



Tip Sheet: Get in the picture with your family

As anyone can see from my website, I love capturing the everyday moments for other families as well as for my own. One thing that I realized several years ago as I started to put together photobooks for my children was that I was falling into that trap of having so many photos of those around me and hardly any that included me. I don't love having my photo taken but I'm getting better at it because I know it is worth it. Years from now, I want something tangible to remember the little and big moments – moments that include me.

And while I love capturing these moments for others, I also think it is important for clients to have the tools to do it for themselves on a regular basis. These tips also apply if you live with someone who is technically challenged when it comes to setting up focus on your camera and you have stacks of blurry, impressionistic photos to prove it.

1) Get that camera out and learn how to use the self-timer

Think beyond the traditional selfie with your arm outstretched and faces filling the screen. Take some time to read up on how the timer on your camera works, whether you are using a phone or a DSLR. Some cameras have remotes or allow you to set up your phone to act as the remote which can also come in handy. This allows you to set up the shot, press a button and then step in front of the camera. You don't have to rely on anyone else to take the photo and it is pretty simple once you get the hang of it. Use a tripod if you have it and if not, keep things simple and use whatever surface is handy (and safe) to rest your camera on.

2) Focus is key

When setting up your shot, ensure that your subject is in focus. If the subject will be you and obviously you are behind the camera right now setting things up, there are two options:

- a. Focus on something that is the same distance as where you will be, press the shutter release and then recompose your shot...and run into position before the timer goes off.
- b. Place an object (stuffed animal will do the trick) where you will be in the shot so that you can lock the focus in that area, once you press the shutter release, get into place and move the object out of the way.

3) Setting up the shot

Try to get your composition and settings in order before you get others involved. This is important to avoid meltdowns and frustrations that can kill the mood. When setting up the shot, check the edges of what is in your frame and take time to compose it the way you want – to include and exclude details. Experiment with different perspectives.

4) Take multiple shots

When setting up the timer, use the option for continual shooting (taking several shots in a row) to increase your odds of getting a good shot. Don't worry if they don't turn out at first. Keep trying. It takes practice and sometimes luck to get things to align for that perfect shot.

5) Push yourself to do it regularly

Life gets busy and it is easy to forget or to tell ourselves that you will do it later. Like anything else that is important to you, make it part of your routine. Keep the camera close so you are ready if a moment presents itself. It is also important to know when to move on. If others are losing patience or are just not feeling it, try another day.

6) Be kind to yourself and don't make excuses for not wanting to be in the picture

Don't overthink it. Just do it and you will be happy you did when you see those moments. If it helps, remind yourself that these moments are not just about you but about preserving moments for your family.

Looking for inspiration on how to capture life with your family? Check out this beautiful project by a group of photographers: Wherever I am with you (<http://www.whereveriamwithyou.com/> *)

(*While this project is moms with their kids, the same applies for Dads – let us not forget to include them as well!)

Contact me if you have any questions about these tips. Happy shooting!