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ULTIMATE

MOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE

**for Tour and Activity
Providers**

by Matthias Maraczi

ULTIMATE MOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE for Tourism and Activity Providers

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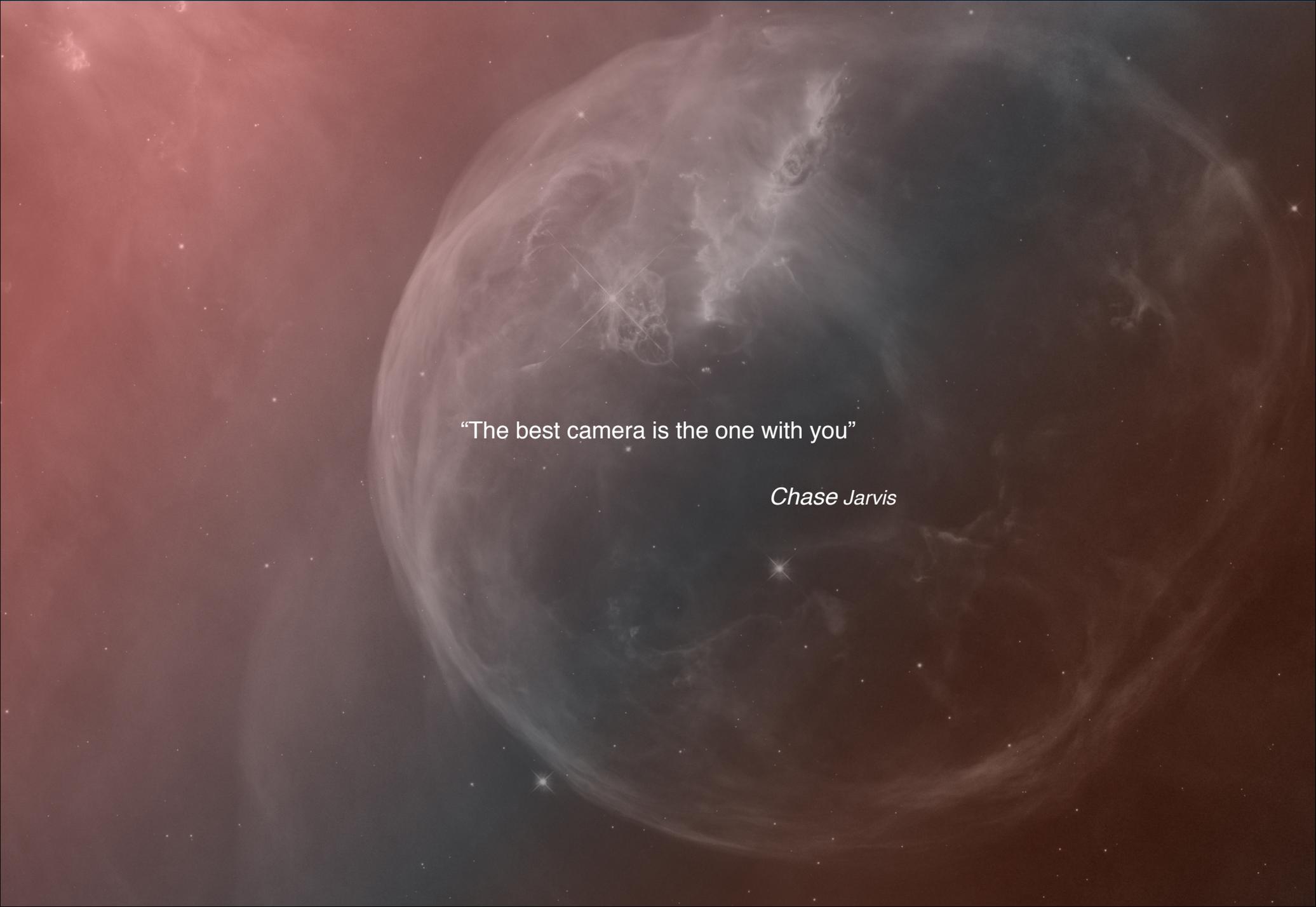
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“The best camera is the one with you”

Chase Jarvis



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Author's Note

Choosing the right images to represent your company is a significant part of your visual content marketing strategy. However, we know from working day-to-day with tour and activity providers that acquiring these images can be tricky.

