects us is knowing that our lives will never ever be the same.

This week we are going to be exploring the compositional idea of Perspective in our images. The way we view the world, and how the way we choose to compose our photos can impact the way we tell our story.

Just as a single event can frame our perspective of the world, the way we frame a single photos can change the perspective on how we view the image as well.

As I was compiling images for this course I came across the image above. It was taken January 7th, 2010, just over three months after we lost Bella. And I was having a week where, amazingly, the good days were outnumbering the bad.

The weather was cold, it was the dead of winter, and we had been blanketed with a layer of snow.

As it melted and packed itself down into our front yard it had created pockets of ice crystals mixed with soil and the dead earth winter brings. As I looked closer I found this leaf peeking out from the ice. The leaf was dead, but provided a bit of color in a stark canvas.

I liked to imagine that leaf was me. Still dead inside, but beginning to break through a barrier and bring a bit of

*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

color back into my world.

it more meaning.

The discovery of this leaf was almost serendipitous, but the way I framed this shot was completely purposeful to give

Let's talk about some of the tried and true elements of composition that can bring your imagery to a whole new level.

## *composition tips*

*Here is a quick reference to some of the most common composition rules for you to try during your assignment this week:*

- 1. RULE OF THIRDS** Imagine that what you see in your viewfinder is divided into three quadrants. Try to align the items of interest on those dividing lines. This can be done while taking the photos, or after you upload in an editing program such as Picnik.
- 2. FRAMING** Use creative and varied ways to frame your images. Align your subjects off center, take wide angle shots, then take close up shots.
- 3. NEGATIVE SPACE** Leave a large portion of your canvas blank to keep your main focus on the subject or object you are taking a picture of.
- 4. POINT OF VIEW** Move yourself physically to get a different perspective. Shoot from up high, shoot at eye level, then get down low and shoot up. How does your perspective change?
- 5. TYPE OF CAMERA** Try using multiple camera types on the same photo journey. Try a point and shoot, or a dslr, or film, or phone. Take what you have available to you and try them all!





*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

First, we're going to explore a concept called the **RULE OF THIRDS**. Next time you go to create an image, try to keep in mind that the subject of your image does not have to be centered in the frame. In fact, oftentimes an image can look even more interesting if we put our image off center.



Imagine that your viewer is dividing your image into threes, horizontally and vertically. The key is to try to keep the items of interest in the shot on one of those lines dividing the frame.

It's great if we can imagine these lines in our mind as we compose and take a shot with our camera. But many times we must go in to tweak and crop images after they are taken to follow this rule even better.



*Don't be afraid to experiment  
with perspective.*

Another thing to think about when composing your shot is **FRAMING** and whether you want to take a wide angle approach or a macro approach for your image. Basically, this means do you want to frame the shot far back and capture a vast array of scenery, or do you want to get up close and capture the details?

The photo on the left was not taken by me, but by my husband. We both embarked on a photo project together in 2010 called a 365.

A 365 project is just what the name implies, you take a photo a day for an entire year. I unfortunately have never

*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

made it through all 365 photos, but I still consider the project a success because I learned so much about my camera and about photography from taking a daily photo.

Brendan however, documented all of 2010 through the lens of his cell phone camera, and we have a glimpse of what that year was liked through his eyes. It is really a neat photo diary.

On this particular day, he came to visit me at work. As we were leaving, the tree buds caught my eye and I immediately grabbed my dslr to go close up and take a macro photo. He grabbed his

camera and took the wide angle shot of me in action. Can you believe that as he captured this image of me out in the dry, cold, dull winter afternoon I was capturing the image below?

***Our perspectives at the same exact time, on the same exact day, in the same exact location were completely different!***

Don't be afraid to test out different types of shots. Take that wide angle far away shot, but then take a few steps closer, get up close and personal with your environment and see what beauty you can find.



*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

Another compositional element I love to play with that you can see in the image at right is the use of **NEGATIVE SPACE**.

I used this technique a lot during my loss journey.

A piece of me was missing during the loss of my baby, and I truly think I was also subconsciously eliminating a piece of my canvas as I composed images.



