

P.52 NATURE STORIES
Kristi Odom's Animals

P.46 WITHIN REACH
Telephoto Zoom Review

P.32 PEOPLE POWER
Relationship Marketing

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Exclusive info and images
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DO I HAVE TO PAY AN ARM AND A LEG JUST TO GET THE PERFECT SHOT?

Working for a company like Paul C. Buff, our marketing department has access to every light and modifier we carry every time we do a shoot for the company. It's easy to fall into the habit of creating lighting setups that are not accessible to every photographer at every stage of their career. So, we decided to take a step back, set down our LINKs and HUBs, and put together a few visually striking setups that don't require \$2000-5000 (or much more depending on your preferred brand) in lights alone!



No backdrop? No problem! If you are looking for a solid white backdrop and some dramatic backlighting, then a diffused PLM is a phenomenal option that won't break the bank. This two-light set up only uses two DigiBee DB800 units and two PLM umbrellas to create all the drama you could want (and then some) without breaking the bank!



We adore V-Flats and, as you can tell from the behind-the-scenes image on the right, we use ours A LOT! But if you are just starting out and still saving up for one of your own, you can use a bit of gaffer tape and some foam core for a sometimes frustrating, but very affordable stand in. We taped ours to a light stand and were able to craft a crisp column of light behind our model for an easy two light setup.



As optical snoots have become an industry favorite, we have put together a lot of content featuring the LINKs ultra-bright modeling lamp. If you aren't in need of 800WS, TTL, and HSS, but still want a super bright LED to focus your shapes and spotlight, then the DigiBee is here to perform! Using two PLMs with gels taped over their reflectors, a 7" reflector for backlight, and our new Eclipse Optical Snoot, we were able to craft the moody neo-noir scene to your right! Affordability doesn't mean you have to sacrifice light quality!



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Golden Opportunities

RELATIONSHIPS ARE A TREASURE

Jeff Kent's interview with Julie Reisler in this issue is a wonderful primer on the importance of relationship marketing ("People Power," page 32). If ever a profession was built on the strength of relationships, it's photography. Regardless of the market or subject, a photography business is founded on the durability and diversity of the photographer's relationships. These include interactions with subjects, clients, gallery owners, agents, designers, publishers, nonprofits, and more. Being able to nurture new and existing relationships is important to the sustainability of your business. And while you want these relationships to be fulfilling and enjoyable in their own right, they're an undeniable element of a sound business plan, too. Because, ultimately, these relationships are your basis for making a profit by selling your services.

And you shouldn't fear the sales process. Don't try to avoid it. Treat it as one of the essential services you offer. In fact, think of sales as proactive customer service. Because you're not asking clients to do you a favor; you're offering to do something for them by sharing your talent, time, and expertise. Your sales process begins from the get-go of any project, whether that's a business meeting with a potential commercial client or an exploratory phone call from a couple planning their wedding. You're the expert, so clients will look to you for education and inspiration. They will look to you for advice and options. Be the photography consultant they're seeking.

This brings us back to relationships. Consultative sales is an approach that depends on strong relationships. It gives you the opportunity to position yourself as an expert in clients' eyes, which is a value-added service they'll appreciate and be happy to pay for. The rudiments of good consultative selling are some of the same basics of good relationship building:

Listen more; talk less. Ask potential clients probing questions, then actively listen to their answers. People won't necessarily tell you what challenges they're facing or what they don't understand. And they don't know what they don't know. It's up to you to dig in a bit, confirm what you've heard, and offer recommendations.

Don't make assumptions. You have no idea how much budget a client may have or what they know about any given subject. Ask questions, be honest, and keep an open mind.

Bring value to the relationship. You can bring value to professional relationships by virtue of your expertise. Instead of focusing on the services and products you might sell, explain what you can provide in terms of outcomes or solutions. For example, when is a family portrait not just a family portrait? When you've explained that you can provide a piece of wall art that will become a treasured family heirloom for generations. Sell people what they need, which might be something they didn't know to ask for.

Treat client relationships like gold and you'll be rewarded handsomely. •

Jane Gaboury
Director of Publications

CORRECTION

Two corrections to note in our August Hot Ones buyers guide: The new Tyndell Photographic 1-inch portrait box sizes are 4x6 inches and 8x12 inches, and the StellaPro Reflex S lumens are 9,000 lumens in continuous mode and 18,000 lumens in digital burst with 100W power source. Our apologies for these errors.

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FOREGROUND

By Amanda Arnold

Bird's-eye View

GORGEOUS GAZE

Flamingos are social creatures with one another, says photographer Melissa Cormican, who made this photo of a Chilean flamingo at the Los Angeles Zoo. And she's also noticed they take an interest in her, making eye contact as she captures their photographs. "I am endlessly fascinated with what they may be thinking when their gaze is on me," she says.