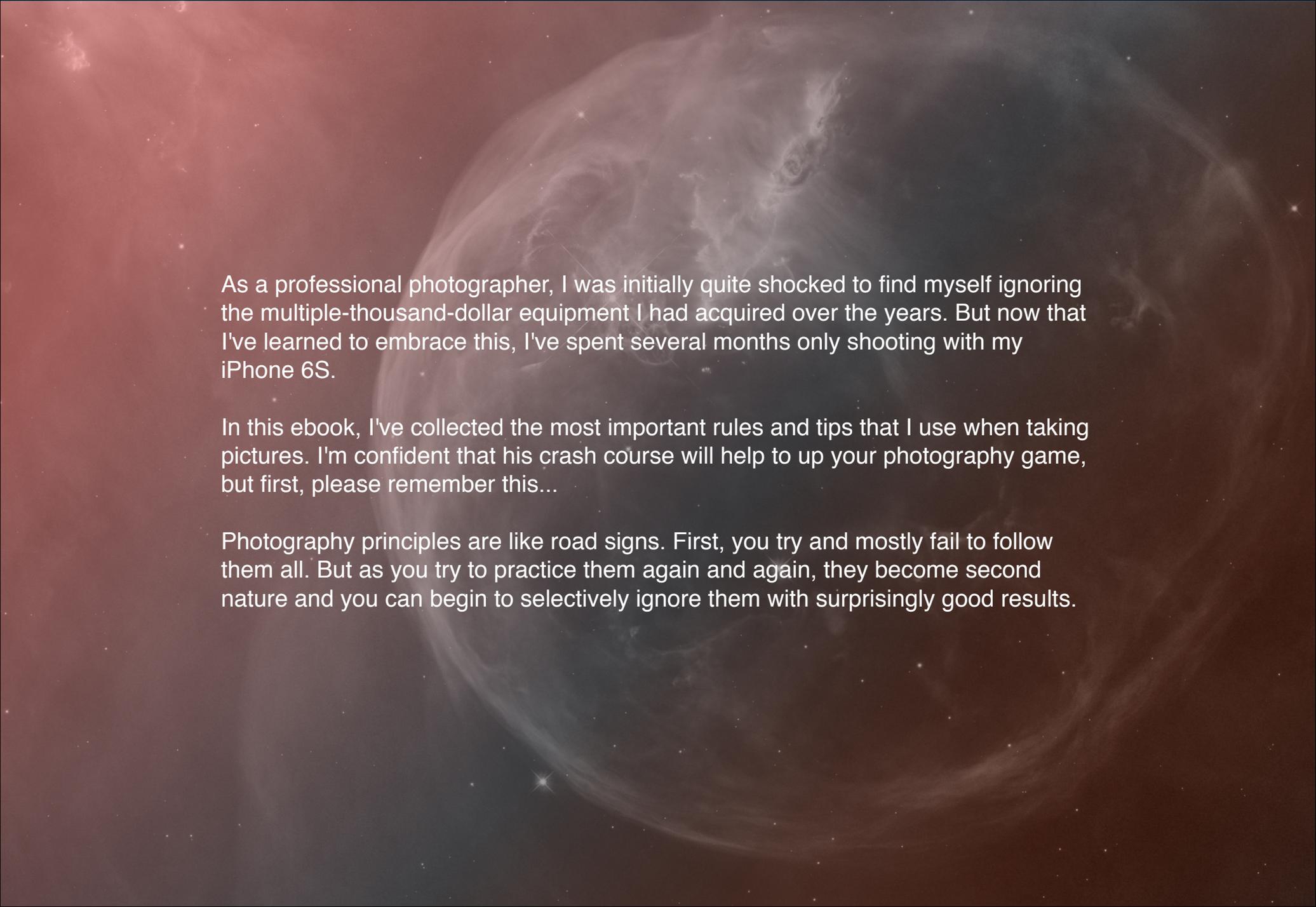
As you're selling a really specific experience, using stock imagery is almost always out of question.

Also, hiring a professional photographer can be heavy on your wallet. It also doesn't provide you with a steady flow of images that you can use across your social media channels and website.

That means you need to start taking your own photos. But what if you weren't gifted with the keen eye of a photographer, or you just don't have the financial resources to purchase a professional camera and all the necessary equipment? Well, I've got good news for you folks! None of that actually matters.

Photography is a skill that anyone can acquire, and the equipment you use plays little to no role in how your photos will turn out. This is especially the case nowadays, when most of you already carry a high definition camera with you, right there in your pocket, sitting in your smartphone, and waiting to be embraced.

Matthias Maraczi



As a professional photographer, I was initially quite shocked to find myself ignoring the multiple-thousand-dollar equipment I had acquired over the years. But now that I've learned to embrace this, I've spent several months only shooting with my iPhone 6S.

In this ebook, I've collected the most important rules and tips that I use when taking pictures. I'm confident that this crash course will help to up your photography game, but first, please remember this...

Photography principles are like road signs. First, you try and mostly fail to follow them all. But as you try to practice them again and again, they become second nature and you can begin to selectively ignore them with surprisingly good results.



1. Consider viewpoint

Viewpoint is more than just a single principle. In order to turn the simple act of taking pictures into 'Photography', you have to put a lot more thought into creating the shot you want.

You have to search for the right angle, anticipate how your subject will behave, **know what that photo will be used for.**

For instance, do you want to use the photo you're taking as a website header? Leave a good amount of negative (or blank) space above or below your subject for the page title or your logo to go. Just like so...

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2. Learn the rule of thirds

The rule of thirds is, in my opinion, the single most important rule of photography. Imagine dividing your photo into a **3 x 3 rectangular grid**. Or, if you don't want to imagine, turn on the 'Grid' function on the camera you are using. I guarantee it will be there.

Now that you have your grid, align everything in the frame along these lines and to their intersections. Fairly simple.

By **not placing your subject in an obvious spot**, such as the middle of the photo, the unequal parts seamlessly draw your attention from one part of the image to another.

Alternatively, **parts of equal appearance hold your attention awkwardly suspended**, as if you're unable to determine which of those parts is to be considered secondary or inferior to the other.

Ask yourself: which effect do you want to create?

Let's look at this in action... Which effect would you say is used on the next page? Do you think it works well?





3. Use leading lines

Leading lines are used to control the viewer's mind. When you look at an image, **your brain scans it and determines lines** which it will follow to read the image in detail.

Simply put, you can guide a person's attention from one part of the image to another by **decreasing the distance between your guiding lines**.

Look at the photo on the next page...

Did you notice how your eyes followed the road to the distance? What did you notice first? The snow on the mountain or the poles on the left?

You could also create drama and suspense by making your image harder to scan. Intersecting lines will make the photo feel less balanced and, combined with the right angles, you can create a piece of art that will stop your audience from trying to interpret the image, making it a lot **more memorable and engaging**.





