The background is a solid teal color. It features several stylized illustrations of smartphones. In the top left, a white smartphone is shown from the back, with a camera lens and a flash. In the top right, a yellow smartphone with an orange leopard print pattern is shown from the back. In the middle left, a yellow smartphone is shown from the side. In the bottom left, a smartphone screen displays a close-up of a cat's face. In the bottom right, a smartphone screen shows a person in a blue outfit. The main title is centered in a large, bold, black serif font.

# How to Rule at Photography

**50 Tips and Tricks for Using  
Your Phone's Camera**



# How to Rule at Photo- graphy

**50 Tips and Tricks for Using  
Your Phone's Camera**

Illustrations by Rachel Harrell



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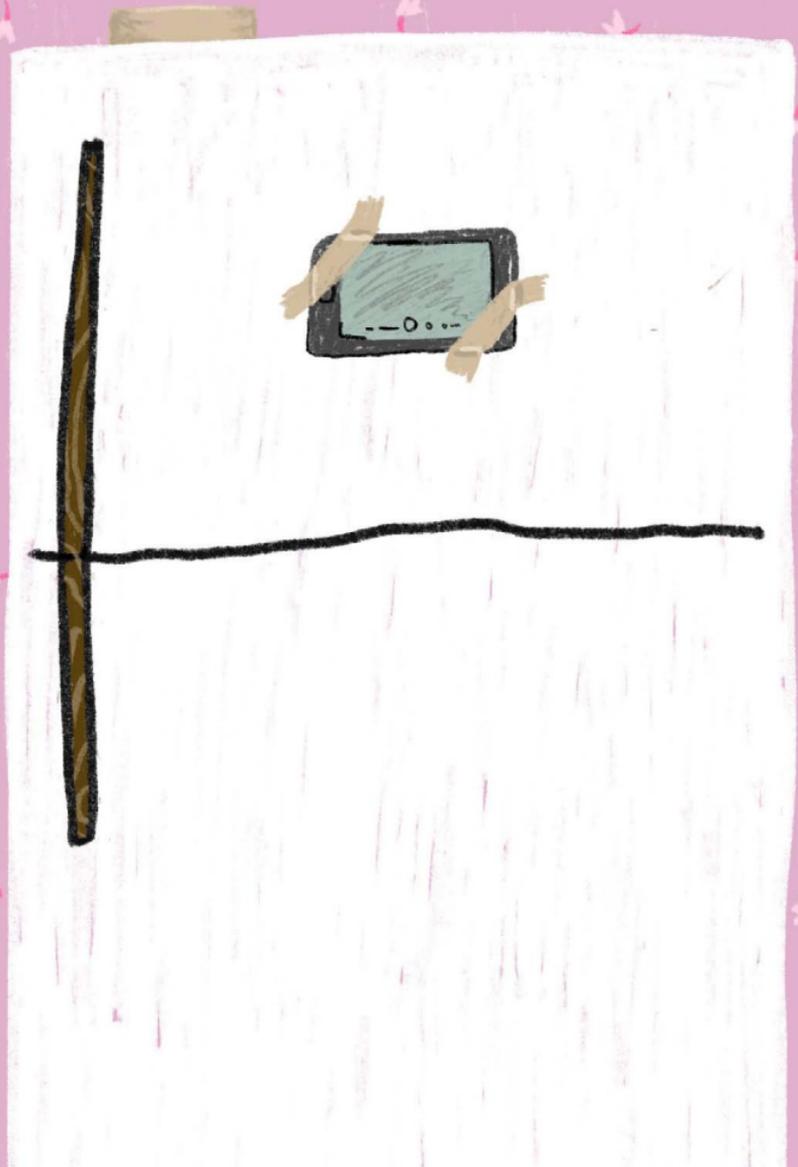
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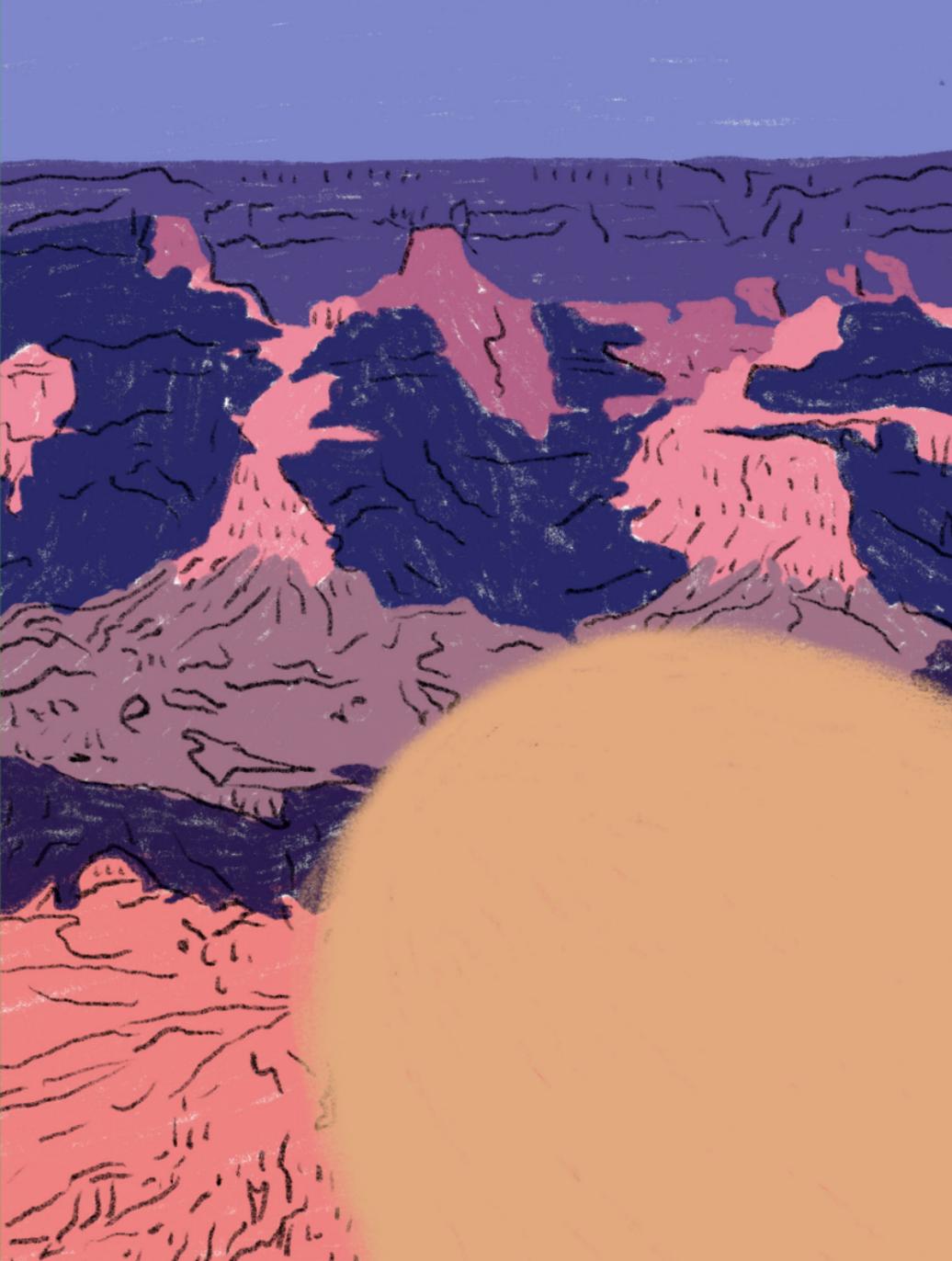


