



5 ways to
THRIVE
instead of just
SURVIVE
DURING COVID-19

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NO. 1

CREATE *THREE*
LEVELS OF
COMMUNITY

I have thought so often about how hard this time is going to be for those that struggle with mental illness. It's hard for me to sometimes stay encouraged and positive and inspired when I don't have the normal social-interaction that I normally have. I miss going to the gym with my sister and our friend, Mac. I miss our church and our small group. I miss meeting my family for dinner and sitting in the midst of other strangers in a restaurant. I miss these things and they definitely affect my mood sometimes so I can't imagine how hard this season must be for someone else who has additional struggles to maintain a positive mood and healthy thoughts. I know this isn't a fix for everything, it's simply a suggestion that I think will help a lot of photographers who feel lonely and worried about community in this COVID-19 season. If you struggle with mental illness and find yourself falling into an unhealthy mental state, I hope you will reach out and maybe, if you have initiated these three areas of connection, you will have more options to reach out to.

*In this season I think it would be wise and beneficial for wedding photographers to have **THREE DIFFERENT LEVELS** of community.*

You may already have one or two of these types of community groups established in some way, shape or form. If not, now is a wonderful time to initiate these relational connections and I hope that even after this crisis dies down, that these relationships will be a GIFT for years to come. The truth is, HARD TIMES bring people together. Hard seasons lend themselves to more vulnerability and sharing....something our culture lacks BIG time. My hope is that these different levels of community will bring not only encouragement but also peace into your lives.

LEVEL ONE:

Create an “Emergency Pod” (10-15 local photographers) :

During a recent FB Live, I was asked “In the event that we do get the virus and we need a replacement for a shoot or a wedding, what do we do if our normal backup is sick or unavailable?” This is a great question. While most events are being postponed and rescheduled, there may be time when smaller weddings and events are allowed but you are unable to capture them. Whatever the situation may be, I would encourage you to take your “back-up” plan to the next level and create an “Emergency Pod” with 10-15 other local photographers who would be willing to all cover for one another. I would create a shared Google Spreadsheet with names, contact info and location so that you can all have information right in front of you whenever you may need it.

Our students in our [KJ Education Facebook Group](#) have been rallying together to create their own Emergency Pods this past week and the response has been incredible!!

LEVEL TWO:

Unite your “Crisis-Companions”

(5-6 Online friends - Check in WEEKLY) :

I realized yesterday that there was a pattern happening in my text messages. I have been texting my BEST FRIEND and then I have two group texts of 5-6 friends that I’m communicating with as well. This group of 5-6 friends kind of feels like my social OUTLET that I’m missing from my normal life and I realized that this type of “Crisis-companion group” could be such a blessing to other photographers who miss human interaction and desperately want to connect with one another. This is different from the Emergency Pod because the purpose of this group is to share life updates, get to know one another, share concerns, share encouragement and be a sounding board for one another. Unlike the Emergency Pod, this group exists for US and not for our clients.

I realize making friends as adults is HARD. It shouldn’t be, but it is. It takes vulnerability, intentionality and risk to reach out and ask for a deeper connection to others.... But it’s WORTH the risk when it happens. So how do you find your Crisis-Companions? Here’s what I suggest:

- *Pay attention to threads you have engaged with in FB Groups. Who do you connect with? Who have you had conversations with? Who has been in a similar situation as you? Maybe this is a good person to reach out to and invite them into your “Crisis-Companion” group.*
- *Share your story and unique situation in a few FB groups and explain that you’re looking to connect with 5-6 people during this crisis who can provide encouragement, support and interaction. Maybe your spouse is in the military... maybe you have more than one kid at home... maybe you have teenagers stuck at home with you... maybe you just had a baby... maybe you’re single... maybe you just moved... maybe your spouse is in the medical field. By offering your story and situation, you may find that others are in the same boat and you can form your Crisis-Companion group through those interactions.*
- *Consider connections you already have and unify them! Maybe you already have a group of people who you have connected with and you text individually that you could combine and form your “Crisis-Companion” group.*

LEVEL THREE:

Connect with your most trusted friend

(Check in DAILY):

Your “Crisis-Companion” group can be a great place for encouragement, sharing and community.... But having one person that you can go to with your highest highs and your lowest lows is powerful. This type of relationship can just be “asked for” or “wished for”, it’s gained over time through trust, mutual respect and love, and vulnerability. I’m not saying that you can initiate a relationship RIGHT NOW during this crisis and automatically have a BEST FRIEND. What I’m encouraging you to consider is how you can be real, honest, and intentional with your friendships during this crisis and potentially see stronger relationships blossom.

