

Moose Podcast #439

Moose Peterson Howdy, folks, and welcome to Moose Podcast number 439. Want to be the best? How are you folks doing this very fine week? Here we are already in March. Man, and I can't believe what's happening already. Robins have showed up. We've got, it appears to be two. Pairs of Pileated woodpeckers kind of fighting over some of our property, which we're hoping will lead to nesting. Some spring birds have shown up. It is, even though it was really warm this past week here in Montana, supposed to be a little cooler this week, but wow, I'm telling you, here we are in March already, almost the end of the first quarter. I trust you had a marvelous week this past week. Met some of you folks at the Montana Aviation Conference. Appreciate you stopping by saying hello. A couple of you picked up books. So we had some great conversations with folks about aviation photography and well, I just really grateful for you and for your, uh, continued support. So thanks so much. This podcast is again being recorded with the Adobe beta podcast using the AI voice. I took it down a few notches, uh, to see what would happen just because. So if you hear a change or any differences, let me know, would you? Now remember that you can head to the website. See, uh, the links I might post for that particular podcast. You can listen to the podcast. Photograph that I might be talking about in that podcast would be there as well. So that's one option to listening to the, uh, the podcast. You can head to Spotify or, uh, iTunes or Amazon or those places where it's, you like to listen to podcasts. But remember, if you head to Spotify, you can see the transcript, which they do the best, I think, of all the transcribers, as well as you can leave a Comment and or have a question or want to have a conversation and it's a great place. I get notifications when it happens and I jump on it, answer whatever happens to be there just as quickly as I can. So, that's over at Spotify. But conversations are good, so don't hesitate to reach out. Happy to do it whenever, however, it is possible. I want to thank my good friends at Bedford's Camera, bedfords.com. They are the sponsors of the Moose Podcast, but more importantly, they're the folks that help me with my addiction. Yeah, that's this photography thing, uh, I had a great conversation with someone and he said, are you going to retire? I said, no, I am never going to retire. I love this thing. And, and Bedford's keeps that passion going. I mean, they've got the gear. They've got the great folks. They've got the killer prices. They've got the moose discount after you check out. And right now they've got a whole lot of sales going on on a lot of products. Some great stuff as well as on their use department. And it's just a, it's just a fun experience. Leaving some money with them and seeing that box appear and all the goodies inside. So head to bedfords.com. Head to a Bedford store. There's a number of them. Head to their website. Check them out. You need some gear. Please feel free to click. Mention my name. It will save you money after you check out. So that's my good friends at Bedford's. Bedford's dot com. Well, I got a little news for this upcoming week. I will be in Arizona, in Phoenix, to be exact, on the 8th, Saturday, presenting for the Arizona Camera Club Council. I'm doing two presentations in the morning. The art and craft of bird photography. And in the afternoon, critter stories. I'm going to be talking about Everything from focal length and ISOs to noise to getting close physically to different kinds of critters that I photographed and the lessons that they have taught me that... I want to share with you, be it biological, photographic, personal. It's going to be a great time. Again, that's the Arizona Camera Club Council this coming Saturday. In Phoenix, I hope you can join me. It's going to be a great time. We're going

to talk some of my favorite things, and that's critters and photography. So come on by. Now, I don't have a specific book recommendation, uh, this week. I just picked up three more books. They are aviation, uh, history books to be more, uh, exact, but, uh, I do have, uh, I should have some book recommendations coming up here shortly. Finding time to read right now as we get more and more daylight time is a little bit of a challenge. So if you have a good book you like, you want to pass it along, hey, drop me an email. I would like to know what you're reading. And those books that you really enjoy. Want to be the best writer? Yeah, man, I tell you, that simple thought, which is not simple, something that kind of plagued me for my first years as a photographer, It seems, and it could have been just me, so keep that in mind, but one of the driving forces of Clients and editors and teachers was pushing to be the best. I think it got the best me in the beginning. I really do. I don't, I think I lost sight of what was important and more importantly, lost a little ground trying to be the best because every day what? Everybody wants to be the best. Well, I learned, uh, through the Hard Knock School of Photography that the best was not At least for me, and perhaps might find it for you, being the best wasn't the best thing for me or my photography. It seems like a little bit of an oxymoron. And I've thought about it for a long time and I stopped trying. I shouldn't say that. That being the number one goal went away decades ago. And it still comes up, people talk about it, the word best, right, shows up a lot in photography, be it the best. Teachers are the best. Lens are the best. F-stop are the best, you know, you know what I'm talking about. Best, best, best, best. And, well, I've wondered for a while how to think about and talk about this topic today. Because I don't want to discourage you from aiming for that. But I thought I needed to find a way to put it in perspective. And, uh, listening to, uh, Interview with Vince Gill, the country's, well, he's singing with the Eagles now, so that's not truly country. He basically said, and he said it so fast that I couldn't write down verbatim But he said something to the effect, I don't want to be the best in the band. I always want to be learning. And I thought about that for a second. I go, Wow, that really kind of sums up what I learned through the School of Hard Knocks. Don't want to be the best in the band. I always want to be learning. Now, what does that imply? Oh, boy, a lot of things. Perhaps that one when you all of a sudden think you are the best, okay, or you get told you're the best way too much by too many folks who are, who have, you know, the best intentions, but perhaps not. Not the best intentions. That you start believing it, that you kind of, and Vince Gill kind of states it, you get perhaps stagnant. And why would you get stagnant? Well, because you're not... Hungry, you're not thirsting to learn more. Now, with that in mind, should the word best kind of disappear from your photographic vocabulary? No, I don't think it should. Should it be perhaps redefined and perhaps not use Webster's, you know, dictionary's definition verbatim, but perhaps... Modify it for who you are. Yeah, I think that's the way it is. And that's the very first important thing I want to talk about is You need to, I think, perhaps modify it for yourself. Now, I'm going to use myself as an example because that's the only one I have, but keep in mind, okay, that The best, which is synonymous with being number one, isn't all that it's cracked up to be. And as Vince Gill said right off the bat, you stop learning, right? You stop being hungry. You stop pushing yourself. So keep that all in mind. When it comes to the best, one thing that I try to do on a daily basis is do the best that I can at that moment. Even though I might know that, that perhaps I am, uh, not doing the best overall. I'm doing the best I can at that moment. Now, does that mean that I'm doing the best um, ever? Not necessarily. One example comes to mind last fall. Um, I was doing it air to air. And I was, I was truly challenged