*how  
project 365  
changed  
my life*

On a whim in March of 2009, I began a photo project called "Project 365." The goal of this project is to take a photo a day for an entire year. At the time, all I had was my trusty Kodak point and shoot, a flickr account, and a desire to learn about photography and document my life.

*Little did I know at the time how incredibly awesome this project would be.*

I connected with other photographers around the world, invested in my first slr camera, and learned to appreciate beauty in the tiniest details of day to day living.

I have never completed a project 365 (my longest run was 150 days) but the things I learned along the way about myself, about photography, about creativity, and about finding passion has been invaluable.

Committing to this project is a huge undertaking but it can be done! My husband successfully completed a 365 project in 2010 using only his cell phone. It's fun to look back on our year together through his eyes.

Are you ready to embark on your own 365? *I'm here to cheer you on if you decide to embark on this journey!*

*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

Another element to think about as you compose images is your physical perspective and your **POINT OF VIEW**. Are you shooting down on your subject? At eye level? Or are you shooting from the ground up? Our physical perspective can drastically change how an image is viewed.



How does your perspective change when viewing images from **VARIOUS CAMERAS**?

During the Spring of 2010 I took a trip into Washington DC for the annual Cherry Blossom festival. This trip was truly special because I was able to capture some unique images with both my dslr camera, and a polaroid film camera I have at home as well.

Seeing an image digitally, and then capturing images from the same time and same place on film brought a whole new perspective to the same trip.

Next time you are out and about, try taking some photos with two types of cameras. Perhaps a digital camera and a cell phone. Or digital and then film. Or point-and-shoot and dslr. See how your perspective changes as your camera changes.

gaining  
a new  
perspective

## *Your weekly assignment: 100 steps to healing*

As I began my healing journey, I searched for photography projects that would help on my mission to get up off the couch and try my best to live, even if only in short increments.

The project I discovered was called 100 steps. The rules were simple. Choose a starting point. Walk 100 steps with camera in hand. Stop. Wherever you end up you MUST compose an image.

This project forced me to get out of the house. Helped me compose images more creatively. And encouraged me to appreciate the little things. Often times I ended up outside, but one day my 100 steps involved walking up and down the stairs until I finally came to a stop in my house.

Go out three to five days this week and take 100 steps. Compose your shots. Choose your favorite images from the week to share along with a journal about Gratitude.

*This week, I want you to get out and shoot and compose before you journal.*

I think this week's assignment lends itself well to shooting before writing.

Shortly after Bella's loss I realized I was heading into a downward spiral. I barely recognized myself and I absolutely refused to allow myself to sit and wallow in self pity 24 hours a day. I knew Bella would want me try and continue living my life as fully as possible.

Your prompt this week is "I am grateful for..." Even though you may be at the your lowest point right now following your loss, I truly believe you can find something in the world that still brings even a tiny amount of joy to your heart.

*For me, taking those 100 steps each day reconnected me with nature, with life, and helped me find small bits of beauty each day.*

*gaining  
a new  
perspective*

*During our darkest days, sometimes we must force a change in our perspective on the world in order to bring real change to the actual perspective in our hearts.*

I hope the steps you take this week allow you to discover gratitude in the little things life has to offer, and help you to find a new way to frame your own perspective from behind the lens.

I'd love to hear from you and have you share your blog posts with me a [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram page [@creating.courage](https://www.instagram.com/creating.courage) and share them with me there.