If you already have a trusted best friend, this is an amazing time to intentionally check in and be a GOOD friend in the midst of the chaos that is surrounding us. If you don’t have this person in your life but you have dear friends who may be able to fill that role, maybe this season is your opportunity to strengthen a “trusted-friend” type relationship. *If that is a possibility wanting to happen for you, what a gift that would be at the end of all of this!!!*

NO.2

PRODUCTIVITY

LEADS TO

PURPOSE

*How do you feel about yourself when you've had
a full work day and you feel like you got NOTHING DONE?*

It's an awful feeling. There is honestly not much else that feels quite as defeating to me as a day when I know I could have potentially gotten SO much done but failed to.

Now, take that thought.... And the way ONE UNPRODUCTIVE DAY feels like... and imagine weeks upon weeks of that feeling. - YIKES. Can you imagine if we have time and space to grow and be productive but because we're stuck in such a negative mindset, we get NOTHING accomplished? That would definitely kill morale in a business trying to thrive in the midst of COVID-19!!!

So let's think about this....

What do we need to decide on and realize in order to make the most of this opportunity for productivity:

- Catch up on your MAINTAINING TASKS (tasks that are required constantly like editing, emails, etc) so that you can start accomplishing a high-priority GROWING TASK! - If you want to learn more about "Growing vs. Maintaining Tasks, watch [HERE](#)".
- Create DEADLINES for your specific tasks
- Post your TOP THREE tasks in a very visible place that you will see constantly.
- List out EVERYTHING you want to accomplish in your business on a master list and then pull your top three tasks from that list to begin with. (Make sure your lists are actionable tasks, not massive goals).
- Recognize and Remove your distractions: What makes you deviate from a task the most? For me, it's my pantry, my phone and my kids. I can't remove my pantry but it helps to shut the door and put a sticky note on it reminding myself to turn around and get back to my task!!!

When it comes to Step 4 where I mentioned listing out what tasks you want to accomplish in your business, here are some COMMON things that photographers are constantly talking about wanting to accomplish in our Facebook Groups. Take this list and grab the tasks that are true for you!

“During COVID-19, I want to.....”

- **Finish my KJ Bridal Guide Template!!** - So many students want to get their guide out to their clients but they need to finish inserting their own images! The time is now!! You'll LOVE the feeling of holding your beautiful magazine in your hands and then shipping a copy to your couples to help them prepare and plan a photography-friendly wedding day! Ps. This is the number one way we convince our clients of First-Looks, more portrait time, appropriate number of family formals & unplugged ceremonies! Learn more [HERE](#)!
- **Finish your KJ Courses that you are behind in!** - Oh, I know I'm talking to a whole lot of KJ Students out there! We all have courses (and books!) we need to finish (amiright?!). Think about how amazing it would feel to get back into the swing of normal business life in (hopefully) a couple of weeks knowing that you've completed your courses that you've invested in and you could start implementing what you've learned?! Click [HERE](#) to sign in, click [HERE](#) to add a new course and save \$200!
- **Watch and LEARN FLASH:** Seriously, why not learn flash during this unexpected break? It's always shocking to me how many wedding photographers are terrified of FLASH and honestly don't understand it. If you're not already a member of [KJ All Access](#), here's a link where you can watch me photograph a wedding that I photographed in downtown Boston, it was freezing and the ceremony took place 2 hours after sunset. I photographed over 50% of this wedding with flash and you can learn from watching me do it! YIKES! If you struggle with flash, this is your chance to learn for FREE!
- **Update your website:** You know after you clean a room and rearrange the furniture a little how fun, new and fresh everything feels? Same with your website! Update your portfolio, about me images, etc!! If you struggle to gather your images, start implementing this tip: After EVERY shoot I do, before I mark my workflow as complete, I take the top 5 images from that shoot and add it to my "portfolio" gallery that I keep in Cloudspot! That way my BEST of the best images are stored in one place, making year-end blog posts and website updates easy and fast!
- **Create or update your Email Templates** - Add new email templates that you've been meaning to create for a while!! Whether you're writing them from scratch or want to use [my templates](#), you can save yourself SO much time by sitting down and hammering out your most common emails that you're constantly sending to your clients.