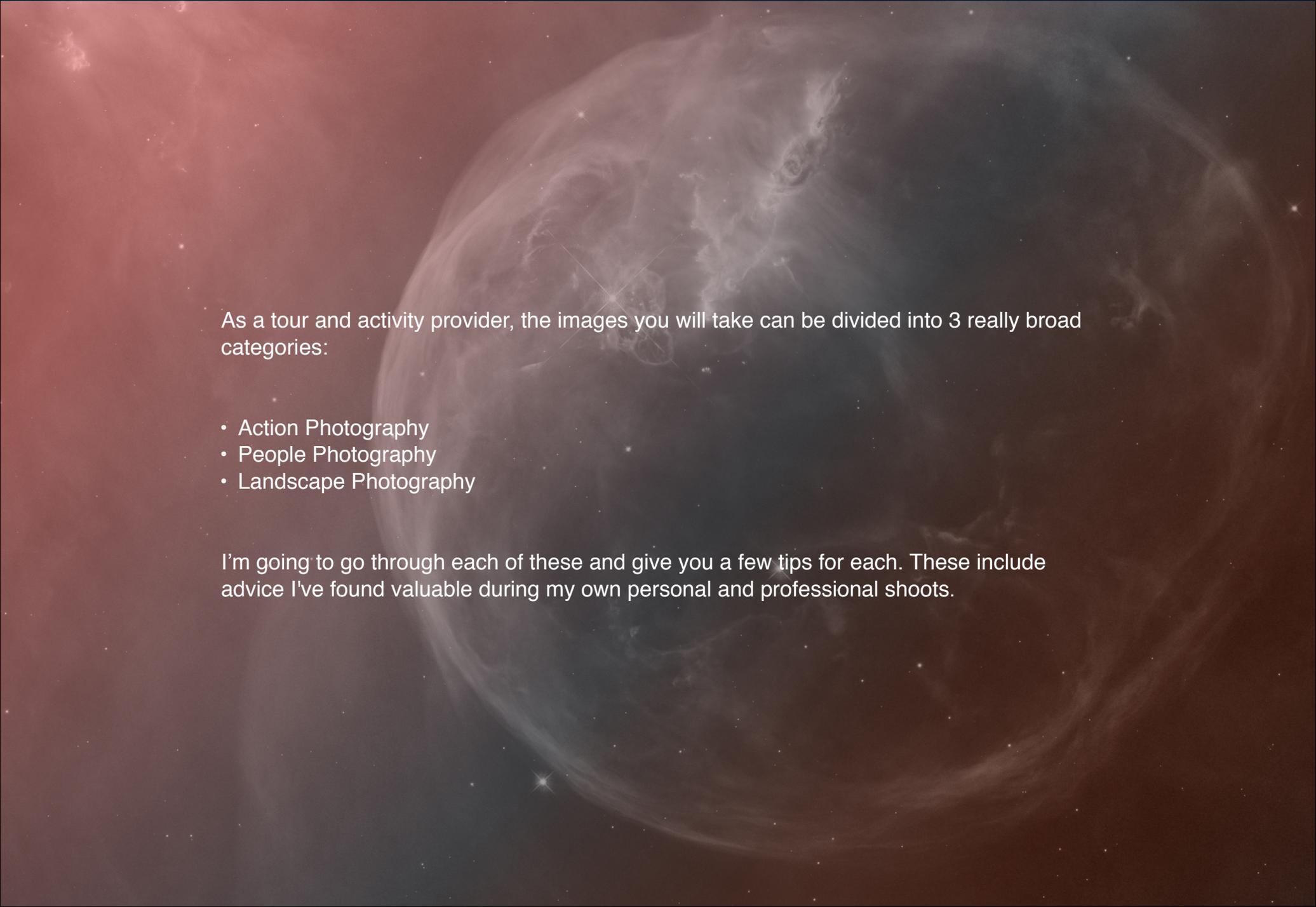
4. Understand framing

Framing is a commonly used word in photography. In this case, it sort of means a frame within the frame.

It's an effective composition technique to **surround your main subject with additional elements**. It communicates really clearly the important parts of the image. Play with your background and wrap your subject in it.

If your background or frame is a solid color, blurred, or has a simple pattern, it is perfect to hold additional elements such as logos and text for your marketing.





As a tour and activity provider, the images you will take can be divided into 3 really broad categories:

- Action Photography
- People Photography
- Landscape Photography

I'm going to go through each of these and give you a few tips for each. These include advice I've found valuable during my own personal and professional shoots.



5. Use burst mode

Action photography has its own distinct challenges. To capture it in all its excitement, you have to plan everything out before it happens. A good way to ensure you get the image you want is by using burst mode.

Burst mode is a feature on most phones where you can **capture multiple images within a short period of time**. This way you can't possibly miss anything happening. Also, it allows you to focus on composing your image and holding your subject in focus.



