

[Nowadays], photos are less markers of memories than they are Web-browser bookmarks for our lives. And, just as with bookmarks, after a few months it becomes hard to find photos or even to navigate back to the points worth remembering.

Om Malik, New Yorker magazine

Photography Books and My Dog's Dish

Steve Gottlieb

Preparing a meal for Tucker, our rescue cockapoo, takes about 60 seconds. Chef Gottlieb conjurs up an irresistible combination of moist canned meat plus dry kibbles, with a perfect soupcon of water. To my chagrin, Tucker takes less time consuming his meal than I take in creating it. I apparently suffer from some form of anthropomorphic-related delusion: I want my dog to *savor* food more like I do. Inhaled food is not savored. So I recently purchased a dog dish (see image) that is specially designed with ridges that forces Tucker to eat more slowly. This pleases me. (Obviously, I'm not the only one bothered by a speed-eating dog.)

Why am I telling you this? Because when it comes to photographs, I think most of us are like Tucker—inhaling what we could be savoring. Most of us hardly look at the photos we produce, and even less time at the images other people make. We just glance at images, then relegate them to the digital dustbin. If we do look at them again, or show them to friends, they rarely get more than an additional momentary glance. Since the dawn of photography, pictures have had the power to tell stories. But today, we have become speed readers of our visual stories. They are like a drop of water hitting a hot pan. A momentary sizzle...and then gone.



If you don't find the present state of photographic affairs totally satisfying, here's one antidote: create a book of your own images. They will be like my dog's new dish; they slow you down and enhance the viewing experience. And that's just one of MANY benefits of books, which are relatively simple and inexpensive to create. As someone who has produced many books—both with traditional publishers and using online services like Blurb, Shutterfly and MyPublisher, I can say without qualification that creating photo books has been the most deeply satisfying component of my decades as both an amateur and professional photographer. I have compiled an extended list of my many different motivations for creating books. Perhaps you share some of them; if so, why not start a book project?

