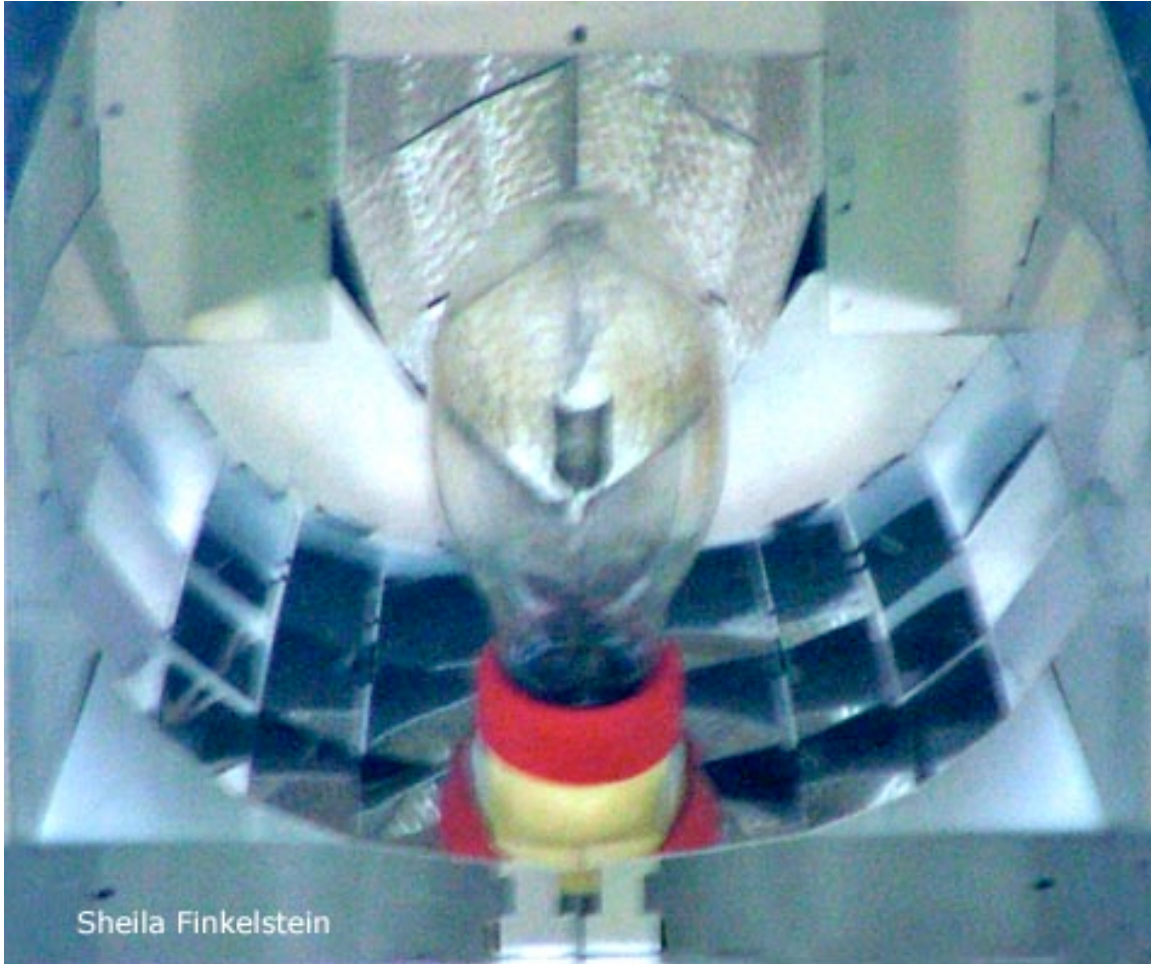


EXPAND YOUR VISION WHEN STUCK:

Using Your Camera and Writing to Open Yourself Up
to New Ways of Seeing Opportunities



Welcome to Seeing Yourself and Your World with New Eyes

**Photography and Writing by
Sheila Finkelstein, Artist/Photographer/Writer/Coach**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
7 Tips for Expanding Your Vision	4
Personified Cover Image – Free-flow Writing	5
Cover Photo Explanation	6
Changing Perspectives Results in Changed Perspectives	7
Perspectives Photo 1	8
Perspectives Photo 2	9
Explanation	10
Transformational Experiences as Described by Subscribers Shadows and Light	11
Caged Sunset	13
Caged Sunset Description and Queries, Invitations and Contact Information	15

Introduction

Purpose

It is my expectation that in exploring, and fulfilling on, some of the activities detailed on the next page in "7 Tips to Expand Your Vision," you will have access to on-demand relaxation in your life. I expect also that some creative muscles will be strengthened, allowing you more flexibility and openings when facing challenges.