Cormican made this photo with a Nikon D750 and AF-S Nikkor 200-

500mm f/5.6 E ED VR lens. She finds that outside distractions can be a hindrance while she's making photographs. "To concentrate, I put on my headphones, shuffle my playlist, and essentially disappear into my own world where it is just me and the animal I am photographing. Everything and everyone else disappear. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of music in my work." •



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All the Feelings

HONEST PORTRAITS

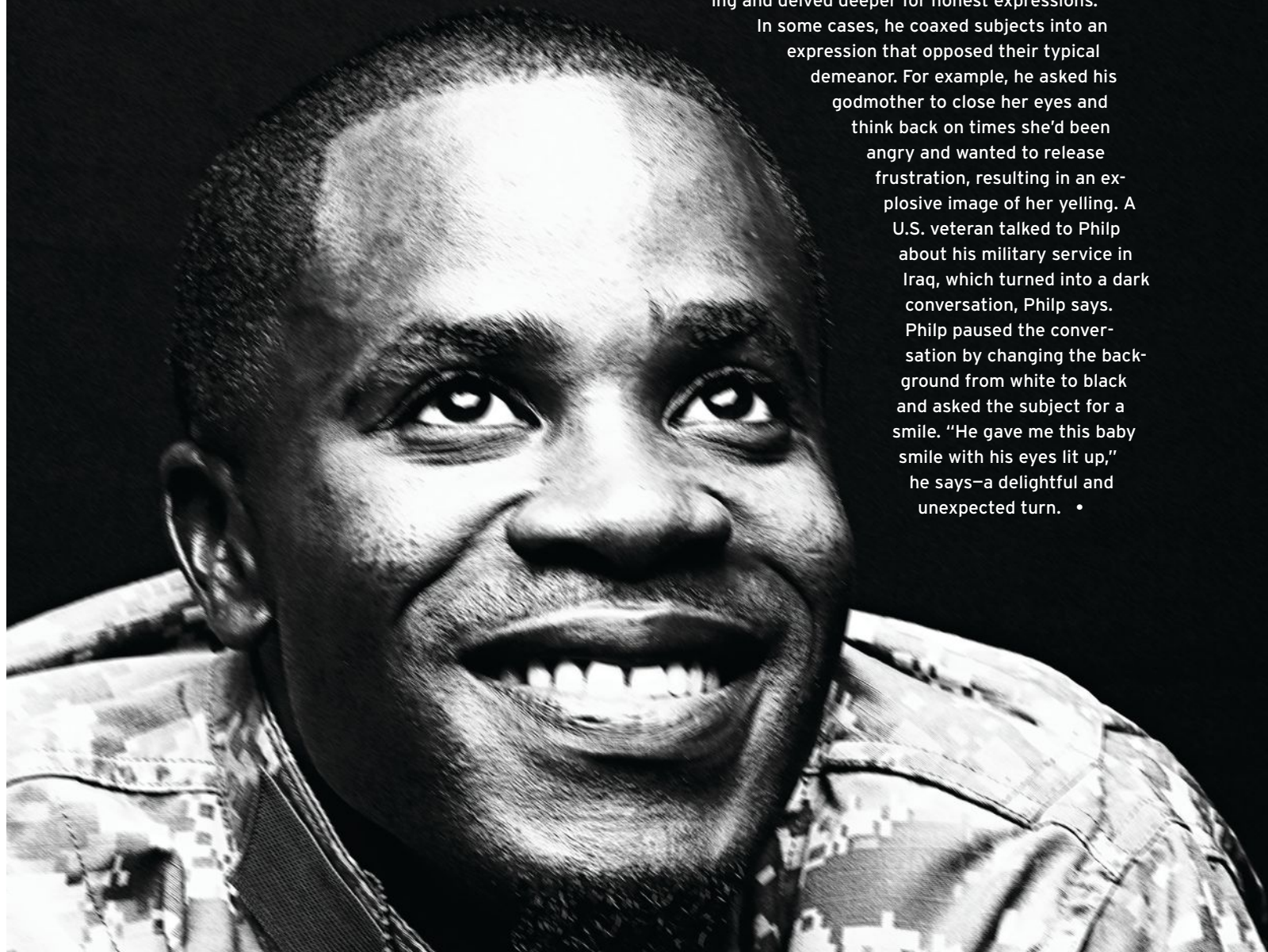
The images were brilliant—his mom, her siblings, and her cousins in their teens and 20s living their best young lives. But one thing stood out to Demetrius Philp as he searched through his family's archives: In all the photos, all the subjects were smiling.

Inspired to create something different, Philp developed a portrait series, "Expression," that conveys the "wide range of Black Caribbean emotion not pictured in many traditional

