



**Reflections:
Photos and Queries**

**Using Photography
for
Breakthrough Shifts
in
Seeing, Communicating, and Being**

Photography and Writing by Sheila Finkelstein

INTRODUCTION to REFLECTIONS: PHOTOS and QUERIES by Sheila Finkelstein

Reflections take many forms. There are both **internal**, using our thought processes, and **external**...Reflections in mirrors, in glass – that from which we drink, windows, table tops; headlamps – cars, motorcycles, trucks; in water; reflected lights, including sunlight.

Do any other types of reflections occur to you?

The **REFLECTIONS photographs** within this document are meant to offer you inspiration for self-reflection, as writing prompts, and relaxation and inspiration as you simply “be with” each photo.

For this particular package, I chose the theme of reflections in water. It is water that gives me and many others the most peace, healing and sustenance. The queries are included for those who appreciate reflecting on their lives. Some appreciate using the queries as guided prompts for journaling.

The photographs are all ones that have been featured in my PICTURE TO PONDER ezine in its early years. The “Self-Reflecting Queries” have evolved over time and develop in each issue as I start writing about the photographs once I’ve selected them.

It is rare that I know in advance what the “Queries” will be. Oftentimes they may not seem directly related to the particular photograph. They arise out of discussing the photo selection process for the particular issue, or perhaps from something totally different.

Be sure to check out the Appendix at the end, page 17. There you will find my “7 Tips for Getting Out of a Funk – Using Your Camera”.

At the end, in a few places, I invite you to share your experiences and discoveries with me. I look forward to reading them.

QUERIES with REFLECTIONS



In a writing class, I had written a poem "From My Heart to Yours" responding to a prompt "In the scene there is...."

Unintentionally in my writing I began describing my experience of walking in Wakodahatchee Wetlands, a favorite nature spot of mine.

My writing continued on to the expression of love and gratitude to and for the subscribers to my Picture to Ponder ezine.

After the call I went for a walk in Wakohatchee Wetlands looking for the "perfect" picture to illustrate what I had written. Toward the end of the walk I saw the "heart." Perfect!

A Query:

Given we're just starting here with photos and queries, I am going to extend a simply invitation to you.

I invite you to look around you for the next day or two, simply being open to finding an image of a heart, not purposely created as such, in an object or nature.

When you find it, consider, "What does it represent to you?"

During that time you might also reflect on, "My heart feels full when I think of...."

Following is what I wrote in a free-flow writing exercise, prior to finding the photo.

Ode to Wakodahatchee

In the scene there is peace.
There is green.
There is water and
There are birds.
The people who are dear to me are there also.

My heart flutters at the sparkles in the water,
The splashes that spray when the terns dive down.
Food for all.

Sustenance comes from this peaceful place
With all that I love.
I want to share it.

I'd love for you to experience the texture,
The vibrancy, the beingness of the
Freshness of Nature and Humanity.

People, animals, birds, plants...
All alive to be appreciated,
Loved,
Nurtured.



An October golden sunrise at the ocean in Delray Beach, FL.

The Queries:

Reflecting on the warmth of the sun, I invite you to ask,

"Where, outside of me, do I find the light and energy that warms and sustains me?"



From a different perspective, the same October golden sun as in the previous photo and query, reflected on the beach in the surf at Delray Beach, FL.

The Queries:

"Where is the light and the power within me, that which stays steady during the ebb and flow of the waves in my life?"



Sunrise at the ocean in Boyton Beach, FL.

Pink clouds reflecting the sun, then reflecting themselves in the surf.

The Queries:

Where in your life is the fullest reflection of you?

What adjectives would someone else use to describe that?



Dramatic colors of sunset on a neighborhood walk I almost didn't take.

When I had looked out my window close to sunset, I was certain that it wasn't going to be a "great" sunset so I didn't bother going to the Wetlands where I usually went for sunset walks.

Glancing out my window a little later, I saw I was wrong. It was too late to go to the Wetlands so I went on a neighborhood walk. Thus the following queries arise.

The Queries:

Are there places in your life where you can widen the window out of which you are viewing your circumstances?

Are you open to possibilities coming from "not knowing," in addition to those you think you "know?"



A reflected fern in Wakodahatchee Wetlands looks like it's an actual leaf stem on top of the water

The Queries:

Are there places in your life where it is difficult to separate the "actual" or "real" from what you make up about it?

