

# Creative Energy Questionnaire by Jim Beecher

[photokaboom.com](http://photokaboom.com)

## Section A - Four BIG Questions

Just jot down a few words. We'll come back to these questions later.

### A1: Why photography?

Please write your answer here:

### A2: Write down some ideas for a photography project. If you're doing a project, how can you extend the project in some way?

Please write your answer here:

### A3: List any tools and techniques that you would like to learn more about.

Help: Exposure, aperture, shutter speed, depth-of-field, lighting, flash . . .

Please write your answer here:

### A4.1: Light is the most important ingredient in your photography, besides yourself. How sensitive to light are you?

(1 = poor; 5 = excellent)

Help: Do you ask yourself, as you pick up your camera, "Is this good light?"

Please choose \*only one\* of the following:

1  2  3  4  5

### A4.2: Light can be described using the qualities below. Write a word or two about each one, or give an example of each.

Help: Review the sections about light in [PATH: Ways-of-Working in Photography](#).

Please write your answer(s) here:

Direction the light is coming from:

Size of the light source relative to the subject:

Distance of the light source from the subject:

Color of the light:

## Section B - Basics

These are easier questions than those in the first section.

### B1: What type of camera or process do you use or wish to explore?

Please write your answer(s) here:

Film?:

Digital?:

Pigments?:

Mixed media?:

Or?:

### B2: What sort of camera(s) do you like, or feel you would like?

Please write your answer(s) here:

35mm film?:

Digital?:

Point-and-shoot?:

Toy camera?:

Pinhole?:

Panoramic?:

Medium format (6x7 cm., 2 1/4")?:

Large format (4x5" & 8x10")?:

Or?:

### B3: Color or tone?

Please write your answer(s) here:

Color?:

B&W?:

Or?:

### B4: Which processes do you employ, or want to learn more about?

Please write your answer(s) here:

In the darkroom (silver & chemicals)?:

On the desktop darkroom?:

Alternative processes, such as cyanotypes?:

**B5: Do you do photography by itself, or with another medium?**

Please write your answer(s) here:

Text?:

Collage?:

Music?:

Installation?:


Video?:

Web?:

Or?:

**Section C - Your Sniglet**

**Sniglet Identity Card #12345**

|   |   |                                    |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Subject</b>                          | Bikes, cars, frozen towels, people |
|   | <b>Genre</b>                            | Portraiture                        |
|   | <b>Location</b>                         | NYC and Catskills                  |
|   | <b>Camera/Process</b>                   | Lots                               |
|   | <b>Theme</b>                            | Transformation                     |
|   | <b>"ism," philosophy, belief system</b> | Lapsed pantheist                   |

On the following pages, there are questions about subject, genre, location, type of camera and process, theme, and "ism."

Your photography is largely a combination of these categories.

*Sniglet* is my term for this combination. Each photographer has his or her unique sniglet.

Here's a [visualization of a sniglet](#).

**C1.1: Do you like a particular genre?**

Please write your answer(s) here:

People?:

Landscape?:

Still life?: \_\_\_\_\_

Documentary?: \_\_\_\_\_

Abstract/formal?: \_\_\_\_\_

Or?: \_\_\_\_\_

**C1.2: Take your top genre, and elaborate using the categories below.**

Please write your answer(s) here:

Tools: \_\_\_\_\_

Techniques: \_\_\_\_\_

Expectations of the photographer: \_\_\_\_\_

Expectations of the viewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Guidelines, conventions, styles: \_\_\_\_\_

Purposes/meanings: \_\_\_\_\_

Point-of-view: \_\_\_\_\_

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Feelings: \_\_\_\_\_

Money: \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

**C2: Do certain subjects attract your attention/interest/passion?**

Please write your answer here:

**C3: A certain location?**

Please write your answer(s) here:

Corporal?: \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic?: \_\_\_\_\_

Affective (such as disgust)?: \_\_\_\_\_

Verb (such as having activism)?: \_\_\_\_\_

Temporal (such as freezing motion or the past)?: \_\_\_\_\_

Ghost in the machine?: \_\_\_\_\_

Or ?:

**C4: Do you have a theme to which you return often?**

**Help:** There are zillions of possibilities. Look at the information and entertainment that you encounter for ideas about your photography themes. For example, what sorts of books appeal to you? There may be a common theme. Or, look at the who, what, where, when, and why, of what you do at home, out in the world, and in your relationships.