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xo

*Beryl*





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# illuminate

LIGHTING THE PATH TO PHOTOGRAPHIC HEALING

*week four: inspiration going forward*

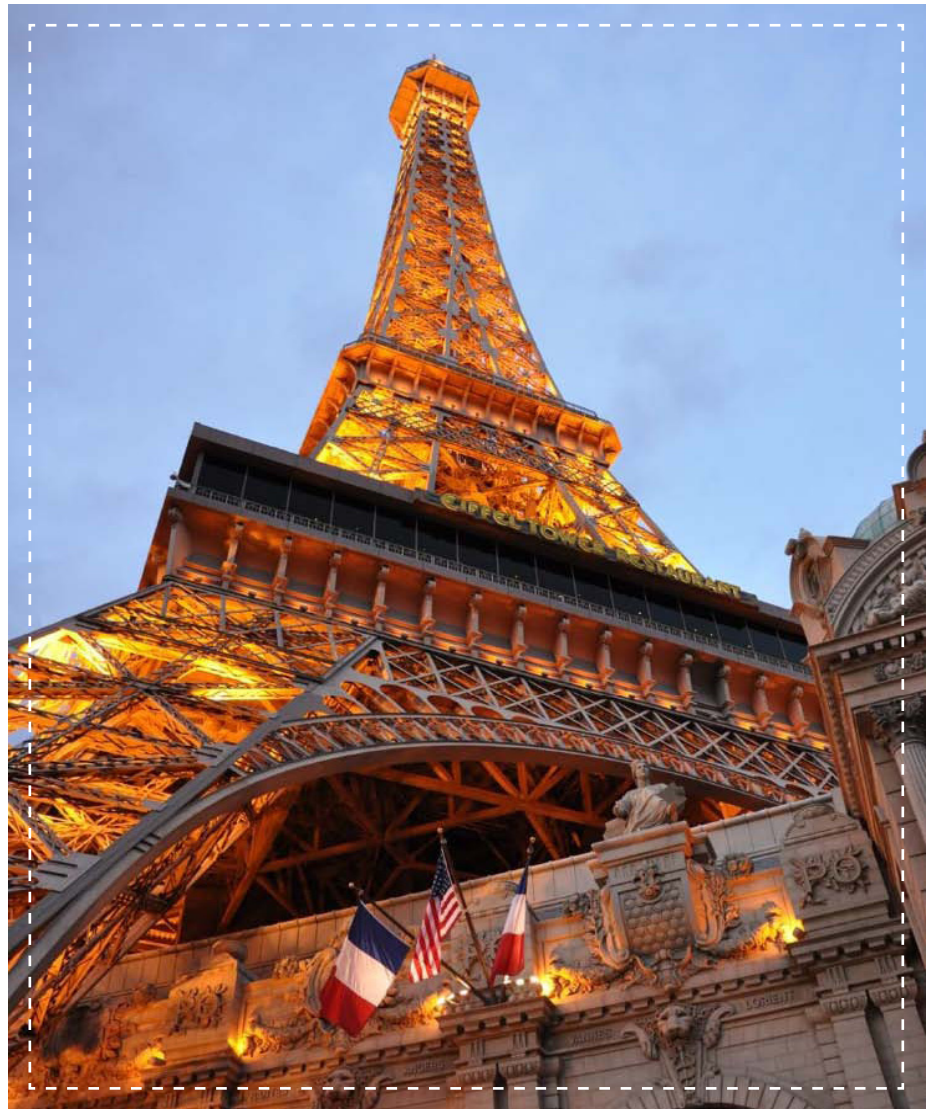
*“Inspiration is the gift of those who have experienced life at its most defined moments.”*

Sasha Azevedo

*I've only really considered myself a professional photographer since we lost Bella.*

That was the time when i really threw my entire heart and soul into my camera and turned my hobby into a passion.

*But I like to think that I've always had an artistic eye.*



## inspiration

I was meticulous about finding a photographer for our wedding day. I wanted someone who would unobtrusively document each detail, and artistically capture the precious memories of our special day.

After our engagement I sat online for hours studying images, getting myself lost in photographers' websites, and reviewing portfolios.

We interviewed three photographers and finally settled on Richmond, VA based Worthington Photography to be the ones to capture our special day. It was obvious from the first time I emailed them that Sam and Mel, a husband and wife team, love their job, love people, and have unbelievable talent.

I must admit after I hired them I was a bit jealous of the magic they could make behind the lens and to this day my wedding photographs remain one of my most treasured possessions.

*Based on how carefully I chose our photographer you might think I am one who has truly enjoyed taking pictures my entire life.*

But, as a child I HATED photography. I hated being in pictures. I hated taking pictures. I hated posing, smiling, and being subject to my mom's millions of clicks. I still remember one summer, I

was about 9 or 10 and we were on our annual family vacation. I don't remember the location. But I do vividly remember my mom sitting with me on a stone wall to rest from an exhausting day of sightseeing. As I turned around to take in my surroundings, I noticed a beautiful arrangement of planted flowers behind me, and knew exactly what was coming next before she even had time to pull her camera out of her purse.