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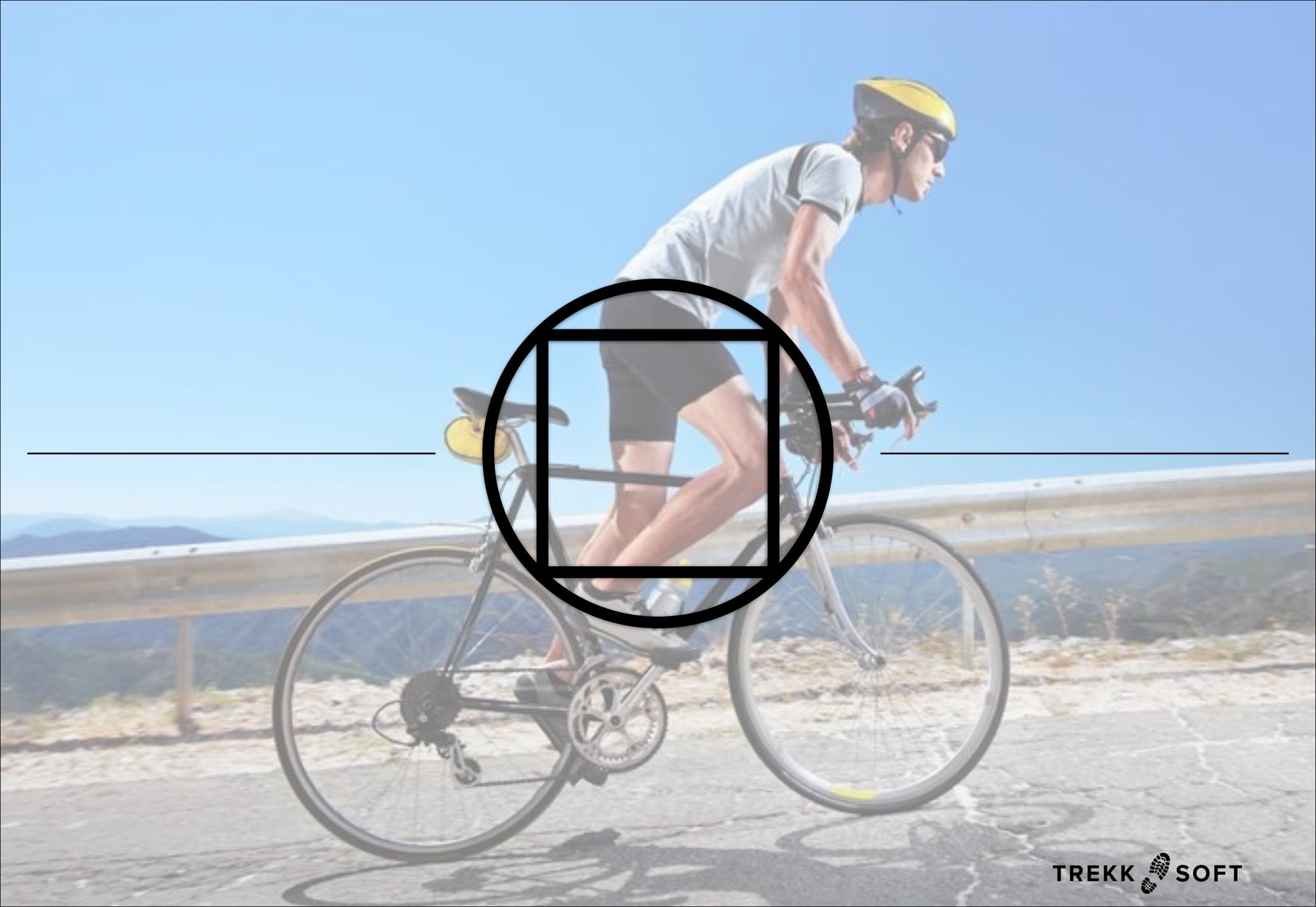
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6. Use prefocus for fast-moving objects

Prefocus is a technique for shooting fast-moving objects. **If you know the exact spot the object will pass by**, you can lock the focus of your camera on the point and hit burst to make sure you have a crystal sharp image.

Focus-lock is a common feature on mobile phones and in various 3rd party applications. If you are using an iPhone, just **tap and hold your finger till the yellow bar appears on the top of the frame**, indicating the lock.

