



## Life as a Professional Photographer

---

When people hear that I am a professional photographer, many speak with words of envy and how they too wish they could do this for a living. Therefore, I am writing this piece for all those who feel that this life is for them. Like everything else in the world, this too is a job. Do not think that being a photographer means you get to travel the world in style, take pictures and then everyone will want to buy your work. Photography takes hard, hard work and a time dedication well beyond just 40 hours a week. At least I get to travel right? Well, traveling as a photographer is much different than your typical summer vacation, or camping trip. While on location you rarely if ever get a hotel room, or a fire; perhaps just a sleeping bag in the back of your truck. Your meals are not from a fine restaurant or even McDonalds for that matter. Your lucky if you get to suck down a bowl of soup that gets cold with every second in the cold mountain air. You are in the elements all day every day while on location. This means when it is raining, there you are; when it is snowing, there you are; when it is 125 degrees in the relentless sun, there you are. No air conditioning, heater, or roof over your head to shelter you from the elements. You are subject to Mother Nature and all she wishes to send your way! You get up very early in the morning to start photographing, and even get up when it is -10 degrees, snowing and windy. You generally photograph well into the night under the same harsh conditions as morning. When you retire in the evening, it is not to a warm bed, but back to your sleeping bag for only a couple hours before it starts all over again. During the daylight hours, you have to explore the landscape, search maps, and try to determine where you are going to shoot in the evening ,as well as the next morning. There is also the hours in the day when you just sit and wait. Wait for the light, or for that grizzly bear to grab a fish in the river, or for the hours of evening to come. Wait for the mosquitoes to stop swarming, the rain to stop, or for your hands to warm up enough to focus your lens. These scenarios can go on for days, weeks and even months. I remember one summer in Alaska it went on for three months before I ever stepped foot into a hotel room and got a warm meal. If this sounds like the kind of life you could handle then perhaps you might be able to manage as a professional photographer. After all that is the fun part! Once your business trip is over, then the real work begins.

Like every other job in this world, photography takes work. No matter what you do for a living it is essential that you love what you do! I LOVE being a photographer, and everything that comes along with it, even the hard work, and especially the harsh conditions it presents. To me it has wonderful rewards that inspire, and give direction to MY life. I love being able to spend time in nature with all of Gods creations; to feel their warmth and companionship. I love to listen to the words of nature, echoing in the cascading stream and the rustling leaves; to feel the companionship of a truly wild animal; to feel the cold wind on my face; the icy streams that quench my thirst, and the sun that warms my face. These are a few of the things I love about my profession.

You will find that every job, even yours has these same traits, as long as you love what you are doing. Life is too short to not enjoy it.