Do you live mainly out of being "present" or are you spending more time in the "stories" you are telling yourself?



Spatterdock flower, reflection, and leaves gilded bronze by the late afternoon sunlight

The Queries:

Challenged on selecting a photo for the ezine, I chose to write about "being in the moment" with a response I had written to a writing prompt:

"I am called to pull forth the beauty that I've seen and captured - that which, in the moment, inspires me. I am called upon, in this moment, to trust that that is what's right for me and for the people whom I will touch. It's not about perfection, getting it exactly right. It's about what catches my core - in the moment."

In relation to "perfectionism" and being in the moment –
Have you been going back and forth about anything in your life recently? At work? In relationships?

If so, I invite you to look at being "in the moment" of where you are right now. What you are seeing? What you are feeling?

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Sunrise from the top deck of a cruise ship in the Western Caribbean, with sunspots or lens glare being reflected

This image gives a feeling of being anchored by the strong dark colors and shapes of the translucent panels that protected the passengers, keeping them safely on board.

The view between is soft, warm and comforting and everything seems to hold together and move in a forward direction.

The Queries:

Reflecting on your own life, where are the supports, the lights?



Sunrise from the top deck of a cruise ship, from a slightly different position than the above –

Strong, bold, directed lines provide contrast to the softness of the sunrise.

The Queries:

Can you see your direction? What are the strengths in your life?

And, as importantly, how do you reinforce these tools for yourself so that you remember to put those actions in place?



Railing and Me in the Shadows on the left – Shadows and reflections in the water and rocks at Morikami Gardens in Delray Beach, FL

The Queries:

Are there places in your life right now where you are in the shadows?

If so, what are the shadows?

and

If so, when looking beyond, where can you see light?

The photo on the cover:



Fireflag Plant Reflections in Wakodahatchee Wetlands

In the issue in which I had posted this photo, I wrote: "This particular young plant caught my attention because of the feeling of oriental calligraphy that I got from it, combined with its reflections."

I see a lyrical quality wherein I also get the feeling of music. The little plant and reflection on the left seem to be the finale or "punctuation" point."

I wrote that I had been wanting to use this photo for a couple of weeks, from the time I first saw the image and felt the "calligraphy" of it. And there were several stalls.

The color was kind of gray and I thought I'd wait until I got the tools from the class I was in to remove the cast. In addition I thought the water might be too static, that a little more motion might provide a better contrast, and there were probably a few other things in the way.

In the meantime, when I went back on another Wakodahatchee walk, I realized the plant had grown fuller, the lighting was different, so the effect wasn't the same, and, even more ironically, I had already forgotten that I had wanted to re-photograph it in the first place."

So I finally published it with the following queries. And, I also used the image in many ways over the years.

The Resulting Queries:

"What do we gain in striving for 'perfection' beyond 'perfection'?"

Is there such a thing?

Can something be 'perfect' or almost so, the first time we see it, as is?

Final Note re the photographs:

A few of the photos in this mini-ebook are available for purchase as wall décor prints and on a wide range of other items on <https://sheila-finkelstein.pixels.com/collections/sunrises>.

While there be sure to check out the menu on the left for other collections of my art including photographs of Butterflies, Sunsets, more Sunrises, other Nature Photography, my Photo/Drawing Art, Truck Art, and Fantasy Landscape watercolor prints.



Sunset at Wakodahatchee Wetlands

The Queries:

As the sun is setting, so-to-speak, in this series of photos and queries, what are you taking away from them?

Is there anything you are now seeing from different perspectives in your life? with yourself? your relationships? your business or job?

I'd love to hear from you as to your experiences. Simply email me at Sheila.finkelstein@gmail.com with Photos and Queries in the Subject line.

If you questions, I'd be glad to set up an exploratory interview with you by phone or on Zoom video conferencing. Simply state that in your email listing your time zone and three best times that work for you.

APPENDIX:

7 Tips For Getting Out of a Funk - Using Your Camera

Do you ever feel stuck? Lacking in energy? Even think you might be in somewhat of a state of depression?

If your answer is "Yes" to any of these statements, continue on to read my tips for getting out of a funk. You will be tapping into your creative self who is waiting to be your partner. The only requisites are an open mind and a digital camera or cell phone camera.

The tips:

1 - Take a daily walk - You are constantly being told that walking is good exercise and important for our physical health and energy. Walks, especially when out in some form of Natural environment, are also good for your emotional well-being and for creating shifts in mental states.