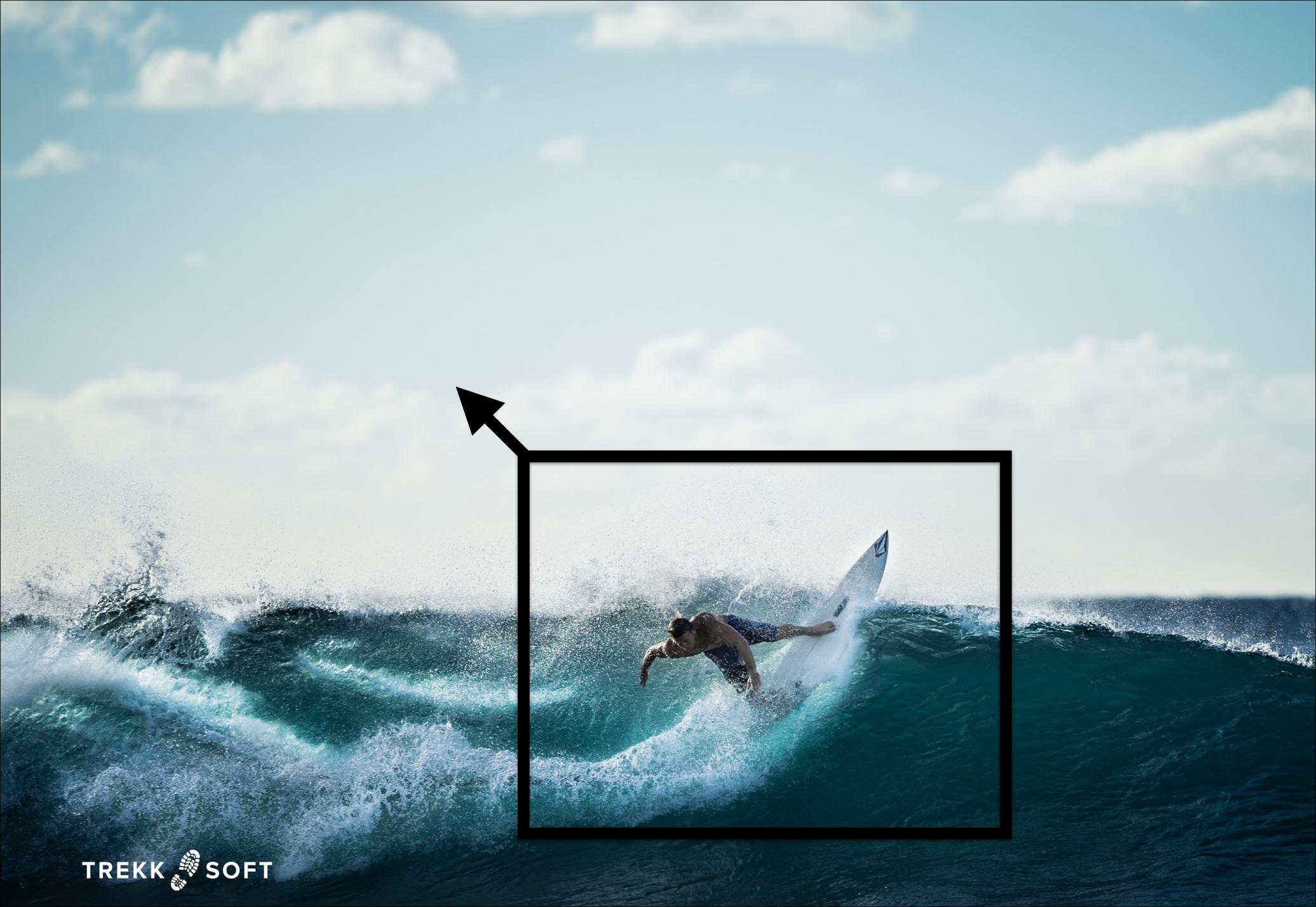


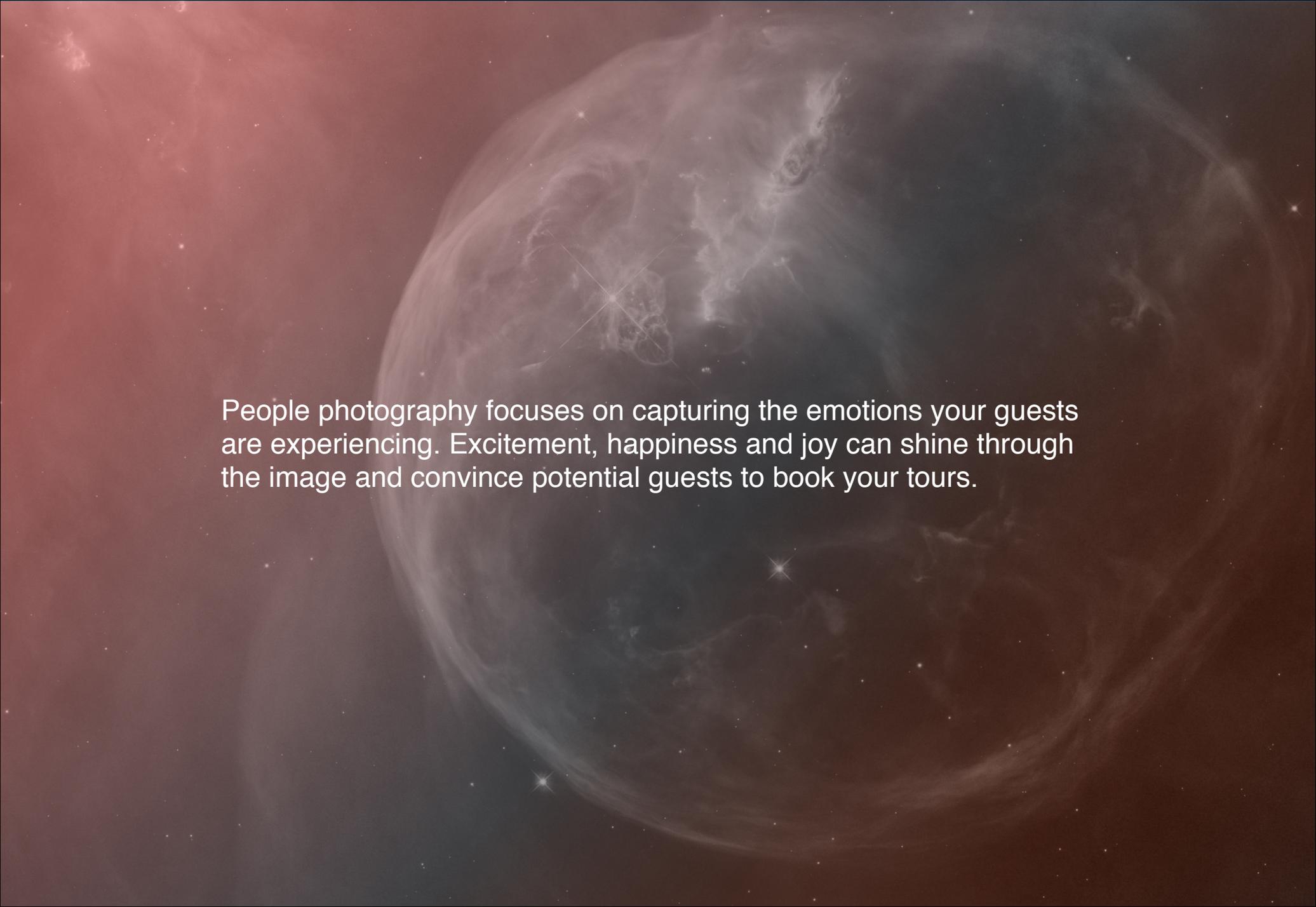


7. Don't get too close for action shots

When shooting action shots, you don't want to get too close to your subject. First of all, this is because it's harder for your camera to focus especially since the subject is moving. Also, the surroundings can make the image look a lot more interesting.

As I mentioned earlier, try to leave some negative (or blank) space in the photo you are taking. This will allow you to use it for more than one purpose, for example, as a Facebook cover photo and an image in a blog post.





People photography focuses on capturing the emotions your guests are experiencing. Excitement, happiness and joy can shine through the image and convince potential guests to book your tours.



8. Go paparazzi

Everyone, even subconsciously, knows the difference between a real and a fake smile.

To get real emotions on camera, **quit staging your photos**. Shouting “SMILE!” has hardly ever resulted in a good, genuine image. Be a bit more subtle and you'll get more natural results.





9. Get closer for people photography

Get closer. Close-ups can help you to capture more emotion in the person you're photographing.

