Playing With Light  
Lesson Five: Blending Natural Light and Flash

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Introduction

You've almost come to the end of your introduction to light in both natural and artificial forms.

By now, you should have a much better sense of the quality, direction and color of light - and how these three elements can combine to create "spectacular" light.

You should also be starting to get a sense for the type of light that you prefer.

You may have noticed that a lot of the techniques that I present in these lessons revolve around softening overly hard light. There's a reason for this: softening light brings the tones within the dynamic range your camera can capture.

This ensures that detail in your subject is visible in both the highlights and the shadows.

But you may find that the lower contrast of soft light is not to your liking. As I mentioned in my discussion of natural soft light (what you get on an overcast day), subjects can wind up looking flat and two-dimensional.
What you should take away from this is that the "optimal" light for any photograph is based entirely on decisions that you - the photographer - make.

- You get to choose whether you take pictures in natural light or artificial light
- You get to choose whether you reflect or diffuse the light

And - as I hope this lesson proves - there are a few times when a blend of BOTH natural and artificial light is what's required to really make your image stand out.

**Natural Light and Flash**

**The Sun as Light Source**

Photographers on tight budgets who can't afford multiple external flash units just need to take a single flash outdoors.

When you do this, you're actually working with TWO light sources: the sun and your flash.

You've instantly got a secondary light source that - happily - you don't have to pay for. The only drawback is that you can't position the sun exactly where you need it, so you have to work with what you've got.

Any time you're working with two light sources, some additional flash terminology comes into play:

- **Key Light** - the "key" light or "main" light is your primary light source, the one that is most responsible for illuminating your subject
- **Fill Light** - a fill light is secondary to the key and its sole purpose is to bring out detail in the shadows
- **Rim Light** - this type of light causes the subject to stand out from the background (by creating a rim or halo of light) and is typically placed directly behind the subject

For each of the following sections, I'll talk about which light source is the key, and which one plays a supporting role.

**Fill Flash**

The irony about fill flash is that it's a pretty simple concept...but only after you have a solid understanding of limited dynamic range, diffusion and reflection.

To put it another way - if I had described fill flash at the beginning of these lessons, you might have found it conceptually hard to understand.

Now, I'm hoping that there's just an "aha" moment for you as you read through the following explanation:

- You're taking photos in hard natural light
- The contrast exceeds the dynamic range your camera can capture
• You want to preserve highlight detail, but this renders shadows as almost pure black
• You'd like to brighten the shadows so that some detail is visible

While you can certainly brighten shadows by using a reflector (as described in lesson two) what if you don't happen to have a reflector handy?

It's time to leverage a flash that always is available on your camera.

To add just a kick of light to shadows on bright sunny days, start by activating your camera's built-in flash.

While using a flash in full sunlight seems a bit silly at first, it makes perfect sense when you understand that the purpose of the flash is NOT to illuminate your subject, but to ADD light to the areas of shadow.

The net result here is that dynamic range is REDUCED, and your camera is able to capture details in BOTH highlights and shadows.

Built-in flash works well for this need, because you don't need a super-powerful flash to achieve the desired effect. You can use an external flash to add fill light, but in many cases you will have to reduce the flash exposure compensation so that your subject isn't washed out.

There are many times when you can leverage fill flash to balance the exposure of a subject close to the camera with the background. Here are just a few examples:

**HAT SHADOW – NO FILL**

If you take a lot of photos of people who wear hats all the time, you're constantly dealing with the shadow that is thrown over the face and eyes. To bring out some detail in the shadows and make the eyes brighter, add a touch of fill flash.
HAT SHADOW – WITH FILL

With just a bit of added light from flash, the eyes are now visible and the entire image looks brighter.

BACKLIT SUNSET – NO FILL

I think just about everyone (at least people who take lots of pictures) has a shot of a friend or family member in front of a gorgeous sunset.

The sunset looks great - but your primary subject is a dark silhouette against the skyline. If you'd like to capture BOTH the facial features of your subject AND the sunset, just add some fill flash.

BACKLIT SUNSET – WITH FILL

That's better! With just a touch of flash the exposure of the subject is now balanced with the exposure of the bright sunset in the background.

Now if I could just get my subject to smile...

Let's talk about the roles that the sun and your flash play in these two scenarios.