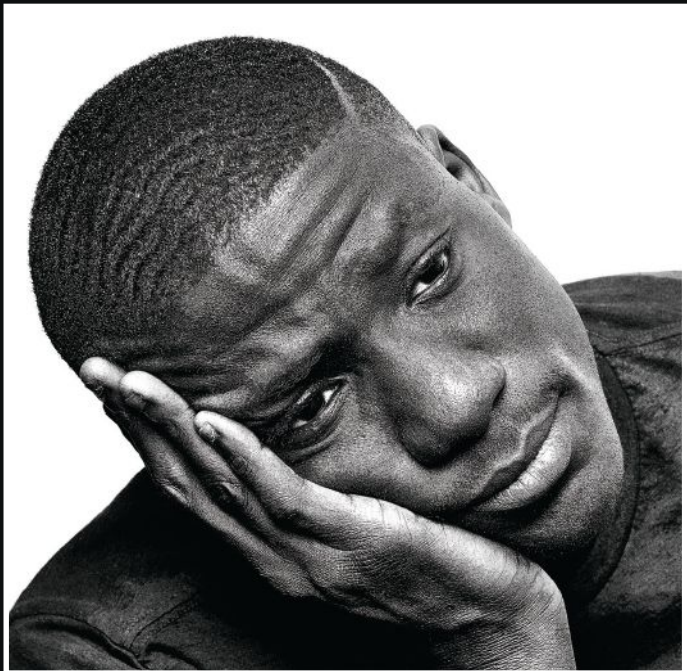
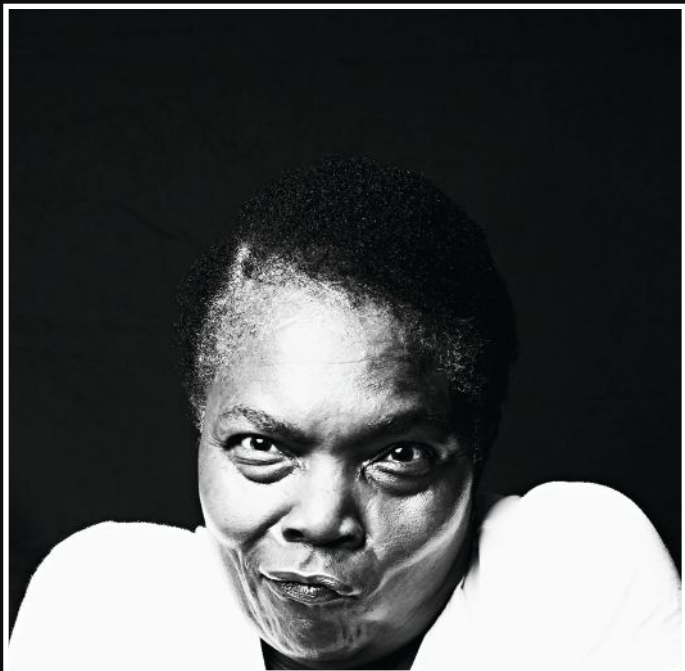
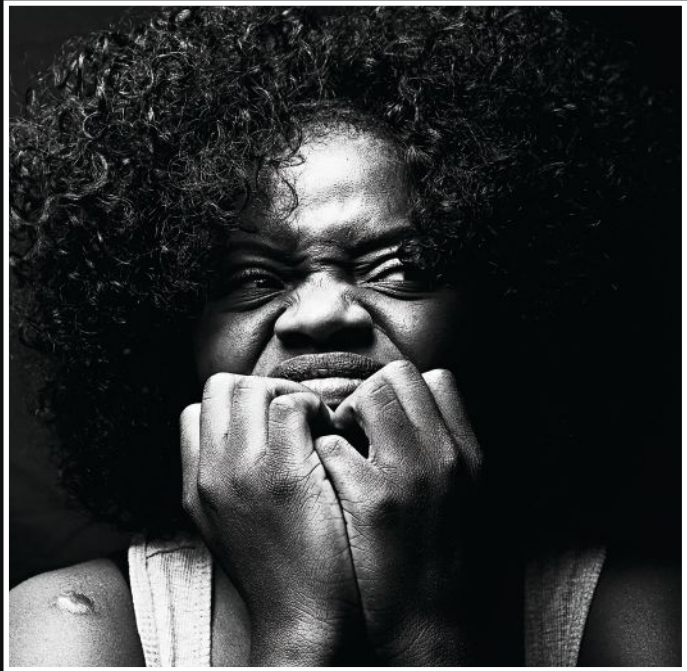
portraits. ... I wanted to create something that would contrast the narrative," he says, something that would tap into subjects' inner selves, showing what might be bubbling up beneath the surface of that facial facade.

Drawing an intriguing facial expression from a subject was a matter of being patient and making conversation, he says, and typically required only as much time as it took to make about five frames. He asked subjects how they were feeling and delved deeper for honest expressions.

In some cases, he coaxed subjects into an expression that opposed their typical demeanor. For example, he asked his godmother to close her eyes and think back on times she'd been angry and wanted to release frustration, resulting in an explosive image of her yelling. A U.S. veteran talked to Philp about his military service in Iraq, which turned into a dark conversation, Philp says. Philp paused the conversation by changing the background from white to black and asked the subject for a smile. "He gave me this baby smile with his eyes lit up," he says—a delightful and unexpected turn. •



IMAGES © DEMETRIUS PHILP / demetriusphilp.com





Old Growth

LONG LIVE OLMSTED'S TREES



Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted was born in 1822, and many of the trees in the public parks he designed throughout his lifetime are still alive today. For his new book, "Olmsted Trees" (Hirmer), photographer Stanley Greenberg documented those long-established plants in parks across the United States, including Central Park and Prospect Park in New York, as well as park systems in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Chicago, Illinois, and Louisville, Kentucky.