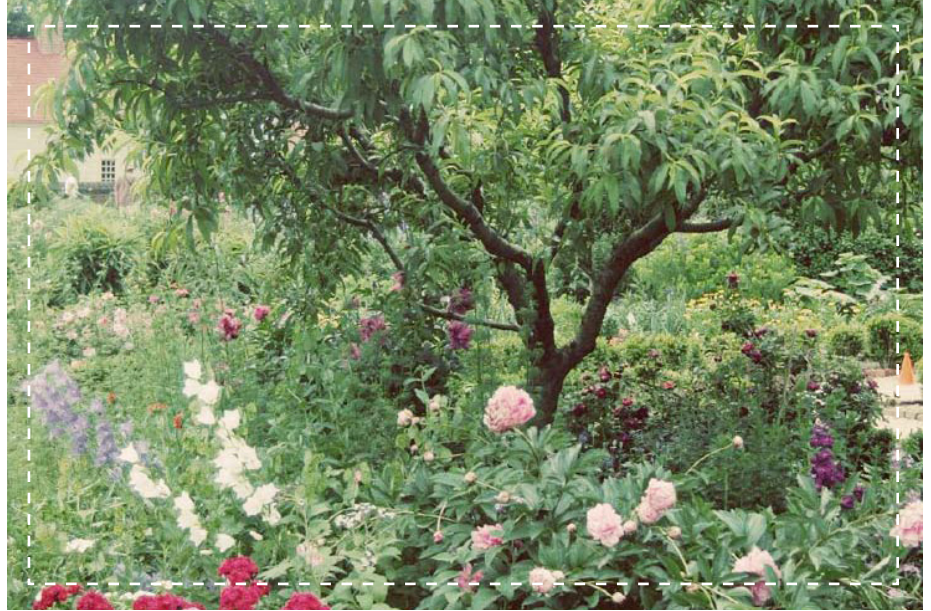
Then began the dance that was so often part of my childhood. I was asked to smile and instead I'd frown, I'd put up a fight, I'd whine, and I'd complain. Sometimes I'd even run away.

I had a love hate relationship with the camera growing up. I was always the one who brought the camera to the party but never pulled it out of my purse. Or the one who packed the camera in my bag when we went on vacation, but spent more time at the pool or enjoyed sightseeing more than documenting the journey.

Even so, the writing was on the wall that I'd eventually come around to the idea of photography. I wanted to document my memories, I loved beautiful images and wanted them framed and hanging in my home, I just didn't have the drive, desire or technical know how to create what I was looking for.

So I didn't.

*So how did this photo hater eventually turn into a professional photographer? All I needed was a little spark of inspiration. And her name was Bella Rose.*



*This week we are going to talk all about finding inspiration and re-discovering ourselves again after loss.*

Each of our journeys after loss is so different. For me I wanted the world to know how I was feeling but I also wanted to run and hide sometimes too. I found the combination of blogging paired with being able to hide behind my camera was just what I needed to work through my pain.

Just as we each grieve differently we all photograph differently as well. Our sources of inspiration behind the lens are each personal to our own passions. I encourage you to photograph what brings you joy and gives you strength.

For me I found joy after loss in preserving memories because Bella taught me just how precious each moment here on earth really is.

We opted not to hold Bella after her birth and death and we declined photos.

To this day it's my only regret, and somehow I feel that photography is helping me teach others from my own mistake. I love that this business has allowed me to take such a huge role in making memories for families, or teaching families how to properly preserve their own.

*So now I ask you, what inspires you to photograph?  
What brings you the most joy when you pick up your camera?*

inspiration

WHAT BRINGS  
YOU JOY IN YOUR  
PHOTOGRAPHY?



*This week is all about finding what brings you the most joy as you remember your babies, while also looking forward to the future that lies ahead.*

### *This week's journaling:*

Our journal topic for this week is "One year from today." In order to begin to look ahead I want you imagine what life might look like one day from now. One month. Six months. And one year. So much can change in a year.