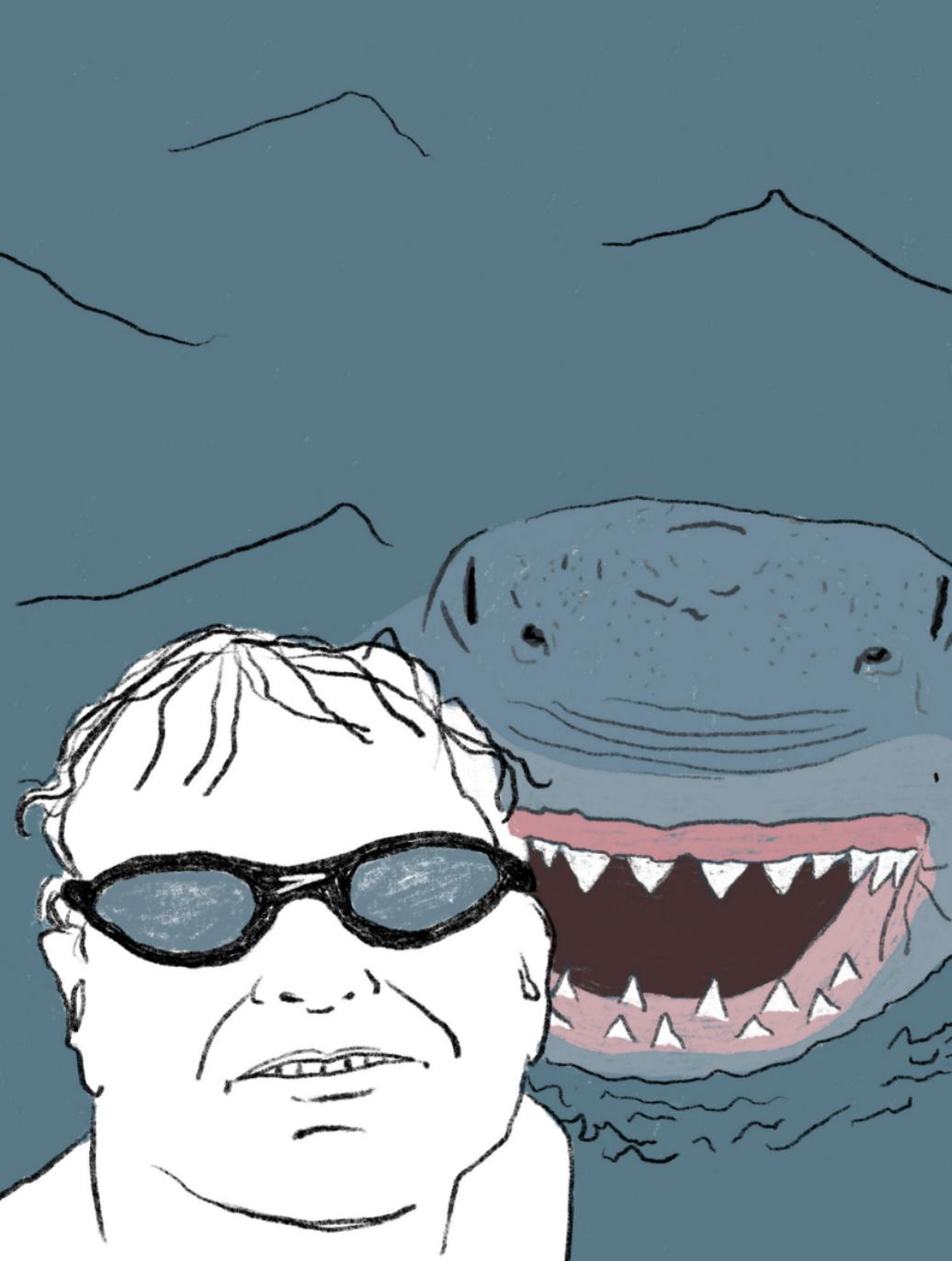
1.

**A roll of  
masking tape  
turns almost  
anything into  
a tripod.**

2.

MAKE SURE  
YOUR THUMB ISN'T  
COVERING THE  
CAMERA LENS.





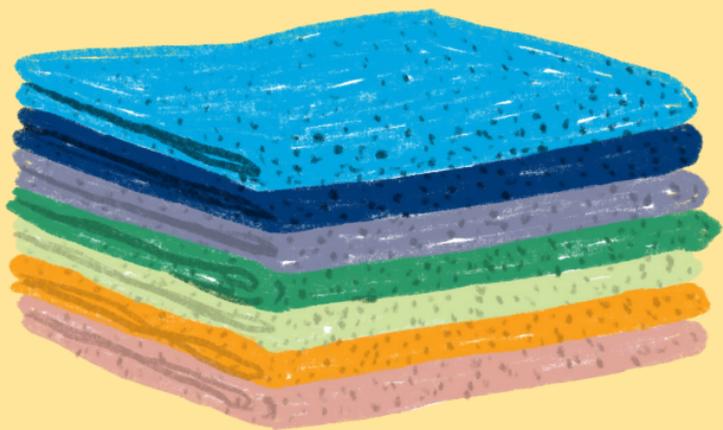
3.

# *Don't be dumb.*

Don't try to take a photo if it could potentially be dangerous (like if you are driving or performing open-heart surgery).

4.

**CLEAN  
YOUR  
LENS!**





5.

***People  
laughing: Take  
a gazillion  
pictures of  
that.***

6.

CONNECT WITH  
YOUR PORTRAIT  
SUBJECTS. MAKE THEM  
COMFORTABLE.