If you are using the flash to add light to shadows:

- The sun is the Key Light - the natural light provides the main source of illumination for your subject
• The flash is the Fill Light - the light from the flash is only used to brighten shadows (you can control how much the shadows are brightened by manipulating the power setting on the flash or by adjusting flash exposure compensation)

If you are using the flash to light a backlit subject:

• The flash is the Key Light - your subject is lit primary by flash, not natural light
• The sun is a Rim Light - if it's even visible, the light from the sun will illuminate the edges of your subject from behind

**TIP** How you position your subject will determine how many shadows you have to brighten. For example, if your subject is at a 90 degree angle to the sun, then about half the subject will be in shadow. But if the sun is positioned directly behind the subject then the ENTIRE subject will be in shadow.

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**Balanced Exposures**

In the lesson where I talked about modifying natural light, I mentioned that there's not much landscape photographers can do to change the available light.

Unfortunately, landscape photographers also can't use flash to balance an exposure – not without **hundreds** of flashes at least.

The following technique is really only useful for people who photograph **smaller subjects**, since a smaller subject can be effectively illuminated with a flash.

When used properly, it should be very hard for the person viewing your photograph to tell that a flash was used (regardless of the type of flash).

Here's the setup: you're taking photos in natural light that exceeds the dynamic range of your camera. You want both your subject AND the background to be correctly exposed.

The actual technique you use to achieve this end result overlaps a lot with the use of fill flash.

1. Set your main mode dial to Manual (M)
2. Using your camera's light meter, determine a shutter speed and aperture setting that will create a balanced exposure (where the meter displays a zero)
3. Take a test shot - examine the results on the camera's LCD to see if there are any highlights that look too bright
4. Adjust either your shutter speed or aperture setting to preserve details in the highlights
5. Take another test shot - while the background is now correctly exposed, your primary subject is probably severely under exposed

6. Add some light from flash to illuminate the subject - keep taking test shots while you adjust the power of your flash OR the subject-to-flash distance until the subject is correctly exposed

As with fill flash, you’re adding light to the shadows to reduce dynamic range and to allow your camera to capture details in BOTH shadows and highlights.

The main difference between this technique and fill flash is that the purpose of fill flash is really to add just a SMALL amount of light to the scene. Fill flash is often used when your main subject is in direct sunlight.

But let’s say that your primary subject is in the shade of a tree, while the background is lit with direct sunlight.

To create a balanced exposure of this scene - where both the background and the subject are correctly exposed - you have to start out by setting your exposure to capture detail in the background (since that is the brightest part of the image).

Then you use your flash to fully illuminate your subject so that the amount of light on the subject (from the flash) is equivalent to the amount of light in the background.

Here’s how this works:

**STEP #1 – BACKGROUND EXPOSURE**

In this first image the background is correctly exposed. However, since the main subject of the photo is standing in the shade of a tree, the exposure on her is way too dark.

This image uses only natural light, the flash was turned off.
STEP #2 – ADD SOME FLASH

This is the right idea, but taken too far.

For this shot I simply turned on the flash. I set the flash power manually, and it's clear that the power is turned up too high.

Since I don't want to adjust camera settings (which would affect the background exposure) I have two options: 1) move the subject further from the flash or 2) turn down the power.

STEP #3 – FLASH AND AMBIENT

For this last photo, my daughter simply moved farther away from the flash which reduced the amount of light falling on her.

Now the light from the flash is balanced with the exposure settings for the ambient light in the background.

Depending on the size of your subject, this technique can require a more powerful flash than the built-in one attached to the top of your camera.

Balancing flash with ambient light is something that professional photographers do all the time, but they are also using large, powerful professional flash units. This lets them achieve balanced exposures even when they're working with large subjects (or groups of subjects).

You can achieve the same results yourself with one external flash unit - preferably off-camera - you'll just have to keep the size of your subjects limited to what your flash can illuminate.

For balanced exposures, there is no Key Light/Fill Light relationship: both the light from the sun and the light from the flash work together to reduce the dynamic range in your photo so that you can see details everywhere.

Overpowering Ambient Light

Now that you've got the hang of getting your flash to play nice with the available natural light, you're going to use your flash to beat up the ambient like a schoolyard bully.