Please write your answer here:

**C5: A certain type of camera or process?**

**Help:** Perhaps the type of camera or process that you use, is who you are, as a photographer. One of my best friends identified herself as a pinhole photographer. She also could have called herself a Calotype photographer, as she made her own photography paper using this process.

Please write your answer(s) here:

Type of camera?:

Type of process?:

**C6: You may identify with an "ism," philosophy, or a belief system. For example, "I'm a feminist photographer." Or, "I'm a cynical-existential-optimist."**

**Help:** An ism, philosophy, or belief system, can change the way we experience ourselves, others, the world, and our photographic way-of-working.

Please write your answer(s) here:

ism?:

Philosophy?:

Belief system?:

Or ?:

**Section D - Personality**

This section is about you more personally.

There are polarities. Define what the polarities mean to you, and check the number that represents where you are, photographically, between the two polarities.

Recognize that our personalities are not constant. Personality depends on the context in which we are at a particular time. You may be a "3" behind a camera, and a "5" at work, for example.

Remember, being a particular number is only "bad" if it get's in the way of your photography.

**D1: Are you more x, or more y?**

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

**Risk-taking:** Sit on the sofa (1) v. Sky diving (5)

1  2  3  4  5

**Tolerance for ambiquity (1) or desire for certainty (5):** "That dead-end road looks interesting." (1) v. "I want global positioning at all times." (5)

1  2  3  4  5

- Ability to concentrate: "What's this!" (1) v. "Whatever." (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Tolerance for mistakes/frustration (1) or judging self strictly (5): "As long as no one is hurt, I'll try . . ." (1) v. "I must not, ever, make a mistake." (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Level of craftsmanship required: Messy (1) v. Perfection (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Level of control preferred: Steps 1, 2, 3 (1) v. Flip a coin (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Preference for analysis (1) or intuition (5): "The reason why is . . ." (1) v. "I don't know why I did it that way." (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Instant gratification (1) or the long road (5): Now! (1) v. Pacing (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Love of novelty (1) or comfort with the tried-and-true (5): Vroom! (1) v. Put, put, put, put, put . . . (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Procrastination (1) or decision making (5): "Where's the remote?" (1) v. "Let's get out and try . . ." (5)  1  2  3  4  5
- Planning & knowing (1) compared with spontaneity & curiosity (5): "I have to do this, and then I'll do that." (1) v. "I wonder what would happen if . . ." (5)  1  2  3  4  5

**D1.1: Pick out one of the above traits, and write a few words about the trait.**

Please write your answer here:

**D2: What motivates you?**

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

- Fear \_\_\_\_\_
- Pleasure \_\_\_\_\_
- Recognition \_\_\_\_\_
- Please self (pride, honor, respect) \_\_\_\_\_
- Please others (who?) \_\_\_\_\_
- Extrinsic reward (money, status, power) \_\_\_\_\_
- Connecting with self, others, or ? \_\_\_\_\_
- A feeling or mood \_\_\_\_\_
- Music \_\_\_\_\_
- Religion or belief system \_\_\_\_\_
- Love of nature, cosmology, or ? \_\_\_\_\_

**D3.1: Fear is a top motivator. What's something scary about photography?**

Please write your answer here:

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**D3.2: Pleasure is another top motivator. What are five aspects of photography that you find pleasurable?**

Please write your answer(s) here:

1):

2):

3):

4):

5):

**D4: Pick out one of your motivators, and write a few more words about the motivator.**

Please write your answer here:

**Section E - Passion, Sensitivity, & Discipline**

Passion and sensitivity go together, but discipline doesn't. Or does it?

**E1: What are you passionate about, even, obsessed about?**

Help: Passion and obsession provide energy to move, and to lay down planks over the pitfalls along the way. Passion and obsession create a destination that's highly visible in your mind's eye. If you've got a place to go, you'll get there. Having a destination creates more energy.

Please write your answer here:

**E2.1: Sensitivity is needed by photographers. Besides a sensitivity to the qualities of light, what else are you sensitive to?**

Help: To others, to self, to animals, to the weather, to a memory, to a loss, to . . .

Please write your answer here:

**E2.2: What are you allergic to, photographically?**

Help: Chemicals, know-it-alls, artspeak, . . .