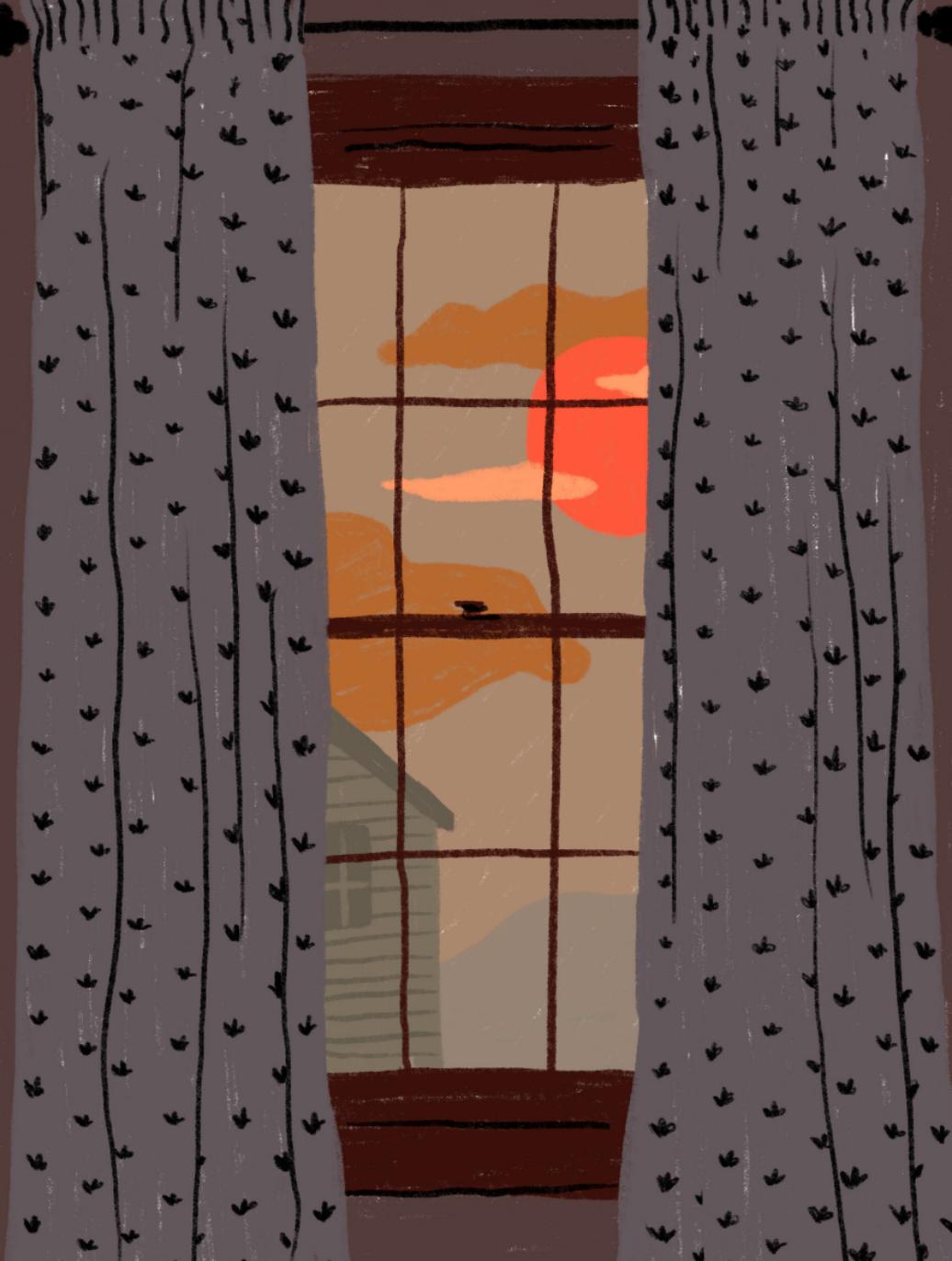
7.

# **Pay attention to background when shooting a portrait.**

Clear away clutter. A simple solid color adds a lot.

8.

TAKE PICTURES AT  
THE BEGINNING  
AND THE END OF A  
MOMENT, EVENT, OR  
SPECIAL DAY.





9.

***If you're asking  
a stranger to  
take your photo,  
make it as easy  
as possible for  
them!***

1. Tell them exactly where to stand so they get the angle you want.
2. Have your camera on the right settings.
3. If it's a group photo, make sure everyone is already in position before you flag the stranger down.

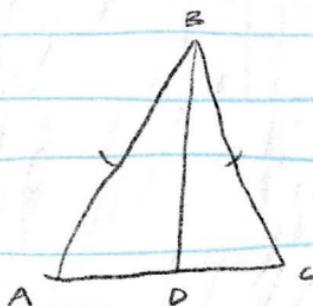
10.

HOLD A TREAT OR  
A TOY ABOVE YOUR  
CAMERA TO GET YOUR  
FURRY BABY OR  
HUMAN BABY TO LOOK  
AT THE CAMERA.

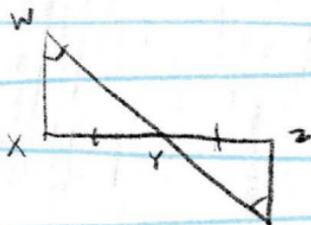


# FINDING YOUR BEST ANGLE

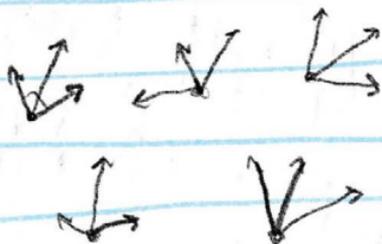
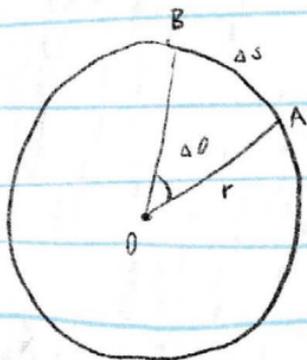
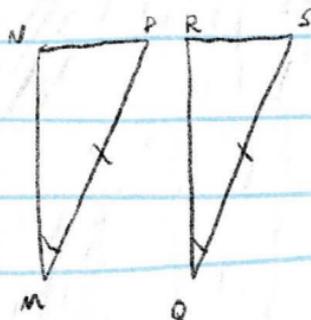
1.  $AB \cong AB$



1. REFLEXIVE PROPERTY OF Equality.



2. THE ANGLE BISECTOR DIVIDES THE ANGLE INTO TWO CONGRUENT ANGLES



11.

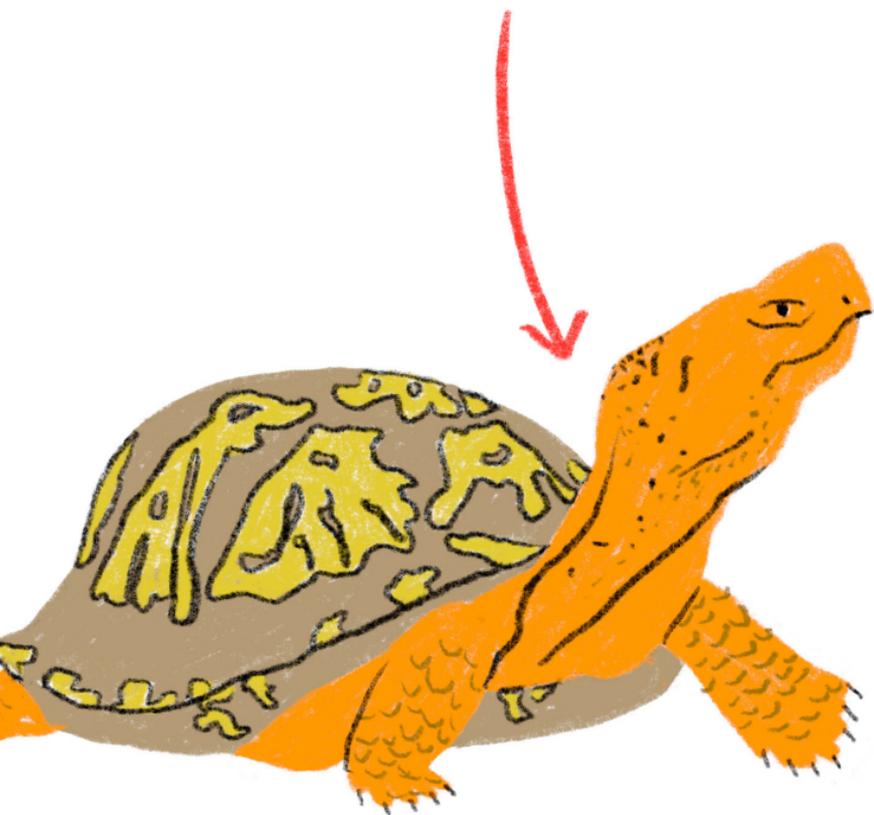
# *I'm going to let you in on a little secret:*