While this is perhaps an extreme way of describing what you're about to do, it's not too far off the mark: you're using the light from your flash to overpower the available ambient light.
Why would you do this? There are several reasons:

- **Poor Quality Light** - when your only option is to take pictures at high noon on a sunny day, you're not working with great ambient light. In this case, you can overpower the ambient light with flash to improve the quality of the light.

- **Depth of Field** - with dim ambient light, you need to use a wide aperture setting to get a correctly exposed photo (if you don't want to use a very slow shutter speed). If you add more light from a flash, then you can narrow your aperture for increased depth of field.

- **Cluttered Background** - if you're taking pictures in a natural environment and there's too much going on in the background, you can reduce the brightness of the background while keeping your subject brightly lit with flash.

- **Drama** - even if the ambient light is not low-quality, it might still lack punch. Adding flash can add interest to lackluster ambient light.

There are a few caveats about this technique:

- You must set exposure manually - you're not going to be able to achieve the right results with any of the automatic exposure modes like Program, Aperture Priority or Shutter Priority.

- You must use an external flash - to overpower ambient light, you need a powerful flash. You also need a flash you can fire off-camera, so your built-in flash just won't cut it.

The general principle is fairly simple, but getting the amount of flash right can involve quite a bit of trial and error.

First you manually set your exposure so that the picture will come out massively under exposed.

Then, you leverage your flash and aim it so that it ONLY illuminates your subject. Since the ambient light has been eliminated by your manual exposure setting, you're ensuring that the MAIN (or key) light source is your flash rather than the sun.

Let's take a closer look at just how this works.

**CORRECT EXPOSURE - NO FLASH**

ISO: 100  Shutter: 1/30  Aperture: f/6.3

We'll start with an exposure that is purely natural light. In this case, the meter is set to zero, which means that camera feels that the exposure is correct.
**UNDER EXPOSURE - NO FLASH**

ISO: 100  Shutter: 1/250  Aperture: f/6.3

Now I've increased the shutter speed to make the exposure darker. I could also have narrowed the aperture, but I did not want to change my depth of field.

Note how much darker this image is, and how the impact of the ambient light is reduced.

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**UNDER EXPOSURE WITH FLASH**

ISO: 100  Shutter: 1/250  Aperture: f/6.3

Now that I have my camera's exposure set to under expose the image, I can introduce some light from a flash. Once I do this, the flash now acts as the primary light source and the ambient is the secondary (or fill) light. I haven't adjusted my camera settings, I've just added the light from the flash.

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I mentioned above that one of the uses of this technique is that you can de-clutter a background when you're taking pictures in a natural environment.

If you enjoy taking portraits, you'll soon realize that your images have a lot more impact when the background doesn't compete with the subject.

Portraits taken with neutral backgrounds have a clean look, and allow the viewer to focus in on the portrait subject. If there's a lot going on in the background, it draws attention away from the portrait subject and creates a less pleasing image.

When photographers are in a studio, they can easily control the background behind the subject but when you're outside, controlling the background is not so easy.

If you have a background that's too busy, you can decrease its impact by under exposing the ambient light and then adding in flash to illuminate the subject.

In fact, by using shutter speed you can control exactly how dark
Remember from lesson three: when you're lighting a subject with flash, the SUBJECT exposure can only be altered by changing aperture and ISO (shutter speed won't have any impact on the subject exposure). However, shutter speed WILL have an impact on the brightness of the background.

When you use flash to overpower ambient light, the roles of the two lights are now reversed:

- The flash is the Key Light - the quality and direction of light are determined entirely by the placement of the flash
- The sun is the Fill Light - the amount of shadow and background detail can be controlled by adjusting the shutter speed

**Creating Artificial Natural Light**

Here at the end of the last lesson, we're going to put together everything that you've learned so far to create what I like to call "digital photography sleight of hand".

While not truly a magic trick, you are creating a false impression: viewers of your photographs will think that the light is natural when in fact it is not.

This exercise puts together everything that you now know about natural light - its quality, direction and color - and what you know about flash - getting it off camera, and using diffusers and reflectors to manipulate the light.

I'm going to work through 4 examples of how you - without spending thousands of dollars on expensive lighting equipment - can replicate the look of sunlight no matter where you're taking photos.

**Full Sunlight**

Of all the natural lighting you can reproduce with flash, this one is by far the easiest.

Here's what you'll need:

1. One light stand
2. A flash bracket
3. One remote flash unit
4. A trigger for the remote flash

If you're using a wired triggering mechanism, make sure that you've got a LONG cable since the light is going to need to be some distance from the camera.