- **Design a new sample album** - I honestly want to do this. I desperately need a new one that reflects [KISS's](#) new album cover options that I love! When it comes to considering which wedding to use, try to find your most well-rounded wedding day! For example, some weddings have amazing beginnings but the ceremony was in poor light or the sunset portraits were lacking. It's best to find a wedding that you are proud of overall to use in a sample album. That may mean that you don't pick a wedding with the BEST portraits but instead, you pick a wedding with pretty portraits, great ceremony shots, well-exposed and posed family formals, good details and classic reception shots of key events!
- **Start the process of finding your private editor!** - We love and believe in [Edit-Source](#)! My editor actually founded this company years ago and it's an unbelievable resource for photographers wanting to start working with a private editor! Why a private editor? Whew. So many reasons. Mainly, because a private editor feels like you're expanding your TEAM where a large company feels like you're giving your images away to someone you don't know well and that's scary. I've tried both and I will never trust a big company with my images like I trust my private editor!
- **Start the process of finding that virtual assistant** that you desperately need once work picks back up - Here's a great resource to consider: [Outsourcing with Love](#). Another great task is to create a handbook for your business sharing processes and systems so that when you hire help, it's an easy transition!!
- **Do your taxes!** : I know, who really wants to do this? It's definitely not something that feels inspiring to me but if it needs to be done, you will feel SO great once this task is accomplished. If you feel totally ill-equipped, consider outsourcing this task to a professional. As you go through this process, look at what didn't work In 2019 and recreate new systems for the rest of 2020 to make your 2021 tax season more manageable.
- **Catch up on blogging** : I recently did a [Youtube video](#) talking about if blogging is dead or not. Spoiler Alert: It's not. I would definitely admit that traffic has subsided a decent amount to blogs in recent years but here's the thing, I blog to create an archive of my family's life, I blog to showcase my client's and share their stories and I blog because content is still KING and SEO still plays a role in how I rank in Google! So! Why not catch up on your blogging? Be sure to talk about your venues, vendors that you loved, the area you were shooting in, the style of the wedding, etc!

NO.3

REMEMBER

WHAT IS

ACTUALLY

TRUE

How many of you can relate to this?

You're having a bad day.... Having some doubts about your work and who you are as a business owner... you get turned down by an inquiry that you thought was promising....you then realize they went with someone else that you know... you start comparing your work... you feel less-than... you consider tweaking your style to match hers a bit more... you feel less-than... you talk to your significant other about possibly quitting... they don't understand why you're so worked up about this... it causes a fight... etc.

Let's rewind, shall we?!

What caused your bad day to begin with?

What thoughts crept into your mind when your day wasn't perfect?

How did the rejection from a potential client (in your own mind)

"confirm" what you were already believing about yourself?

This is where the spiral began.... But instead of continuing down this path... let's just STOP for a second and **TAKE OUR THOUGHTS CAPTIVE**. Meaning, we don't let our thoughts slip through our minds and start affecting our HEARTS without filtering them through some truth filters and consider what else could be possible.

So let's take this example.....

Is it REALLY true that you are "less than" that other photographer? Could it be possible that they are charging less? Offering more? Have a personal connection to the client? Heavily discounted the package and you would never know? Could it be that that couple really wasn't a good fit for YOU and by them not booking was a huge blessing, not a slap in the face? Could it be that you're going to book their date in a month or two with a couple that adores you and you wouldn't be available for them if you had booked this bride you currently feel rejected by?