Taking the perfect selfie is ALL about the angles. No matter how you're looking that day, if you choose your angles wisely, any photo you take of yourself is going to look Beyoncé-level flawless. Turn on your front-facing camera and try a bunch of different angles, snapping photos along the way. Once you've taken a sufficient number of selfies, check them out and see which angles you love, and which you absolutely hate. And there you have it, all of your best angles in a snap (or 10, or 20). Pro tip: Almost nobody has perfected a selfie taken from below.

12.

**BEFORE TAKING  
A SELFIE,  
DO A QUICK  
TOOTH CHECK!**





13.

**When taking  
a photo of  
yourself, make  
sure you stick  
out your neck  
to prevent  
the dreaded  
double chin.**

14.

# **STRONG ARMS!**

Don't lay your arms flat down. Put your hands on your hips to give yourself Michelle Obama arms.



Brightness:



Contrast:



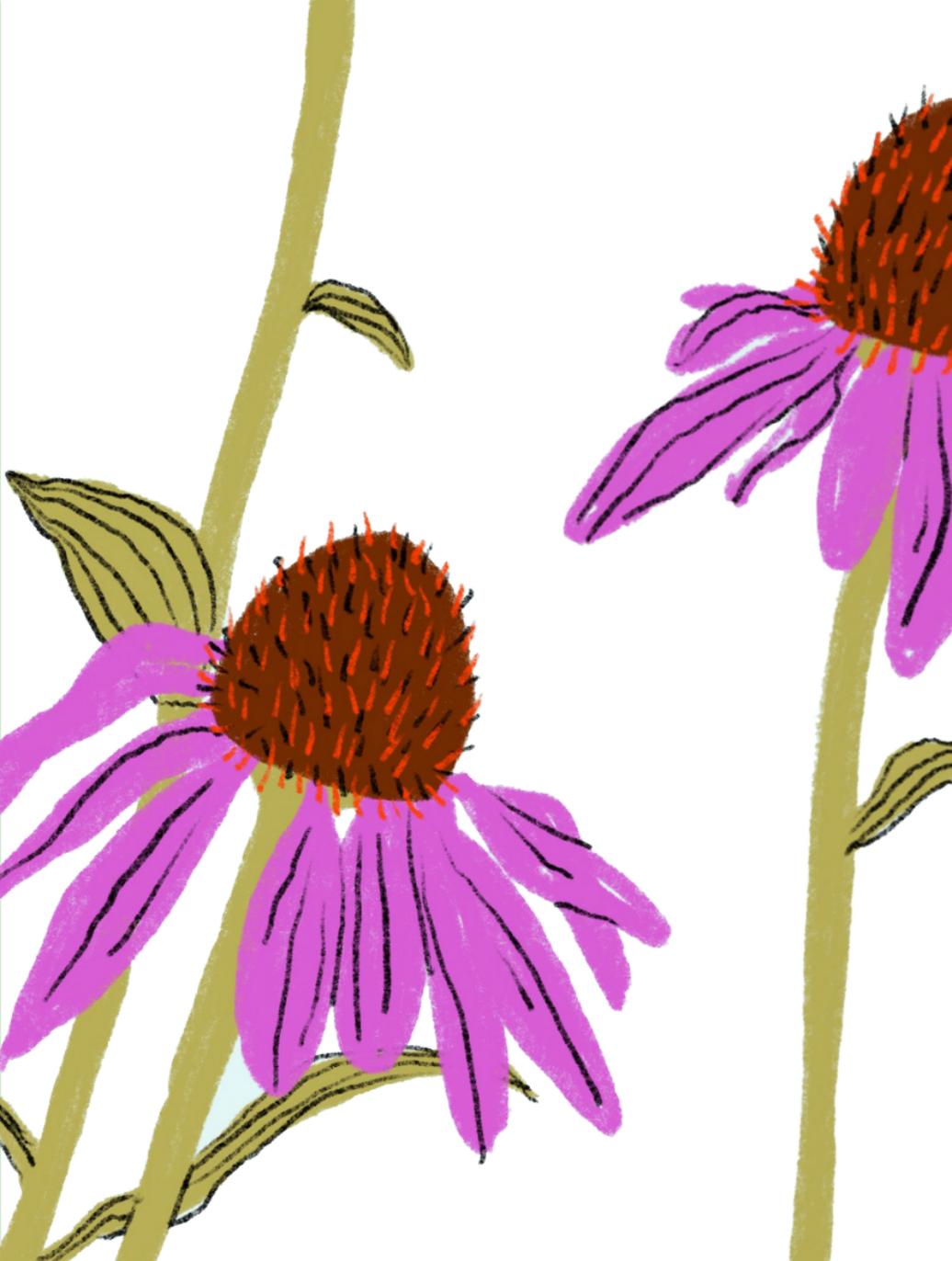
15.

ALMOST EVERY  
PHOTO CAN BE  
IMPROVED BY  
INCREASING THE  
BRIGHTNESS AND  
CONTRAST JUST  
A SMIDGE.

16.

# *Capture the smallest details.*

Get up close to the object or person you are photographing and test your camera's focus. How far or near you are to the subject can drastically change the lighting and dimensionality of a photo.





17.

# ZOOM WITH YOUR FEET.

Your camera's zoom feature can be handy for taking pictures of things that would be physically impossible or unsafe to get closer to. But it also makes your pictures grainier and less visually pleasing. Whenever possible, walk nearer to your subject until you're able to frame just the shot you want.

18.

# Know that flat lay is your friend.

That viral pic of Kendall Jenner's heart hair? Every food blogger photo? That's flat lay and it's the easiest way to elevate your photo game. Hold your phone on a level plane with your subject and shoot. Don't be afraid to get up as high as necessary—stand on a chair or directly over the subject—just make sure you're stable and *then* snap away!





\* CLICK \*

19.