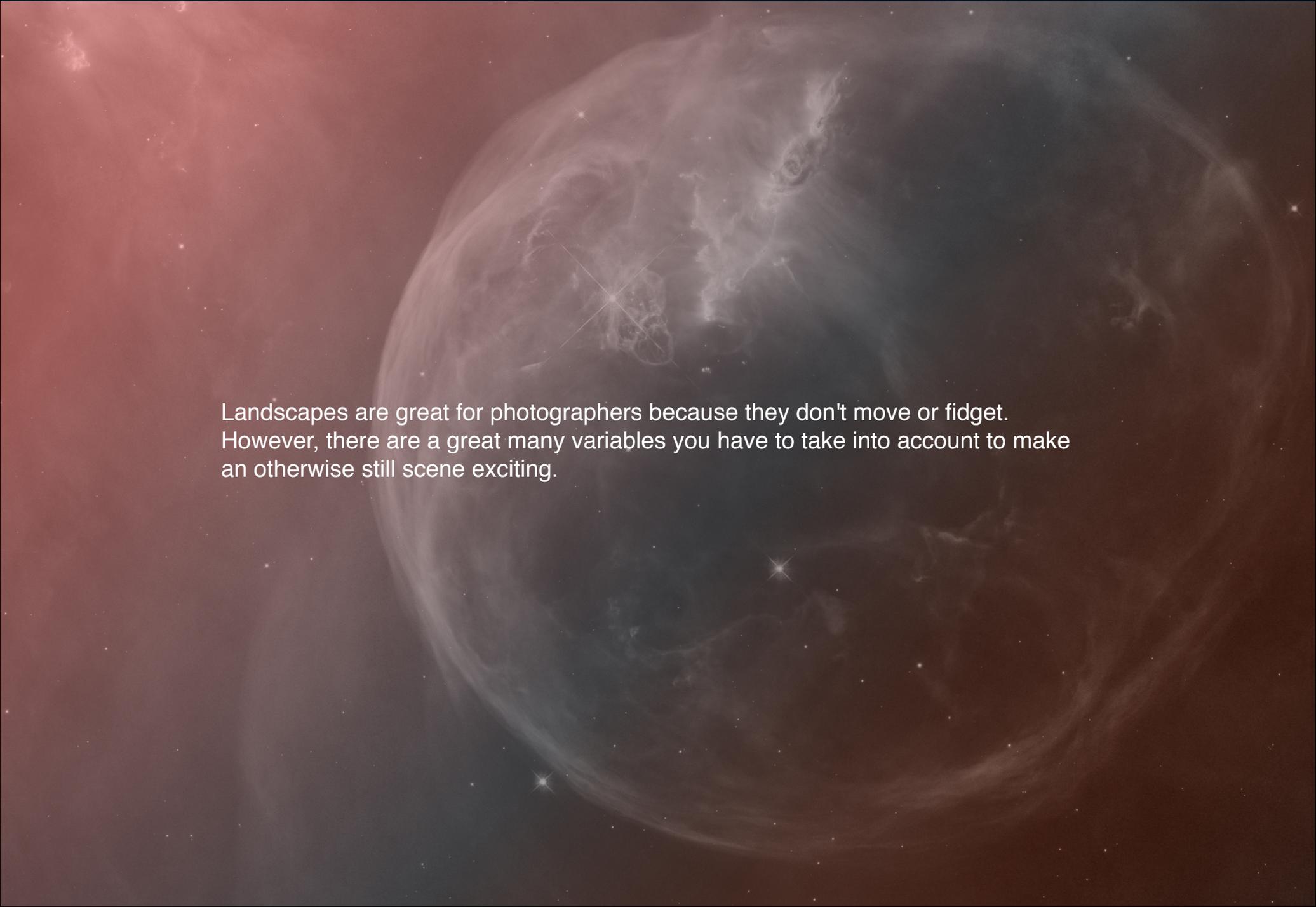




10. Get on eye level

Keep your subject's eye on the same level as your own eye to help more emotion come through in the photo. Additionally, this prevents the appearance of head-tops and double chins.





Landscapes are great for photographers because they don't move or fidget. However, there are a great many variables you have to take into account to make an otherwise still scene exciting.



11. Get the right light

You don't want to shoot midday, when the sun is the strongest. It creates unwanted high-contrast. In these situations, make use of shadows and reflected light.

Make sure you adjust your exposure by **tapping your subject on the viewfinder** to prevent your phone from adjusting to the brightness of its surroundings.

When shooting outdoor, ideally, you would want to aim for **the hour after dawn and the hour before sundown**: the so called golden hours, when the light of the sun is really directional and has a golden tint to it.

I don't have any other quick tips here, as every place has a unique time and weather when it looks best.

Interlaken, where I live, is the prettiest late in the mornings and when the night's fog sits on the slopes of the surrounding mountains almost like a belt, diffusing the bright morning light, only leaving thin streaks to shoot through.





12. Try panorama mode

There is no magic here. It simply looks great and provides a perfect solution to capture big monuments like mountains and huge buildings. Throw a few other subjects in there for additional dimensions within the image: these are essential to bring your landscapes to the next level.

Most phones have panorama functions, if your phone lacks it, download AutoStitch for your desktop or mobile device.

Watch out for people moving while you capture the image, otherwise you'll end up with creepy figures like how one of my colleagues turned out in the bottom-right corner in one of these panoramas...



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13. Embrace composition

Mountains will not run away. As long as the lighting conditions are ideal, you have all the time you need to work on your composition.

Composition refers to the intentional placement of specific objects in specific parts of a photograph, or moving your frame to make sure that certain objects are where you want them to be in a picture.

There are a few things which make the image on the following page great:

- The weight of the main subject is on an intersection (I'm referring to the Rule of Thirds here)
- The whole subject is aligned to the right vertical line
- The subject sits on the bottom horizontal line
- The lines on the image are defined and guide your focus towards the subject
- These lines are also framing the subject
- The dark rock in the foreground makes the composition more interesting, giving the whole image extra dimension.





An overview of basic photography principles

General principles

- 1. Consider viewpoint** - Think about what the photo will be used for and capture the image with an angle that's suitable for this. For instance, how much blank space do you want in the image?
- 2. The rule of thirds** - Visualise a 3 x 3 rectangular grid and place your objects where the lines intersect. This will help you get the most impact from your photos.
- 3. Use leading lines** - These direct the viewer's eye to where you want them to look.
- 4. Understand framing** - What do you want people to focus on? Look for elements in your photo that can frame the subject of your focus.

