



001: WHY I STOPPED SHOOTING IN AUTO MODE

Listen. If you own a camera and feel comfortable shooting in AUTO– keep doing it. BUT, if you read this and feel encouraged to try shooting manual– also do that. My photography journey started about 10 years ago when I asked for a camera for my birthday. When I was lucky enough to get it, I unboxed it and immediately ran outside to capture whatever I could. I never opened a manual or the For Dummies book my mom added on.

I noticed that the "A" on the shooting mode dial stood for AUTO and thought, "Well...that should be good enough! I can just shoot and go," I thought. That's all there is to a digital camera, right? Not until I took a film photography course in college did I truly understand the value of shooting in MANUAL– because I had no other choice. Now I had to rely on myself to make the best call on settings so that the shot came out exactly how I wanted to. The worst part about it? I couldn't check the result and adjust in the moment. I had to wait until I took approximately 36 pictures, develop the roll, enlarge, and print.

Learning how to not depend on the camera to "choose the best settings," (more on this next time) allows you to depend on your own knowledge to sharpen your skills and technique. Since shooting MANUAL, I've gotten way better at troubleshooting, pointing out what went wrong immediately, adaptability (especially in situations with inconsistent light) and understanding photographer jargon (which I also don't care about).

NONE of this is to say that you should change how you shoot– do what works for you. BUT, sometimes life truly happens outside of your comfort zone– give it a shot (pun intended).

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