*Take the photo  
at the bottom  
of your exhale.*

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

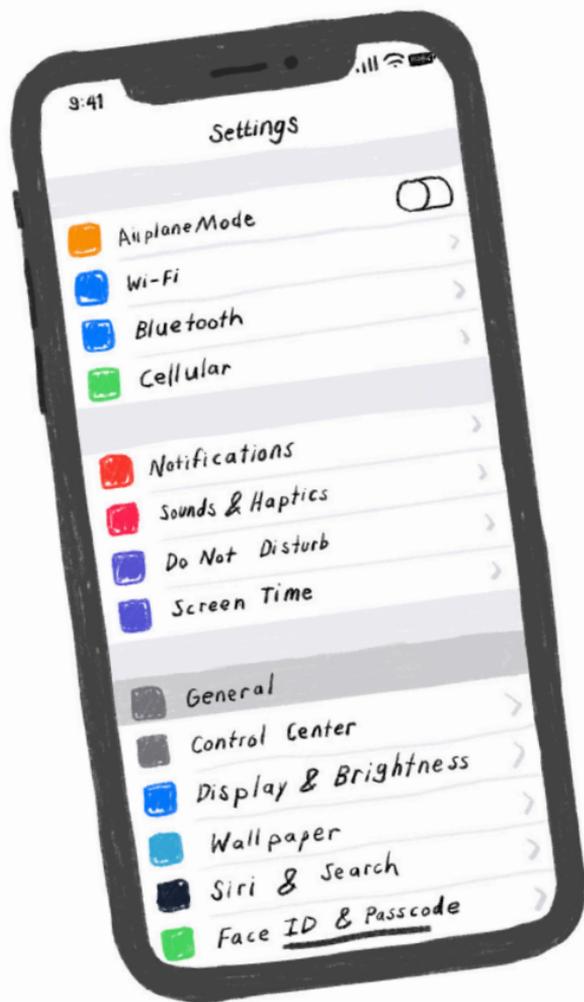
Hold it.

Press the button.

Wobble-reduction and mindfulness, all in one.

20.

**You can save  
an Instagram-  
edited photo  
without posting  
it by putting  
your phone on  
airplane mode.**



9:41

## Settings

 Airplane Mode

 Wi-Fi >

 Bluetooth >

 Cellular >

 Notifications >

 Sounds & Haptics >

 Do Not Disturb >

 Screen Time >

 General >

 Control Center >

 Display & Brightness >

 Wallpaper >

 Siri & Search >

 Face ID & Passcode >



21.

# Invest in a stepladder.

It's the best way to take above shots of products, books, sets, etc., when you don't have a professional studio.

22.

TAKE MULTIPLES  
OF EVERYTHING!  
NEVER ASSUME THAT  
YOU CAPTURED THE  
MOMENT IN ONE SHOT.





23.

# SHOW SCALE.

Does that huge rock look less impressive in the photo than you thought it would? Add something to show scale—a person or an object everyone will recognize, like a flower, or even your feet.

24.

***Don't overedit;  
if you do, your  
photos will look  
dated sooner.***

MOON



Gairo



Nashville



Crema



Gingham



50



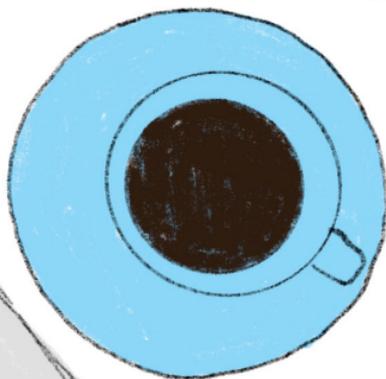
25.

**WHEN APPLYING  
A FILTER,  
SCALE IT BACK  
TO AT LEAST  
50 PERCENT.**

26.

**Photos  
in cloudy  
weather are  
the bomb.**





27.

**CAPTURE  
ORDINARY  
MOMENTS.**

28.

# Find your light.

Take a moment to locate the sun (or, if you're inside, the lamp), and then shoot away from it. Backlit is not a good look.





29.

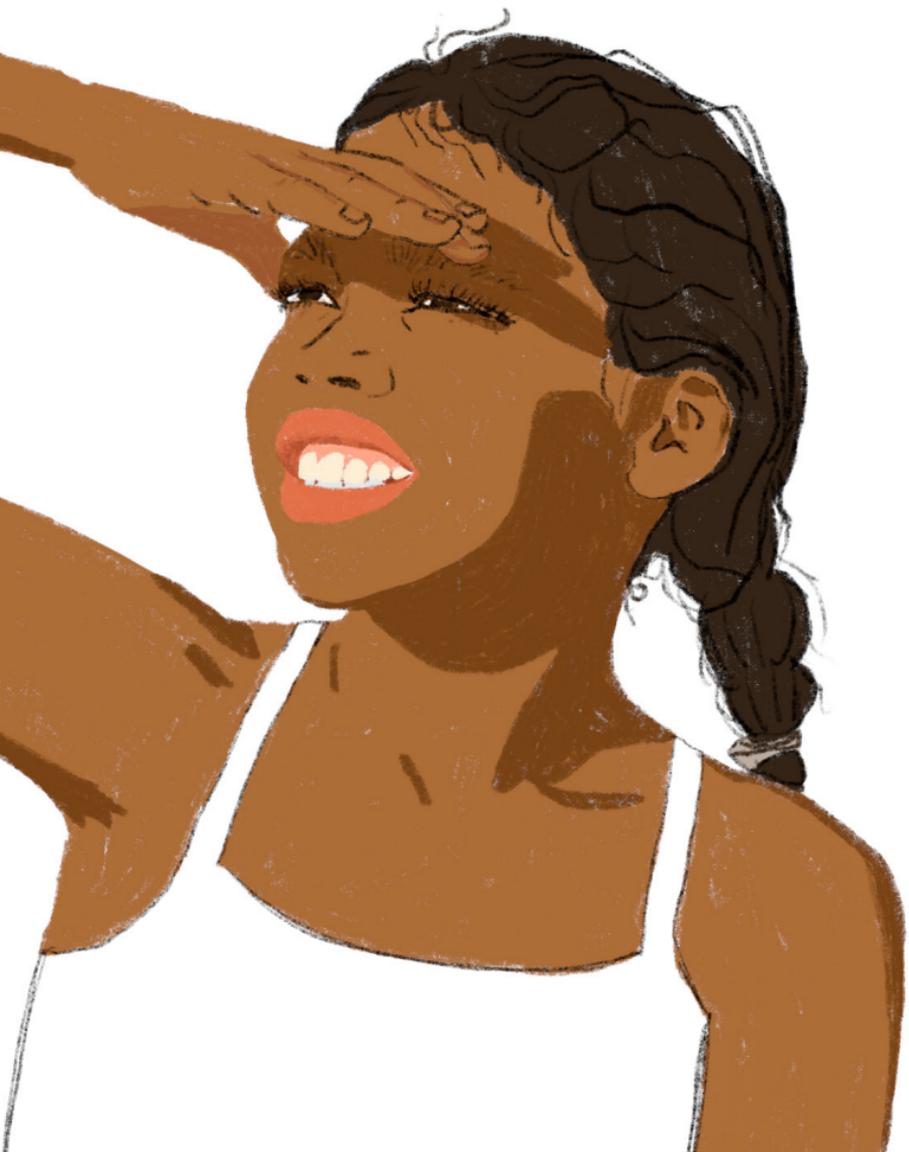
**NATURAL LIGHT  
IS THE BEST  
LIGHT.**

30.

