

Where is Your Subject Looking and Why Does it Matter?

by [Darren Rowse](#)



[Image by Hel Des](#)

When posing a subject, two important questions to ask yourself are:

- 1. 'where are they looking?'
- 2. 'what impact does this have on the shot?'

Lines are an important aspect of any shot and can draw the attention of your image's viewer and lead their eye into the shot.

The gaze of your subject can have a similar impact. Here are a few examples:

- two people looking at each other - draws your viewer into 'relationship'
- a child holding out a plate with a chocolate cake but looking at the camera gives a feeling of invitation - the child becomes the focus
- a child holding out a plate of chocolate cake and looking at the cake can give a sense of 'desire' - the cake become the focus
- Looking outside the frame can leave the viewer wondering what they're looking at?

Here are a couple of considerations to keep in mind when making a decision on how to pose your subject:



[Image by stoneth](#)

Looking Away from the Camera

- If your subject is looking at something other than the camera viewers will naturally want to see what it is. You then have two choices - either to show them or not hide the object of their gaze.
- If the object is within the frame this will often create a focal point for your shots (example - in the picture of the 'bubble boy' above).
- If the subject looks outside the frame it can create either tension or intrigue. This can either spoil or make the shot!

Looking Directly At the Camera



[Image by Mareen Fischinger](#)

- If your subject is looking directly at the camera it's hard not to look at them - they become the focal point
- Sometimes when a subject looks directly at the camera it can create discomfort or tension for the viewer of the image - it can be a very strong and confronting pose. This is not necessarily bad - in fact it can really make the shot quite powerful - but it is something to be aware of.

The direction that your subject looks when being photographed can have a profound impact upon an image so give it careful consideration. Many different poses can work and will alter the mood and focal point of the image considerably.

The key is to know what you're wanting to achieve and to experiment with different set ups to get those results.