



## PROFESSOR KOBRE'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR BETTER PHOTOS

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**Get closer.** The legendary war photographer Robert Capa was right when he said, "If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough." Move in tight to capture the details of your subject and leave out busy details in the background.

**Have patience.** Hang out with your camera and visit for a while before starting to shoot. When people start to forget the camera is there, you can take more natural candid shots.

**Frame the background before pressing the shutter.** Look at the corners and edges of the photo, too, not just the center. Are there interesting shapes along the edges to keep the shot from looking too cluttered? Once you frame the background, then place your subject.

**Avoid busy backgrounds.** A colorful or visually active background can compete for attention with your portrait subject. One trick is move the person away from walls or other distracting backgrounds, and then stay close to focus. Focusing tight on your subject will throw the more distant background out of focus while maintaining the attention where it belongs.

**Don't use direct flash.** If a room is too dark to take pictures without flash, use your external flash to bounce the light from the ceiling or wall. Don't use direct flash. Light direct from your flash looks unnatural and washes out colors and facial features.

If you don't have an external flash for your 35mm SLR Canon, Nikon, or Pentax camera with a built-in pop-up flash, you can bounce the pop-up flash with Professor Kobre's Lightscoop™. The Lightscoop is an inexpensive tool that lets photographers create bounce light with the pop-up flash in these particular cameras.

Bounced light will evenly illuminate the scene and create natural-looking light. Bouncing off a wall produces a beautiful window-type light.

**Avoid shooting outdoors at midday.** Bright daylight is simply not the best light for nice pictures. Instead try shooting in early mornings and late afternoons when the light is warm and rich. If you must shoot during the day, move your subject into a shaded area out of direct sunlight.

**Try more night photography.** Evening offers interesting shadows and light. At night you can use flash, a street lamp or even holiday lights if they're bright enough. Put your camera on a tripod to avoid blurry images caused by camera movement, and then let the rest of the world move on by. You will see all kinds of interesting effects from light and subject movement.

**Let people be themselves.** Don't ask your subjects to pose—or allow them to strike a pose when they see the camera. Instead, ask them to continue with whatever they are doing. Once they are engaged in an activity, you can capture the kinds of candid moments that make photography so rewarding.

**Let posing be natural.** Avoid having someone stand or sit straight up. These tense postures look uncomfortable and don't say anything about the person. A little leaning or slouching can let personality come through. And you may find that NOT smiling for the camera will put your subject more at ease and allow you to capture a more meaningful, reflective moment.

**Include a telling item in your portraits.** Ask your subject to pick out a favorite toy or an item related to his or her hobby or business to include in a portrait. The item chosen and the person's interaction with it can reveal much about the subject's personality.

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“Ken Kobre is the author of “Photojournalism: The Professionals’ Approach” and inventor of Professor Kobre’s Lightscoop, the only camera accessory that instantly improves pop-up flash photos. For more information, see [www.lightscoop.com](http://www.lightscoop.com), or contact Professor Kobre at [asktheprof@lightscoop.com](mailto:asktheprof@lightscoop.com).”

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