THE EMOTION-FIRST PROMPT GUIDE

Stop Describing What You See. Start Describing What You Feel.

THE SHIFT

Old way: Describe what you want to SEE "A woman in a red dress walking through a field at sunset"

New way: Describe what you want to FEEL "Golden hour warmth, nostalgic summer evening, analog film texture, emotional distance"

Same scene. Completely different result.

WHY EMOTION FIRST

The Problem with Visual-First

When you describe visuals:

- AI interprets literally
- Results are generic
- No emotional resonance
- Looks like stock photography

The Power of Emotion-First

When you lead with feeling:

- AI captures intention
- Results have mood
- Images resonate
- Looks like art direction

THE EMOTION VOCABULARY

Warm Emotions

Word	Visual Translation
Nostalgic	Warm tones, film grain, soft focus
Cozy	Warm light, soft textures, enclosed spaces
Intimate	Close framing, soft light, personal details
Joyful	Bright light, vibrant colors, movement
Tender	Soft everything, gentle touch, muted tones

Cool Emotions

Word	Visual Translation

Sophisticated	Clean lines, muted palette, negative space
Mysterious	Shadows, partial visibility, moody light
Serene	Balanced composition, soft light, calm colors
Melancholic	Muted blues, soft contrast, empty space
Contemplative	Quiet, still, thoughtful framing

Intense Emotions

Word	Visual Translation
Bold	High contrast, strong colors, direct composition
Rebellious	Raw, imperfect, unconventional framing
Powerful	Strong light, dramatic shadows, commanding presence
Urgent	Motion blur, high energy, dynamic composition
Raw	Unpolished, grain, imperfection

THE EMOTION-FIRST TEMPLATE

```
[Primary Emotion] atmosphere with [Secondary Emotion] undertones.

[What this emotion looks like]: [specific visual qualities].

[SUBJECT/SCENE DESCRIPTION]

This should feel like [reference moment or memory].

Technical: [specs that support the emotion]
```

EXAMPLES BY EMOTION

Nostalgic

```
Nostalgic warmth with a hint of melancholy.

What this looks like: Warm golden tones, visible film grain, soft focus edges,
afternoon light that feels like memory.

[A person looking out a window in an old kitchen]

This should feel like remembering summer at your grandparents' house.

Technical: 35mm film aesthetic, warm color grade, 50mm lens, 4:5 ratio.
```

Sophisticated

```
Sophisticated calm with quiet confidence.

What this looks like: Muted palette, generous negative space, soft diffused light,
precise composition.

[A single object on a marble surface]

This should feel like a high-end gallery or boutique hotel lobby.

Technical: Clean, minimal, soft shadows, 85mm lens, 4:5 ratio.
```

Raw/Authentic

```
Raw authenticity with imperfect beauty.

What this looks like: Visible grain, unpolished textures, documentary quality, real
light.

[Hands working with materials]

This should feel like witnessing a real moment, not a staged one.

Technical: Documentary style, available light, slight motion, 35mm lens, 3:4 ratio.
```

Mysterious

```
Quiet mystery with hidden depth.

What this looks like: Deep shadows, partial visibility, moody atmosphere, questions
unanswered.

[A doorway with light beyond]

This should feel like the moment before something is revealed.

Technical: Low-key lighting, limited visibility, 50mm lens, 16:9 ratio.
```

Joyful

```
Spontaneous joy with genuine warmth.

What this looks like: Natural light, bright but not harsh, movement and energy,
authentic expressions.

[People in a moment of celebration]

This should feel like looking at photos from the best day of your life.
```

```
Technical: Candid, natural light, slight motion, 35mm lens, 4:5 ratio.
```

THE EMOTION STACK

Layer emotions for complexity:

Primary + Secondary

"Nostalgic (primary) with melancholic undertones (secondary)"

- Primary sets the main mood
- Secondary adds depth

Tension Pairs

Combine contrasting emotions:

- "Bold yet intimate"
- "Sophisticated but raw"
- "Joyful with mystery"

This creates visual tension that makes images interesting.

EMOTION TO VISUAL TRANSLATION

Light

Emotion	Light Quality
Warm/Nostalgic	Golden hour, soft window light
Cool/Mysterious	Blue hour, shadows, rim light
Bold/Energetic	Direct flash, high contrast
Calm/Serene	Even, diffused, soft
Intimate	Single source, low, warm

Color

Emotion	Color Approach
Warm	Orange, yellow, brown, cream
Cool	Blue, gray, silver, white
Bold	Saturated, primary colors
Muted	Desaturated, earth tones
Dramatic	High contrast, limited palette

Composition

Emotion	Composition
Calm	Balanced, centered, space
Tense	Off-center, tight, cropped
Joyful	Dynamic, diagonal, movement
Intimate	Close, personal, shallow depth
Grand	Wide, establishing, deep

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Step 1: Name the Emotion

For your next project, write down:

- Primary emotion (1 word)
- Secondary emotion (1 word)
- What this combination feels like (1 sentence)

Step 2: Translate to Visuals

For each emotion word, write:

- What light supports this?
- What colors support this?
- What composition supports this?

Step 3: Write the Prompt

Lead with the emotion, then add visual details.

Step 4: Compare Results

Generate with emotion-first prompt vs. visual-first prompt. Notice the difference.

COMMON EMOTIONAL PALETTES

The Nostalgic Kit

Emotions: Warm, nostalgic, intimate, bittersweet Light: Golden hour, window light, film grain Colors: Cream, brown, muted orange, sage Composition: Close, personal, soft edges

The Sophisticated Kit

Emotions: Calm, refined, sophisticated, minimal Light: Soft diffused, even, clean Colors: White, gray, black, single accent Composition: Balanced, negative space, precise

The Raw Kit

Emotions: Authentic, raw, honest, real Light: Available, imperfect, documentary Colors: Natural, unsaturated, true to life Composition: Candid, imperfect, spontaneous

The Bold Kit

Emotions: Confident, bold, energetic, impactful Light: Direct, harsh, high contrast Colors: Saturated, primary, black Composition: Dynamic, graphic, strong

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THE GOLDEN RULE

Feelings first. Visuals follow.

When you know how something should feel, the visuals become obvious.

This guide is from LOOPWORKER. For more resources, follow @loopworker.