When Olmsted created his designs, he envisioned what the trees and shrubs would look like 40-plus years into the future. "I have all my life been considering the distant effects and always sacrificing immediate success and applause to that of the future," he wrote in a letter to his son. Greenberg's collection of black-and-white photographs is intended as an homage to Olmsted's work and vision, as well as a message about taking care of the fragile natural environment. •

Lighter and Quieter

TO MIRRORLESS OR NOT TO MIRRORLESS



Who's made the move to mirrorless cameras? Documentary, lifestyle, and travel photographers take the lead, according to the 2022 State of the Photography Industry report by Format and Zenfolio. The study, which surveyed 3,398 photographers worldwide, notes that mirrorless cameras make sense for these specialties because they are lighter and less obtrusive in the field.

The results show that DSLRs remain more popular than mirrorless among portrait, sports, and food photographers. It's nearly a 50/50 split for wedding and event photographers.

Overall, Canon and Nikon dominate the camera market at 70% combined, while Sony and Fujifilm hold 15% and 7% of the market, respectively. The Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, the Nikon D850, the Canon EOS R5, and the Sony A7R IV were the top four camera models used by the surveyed photographers. •

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Business is a Pleasure

"I believe that an artist's work is never fully respected and appreciated until a high dollar value is placed on it. I am proud to be a part of a free enterprise system. Both money and professionalism motivate me to put forth total effort in every sitting." •

—Robert W. Becker, M.Photog.Cr., F-ASP,
"Photography, for Business
and Pleasure,"
The Professional Photographer,
July 1982

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A Matter of Legacy

FAMILY PORTRAITS ARE HEIRLOOMS

By Jeffrey Dachowski, M.Photog.Cr., CPP



©CAROLLE DACHOWSKI / dachowskiphotography.com

It's fair to say that I feel strongly about the value of a family portrait. In 2018, my siblings and I scheduled a family portrait for our family during Christmas week. But my mom fell ill during that time, so we postponed the session. A few months later cancer had consumed her. We were not able to make the family portrait we'd planned. It happens to a lot of families. In fact, this situation reflects what I've said about the two times to make a family portrait: now or when it's too late. Like the cobbler whose children have no shoes, this photographer was not able to put together a family session for my side of the family. It's not that we didn't have a photo with all of us in it at various points in my and my children's lives. We just missed the chance to make it happen when we wanted it to happen.

I've often wondered if my feelings about the value of a family portrait are based on the fact that I earn my living from making them. Am I interested in this concept only because my family depends on the income from making portraits? I don't think so. I believe the root is the idea of legacy.

The desire for legacy is something I feel we all share, whether we need it for ourselves or want to help someone else create their own. In some cases, a drive for legacy involves wanting to create a company in which products and the name associated with those products stand the test of time through generations. Think of Westinghouse, Porsche, Jim Beam, Colgate, Remington, and Brooks Brothers, to name a few. Other people focus their efforts toward legacy on their desire for personal contributions that leave a mark on society.

On a smaller scale, most people want to leave a legacy to their own family. They hope that the images they made on their honeymoon will be treasured by their heirs. This is why many people need to have a professional family portrait. A portrait is a record of a life; it lasts longer than a memory and is usually more accurate than one, and it helps to bind the generations of a family.

October has been known as family portrait month for many reasons. In some parts of the country, it's the first time the temperature is cool enough for kids to withstand a session outdoors. In the Northeast, we enjoy some of the most fantastic fall foliage the world has to offer, plus cool temperatures. Needless to say, it's a busy month for family portraits around the country.

When was the last time you had your family portrait made? Maybe you have seven siblings. Maybe your family is you and your dog. In any case, having a printed portrait of you and someone you love is a great first step to creating some form of legacy. Have you ever heard the phrase "Files are for sharing; prints are for preservation"? I couldn't agree more. A portrait is not in a legacy state until it's printed.

Twice we have travelled to have our portraits made by some of our favorite image makers. Elizabeth Homan, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, API, came to photograph our family under the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City and, Kira Derryberry, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, made our portraits under the giant oak trees in Savannah, Georgia. Both were fantastic experiences we will never forget. Both created pieces of our legacy.

Some years our schedule doesn't allow us the time for a professional portrait. In that case, I have to rely on the app on my phone to trigger my camera for a self-portrait. It can be hard to do, but making your own portrait is important. Making portraits for other families and helping them to create legacy is important.

A keynote speaker at Imaging USA earlier this year said, "To know and not do is to not know."

You owe it to your clients to remind them that October is a great time to make a legacy portrait. You also owe it to your own family to slow down for 60 minutes and either hire a professional or make your own legacy. •

Jeffrey Dachowski operates a photography studio in Bedford, New Hampshire, with his wife, Carolle.

A man with a beard and a woman are looking at a large photo book on a table. The woman is smiling and pointing at a page. They are both wearing lanyards with Canon EOS 5D Mark IV badges. In the background, there is a sign that says "Marathon".

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Julie Solomon

In her closing keynote, Julie reveals the key to making your dreams a reality by ditching outdated beliefs and breaking through barriers with newfound confidence.