One of my favorite quotes is "If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk." Anonymous.

Whether or not you believe in angels, I'm sure you've experienced new thoughts and ideas sometimes popping up, seemingly out of nowhere, as you are moving.

Sometimes the thoughts that seem to be battering our brain and don't seem to want to "let go". For those interested in positive forward movement in their lives, it is especially important during those times that we have an access to move out of this states.

For me, my camera is one of the most important "tools" to take with me on any walk. I have made it a practice to pay attention when something/anything catches my eye when I am walking, even when I am sitting someplace.

Once it grabs your attention, the next action is to take your camera out of your pocket or camera bag, wherever you have it stored, bring it to your eye

to snap a picture. You may continue taking more photos from different angles or simply move on.

It is not the photo that is so important, at that time, as it is the opportunity to shift your focus from, possibly, debilitating thoughts to a fresh place. It is in this shift that the de-stressing takes place. And at the same time you are strengthening your "focus" muscle, leaving you energized and in a new place.

2 – Have your camera with you at all times - The camera is a tool you can use to help you identify what's important to you in your life, as well as what you value in yourself and others. It's a way of making connections with people and with yourself, for discovering what gets you excited.

3 - Look outside yourself - Pay attention to your environment wherever you are - on a walk in your home, outside or even in the supermarket. Once we start using our eyes to look around us and see what's in front of us and on either side, we are expanding our vision.

4 - Stop whenever anything catches your eye - Many times, I'm sure, you've passed something that you've thought "ugly" or "insignificant" and walked right past it. I invite you to make the decision now to pause whenever an image catches your eye. There might be a reason, so stop and look again.

5 - Make it a Practice - Photograph Everything that catches your attention - Once you've stopped and made that decision, ready your camera and "snap" the photograph. Move closer; take another picture, then back and one more. Before leaving that spot, look around you and see if there is anything else that wants to be photographed.

6 - Continue your walk - In the process of photographing you might have observed that it was the color that attracted you, perhaps the shape or a texture. As you walk, look for others of those elements and once again repeat the photographing process.

7 - View your downloaded photos with new eyes - When you are back from your walk and have downloaded the photos to your computer, once again practice stopping at whatever images catch your eye - this time as you

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run them through with whatever download program you use. You might be surprised to discover things that you did not even notice before.

Following these steps are guaranteed to move you out of any "funk" you might be in. Using your camera in this way to open yourself up to seeing new things will also expand into other areas of your life, work and relationships.

In the [Through and From The Lens](#) program you can experience these practices in a group setting. Photos are shared in a private group on the web. During the course participants also gather in a video conference room to talk about their experiences to specific lessons as they share their photos.

Have breakthroughs and fun. Again, I'd love to hear from you at Sheila.finkelstein@gmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I am blessed to have many people in my life many whom I can acknowledge. For this publication, since most of the photographs were taken there, I simply want to acknowledge and thank the Palm Beach County Water Utilities for having created both Wakodahatchee Wetlands - <https://discover.pbcgov.org/waterutilities/Pages/Wetlands.aspx>- minutes from my house, and Green Cay Wetlands and Nature Center - <https://discover.pbcgov.org/parks/Locations/Green-Cay.aspx>- even closer to my home.

I have spent an accumulation of many hours walking on the boards in both locations, taking photographs, meeting people, and making new friends. These locations have provided respite for me many times.

The experiences have also resulted in the opportunity of my work, in one way or another, having made a difference for thousands of people globally.

FINAL WORDS:

These photos and queries are meant for your use only as part of your bonus.

Should you desire to use them on the web for illustrative purposes only, I herein grant such permission, provided you give attribution credit to ©Sheila Finkelstein at <https://TreasureYourLifeNow.com> and <http://www.photographyandtransformation.com>.

I would also appreciate your informing me when you use any of the photos and I would love feedback on any differences my photos and queries might make for you.

Also, as I noted earlier, a few of the photos in this mini-ebook are available for purchase as wall décor prints and on a wide range of other items on <https://sheila-finkelstein.pixels.com/collections/sunrises>.

While there be sure to check out the menu on the left for other collections of my art including photographs of Butterflies, Sunsets, more Sunrises, other Nature Photography, my Photo/Drawing Art, Truck Art, and Fantasy Landscape watercolor prints.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of coming into your life.

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