Background

"We believe that the world is a playground for personal growth and development; that natural environments - gardens, woods, beaches, rivers, streams - are sources for pleasure, creativity, play and self-discovery; that expanding sensory awareness of natural and man-made environments provides access to furthering creative thinking and appreciation." Sheila Finkelstein, www.naturesplayground.com

This is the statement I have on my very first website, Naturesplayground.com and the basis for the information on the following pages. This has been a way of being for me for many years. It was the underlying theme when I taught art in public schools for seven years, many years ago.

When I moved out into a different world, the camera became my friend, my access to peace, discovery and play. A digital camera made it even easier to play. Through its lens I frame whatever catches my eye, intrigues me. Then I click. Further discovery and fun come upon seeing the image on my monitor.

At some point almost three years ago, my need to share kicked in and I introduced and started publishing PICTURE TO PONDER, as an almost-daily photo ezine. Now it's emailed once a week. Over time, in addition to a featured photo or two, "Self-Reflecting Queries" evolved, questions for reflection suggested by the photos as I write. Sometimes it's my own experience with selecting the feature photo(s) that becomes the kick-off point.

Over the years of publishing and leading teleclasses I've seen the differences that my photos and queries have made for people, how they've opened up to seeing themselves in new ways. In many cases they reported transformations in their relationships to situations that they were experiencing in their own lives.

My own satisfaction escalates at the thought of You using the camera to see things differently and, perhaps, for the first time in your own life!

Thus, in my commitment for supporting open communication, as well as fun and play in life, I offer you "7 Tips for Expanding Your Vision". I've included within these pages examples of photographs and writing used in two issues of Picture to Ponder along with feedback on the impact they had on two people.

I now invite you, too, to Have Fun and Play.

7 Tips for Expanding Your Vision

1. Be Prepared - Always have a camera with you; if not a camera, then a pencil or pen and paper, or an electronic recorder

2. Pay Attention to whatever catches your attention when you walk. For me it is usually a texture, a color, or an imaginary face in an object or piece of Nature.

3. Look Further - When you discover which of those elements it is that caught your attention, set yourself a goal of finding 5 to 10 more, with similar characteristics, in the next day or two.

4. Focus and Discover - Cut a 1 inch, or less, opening in the center of a 3 X 5 card, or a piece of paper. Then use that as a viewfinder. Find something in your environment in the space around you, wherever you are sitting. Then, looking through the opening, gradually move your card more closely, exploring different parts of the object. You might even want to try this on a part of your body or a section of your clothing.

As you look closely with your eyes, tune into any physical responses you have when you discover something for the first time. What new things are opening up to you? Are you seeing things you've never noticed before?

5. Open Up to Creative Interpretations - Find 5 examples of "faces" in your environment. This may require your taking a walk outdoors. You may find them in trees, railings, sidewalks, grates, headlights, car grills, places only you may discover. Look in all directions; above you might be wonderful images in clouds. In your home check out the floors, walls, switch plates, door handles, patterns in rugs, upholstery, countless more places. Tell a story about the "faces" you've discovered.

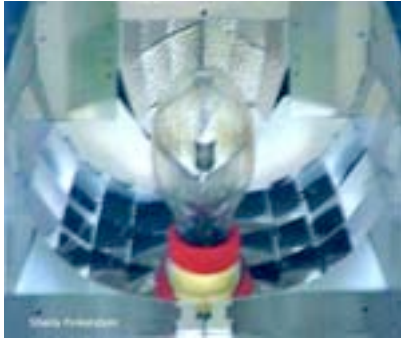
6. Initiate Communication - Use your photographs, or those of another person (including those in this offering), to open up conversation with a friend, family member or colleague. Before you reveal what or why you chose that photo to talk about, ask the other person what he or she sees. Then be free to share your interpretation. Be open for a dialogue transpiring.