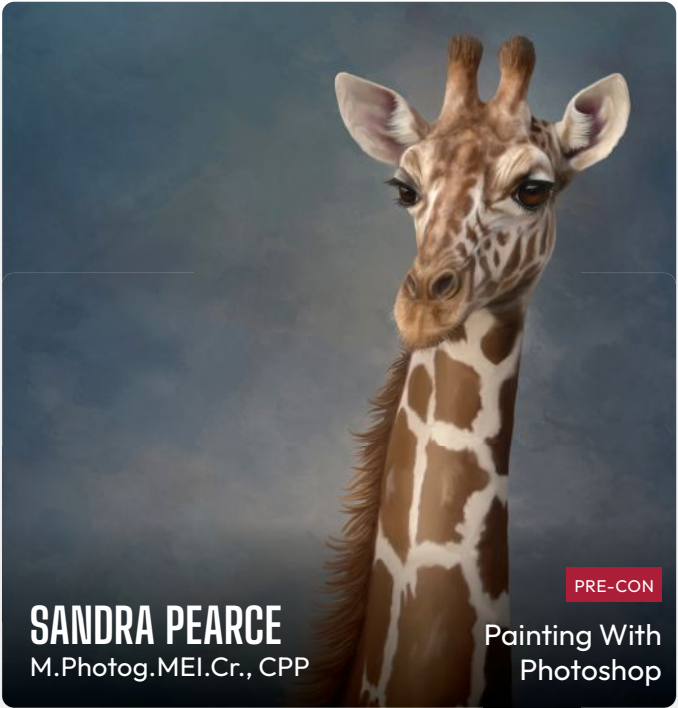
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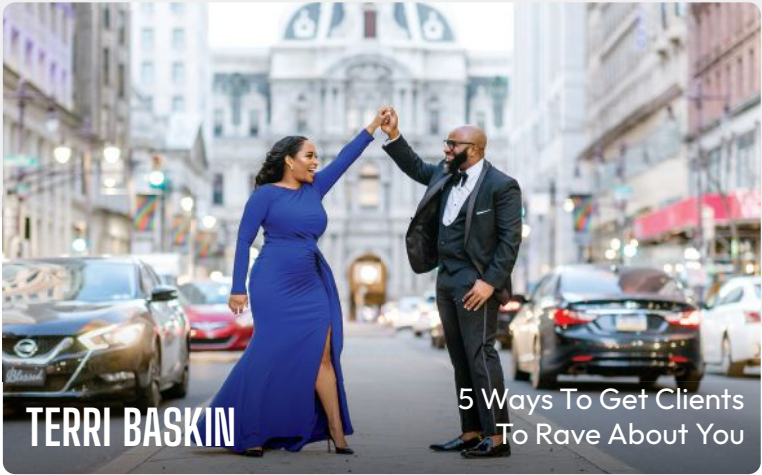
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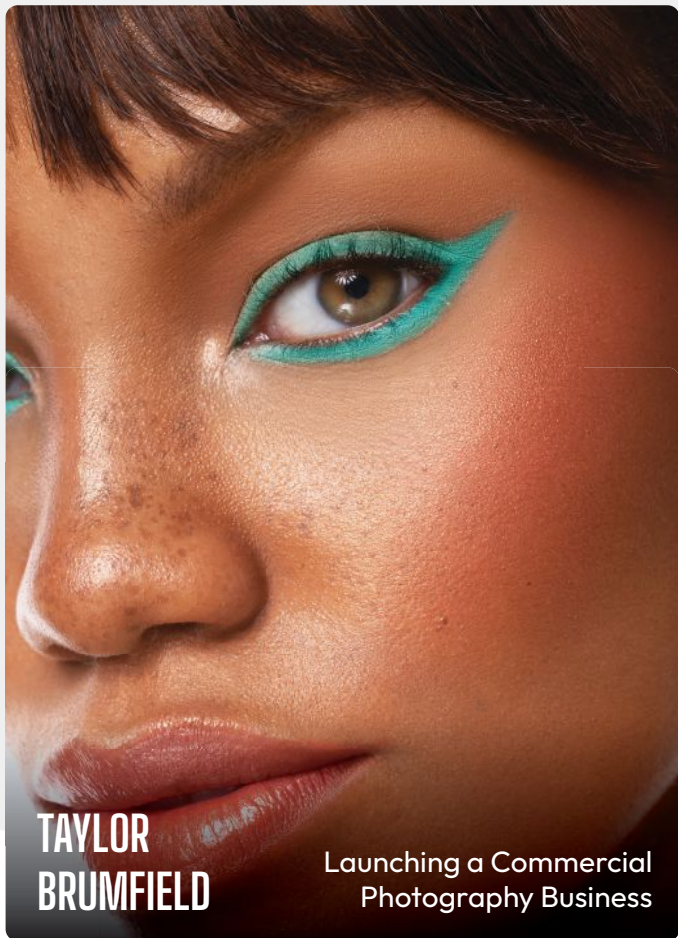
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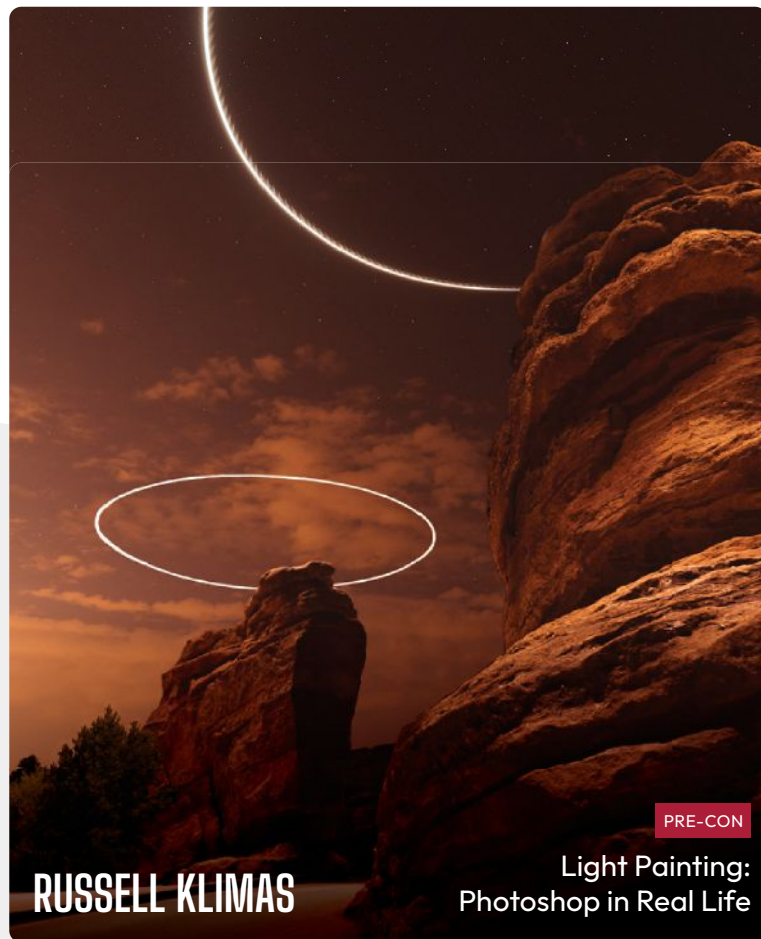
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Painted Bird

