



NOV 7-13, 2008

Friday

Presenting the most coveted wish list in the gender wars 60

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■ DOS AND DON'TS

Through the lens

Feroz Khan, a freelance photographer based in Dubai, offers some insights into the best way to use a digital camera.

DOS

- Capture all photos in the highest resolution possible. This allows greater cropping of the photo and larger prints. Higher resolution pictures also allow greater flexibility during post processing.
- Read your camera's manual and understand every feature that comes with it. Your camera can probably do a lot more than you think it can so be conscious of its capabilities and limitations.
- Push your creative limits further by experimenting with extreme aperture and shutter speed settings. Try out long shutter speeds or wide apertures for closeups. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the results.
- Capture the same subject from different angles and heights. Examples of varying heights could be standing on a chair and looking down on your subject, kneeling down and looking upwards at your subject.
- Be prepared. There can be nothing more disheartening than getting the perfect scene and lighting, but finding out that you've run out of battery or memory.
- Read about photographic techniques and research the works

of established photographers. This will give you an idea of what is possible in this wonderful art and what can be achieved through constant practice.

DON'TS

- Take photos at low shutter speeds (1/50th of a second and below) without a tripod or other support. You may end up with a perfect exposure but a blurry photo.
- Edit the original image without making a backup copy. Also never edit the same file and save over it repeatedly as compressed formats such as JPEG lose quality each time they are saved.
- Put your camera on auto flash mode. Instead, choose the right flash mode by carefully studying exactly which part of the frame you want to illuminate.
- Expect a camera phone to provide you with good pictures in low light. Most camera phones can provide decent pictures in well lit conditions but fail miserably in poor lighting. Stick to a compact digital camera or, better still, use an SLR.
- Be tempted to shoot at the highest available ISO setting unless the situation really demands it. The higher the ISO, the higher the graininess and the lower the quality of the image.

– As told to Preethi Janice D'Sa, a Dubai-based freelancer



Got a personal story or advice that you would like to share? Something quirky, funny, sad, mad, profound, poignant or a combination of a few or all of these? Then send your ORIGINAL ideas and perspectives to Friday's 'Collage' by e-mailing friday@gulfnews.com.

■ SHAWARMA FOR THE SOUL

Second chances

Have you ever experienced something so unexpected that it took your life onto a totally different path?

Ibrahim Nalakath has.

It may have been long ago – December 31, 1976 – but Ibrahim remembers that day with amazing clarity. It was a simple desire to come to Dubai in the golden days when people from the Indian sub-continent flocked to the shores of the UAE to live and work to support their families.

“At Cochin Airport I befriended a fellow Keralite. Just as we were about to check in, Indian Airlines announced that our flight to Bombay had been delayed. The flight was eventually cancelled. There were 18 of us who were stranded, but we decided to demand to be put on an alternative flight with the airlines. There was one flight available to Bombay but it was via Madras. My new friend and I spent the wee hours of New Year's Day searching for rooms in Bombay. We finally decided to stay at a relative's place.

After a short sleep, we visited the Air India office to get my flight confirmed to Dubai. My friend was travelling to Abu Dhabi on a Gulf Air flight leaving at 2:30am the next day. I was given the option to either board a flight to Dubai (Emperor Ashoka) at 7pm that night or another one at 1:30am the next day. My friend proposed that we both share a taxi to the airport so that he could have company. I therefore ended up taking the 1:30 am flight to Dubai.”

Was it destiny's trick or treat that Emperor Ashoka bound for Dubai at 7pm crashed and all on board were killed? Ibrahim ponders this. “I was 22 then, single, but with many goals to accomplish. Although I was one of the youngest in the family (I have seven brothers and five sisters), I was filled with hope to support them and their



PHOTO COURTESY PREETHI JANICE D'SA

families. It all could have disappeared in a flash if I had boarded the doomed plane. We heard about the plane crash from the autorickshaw driver who was driving us to the airport. We were shocked at first and the next minute we were hugging each other because we were still alive!"

There were no mobile phones or text messages to send off, so how did Ibrahim's family feel when they were informed that Ibrahim was not on the doomed flight? "I could not contact my family. There were no landlines in those days so I left a message with a friend, who failed to pass it on to my brother who was in Calicut. I later learnt that my family was in panic for an entire day before it was confirmed by the airline that I was not on that plane. When I look back at what I've accomplished since that day, it is amazing that I've been given a chance to live which those on the flight would never have."

Ibrahim has accomplished a lot since the time he set foot in Dubai. He is now the business support manager for a

global engineering consultancy firm here. He could be due for a long service award having served this firm for 34 years.

"I'm grateful to Allah for having given me lots of opportunities. I was able to bring my siblings and their families to the UAE and help them find jobs. Most of them are now settled quite well.

"I eventually got married and now have five beautiful children. The eldest son is in the US and doing well. I have a grandchild, who is my daughter's son, Ayaan, living in Abu Dhabi. Another son of mine recently moved to Malaysia to pursue a degree in 3D visualisation. I have two others here with me, a son who is studying chemical engineering and a daughter who is in high school. To top it all, my children are talented in many ways. What else could a father ask for?"

Ibrahim is also grateful to his wife, Sabira. Her lunches lovingly packed for him every day to take to work are something that he looks forward to.

Ibrahim Nalakath with his grandchild Ayaan Shaheen and his wife, Sabira. "Always be grateful for every moment that you are alive," he says.

"My wife is innovative in her own way. She comes up with culinary ideas that tantalise my tastebuds to such a degree that I am always in awe of what she will prepare next."

His philosophy is to "be grateful for every moment that you have. Be fully aware of each breath. You never know when it will be taken from you. Always follow your heart and your goals; the last thing you want to do is to awaken in your old age and find that you've not done anything in your life that you really wanted to do. Life is a gift. Live it." **E**

- As told to Preethi Janice D'Sa