Here's how to set up:
1. Place the flash on the bracket and the bracket on the light stand
2. Connect the flash to the camera
3. Using the flash bracket, tilt the flash so that it is pointing toward the ground
4. Extend the light stand as high as it will go
5. Set the light stand slightly in front of your subject so that the flash is pointing down on them from above
6. Take some test shots and adjust aperture to get a good exposure

You should get a look that resembles the type of light you get on a bright sunny day:

- The quality of light is hard (not filtered)
- The direction of light is from above the subject
- The color of the light is neutral

Voila - natural sunlight regardless of where you happen to be. Note that using the technique is not limited to indoor shots. Let's say that you want to take some photos outside but it's a gray gloomy day.

Just pull out your off-camera flash, pop it on a stand and you've got full sun with one major benefit: you can position the sun anywhere you like (a lot easier and faster than waiting for the right time of day).

Sunset

Creating a sunset look in your images just requires one more flash accessory than was used to create a sunlit look: a gel.

Gels are thin pieces of colored material that you place in front of the flash. This changes the color of the flash from a neutral (daylight) tone to just about any color you like: blue, green, orange, red, etc.

For the purpose of a sunset, you want to use an orange gel, which is also often called a CTO gel.
CTO gels come in varying strengths, from 1/4 CTO to a full CTO. While you are certainly welcome to experiment on your own, I've found that a full CTO gel works the best if you really want that sunset look to your photo.

Adding the colored gel takes care of the color of the light, but you also need to think about its direction.

At sunset, the light is at a very low angle so you need to position your flash accordingly. Rather than placing it high above your subject's head, you need to drop the flash down lower to the ground.

Here's why this setup mimics the look of sunset light:

- The quality of light is hard
- The direction of light is low to the ground
- The color of light is warm (orange / yellow)

**Somewhat Overcast**

To create the look of somewhat overcast light with a flash, you're going to need a diffuser. In this particular instance, the bigger the diffuser the better.

Think about what happens on a somewhat overcast day: the sun is still shining down the way it normally does (just like your external flash in the full sunlight setup). On a somewhat overcast day, a thin veil of clouds sits between the sun and your subject.

To re-create this look, you need some type of thin white diffusion material. This diffuser can be just about anything that is white and thin:

- An old bedsheets
- A circular hand-held diffuser
- A shoot-through umbrella

When you add a diffuser to the mix, the flash is not really the light source anymore: the diffusion material is. Yes, you need the flash to light up the diffuser, but it's the light from the diffuser that's falling on your subject.

Let's break out the steps required to get this look:

1. Place the flash on a bracket and the bracket on the light stand
2. Connect the flash to the camera
3. Position the light stand so that the flash is some distance from your subject
4. Place the diffusion material in between the flash and your subject, allowing for some room in between flash and diffuser and diffuser and subject (crowding the three together won't create as nice a look)
5. Take some test shots and adjust aperture to get a good exposure

Clearly, you have some variables that you can play with here: subject to diffuser distance, diffuser to flash distance, and the actual position of the flash itself (low, high, right, left, etc.).

In each case you will be affecting how soft the light is and how much direction it has: a flash placed off to the side will create more shadows and dimension on your subject than one that lights the subject straight on.

The addition of a diffuser to the lighting mix replicates partially overcast light because:

- The light is softened by the diffuser
- The direction of light is spread out (although this depends on where you place the flash)
- The color of light is neutral

**Overcast**

Creating overcast light with flash is really just a matter of decreasing the transparency of your diffuser.

Another way to achieve the same look is to point the flash AWAY from your subject so that your subject is lit indirectly.

After all, this is what happens when clouds completely blot out the sun: light still makes its way through, but that light is very diffuse and very soft.

**Diffusion**

If you've already used a diffuser to soften the light from your flash to create a partially overcast look, then you can just add on to this.

There are two approaches:

1. Make the diffusion material less transparent
2. Double up on diffusion

Let's say that you're using an old bed sheet to act as your diffuser. To begin with, you just spread the bed sheet out in front of the flash.
If you simply FOLD the bed sheet, you’re going to create a diffuser that is less transparent and that will block more of the light coming from your flash. Even though just one diffuser is in use, the material is **denser**.