David Carr

David Carr Photography
Atlanta, Georgia

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: The photo was made by David Carr while on safari in Tanzania, shot handheld while leaning out the window of a Land Rover.

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon 27, AF-S Nikkor 500mm f/2.6E PF ED VR lens

EXPOSURE: 1/320 second at f/5.6, ISO 640

LIGHTING: Natural light

POST-CAPTURE: Carr used Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop to process the image. He wanted the color of the background to flow with the colors of the bird. He used Photoshop to create a separation between the subject and the background so he could adjust the color of each individually. He also used a combination of the healing brush, the clone stamp tool, and layer masks to remove an unwanted blade of grass that was intersecting the bird.



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NOTE: Lighting diagrams shown here are not to scale.

MERITED

Rising Up

Nancy Smithman, M.Photog., CPP

Nancy Smithman Photography
Portland, Oregon



©NANCY SMITHMAN / nancysmithman.com

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "My intent was to get a droplet of water onto a single dandelion clock seed with an interesting background reflected in the drop," says Nancy Smithman. She achieved this by placing two dandelions in clay on a crocodile clip and positioning one of her encaustic paintings in the background. She used a syringe of water and a bit of glycerin to apply the droplet.

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 7D Mark II, Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM lens with Kenko extension tube

EXPOSURE: 1/160 second at f/7.1, ISO 100

LIGHTING: An LED flashlight held above the subject and camera right

POST-CAPTURE: She did color balancing in Adobe Lightroom and specular highlight toning and removing in Photoshop.

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SUCCESS

What's Now in Wedding Photography

After two years of pandemic stress, which kept many families and friends apart, couples are more keen than ever for photos that capture authentic moments from their sometimes long overdue wedding events, according to Brides.com. •

THEN

Perfectly posed wedding party images



THEN

A photographer for the wedding



THEN

Rushing to get in all the portraits before the sun sets



THEN

A pre-wedding boudoir session for the bride



NOW

Candid moments of the wedding party raring at the reception or diving into the pool



NOW

A photographer for the wedding and more—rehearsal dinner, bachelor and bachelorette parties, and honeymoon