Tips for Stunning Action Shots

- 5. Use burst mode** - A common feature on most phones, this feature allows you to capture multiple images in a short period of time, allowing you to focus on your subject.
- 6. Use a pre-focus for really quick shots** - If you know the exact spot where your subject will pass, lock your camera's focus in that spot and use the burst mode to capture crystal sharp images.
- 7. Don't get too close to your subjects in action shots.**



How to Capture Great Pictures of People

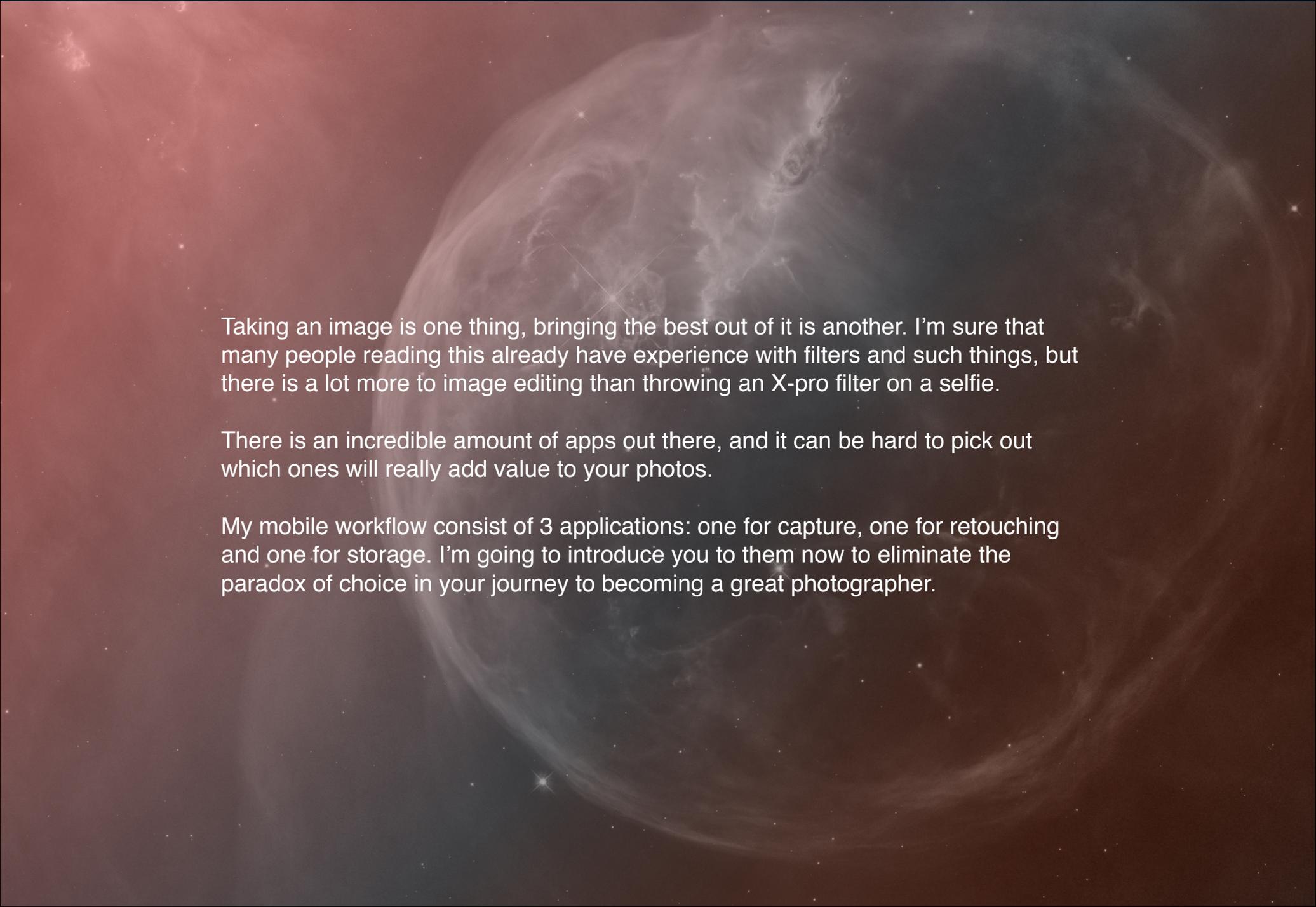
8. **Go paparazzi** - Stop staging your photos to get more natural results.
9. **Get close to your subjects to better capture their emotions.**
10. **Get to eye level with your subjects** - This helps to avoid capturing your subjects in angles that do not flatter them.

Simple Guides to Impressive Landscape Photos

11. **Make the most of light** - Know when your destination looks the most attractive and snap away!
12. **Try panorama mode** - Sometimes the best way to show off your destination is to show off everything about it.
13. **Embrace composition** - Think about the placement of the objects and subjects in your image. Does it create the effect you want?

Where to start?

I would recommend you to **get to know the camera features on your phone**. Go out and start taking photos and playing around with the different buttons you see on your screen. Try out different features, especially the panorama and burst mode. Get to know what your phone's camera can do, your most powerful marketing tool.



Taking an image is one thing, bringing the best out of it is another. I'm sure that many people reading this already have experience with filters and such things, but there is a lot more to image editing than throwing an X-pro filter on a selfie.

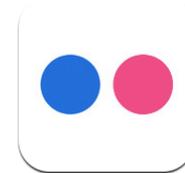
There is an incredible amount of apps out there, and it can be hard to pick out which ones will really add value to your photos.

My mobile workflow consist of 3 applications: one for capture, one for retouching and one for storage. I'm going to introduce you to them now to eliminate the paradox of choice in your journey to becoming a great photographer.



Apps

Eliminating the paradox of choice





ProCam

Brings the phone's interface closer to what you would find on a professional camera, has additional ISO and shutter speed settings.

I typically use the built-in camera app for my day-to-day photography. For days when I want to step my game up, I use ProCam. It gives me a little more control over my exposure than the regular app without compromising on image quality. Play around with it and see if it suits you.