Did anything new occur for you and/or the person or persons with whom you were speaking? If so, consider, "Where else can I create similar communication, even without a picture?"

7. Journal for Self-Exploration - Choose one of the photos from the above exercises, or another, or something else in your environment that has attracted your attention. Then start writing words and go with the flow, with whatever words come. Ultimately, what are they trying to show you?

Lastly, keep notes on what you gleaned from these exercises that you might want to remember to use in the future.

Personifying an Image - Free-flow Writing Response



Here comes Sheila with her camera again.
Shall I wave her away or welcome her with open arms?
I always see her out of the eyes in the back of my head
Taking all kinds of pictures here in Wakodahatchee Wetlands where I
reside.

Loads of cameras here, tripods and long lenses often line the
boardwalk.
Sheila sometimes tucks in between to see and capture the views
people most people love
And many times she's taking pictures that others don't think to take.

Hmmm. She's stopping now, looking up at me, for the first time.
I wonder. Will she see who I think I am, who I know myself to be?

Or, will she stay with the worldview of what I do?

Evidently she has it.
I see her calling some people over to point out, in her camera,
Who she perceived me to be.

I'm flapping my winged arms in glee.
My narrowed eyes open more
I can face the world with pride,
Knowing that I've made a difference far beyond
Simply being part of a team lighting the parking lot

Others now are sure to be expanding on the light
That ignites the inner fires of discovery and transformation.

Will you be one of them?

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Follow-up Explanation of the Personified Cover Photo



"The World View" – source of the cover photo

Something about the inside of this open lamp caught my eye and I was moved to take several photos of the "character" I saw flapping its "arms."

I took the photo of the "real" image simply to have a record of it.

I was so excited with the originality of the "character" I was further moved to write. With no preconceived plan, the poem on the previous page is what came out of freely writing on my experience of it, words following words.

Without intent, it became a celebration of who I am and what I am up to in the world.

Recommendation - Especially for Coaches:

I suggest that you have you or your client find an image that particularly excites you or him/ her, then pinpoint a "human" characteristic and start writing about it. You both might get some good clues for further development.

Changing Perspective Results in Changed Perceptions

The photograph shown in two different directions on the next two pages is rich in content imagery. They are offered to you without words so that you may have the full experience of them on your own, without any interference.

The only thing I will say, before you look at the photos on the next two pages is the obvious – It is the same photograph on each page – the first, vertical; the second, horizontal.

Before looking for explanations of the photos, I invite you to simply BE with them and discover what it is in them that is speaking to you. The time to look further at the notes on page following Photo 2 is after you have done the suggested exercises.

You may wish to jot down some of your observations and thoughts in the spaces below each of the photos. Once you have an overall response, I invite you to create a viewfinder by folding over a piece of paper and tearing a small opening, or “window,” in the center of paper. Then holding the paper above it, move the paper around using the window to close in on various parts of the photo. Make note of the new images you discover.

When you are ready, go on to the horizontal view of the same overall image. Do you get a different feeling when you look at this picture? Very often vertical lines and images represent bolder more active circumstances, while the horizontal give off more restful feelings.

When you are complete with the two photos, feel free to go to page 9 For an explanation of the photograph, plus comments and queries to use with yourself and perhaps others with whom you want to further communication.

Changing Perspectives - 1V



CHANGING PERSPECTIVE - 1H



Transformation Through Photography
Changing Perspectives =
Changed Perceptions
(Photos 1V and 1H)

Summary

The picture used to illustrate changing perspectives is photograph of an exposed root of a tree that had been flattened by a lawnmower. When I shot the picture, and then when I started showing it, I always presented it vertically.

For me, it has a Madonna-like feeling, with several images of babies within the overall. When I first started leading Through and From the Lens: Access to Transformation courses, I decided to rotate the photograph 180 degrees to explore the differences it might create for the participants.

Responses were quite interesting, including one in which the viewer got the feeling she was viewing a large, Sistine Chapel-like ceiling mural.

Queries

For you to use with yourself and for professionals to consider using with clients:

What do you see in this photograph?

Overall?

In portions of it?

Can you find similarities with anything going on in your life? Is there a difference for you between the vertical and horizontal views?

If so, is there anything going on in your own life right now where you might see a shift if you were to look at it from a different perspective?

