A journal is a record of your day to day life and experiences. Entries report both mundane and unusual goings-on, your emotions, thoughts and feelings, your actions and reactions. Diaries and journals tend to be written in a chronological sequence.

Let’s apply this definition to a photo journal and see how well you can record this point in your life using pictures and captions. The challenge is whether you can piece together a coherent and complete story, just by looking at the pictures and minimal words.

Here are four basic components of a creative photo journal.

**#1 Set the context**

Set the mood. This is a whole new experience for all of us. Try to capture it in pictures. Keep your eyes peeled and look around you. What do you see? Any interesting sights? Anything out of the ordinary? Anything special or alluring? Anything new that you have never seen before? Or perhaps it has always been there but you just never bothered to look close enough until now.

**#2 Have an opening chapter – a beginning**

You just started a journey no one has ever been on before. What are your thoughts and feelings wading into this uncharted territory? How can you document your new reality? What images will tell your story in the future to those who didn’t experience it with you?

Vary your images by employing different angles; close up, far and wide, bird’s eye view, worm’s eye view. How about an inquisitive and questioning view? Be creative about it and think outside the box. The obvious isn’t always the most interesting.

What happens each day? Have your emotions changed? Are there distractions or unforeseen events that change your perspective? Were there any curious twists to the plan, or some surprises – nice ones or otherwise?

**#3 Inject some action or drama**

It may be that nothing happens that is spectacular or which causes emotional upheaval. That doesn’t mean you can’t create something dramatic or notable. You can focus on particular emotions, or something pretty mundane, and make a choice to celebrate life’s simple pleasures. If on the other hand there was plenty of action, choose a few main actions shots of defining moments from the day, especially those that elicited the most impressive reaction, or the quietest but most precious twinkle of an eye.

Adopt a photojournalistic stance, and record what happens without thinking too much about meaning or composition. Photograph what catches your eye, or that which you get drawn to instinctively. Trust your eyes to lead you to interesting contrasts and juxtapositions – light and shade, silence and noise, darkness and light. Aim to capture and savour every highlight. Don’t rush, but linger and indulge in the moment. The more you focus on something, no matter how small, the bigger its effects on you will be. Find an experience in the simplest of things; you are writing a story. Writers emphasize, exaggerate, infer, and aim for a climax. Don’t be afraid to do the same with your pictures. Be pro-active and creative.

**#4 Start the closing chapter**

In a book, this part is usually referred to as falling action. It comes after all the excitement and drama happen. It’s like a letting out a big sigh and things start to gather at a much slower pace. Prepare your audience for the conclusion, and end of the story. Unlike the conclusion in a book where the plot is usually unravelled, this part could plainly be writing the last paragraph to the entry of your journal for the day. It could be as simple as taking your shoes off after a long and tiring walk, drinking a well deserved cup of tea after a day full of challenges, or the sun slowly setting or the moon rising.

Remember the purpose of a journal is to record, preferably in detail, what transpired during your day; the running of events, emotions, actions, thoughts, ideas, changes, differences, transformations. So many elements to capture in a few photos. But perhaps in and amongst all the snapshots from the day, there could be one photo that somehow encapsulates how you may be feeling at the end. Use that photo to close your journal.

**You will include at least 4 images per day in your finished photo journal. Start by taking a lot of photos. Tomorrow we will discuss adding captions.**