uh, for a number of reasons. One, the main one was that the photo platforms I was using and this is how challenged The day was. I started off in one aircraft in the morning to do the air-to-air photo mission, and it didn't work. Um, and so we changed to another aircraft, which was better than the first one, but... Still a real challenge. And there are some shots, and I'll be honest with you, and it still plagues me that it looked really good in the viewfinder. But with all that was going on and being challenged, even though I was trying to do the best, I did not produce the best. And it still bugs me. So I go out every time with that camera. With not only the best intentions, but doing the best I can at that moment, even though I know it's not the best. In that process, there is failure and in failure, if you examine it, you will learn from it. So what did I learn from that air to air last September when I had those issues? Wow. One, if the photo platform doesn't fit me, as in I don't fit in it, and I cannot maneuver and use proper hand holding and shoot correctly, It's not worth getting off the ground because you're just going to spend time and literally risk your life for what? Perhaps no photographs. It's not worth it. So that's a big takeaway from that one particular event, one that It's written down and it's written down in many places so I don't forget and toast myself the next time. Now, with that said, Does that, knowing that, knowing that I'm doing the best I can at that moment, but it's not the best, does that slow me down, depress me? Well, it might slow me down for that moment because I'm going to push myself to get past it if at all physically or mentally, emotionally possible. I mean, so it will slow me down for that particular time, but will it depress me? Ah, so that's coming back again to kind of what Vince Gill said. It does not depress me because I know there's a learning moment in it. And that is really, you know, learning. I love learning. I just, uh, this past, this past, uh, Couple days there on the convention floor and our booth was there strictly to just network to get to know folks and have folks get to know us and had a gentleman come up. And Donald was a lovely gentleman, ninety-three and a half years old, Korean war vet, mechanic. And he was there for three days, four hours each morning, seven a.m. to eleven a.m. Just to get his IA, um, certified again for the next year. IA is the top mechanic for aircraft. ninety-three and a half. And we talked, we talked, we talked, we talked. It was great. Um, lots of stories. I learned, I learned from him. And this is important. Something about aircraft that I photographed eight years ago. It was really important information that even the owner of the aircraft didn't know. Had to do a little research to, you know, definitely put the last nail of the coffin to the story. But Donald taught me a whole bunch. So not, you know, learning and getting depressed by not knowing everything. Ah, no, I do my best at the moment. So I gave Donald three prints, came back. That night made three prints of his aircraft and took it to him and it's just, the rewards are amazing. So yeah, it slows me down, but it doesn't depress me. It's part of the process. Well, that kind of, you know, you know, if, if you, And this is opening up kind of a, a sore memory. But if I, if I were to open up my filing drawers as a literal filing cabinet filing drawers. And you were to look at my photographs that I took when I started out. And I look at the first photograph that had published. It gives me nightmares. It's horrible. It's like horrible. Yet it got published. Was it my best then? No. Would I even, even keep that image today if I took a picture? No. But at that moment in time, when I photographed that, that first North America, um, uh, landing, I can't remember the name of this, the Little Whimbrel. If I hadn't, you know, gone out and chased it in the fields of San Maria and taken that picture and then submitted it, I literally, my first photograph published, horrible shot. I would not probably be here today because it taught me so much. So at that moment in time, I was very proud of

that photograph. So proud I sent it into Audubon and it got published. So, you know, there are, you know, if I look at my first images and I look at it with today's eyes, oh, God, I cringe. And then sometimes I get depressed because I think of the opportunity that I had that I didn't, you know, cash in on. But then I reflect back on that day, and that day at that time, it was the best I could do. I learned lessons from it, but it was the best I could do. Now, we all want to be the best. Right? That is kind of a given. And that pushes us a lot. The thing I want to encourage you, because I've seen this too much lately, is that that pushing from inside. You sometimes forget to smell the roses. You forget to give yourself a little bit of credit for what you've already accomplished, what you've learned, what you can do with that camera and beat yourself up for what you didn't do that moment. And that, that goes with the territory. Got to keep that in mind. We all had those moments. I had it last September that, you know, I, I simply didn't do my best. And the thing is, and those images still got published in a magazine, right? Because they're kind of one of a kind. So you, it's, it's just catch twenty-two. And the editor is very kind and understood, ran the article and the photographs, yet. Was it my best? Because, you know, I, well, I do my best every day I can. I don't ever quest anymore like I did in my first few years at being the top. Want to be the best? You can. You can be the best you can be that day, that moment, that time, and that is something to be proud of. You folks have a marvelous week. Look forward to talking with you. Hopefully see you this Saturday. You take care. Remember to make every click your story.