Please write your answer here:

**E3: For creativity, photographers need some amount of discipline. At a fundamental level, we need to get a camera into our hand some way or another, often. Write about any strategies you have for finding the time, for finding the mood, for photography. For example, a strategy is to make sure your camera is accessible. Look for a camera bag with a hook-and-loop flap covering your camera. Having a routine is another strategy. See the *Help* section below.**

Help: Routine: Writers often have a routine that they follow each day. Photographers often do, as well. Routine includes patterns in what you do and when. It also includes the qualities of your workspace. While you may not be putting on your photographer hat every day, you may want to look to see if you have a routine. If so, you can encourage the routine. If not, you may want to establish one.

Please write your answer here:

**Section F - Things to Do**

There are best practices in medicine, i.e., treatments that are proven to be effective (and not just anecdotal "proof").

This section describes some of the best practices of creativity.

**F1: Do you have a place for text notes, such as a notebook, journal, or PDA?**

Please choose *\*only one\** of the following:

- Yes
- No

**F2: Do you have a place to keep *visual* notes? Visual notes are visual examples of what you want to do more of, or less of. Do you have a pile, file, album, or a bulletin board, for visual notes?**

Help: Oddly, I've never encountered this seemingly obvious concept, visual notes, in a class or book.

Please choose *\*only one\** of the following:

Yes

No

**F3: Do you have a place to keep your project that's visible, such as a bulletin board or a picture rail?**

Help: If you keep your newest work in a box, you can't live with it. Living with it enables you, as you walk by, to learn more. As you talk on the phone, and look at your photographs, you'll see what's missing and what needs to be done. Don't just put out your best work.

Please choose *\*only one\** of the following:

Yes

No

**F4: Do you look at photographs?**

Help: On the web, in books and magazines, in galleries, and museums . . .

Please write your answer here:

**F5: Are you connected with other photographers?**

Help: In person, in a class, a MeetUp group, a camera club, or online in a forum

Please write your answer here:

**F6: Write out some tasks and goals. They can be immediate and long-term.**

Help: Buy something, research something, experiment with a tool or technique, do a self-assignment, get involved in a project, take a step toward overcoming a fear . . .

Please write your answer(s) here:

1):

2):

3):

**F7: Look at any *no* responses above. How can you, specifically, do something this weekend to turn the no into a yes?**

Please write your answer here:

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**F8: Consider writing an artist statement. There are examples in PATH: Ways-of-Working in Photography in the *Write an Artist Statement* section. What would the title of your statement be?**

Please write your answer here:

**Section G - Revisiting Those BIG Questions**

Let's look at some of the questions at the beginning of your Creative Energy Questionnaire.

**G1:**

**Here's what you wrote for question A1: *Why photography?***

{INSERTANS:25X88X359}

**Add more.**

Please write your answer here:

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**G2:**

**Here's what you wrote for question A2: *Write down some idea(s) for a photography project.***

{INSERTANS:25X88X360}

**Add more, including actions to be taken.**

Please write your answer here:

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**G3:**

**Here's what you wrote for question A3: *List any tools and techniques that you would like to learn more about.***

{INSERTANS:25X88X361}

**Add more, including actions to be taken to learn more.**

Please write your answer here:

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**G4: The fourth BIG question was about light. There are exercises in [PATH: Ways-of-Working in Photography](#) that will help you to become even better user of light.**

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**G5: And don't forget your sniglet. That's your unique combination of preferences for genre, subjects, locations, theme, camera and process, as well as bodies of belief and knowledge.**

### **Section N - Printing Answers & Creativity Consultations**

If you would like to print your answers, click *submit* below.

There's no need to fill in your name, etc.

A window will appear.

Click *Click here to print your answers.*

If you're having a Creativity Consultation with me, enter your name, e-mail address, and website.

Then, click *submit* below.

For information about a Creativity Consultation, go to [Creativity Consultations](#).

If you have any other questions, go to [Ask Jim](#).

**N1: Your name (for Creativity Consultation only)**

Please write your answer here:

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**N2: Your e-mail address (for Creativity Consultation only)**

Please write your answer here:

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**N3: Confirm your e-mail address**

Please write your answer here:

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**N4: Your website gallery with up to twenty photographs**

Please write your answer here:

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**N5: How may I help you?**

Please write your answer here:



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**Submit Your Survey.**  
Thank you for completing this survey..