NOW

Edgy nighttime portraits in an alley or dark corner



NOW

A pre-wedding boudoir session for the bride and groom together

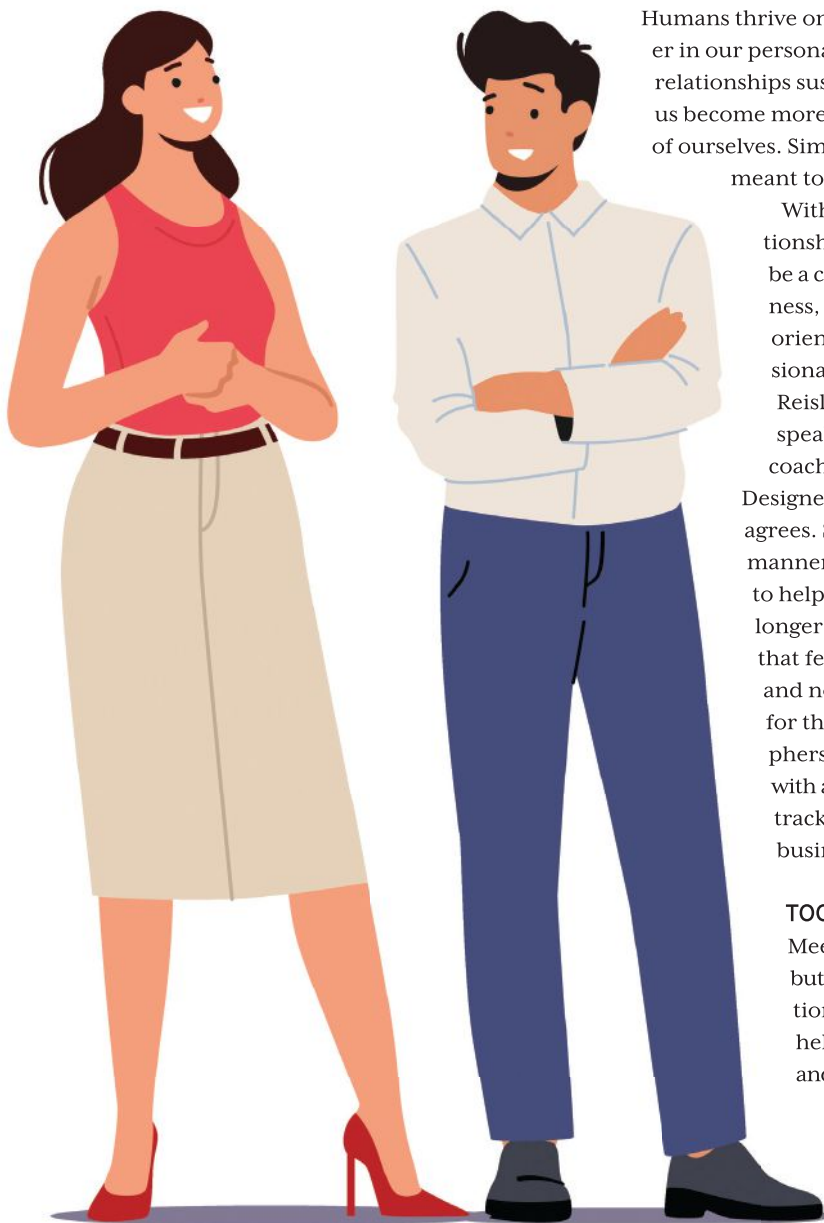


Source: "The Biggest Wedding Photo and Video Trends for 2022," brides.com

People Power

LEVERAGE THE POTENTIAL OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

By Jeff Kent



Humans thrive on connection. Whether in our personal or business lives, relationships sustain us and help us become more complete versions of ourselves. Simply put, we are not meant to be alone.

With this in mind, relationship marketing should be a cornerstone of any business, especially a service-oriented one like professional photography. Julie Reisler, author, TEDx speaker, life and business coach, and founder of Life Designer Coach Academy, agrees. She works with all manner of business people to help them build stronger, longer-term relationships that feed their businesses and nourish their passion for the work. For photographers, she suggests starting with a few basic tools to map, track, and expand crucial business relationships.

TOOLS TO GET STARTED

Meeting people is great, but to be successful at relationship marketing, it helps to have a strategy and to track your progress.

• Community map.

List all the communities in which you participate. These could be professional

organizations such as PPA, your kids' PTA, religious groups, your homeowners associ-

ation, civic organizations, and alumni clubs, among others. Look at the leaders of those communities as well as the people you know. Map this out with you at the center, or hub, with spokes radiating out for all of these connections. This exercise helps you visualize existing community relationships and start reaching out to people in your circle.

• **Tracking spreadsheet.** Once you've mapped out your relationships on a community map, find a way to track those relationships as well as the new ones you build. This process can be as simple as listing relationships on a spreadsheet and recording key details, almost like you're keeping inventory or tracking a budget. For each individual, record where you met, what their interests are, and how you can add value. Use this as a tool to inform your outreach, remember details, and track when you last spoke with them.

• **Referral incentive program.** If you're looking for a carrot to dangle when you're expanding your community map, a referral incentive program is one way to encourage people in your community to refer business to you. Give incentives to people who've worked with you, including clients, partners, and other vendors. The incentives could be a discount, a referral fee for a new job, free products or services—anything to motivate people to spread the word about you and your business.

NEXT STEPS

With these tools in place, make a goal to reach out to a certain number of people each day. Reisler recommends making three to five outreach calls every business day. Phone calls are best since you can have a conversation. Use your tracking spreadsheet to record your efforts, and make notes about when you called each contact, whether you spoke to

them, and what you talked about.

One of the primary goals of these calls is to set up an in-person meeting or, if that's not possible, a video conference. The ideal scenario is a coffee meeting where you can chat and find out what's happening with them then determine how you can be of service. "This isn't a sales meeting," stresses Reisler. "Establish yourself as someone who is there to help and support, to add value for people."

ADD VALUE

Get past the concept of sales being a dreaded process. It's necessary, and though relationship marketing isn't all about sales, building sales is one of the ultimate by-products. To get your head in the right place, go back to your why. Why do you do this work? Why is

the work you do important? Why is it needed in the world? If you stand behind your work and you understand that it means something, then you should be able to proceed confidently knowing that you are providing something of real value.

Still, some of these outreach calls can be misperceived as salesy if they seem to come out of the blue, which may turn people off. To make sure you're not coming off as zealous, start the conversation by being as genuine as possible. Point out your connection, introduce yourself and what you do, and ask questions about the other person. Find out how you might be of service. Be genuine about what you offer, and don't push it on them.

