

The Search for the Missing Person

In years to come members of your family will wonder why there was one person always missing from every group photo.

Was the person a bank robber? Maybe they worked for the FBI or Secret Service and couldn't have their photo taken. Others may speculate the missing person was a celebrity and did not want their photo taken fearing it would end up in one of the supermarket tabloids about an alien abduction.

Early one morning you are going to awake from a deep sleep, sit straight up in bed and realize the missing person in all your family photos was YOU!

Why were you missing when photos were taken? Maybe you were performing emergency open heart surgery and could not be at the family reunion for the photo. Were you saving one of the little kids from drowning in the park wading pool? Why were you missing from the group wedding photos of your daughter? Where were you when the photo was taken of your son, daughter and spouse holding the newest grandchild?

The answer is simple - you were behind the camera taking all the photos. Nothing can be done to magically make you appear in the photos in the future unless you are an expert with Photoshop.



Is this how you want your family to remember you?

Getting yourself into the photo

Use a tripod and the timer on your camera.

This option will be perfect if you need some exercise to help you drop a few pounds. It will also be an athletic challenge to see how many times you can outrun your camera timer.



Frame the shot, set the timer for 10 seconds and quickly run and try to inconspicuously position yourself in the group. Sounds easy. However, we all know it's really hard to run and get positioned into the group *and then appear to be relaxed.*

After a few trial shots and running back and forth to the camera on a hot summer day, you will feel like you've just run the Boston Marathon. Your hair will be messed up and the glistening perspiration on your forehead will accentuate your blotchy red face. (Keep the water bottle handy). It will also appear that you prefer to be standing at the end of the row in every photo. It's no big deal if everyone thinks you have group photo claustrophobia.

Have someone else take the photo

The problem with this option is you may be very disappointed with the results. You will discover how bad the photos are the next day when you view the photos on your computer. The chance to take more photos will be gone. The relative taking the photo will also be missing from your photos.

Solution - Use a remote control shutter release

Plug a shutter release control into the remote jack of your camera so you can stand a few feet away from the camera to take the shot. It has trade-offs and limitations like all things in the computer world.

The biggest barrier is cost. The least expensive Panasonic remote shutter release I could find for my Lumix FZ50 camera was about \$75.00. There were some less expensive no-name brands, but who knows if it will work with your camera. I'm through with rebates and trying to get a refund when things don't work as advertised.

The next problem is the wire that goes from the remote control to the camera. If it's only 2.5m long, there will be a problem taking a large group photo since the camera will have to be positioned farther back. I also don't want a black line (wire) going directly to me in every group photo. I don't need that kind of attention – "Just follow the black line (wire) to find grandpa in every photo."



Notice the shutter release - it was a string used to take this photo in Norway about 1900.

The Solution - A Wireless Shutter Release

I was surprised to find a wireless shutter release while searching the internet for a wired shutter release. Oddly, I found this description of the Cactus Wireless Shutter Release on eBay.

“With the wireless shutter release, you can control the shutter of your camera from as far as 15 meters away (49 feet). The package comes with a handheld wireless transmitter and a wireless receiver to be plugged into the shutter release port of the camera.”

That sounded too good to be true! No wire and it has a range of up to 49 feet. WOW – that’s great! Next question – how many million dollars is this going to cost? I was shocked to see a cost of only \$29.00. I don’t have an eBay or PayPal account so I found the web site of the company. Another shock I could purchase this little wonder with shipping of only \$10 making



the total cost only \$39.00 delivered to my door. SOLD – I had to have it! I was even more pleased to discover it was guaranteed to work with my new Lumix FZ50 camera. After impatiently waiting one long week it arrived in my mailbox with the rest of the bills.

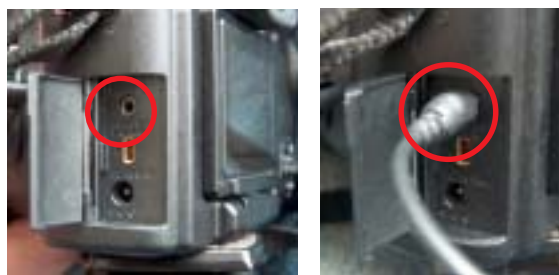
Will it really work?

I’m reluctant to admit the only thing that stumped me was the set up. When it didn’t work right out of the box my overactive persecution complex kicked in big time. I thought, “WHY DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN TO ME? It’s defective – I knew this was too good to be true.”

I then read the little one page of instructions. OOPS! You have to remove the clear plastic coating off the battery contact. Strange – it worked perfectly after I removed the plastic and it had electricity in the receiver.

Next question. So how does this thing work and do you have to be a genius to use it?

1. Plug the receiver into the camera shutter release.



Open the compartment containing the shutter release and insert the jack.

Note: Your camera must have a shutter release jack. Some less expensive cameras do not have this option. If your camera does not have this option, be sure to check for this when you buy your next camera.

You will also need to check the website to determine the right Cactus shutter release for your brand of camera.

<http://www.gadgetinfinity.com/>

2. Press the little orange button to turn the receiver on after plugging it into the camera.



3. Position tripod and camera.



4. Turn the camera on and frame the photo.
5. Position yourself into the group.
6. Hold the transmitter in your hand.
7. Press the orange button half way down to auto focus the camera. The LED will glow red indicating autofocus is set.

Way Cool!



This little gem also has a little antenna you can extend for greater range.

8. Audibly count to three and press the button the rest of the way down to take the photo.



(The LED will turn green indicating the camera has taken the photo.)

Tip for better group photos. I usually take the photo on the two count since all the kids make their silly faces and rabbit ear gestures on the three count. Take several photos in succession so you can pick the best one and hopefully everyone will have their eyes open.

I'm Hoping to see you start appearing (the phantom photographer) in family group photos. You don't have any excuses now for not being in the photo!

The next page will explain how you can use the wireless shutter release to take photos of computer displays and wall mounted photos.

Other Uses

Many people take digital photos of computer screens at family history libraries to get better quality photos and to save the cost of making a photo copy.

Using the wireless shutter release will help you quickly take many photos. Just press the remote button two times for each photo. You can save even more time if you have someone change the images on the monitor while you press the remote shutter button.

Note: Taking photos of digital monitors work best since these monitors do not “flash” or produce a black bar moving down the screen on a “tube” type monitor (CRT) when you take photos. Take several photos if you notice this artifact.

Wherever you have been using the camera timer you can now use the wireless shutter release and not have to wait for the timer for each shot. Taking photos hanging on a wall is another example of a way to save time and still get a good still shot of the picture without using the timer.



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