A second option is to use two diffusers in between the flash and subject rather than just one. This will have the same effect as if you had changed the density of a single diffuser since the light has to pass through two materials to reach your subject.

**Reflection**

If you're not keen on the idea of fiddling around with multiple diffusers then reflection is another good way of creating the soft directionless light you get on an overcast day.

For reflection, you just point the flash away from your subject and bounce the light off of a **large** nearby surface. I emphasize large because a small reflective surface won't spread the light out sufficiently to replicate the look of overcast light.

To maximize the reflected light that surface can be white, but if you want to create the same look that you get on an overcast day then the reflecting surface should be darker.

The reflecting surface does not have to be off to one site of the subject - you can also use a ceiling as a reflective surface. To do this just:

1. Place a remote flash on a flash bracket and point the flash straight up
2. Attach the flash bracket to a light stand
3. Connect the flash to a trigger (wired or wireless)
4. Manually set the power of the flash to either 1/4 or 1/2 power
5. Raise the light stand so that the flash is almost touching the ceiling
6. Adjust aperture to achieve a good exposure

This first image was captured on a completely overcast day. Notice how the light doesn't come from any one specific direction – it just sort of "wraps" around every subject in the image.
This photo was taken indoors, with a flash pointed straight up at a white ceiling. Just like on that overcast day, the light lands on the subject from almost every direction. There are no hard shadows to be seen.

**Diffusion or Reflection?**

Since both diffusion and reflection will achieve the same look, when should use one over the other?

The answer to this question is actually quite simple:

- If your subject is moving around use reflection
- If your subject is not moving then use either one

The reason you want to use reflection when taking pictures of a moving subject is because the reflected light spreads out over a wide area while diffuse light tends to be focused in one spot.

For diffusion, you have to ensure that the diffuser is in between your subject and the flash.

If your subject moves beyond the range of the diffuser, then the light will suddenly turn hard and high contrast rather than soft and low contrast. This is a lot like a partially cloudy day: sometimes the sun is blocked by a cloud and sometimes it's not.

With reflection, your subject can move all over the place: since the reflected light comes from a lot of different directions (thanks to the large surface area) it's hard for your subject to wander too far away from the source of light.

Using a single flash reflected off a ceiling is a great way to take portraits of children indoors, especially if you're snapping photos in a room without a lot of natural window light.

**Exercises**

**Exercise 1 - Fill Flash**

For this first practice exercise, nothing fancy is required: just the built-in flash that sits atop your camera and a fairly sunny day.
1. Find a subject that is outdoors where the shadows are hard and there's lots of contrast
2. With your camera in manual mode, change your aperture and shutter speed so that the camera's light meter indicates you have a balanced exposure (with the light meter reading zero)
3. Take a few shots without the flash first so that you can clearly see the difference once the flash is enabled
4. Manually activate your built-in flash or turn on the power to an external flash connected to the camera's hot shoe (if you have one)
5. Take a test shot with the flash enabled without changing either shutter speed or aperture
6. If the flash is adding too much light and washing our your subject, use the flash exposure compensation setting to reduce the flash power
7. If the results still look too bright, reduce the lens aperture one setting at a time until you get an image that looks natural but where the shadows are not quite so strong

Practice this same technique on a variety of different subjects lit from different angles: if there are more shadows that need to be filled in with flash, you'll need to adjust the flash power accordingly.

**Exercise 2 - Balancing Natural Light and Flash**

To balance natural light and flash, an external flash unit is recommended. The greater power of an external flash will give you more flexibility when trying to complete this exercise.

1. On a sunny day, head outside with the subject of your choice
2. Place the subject in a shady spot, and position your camera so that you can see both the subject and the bright background in the viewfinder
3. Using manual exposure settings, adjust shutter speed and aperture until you can tell that the BACKGROUND is correctly exposed (this will make your subject very dark)
4. Manually activate your flash
5. Since you don't want to change your aperture setting - this will affect the background exposure - the way to adjust the light from the flash is by using flash exposure compensation OR by setting the power level manually
6. Adjust the light output from the flash until your subject is also correctly exposed

You can also try this exercise with subjects where there is strong backlighting - the most common example is of someone standing in front of a sunset.

First, set your camera to expose correctly for the sunset and then gradually add the flash until your subject looks naturally balanced with the sunset light in the background.