# BE CONSCIOUS OF SHADOWS.

Look for window light and shade to get rid of distracting shadows, or find harsher light to make interesting, dramatic shadows.





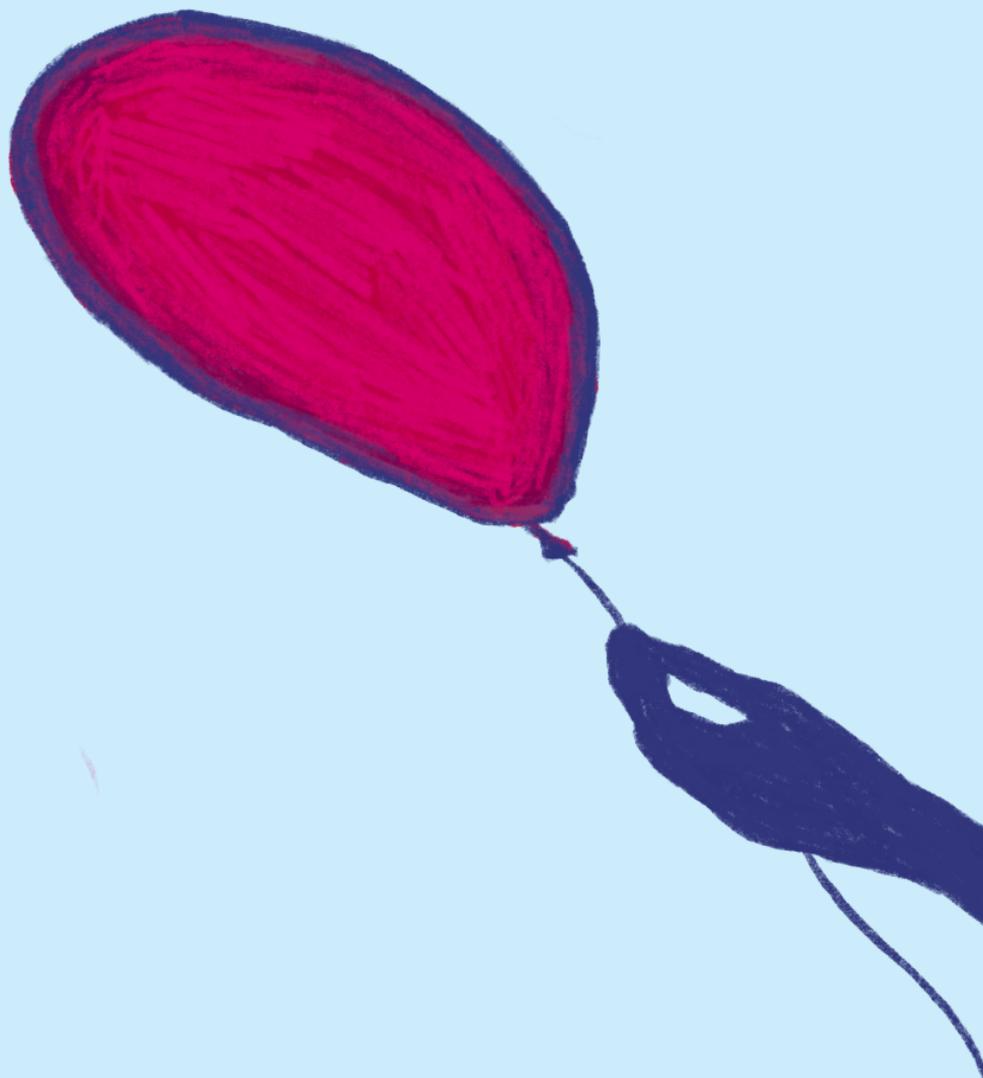
31.

*If you're in a  
photo and  
you are not  
squinting,  
you're probably  
backlit.*

# FIGURE OUT WHITE BALANCE: IT WILL MAKE YOUR PICTURES 100 TIMES BETTER.

Correctly setting the white balance ensures that the white and gray parts of your photo look neutral and don't have a color cast to them. Every light source has a different color temperature, ranging from cool to warm. Our eyes naturally adjust to different lighting so we see white objects as white, but digital cameras don't. That's why sometimes your indoor photography will have a yellow cast, or your outdoor shots will look a little blue. Correcting the color will make your photos look crisper and more natural.





33.

**BALLOONS  
MAKE COLORED  
SHADOWS.  
TAKE A PICTURE  
OF THAT.**

34.

**Never  
underestimate a  
black-and-white  
photo.**





35.

*Nothing says  
peace and quiet  
like a photo  
taken in the  
early morning.*

36.

KEEP STRAIGHT LINES  
LIKE A WINDOWSILL  
OR TABLETOP AWAY  
FROM YOUR PHOTO'S  
EDGE UNLESS YOU'RE  
WILLING TO REALLY  
LINE IT UP.

A



B



C



D





37.

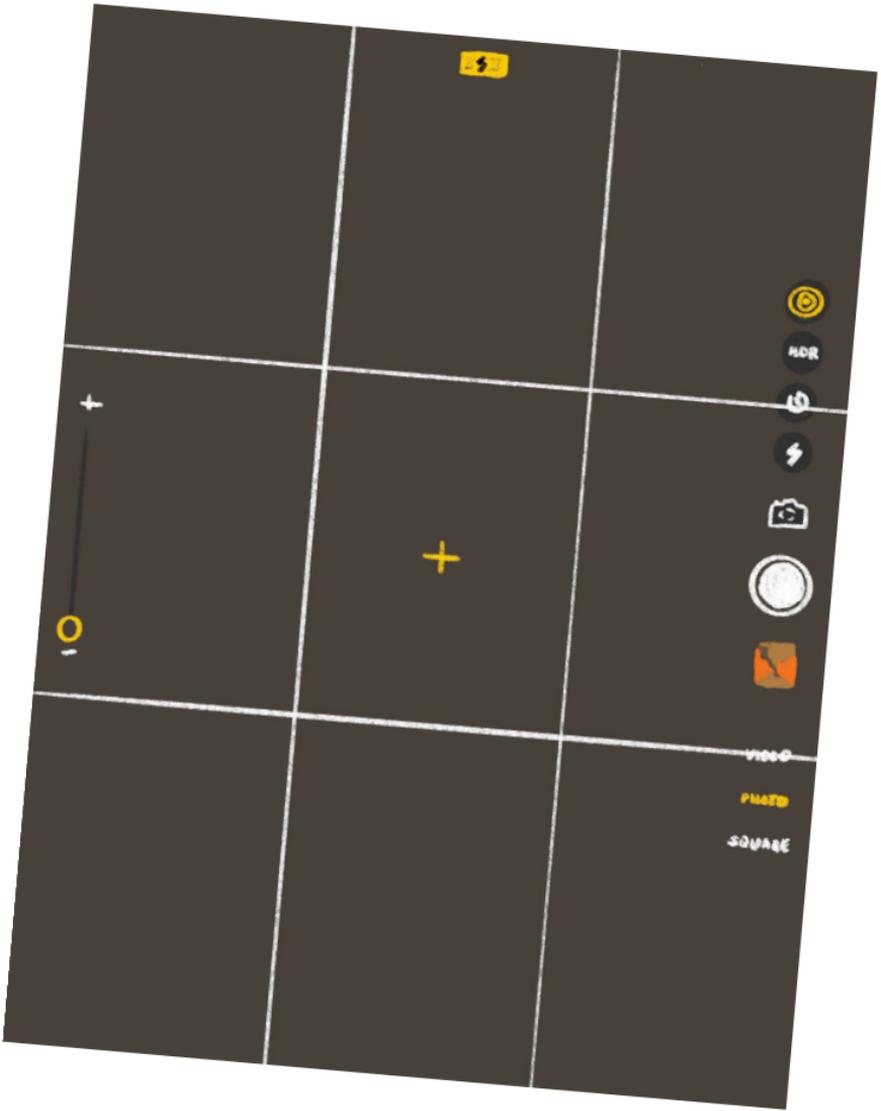
**Experiment  
with cropping,  
both while  
composing your  
shot and after  
you take your  
shot.**