When you start to allow yourself to be set free from all of the negative, made-up assumptions that you create in your life, you start to be set free to consider other possibilities.

With COVID-19, the outcome is very uncertain.

If you allow your mind to wander without taking your thoughts captive, this uncertain time will overtake you. This is especially true if you struggle with anxiety. It's so easy to start to "envision" what you assume or "predict" may happen and then you start seeing EVERYTHING as a sign that it's going to go what direction. When this is happening freely in your mind, you will quickly find yourself so far into your belief that it's hard to see what is truth and what is FEAR taking over.

Whether you need this in your PERSONAL LIFE or in your BUSINESS or in BOTH, my invitation to you is to start TODAY. Start paying attention to this in little ways. It's going to blow your mind the stuff that you're coming up with from tiny little thoughts that just get out of control!

(Ps. If you're in a relationship, this self-discipline is a game-CHANGER!!! Hopefully I just saved you from a few big fights that would have happened because of thoughts that weren't taken captive and spiraled into something bigger than it ever needed to be!)

I know this is heavy and pretty intense to think about, so if you're wondering how to begin this approach to mental-health, just start by asking yourself the question :

"Is this thought stemming from FEAR or FACT?"

NO.4

PIVOT YOUR
PRIORITIES

I'm great at creating amazing experiences for my clients. That's what I'm good at, that's where I excel and that's where I feel MOST comfortable. So, naturally, it's hard for me to make this pivot that I'm about to share with you. During this season of time where we're not shooting and we're not meeting with people in-person, I know that I should pivot my priorities to being more about PRODUCTS than my SERVICES.

Sure, my services are going to be coming back into play as SOON as the chaos of this crisis dies down, but until that happens, I need to be WISE with my time and prioritize creating income from the work I have already done!! *What does this look like? Let's talk about ALBUMS & PRINTS!*

Your brides, who are behind on making tweaks to their album, may be ready to dive into the details of making changes and finalizing their order now that most people are not going into work! Take advantage of this!

Here are some ideas:

- Spark the IDEA and give them a DEADLINE with a REWARD: This means, sending an email saying something like - *"Hey NAME, I hope you're doing well and are healthy! During this crazy season of COVID-19, if you find yourself at home with more time than usual and want to have me start making some adjustments to your album design, I would love to do that for you! (insert details as to how they can find their link to their design and password again). This slower pace of life is allowing me to get so many albums ordered and so I wanted to let you know that if you are able to get your album design finalized by XXX date, I would love to take 50% off of your additional spread cost!"*
- Use incentives as a "surprise" and a way to incentivize them to take action. Maybe it's discounted album spreads, a parent's album deal of some kind, complimentary upgraded cover material, etc.

Maybe you're not in a season where you're offering albums (or maybe all of your brides are up to date on their orders!) and you need to pivot your focus more towards PRINT SALES!

I am a proud user of Cloudspot and their system offers the option to run a sale with a discount code that can be advertised on a thin banner on the top of each client's gallery page! Why not use a feature like this to do a limited time print sale to encourage clients to use their down time to sit down and print their favorite images. A lot of times, a lack of print sales is stemming from the perfect combination of the photographer not initiating any type of momentum towards a sale and the client forgetting that they want prints in the first place! Let's bring it back to their attention and then once this crisis is over, use this "SALE" idea and schedule it to use for each client's first anniversary!

NO.5

CHOOSE

VISION OVER

VICTIMIZATION

Ok.... I know not everyone is going to like this one.

Why? Because it's NOT a popular way to overcome hardship. It's not easy and it isn't supposed to be. If it was easy, this would be a COMMON way people walked through hard seasons... but it's not common... it's actually FAR from common.... But it's a GIFT and it's LIFE CHANGING if you can truly commit to embracing it. So here we go.....