Zig Zag Shadows



Zig- Zag Lines - Confusion and Bombardment



Step Back – Clarity Steps In

Reader Response

"Day after day, your photographic gifts are a joy in my life...and your reflections adding wisdoms to my life. I think today's two pictures of fence shadows are exquisite. . . Both photos, the intense close-up and the stepping-back image are amazing, each offering their own messages and thoughts.

Wednesday, I suffered from a very difficult episode of bipolar chemical imbalance... sudden onset as always, and long-term recovery in terms of regrouping re exhaustion and physical depletions just to deal with the day.

Today I had an unusual response from my psychiatrist -- an angry, 'I'm not responsible other than your 15 minutes a month for meds' response. When I first hung up from her phone call, I couldn't see the event from the difficulty of the shadows.

In looking at these pictures, I have been reminded that this doctor is only one element of support for me...and that there are other doctors; that what I have is an illness, not a reflection of who I am; that the 'shadows' of having a mental illness do not remove the opportunities for light." CG - Subscriber's response to PICTURE TO PONDER – [Volume 2 – Issue 57](http://www.eteletours.com/v3-issue57.html), <http://www.eteletours.com/v3-issue57.html>

Caged Sunset





"When I first saw the top picture my thoughts were why would anyone ruin a beautiful sunset by including those ugly poles in it and when I looked at the bottom picture I loved the way the reeds stood out and the water reflected the beautiful colors in light of the sunset. I take a lot of pictures and always try to exclude anything 'unnatural' i.e.: the electrical poles.

Then I read your post and realized that my thinking on a certain situation in my life was exactly what you had expressed. It was like your post was meant expressly for me. I have a son in prison. So naturally the word 'prison' and 'caged in' jumped right out at me. When he first was incarcerated, although I was heartbroken, I also realized that this was saving his life, as he was addicted to drugs and alcohol. But even by realizing this, I was so afraid that being 'caged in' was going to change the most beautiful part of this personality, which is his ability to have compassion for all living beings and his need to help others even in the advent that it was derogatory to him.

In looking at your pictures and rereading your post, I have come to the conclusion that this is not going to happen, this compassion and giving nature of his is part of his soul and even in this present situation, he is the most loving, giving, compassionate person I know. And I now believe that this current situation is part of his 'lesson in this physical life of his' or to put it another way, it is one of his contracts with divine energy/the universe/God.

Thank you so much for giving me this realization this morning." DR. a PTP subscriber

Caged Sunset Description and Queries

My description and the Self-Reflecting Queries to which, in addition to the photos, this reader was responding:

"My impetus for taking the pictures featured above was, at first, an intellectual, preconceived thought. When I looked up, as we were leaving our car, I had the idea of "capturing" the sun, seeing how it would look "caged in" or imprisoned. Once I viewed the photos, after downloading them into my computer, I ended up thinking, "Given the dominance and heat of the sun, is imprisonment even possible?"

As I moved my sightings and the focus of the lens closer to me, the tall reeds became the cage." The result, as we see, was far from a prison. What I got was a simple gift of lyrical beauty.

So, how does this reflect into our queries here? I'm thinking it's an invitation, and reminder, for all of us to test our ideas and then to be open to the variations of whatever shows up.

Are there places in your life now where things are happening that might be served by your changing your focus? If so, I invite you to check out what may open up for you." - as published in PICTURE TO PONDER – Volume 3 – Issue 16 – <http://www.eteletours.com/v3-issue16.html>

Invitations

If you have discovered anything within these pages that has been/will be helpful to you in expanding your personal growth and development or that of your business, I would appreciate your sharing that with me via email – sheila@photographyandtransformation.com

If you are not already a PICTURE TO PONDER subscriber, please take advantage of my weekly, free, inspirational photo ezine and [SUBSCRIBE](http://photographyandtransformation.com/PTP-subscribe.html) at <http://photographyandtransformation.com/PTP-subscribe.html>

Contact Information

For further exploration of topics discussed in these pages, or to reproduce, the included photos, or others of mine, for anything beyond your personal use, you may also contact me by phone at 561-752-8339.

Thank you for sharing your creative energy by having participated in exploring these pages and what I've put forth.

Sheila Finkelstein, Artist/Photographer/Writer/Coach