**Exercise 3 - Overpowering Ambient Light**

To overpower ambient light, you absolutely need an external flash - built-in flash units aren't nearly powerful enough to achieve this effect. It also helps if the flash is off-camera since this allows you to position it anywhere you like.
1. Head outside with your subject on a sunny day, preferably in the late afternoon
2. Set up your subject in direct sunlight
3. Adjust your manual exposure settings so that the subject and background are correctly exposed (per your camera's light meter)
4. Now, change your exposure settings so that the meter indicates the image is under exposed (either to -1 or -2)
5. Add the light from your flash, and adjust the power level to achieve the look you want
6. If you want to replicate the look of sunlight then leave the flash bare, but if you’d like a softer look then use diffusion or reflection

**Exercise 4 - Faking Natural Light**

Faking natural light in an artificial environment takes tons of time, lots of patience and some additional photographic accessories.

Here's what you'll need:

1. An external flash unit
2. A flash bracket
3. A light stand
4. A flash trigger (wired or wireless)
5. A diffuser
6. A reflector

Tools in hand, it's time to play with light.

Start by re-creating full sunlight, even if there's no sunlight anywhere to be found. If you don't want to try this exercise outside, then try it in your living room, basement or garage. If you do this indoors, you just need ceilings that are high enough so you can position the flash above your subject.

To re-create full sunlight:

1. Attach the flash to the bracket and the light to the light stand
2. Connect your trigger (wireless or wired)
3. Bend the flash bracket so that the flash is pointed toward the ground
4. Extend the light stand to its full height
5. Take test photos and adjust your aperture and ISO to get a good exposure

Now, bring in the diffuser to re-create the look of a somewhat overcast day:

1. Position the diffuser in between the light and your subject
2. The diffuser will reduce the light falling on your subject: move the subject closer to the flash, increase flash power, increase ISO or widen the aperture to balance the exposure.

3. Play with the position of the diffuser: place it right between subject and flash, closer to the flash and closer to the subject to see how this changes the quality of light on the subject.

Finally, leverage the reflector to re-create the look of overcast light. If you don't have a reflector, feel free to use a large white wall or a ceiling to create the same look.

1. Reduce the height of the light stand so that the flash is around eye level or slightly higher.
2. Point the flash AWAY from the subject (in any direction you like).
3. Position the reflector in front of the flash so that it bounces light back onto your subject.
4. Reflecting light will REALLY reduce the volume of light falling on your subject: move the subject closer to the flash, increase flash power, widen aperture or increase ISO (or combine several of these changes to improve your exposure).

In Conclusion

As we come to the end of this series of lessons, you should have a much finer appreciation and awareness of the light around you.

At the very least you can now tell why some of your pictures in natural light look great and others don't turn out very well.

When the dynamic range of the scene falls within what your camera can capture, your photos match more closely with what your eyes see.

And the quality of the light isn't the only player in this game: you're also dealing with the direction and the color of the light every time you snap an image.

When all three of these variables are in harmony, you've got a perfect day for photography. Whether you take landscape shots, portraits or pictures of nature and wildlife, your photos on these "perfect" days will be some of your best.

However, these perfect natural light days are few and far between.

Often you'll want to take pictures in light that is less than optimal. There are some camera settings that you can adjust to improve the look of your photos on these days, but if you really want to take control then you'll need some help from artificial light.

Artificial light - flash - comes with its own set of issues and challenges (along with a brand new set of terminology).

However, once you understand the terminology and the limitations, then you can start to selectively use flash to enhance your natural light images. Of course, you can also use flash when there is a complete absence of natural light.
In the end, the light produced by a flash is no different than the light that comes from the sun: *except for the fact that you can place your artificial sun anywhere you like.*

Light modifiers like diffusers and reflectors allow you to mimic the look of natural light in varying conditions: from partially overcast to full overcast, from daybreak to sunset.

Every time you use your flash, you have a choice:

- The light from your flash can be subtle and can blend with the other available light, such that someone looking at your photo cannot tell that a flash was used
- The light from your flash can be strong, creating dimension and contrast where none previously existed

Regardless of how you choose to use it, flash lets you improve less-than-perfect natural light.

Any time you're able to improve the light so that it is more flattering to your subject you're going to wind up with photos with far more visual impact than those that are just captured with the light as-is.

And *that* is the difference between photographers who can "see" - and appreciate - the light around them and those that can't.