38.

TURN ON THE GRID  
FEATURE ON YOUR  
PHONE'S CAMERA AND  
THEN USE IT TO LINE  
UP YOUR SHOT.

For straightforward shots, put the focus in the center.

For something artier, try off-center focus.





39.

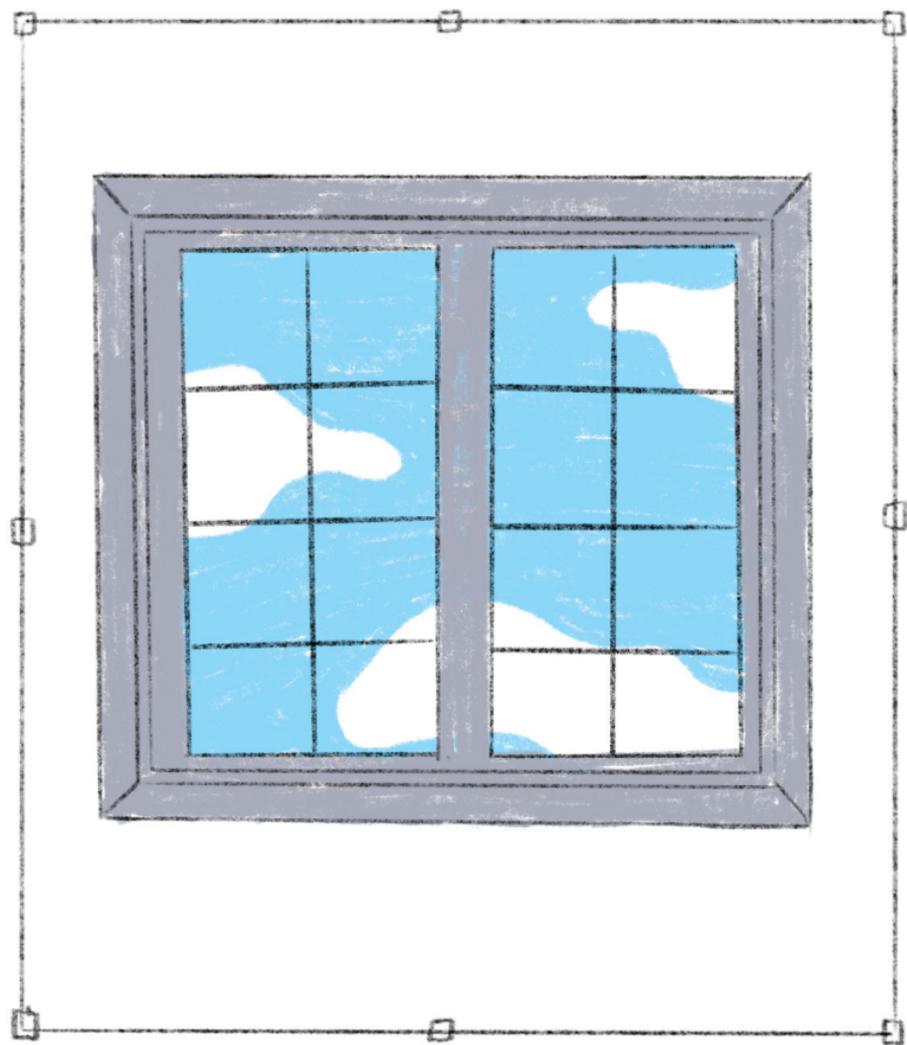
*Watch out for  
perspective  
distortion.*

Move two steps back, to the side, up and down—  
whatever it takes to create balance.

40.

# Some apps have a skew- perspective feature.

If you take a photo of a rectangle-shaped object (like a picture frame or a window) and it's looking askew, try using this feature to fix it.





41.

# THE RULE OF THIRDS:

When framing your shot, imagine two vertical lines and two horizontal lines dividing your field of vision into thirds in either direction. The lines create a grid that breaks up an image into nine equal parts. If you place important photographic elements (the horizon line, landmarks, etc.) along these lines, or at the points where they intersect, it will help create a more dynamic, interesting photograph.

42.

*Play around  
with your  
camera's editing  
tools. Have fun  
and try new  
things—no one  
has to see it if  
you hate it.*