*What is the change you want to make? Tell me what your life might look like in the year ahead.*

## MAKING CHANGES FOLLOWING LOSS



How will you invent yourself after loss? What changes do you need to make to surround yourself by love, support, and an environment where you can re-emerge stronger and better than before?

For me, I lost good friends, I quit a service organization where I was a leader and firehead for over nine years, and I went into hibernation mode which is very uncharacteristic of me.

I felt like the experience of losing a child was the perfect time for renewal and for bettering myself as an individual.

The experience of losing a baby taught me so much about who I was as a person, who my real friends really were, and the direction I was heading in.

And now the changes I have made are fulfilling this life I have now ten fold.



*"... when one door closes  
another opens..."*

I truly believe in the saying that when one door closes another opens, and Bella has opened so many new and joyous doors for our family even though she is not here with us on earth.

The year following the loss was defined by much pain and heartache but also by: the following of a passion and start of new business for me; enrolling in school and beginning of a new career for Brendan; the purchase of a new home, and a fresh start for our family.

*What doors can your angels open for you?*

What change will this next year bring?

## One little word

As you think about this topic and work on your journal this week I also want you to think about a one word mantra to carry you through the next year.

I first discovered this concept of “one word” on one of my favorite photography inspiration sites, called the Shutter Sisters. Developed by photographer Ali Edwards, she suggests this mantra be: “a word to focus on, mediate on, and reflect upon as you go about daily life.” It’s such a small, simple concept, but it is oh so powerful!

2009 was the year we lost Bella. That year my one little word was: **HOPE**. 2010 was the year I started my business and my word was: **SOAR**.

This year I took my one little word to an entirely new level and I want you to do the same this week. I want you to not only find your one little word, but also go out and photograph it.

Have you ever been on a letter hunt before? If not, remember when you were little and you used to lay flat on your back, not a care in the world, and stare at the clouds? And sometimes if you were oh so lucky those clouds would look like something interesting? That’s how I like to think of a letter hunt.

## Your assignment:

This week I want you to go out and take a walk. And I want you to search specifically for the letters in your one little word. Explore the details of the world around you and find objects that resemble letters.

I don’t want you taking pictures of letters on streets signs though. I want you to get more creative and really dig in deeper to the details of the architecture and environment around you. How the

wrought iron fence post curves its way perfectly into an S, or how if you squint your eyes just right this piano stands looks just like an H, or the garage door post that looks just like an I, the mirror frame that looks like an N, and the mailbox post that is shaped exactly like a lowercase E.

What happens when you combine them all together? That’s right, your one little word comes to life.



*shine!*

## inspiration

This ceramic cicada bug is displayed proudly in our kitchen and is said to be a symbol of luck and happiness. It's one of the first things you see as you enter our home.

And, in Ancient China, before burying their deceased loved ones, wealthy families would insert a jade carving of the cicada bug inside their loved ones mouths. It was believed this would assure that those who have passed would have a joyful life after death, and would immortalize them after their passing.



Then, there is the lightning bug, the symbol of our class, lighting the way to a new outlook. Fireflies here

are a strong symbol in Native American culture, indicating inspiration, hope, creativity and new ideas.

## my hope for you

I hope during the course of our four weeks together you've found your cicada and your firefly. A way to wish your angels well, and immortalize their memory through pictures and words, all while keeping a sense of inspiration and creativity.

I hope as you continue on your healing journey you are able to continue on the path of finding new ways to remember your angels, honor them, and contribute to the loss community as a whole. I know your loved ones must be smiling somewhere amongst a field of cicadas and fireflies, so proud of the work you've done here.

Now equipped with your new one word mantra, a vision for what lies ahead, and camera in hand I wish you a little bit of luck, a lot of hope, and much happiness in coming year. ***Until we meet again, keep on shining, just like the firefly lighting his way through the dark.***

I'd love to hear from you and have you share your blog posts with me at [hello@beyoungcreative.com](mailto:hello@beyoungcreative.com) or hop on over to my Instagram page

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xo

*Beryl*







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