When Michael and I were walking through the pain of losing our second child due to complications from Down Syndrome, we found ourselves in a “crucible” of a situation. Like we felt as if we were standing at the end of a path and it split into two directions. One direction led to LIGHT and new life and the other led to a dark hole that we could survive in but it we would feel the heaviness and the weight and the burden of the darkness forever. The path that led to LIGHT and LIFE was a hard hike... lots of steep hills, high cliffs and it wouldn't be the path most would choose because it was far from easy and the path that led to gloomy darkness was a simple walking trail that was easy and all downhill.

We chose the path to LIGHT and LIFE.

What did this look like in our life during tragedy?

It looked like choosing to create a VISION instead of being a victim.

Now, let me just say this.... It felt natural, comfortable and normal to have a brand new pity-party for myself every single day as we walked through this pain.... And some days I did. But I didn't stay there. Michael and I knew that the path to the darkness could easily swallow us up and it would be hard to get out of if we spent years of our life stewing in the bitterness, pain and resentment that was waiting there for us. That wasn't what we wanted. We have an amazing relationship-coach that challenged us to fight against the natural tendency to feel like we were hopeless and instead, create a clear VISION for how we wanted to show up in the midst of the mess we were living through.

Having a VISION changed absolutely everything.

I would have breakdowns every single day that I was pregnant with my baby that wasn't going to survive. However, after my breakdowns, I would remind myself of what I ultimately wanted in this season. Part of my vision was to “Love him while we had him”... meaning that I didn't just want to wish his life away because it was so painful, but I wanted to know that I CHERISHED him while he was alive inside of me. Part of our vision together as a couple was to grow closer instead of being torn apart like so many couples are in the midst of losing a child in the way we were losing Baby James.

This part of our vision changed the way we fought in that season of our life. We still had tension but we felt more like a team during those three months of our marriage than ANY other part of our relationship. How in the world was that possible? It was possible because we continually chose our vision over being a victim.

Now, I get it.... We're all technically "victims" to the ripple effect of this contagious virus. No one chose this, no one made this happen.... It's "happening" to all of us.... But that doesn't change the fact that we all have a choice. We all get to choose how we're going to show up in the midst of this.

Some will choose to be victims and the pain of this season will sit heavy on them for a long time.... And some will choose to believe that this hard season may not ONLY be bad but that there could be other possibilities beyond the pain. Both types of people will suffer and some may suffer greatly.... But the one who chooses not to be a victim will be the one that gets to the top of that mountain where the light is bright enough to show them a bigger perspective of the story.

I'm so thankful that I have been able to see the bigger picture of our hard season of losing a child. The more that I chose VISION over being a VICTIM, the more I was able to see God changing lives through Baby James' story. The further I hiked and climbed the path that led to LIGHT, the more I realized that I would never want to go back to the path to darkness. As hard as it was to choose to see other possibilities and opportunities in our pain, I realize now that THAT was the secret to surviving it. LOVING our baby instead of only being devastated that we were going to lose him was how we lived through a stillbirth and actually experienced JOY despite the sorrow.

So what are you choosing in the midst of this season?

Will you fall into the "doomsday" category and try to prepare yourself for the absolute worst while living in constant fear and panic? Or will you choose a different narrative and allow yourself to see other possibilities?

This decision and the way you show up during COVID-19 could potentially transform the way you FOREVER show up in hardship..... For the rest of your life... now wouldn't THAT be a crazy new possibility that you've never considered?!!

LET'S WRAP UP...



These tips were lengthy and I probably went a little too in-depth with some of them... but I hope in all of this, maybe you gained a new perspective... maybe you feel more inspired to show up differently... and maybe together, we can all look back at this season and be incredibly proud of ourselves for not just surviving the COVID-19 crisis, but THRIVING in the midst of it.

I hope you know how much I care about you all. I realize that anyone who somehow gets ahold of this information was connected to us for a reason and I'm honored that you read this and let us into a tiny piece of your life.

Stay safe, stay healthy and keep fighting to see other possibilities,

Xoxo,

Katelyn

Other KJ Resources:

[INSTAGRAM](#)

[KJ EDUCATION FACEBOOK GROUP](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

[BABY JAMES' STORY](#)