Snapseed

Simple interface with an editing powerhouse behind it. Has everything you can wish for including a healing brush to get rid of unwanted objects or eye bags in your photos.

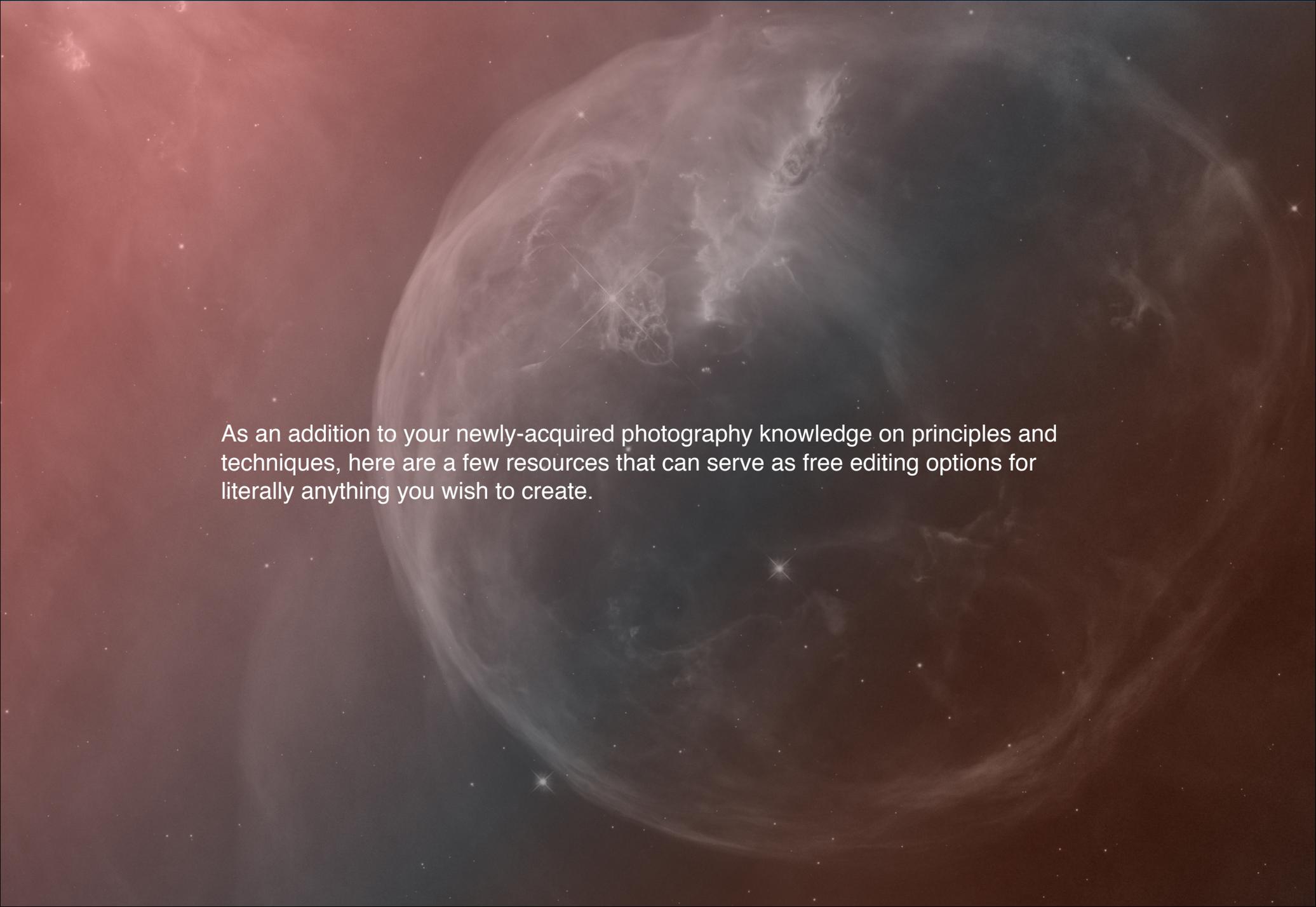
Google's all time image editor has a long history behind it. In recent years, in my opinion, it has become one of the best image editing applications on the market. And just like most Google products, you can get it for free. I wouldn't go into great detail about what it does, but I tell you, despite the incredible amount of features, Google has managed to keep this app's interface as intuitive as possible. Importing and exporting photos is super simple, and all the adjustments are controlled with finger motions on the image. I can't be the only one who hates to fiddle with buttons and sliders on a 5-inch screen.



Flickr

1TB storage for free. It also hosts your photos and lets you share them with a huge community of professionals.

I originally signed up for Flickr to join the community of photographers online. Later, when the Flickr app landed on my phone and started uploading all the photos I've taken (without displaying them publicly of course), I discovered their great cloud service. I've been a loyal user ever since. To me, people giving feedback and leaving comments on my work is just an added bonus. It has helped me grow as a photographer a lot more than any book, article, tutorial or class ever did.

A large, ethereal, glowing sphere with intricate internal patterns, set against a dark, starry background with a reddish glow on the left. The sphere has a complex, almost crystalline or cellular structure, with various shades of white, grey, and blue. The background is dark with scattered stars and a prominent reddish glow on the left side.

As an addition to your newly-acquired photography knowledge on principles and techniques, here are a few resources that can serve as free editing options for literally anything you wish to create.



pxlr.com

Edits images online from any computer. It is basically Photoshop online, for free.



canva.com

Really simple desktop editing application for print and social media design.

Canva is the best available software for simple media and print design. Headers, covers, posters and Facebook image templates are provided with a bunch of templates, icons, fonts and free stock photos.



[pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

A collection of royalty free images with commercial license without attribution.

When it comes to photos, my ultimate recommendation is Pexels. Even though the search function and image tagging is a little sloppy, it is still a great collection of images you can use commercially for free.

If you are feeling adventurous and not particularly determined about the subject of the stock photo you are looking for, try unsplash.com.



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