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The Seeing, Not the Taking
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My middle son is coming into his own right as a photographer, as is his little brother. While on a backpacking trip to Colorado this summer, he took a goodly number of images and then led his little brother and me through an image show presented on the television screen (ain't technology grand!). As he conveyed stories about each image and his feeling about them, I realized how much a part of him the images were. One photo, in particular, struck me.

The hike took him and his buddy to the continental divide area in southern Colorado. From one vantage point atop gray granite, the landscape comprised gray peaks and sides of peaks and snow—no valleys and no tops higher than his save for off in the distance. Above him, only sky. At this image he paused and said, “Sitting here dad, taking it all in, thinking of Thoreau’s work (he had taken “Walden” with him as a second companion), I felt like God was sitting next to me.” “He was,” I replied. His comment struck me because, at almost 20, he is “religious,” though he has a strong spiritual side.

How often do we allow our work, or that of others, to touch us as much as that scene touched him? How often do we pause to allow in, and acknowledge, that a greater power does indeed sit next to us at our moments of inspiration and/or creation?

We are all called to the act of creation. It is in our hearts and souls. As photographers we use tools to modify, move and read the material we can't touch—light—to breathe life into our ideas, to breathe life into the two-dimensional images of our subjects that inspire us. Light, the invisible yet discernable power for all life is ours to create with. How lucky we are.

I recall my son's excitement for the scene and for the image, and his enthusiasm. The root of the word “enthusiasm” is Greek, meaning “possessed by a god” or “having the god within.” Since the dawn of civilization, there has been the need to describe the power and source of that **feeling** inside. Inspiration is enthused; enthusiasm feeds our creative energy and our ability. Use it.

No matter what our preferred subject matter is, or our level of experience, our ability to breathe life into an image by letting light and our imagination work together is a powerful one. We are part of ongoing creation. Consider that and who is sitting next to you. Consider the power, the muse and the enthusiasm that you genuinely feel for that which inspires. Then see with new, enthused eyes before adding to creation. It's the seeing, not the taking that matters first.

Check Dion's [site](#) for other tips for photographers and other creative/expressive folks, as well as the calendar of his presentations around the community.