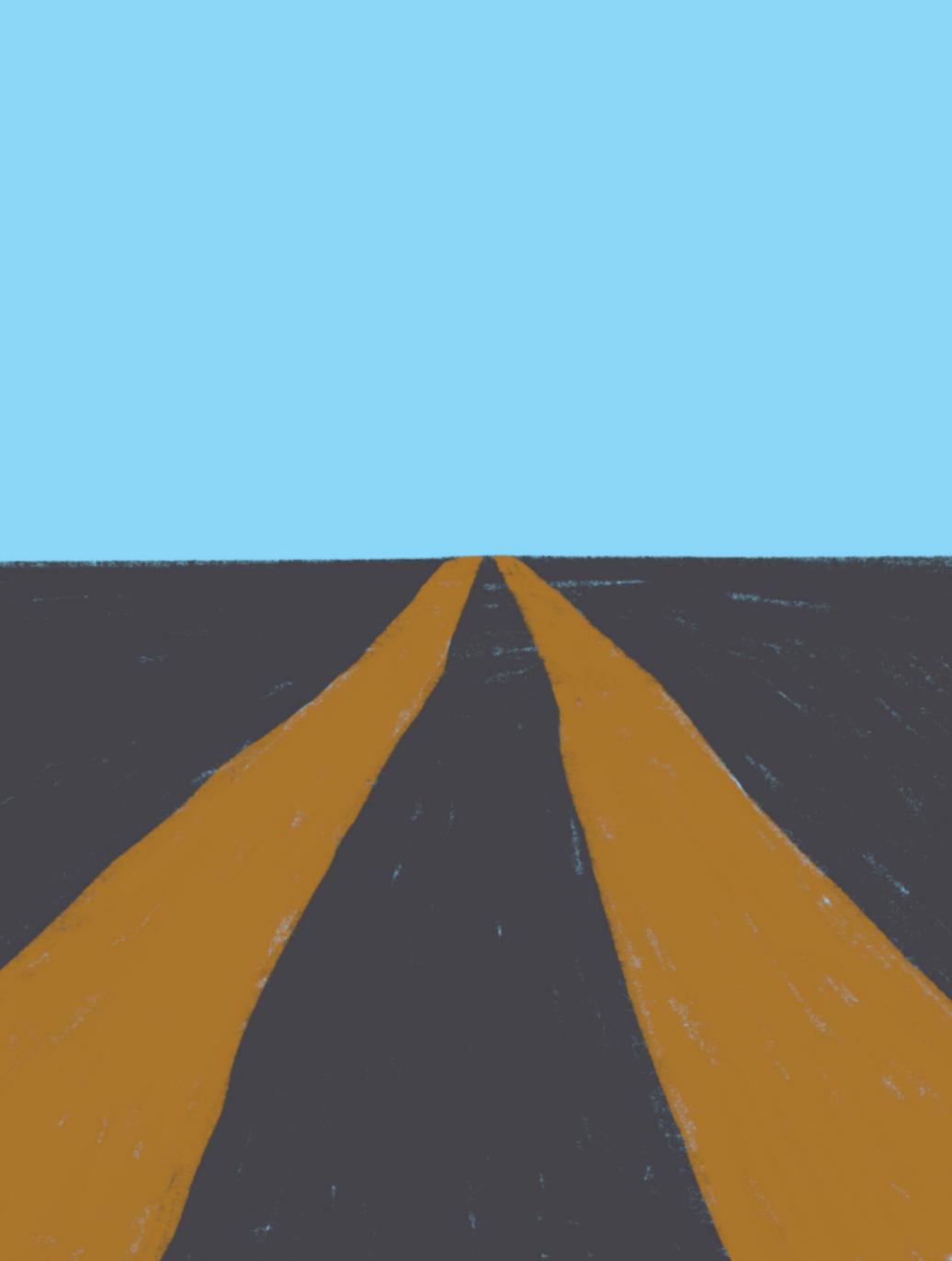
43.

# **Don't be afraid to experiment with different photo props.**

Maybe it's a cactus, your favorite candy bar,  
or even your cat's paw. Whatever it is, you'll never  
know what you'll like until you test it out.

44.

***Experiment  
with vantage  
points. Stand  
on a chair,  
lie on your  
stomach, lie on  
your back.***





45.

**DON'T FORGET  
TO BE IN  
THE PRESENT  
MOMENT!**

Don't spend so much time taking pictures  
you miss out on the main event: life.

46.

**When  
photographing  
something in  
motion, take  
a burst of  
shots in quick  
succession.**

Hint: Most phone cameras have a setting that allows you to do this with just one touch.





THE DONUT SHOP

DONUTS

47.

**BE CURIOUS.  
PAUSE. LOOK  
DOWN ALLEYS,  
THROUGH  
WINDOWS.  
LOOK UP.**

48.

# TAKE PHOTOS OF SUBJECTS YOU LOVE,

whether that's food, your BFF, or your dog. It'll help  
you find the beauty in every photo you take.





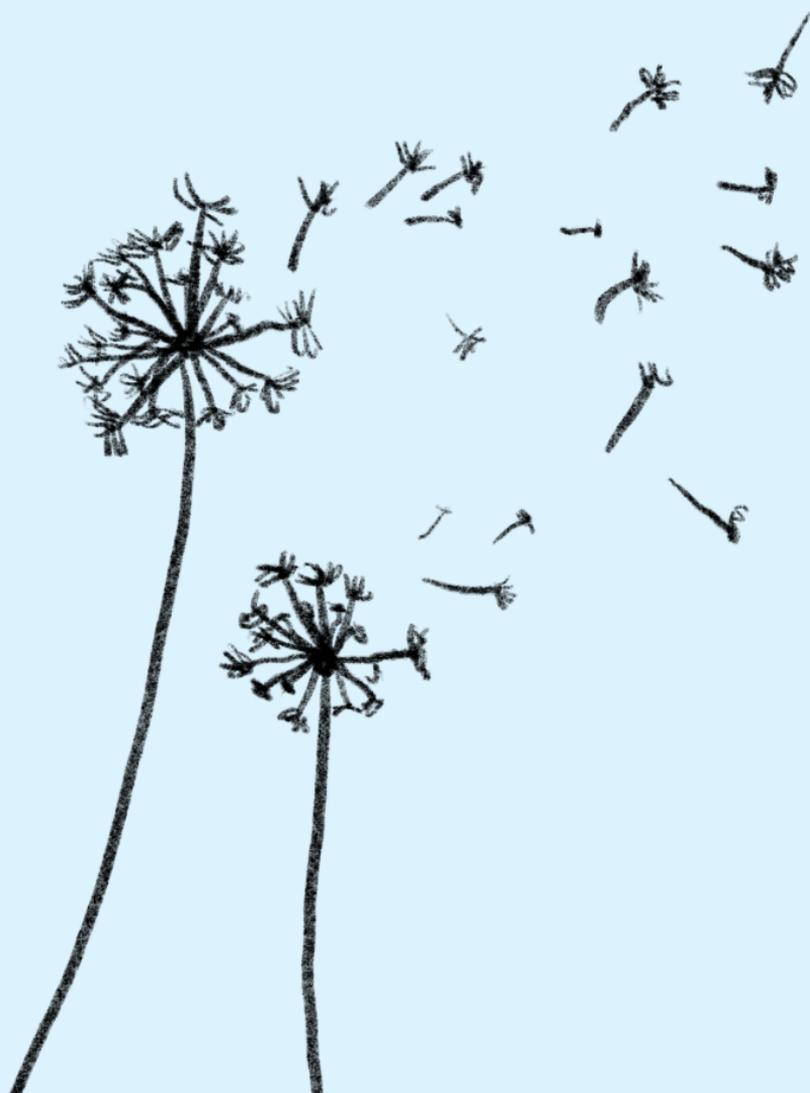
49.

IN GROUP SHOTS,  
PUT PEOPLE WITH  
BIG FACES IN THE  
BACK AND PEOPLE  
WITH SMALL FACES  
IN THE FRONT.

50.

# EVEN STATIC SCENES CAN SHOW MOVEMENT AND LIFE.

Use shadows, clouds, body shapes, etc., to show that this is a moment in time and that the world keeps moving after the “click.”



**Thank you to our extremely**  
**knowledgeable and creative crew**  
**of contributors:**

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Iris Mori

Rachel Nuzman

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Dena Rayess

Olivia Roberts

Janine Sato

Allison Weiner

Jennifer Yim



# Rule at photography!

Creating brilliant photos with your phone isn't as hard as you might think. The 50 easy-to-follow, irresistibly illustrated tips included in this book go way beyond selfie help. They'll take your shots from unremarkable to unforgettable—and help you develop your own personal style along the way.

Let these deceptively simple tips unleash your inner creativity and upgrade your social media feed as you start snapping truly regal shots using only your phone.

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