When you embody an attitude of service, the other person can feel it, and it's more

likely to build a deeper relationship. To communicate that service intent, consider how you can add value for the other person while expecting nothing in return. Reisler advises that you strive to remain unattached to the outcome of the conversation. In other words, don't try to get something out of it. You understand that sales or referrals could emerge later, but at early stages of your interactions you have zero expectations.

"When you get attached to the outcome, you can come across as needy, clingy, and lacking confidence," explains Reisler. "It can cloud your ability to be of service to someone. On the other hand, when you come from a perspective of adding value, it's a different mindset. It doesn't mean you can't offer your services or offer a taste of what you do,



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A great way to add continuing value to people's lives is to provide expertise. Reach out to potential partners and members of your community to offer yourself as a resource.

but the approach is about being grounded, confident, and focused on the other person, not your own needs. People respond to that approach much more favorably.”

MAINTAIN AND BUILD

Building strong relationships requires nurturing each connection over a period of time. Reisler points out that the process can take six months, a year, or longer until any sort of benefit comes back to you. “Sometimes you meet someone, and you’re not sure how you would work with them, but opportunities arise a year or two down the road,” she says.

How do you stay engaged over these long periods? Think in terms of touchpoints to keep the relationship going. Reach out on people’s birthdays, around the holidays, and periodically just to say hello. Reisler recommends contacting people in your network at least once a quarter. And there’s no time

like the present. After two and a half years of pandemic-related disruptions, now is a great time to reach out and reconnect with people, particularly folks you haven’t seen in a while, just to see how they’re doing and if there’s anything you can do to help.

A great way to add continuing value to people’s lives is to provide expertise. Reach out to potential partners and members of your community to offer yourself as a resource. Your expertise could be photography-related or ancillary to your core services, like organizational skills, color coordination, image reviews, or any other services where you could add value for people.

“Most of all, remember that there is a human being on the other end, not just a sale,” says Reisler. “It’s a person with needs and desires and their own story. Come from a place of really wanting to add value for them, and you’ll be more successful.” •





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Time is on Your Side

EASY STEPS TO STREAMLINE YOUR BUSINESS

By Jeff Kent

Every photographer—indeed, every small business owner—has said it: If only I had more time. You can't create more time, but you can reallocate more of it to the tasks that matter most.

Business systems strategist Kate Rosenow points out that implementing the right processes in your business can take you from overwhelmed and stressed to productive and in control. As the owner of Work Well with Kate, Rosenow helps business owners streamline their operations so they can focus on what they do best, and her advice has been featured in *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Real Simple*, and *Business Insider*, among others. In a few simple steps, she shares how photographers can sweep away mental clutter, freeing up time to work on what matters most.

THE BAG DUMP

When you get a new camera bag, it's clean and organized. Months later, it's loaded with extra junk. You stuff in additional gear, cords, adapters, notes, receipts—clutter. The same problem happens in a small business. You start out clean and organized, then eventually get bogged down with extra tasks that distract you from your most important work.

What to do? Dump out that metaphorical camera bag and home in on what you really need to run your business. Then eliminate, delegate, or outsource the rest.

Start by writing out the areas in your business that you know are essential, Rosenow says. For example:

- Client work
- Marketing
- Administration
- Finance
- Legal

Then look at your calendar and to-do list, and write down all the tasks in the categor-

ies you've outlined. Also indicate periodic and long-term tasks that may not be on your schedule. Scan the list to see if anything isn't essential or revenue-generating. "Be realistic and ruthless in this process," says Rosenow. "If you've been doing something that seems essential but isn't working, scratch it off your list." For example, if you're spending hours and hours on social media, but after six months it's not generating leads, scratch it off.

Look for anything that can be automated. Write an A next to those tasks. Sending contracts and legal agreements, emailing thank you notes, and scheduling meetings are all tasks that can be automated.

If a task can't be automated, can it be out-sourced or delegated? Write an O next to these items. Image editing, bookkeeping, tax preparation, studio set-up and breakdown, appointment setting, and billing are all easily outsourced or delegated. Write these down, and you've suddenly created a job description for a studio manager or virtual assistant.

After working through this process, you should have fewer items on your to-do list. This pared-down lineup shows the only things you should be doing for your business.

BATCHING TASKS

Try to complete your remaining tasks in batches. Batching is one way to increase productivity. You can set aside certain days or certain parts of days for specific tasks. The practice improves your concentration and helps you do more during your allotted time.

"There's no such thing as multitasking," explains Rosenow.

"There's only task



switching, and it takes 20 minutes on average to switch from one task to another. That's part of why we're so stressed out; we're constantly switching and playing catch up. All that switching and catching up creates mental clutter that takes us away from our priorities."

Instead of attempting to multitask, Rosenow now recommends the Pomodoro Technique, which divides each workday into 25-minute segments separated by five-minute breaks. Focus on one task for a set period of time, take a break, then start the next time segment of work.

To get the most out of batch scheduling, Rosenow also suggests blocking off chunks of time for different categories of tasks. Schedule client meetings on specific days of the week, or answer emails only during specific times of the day.

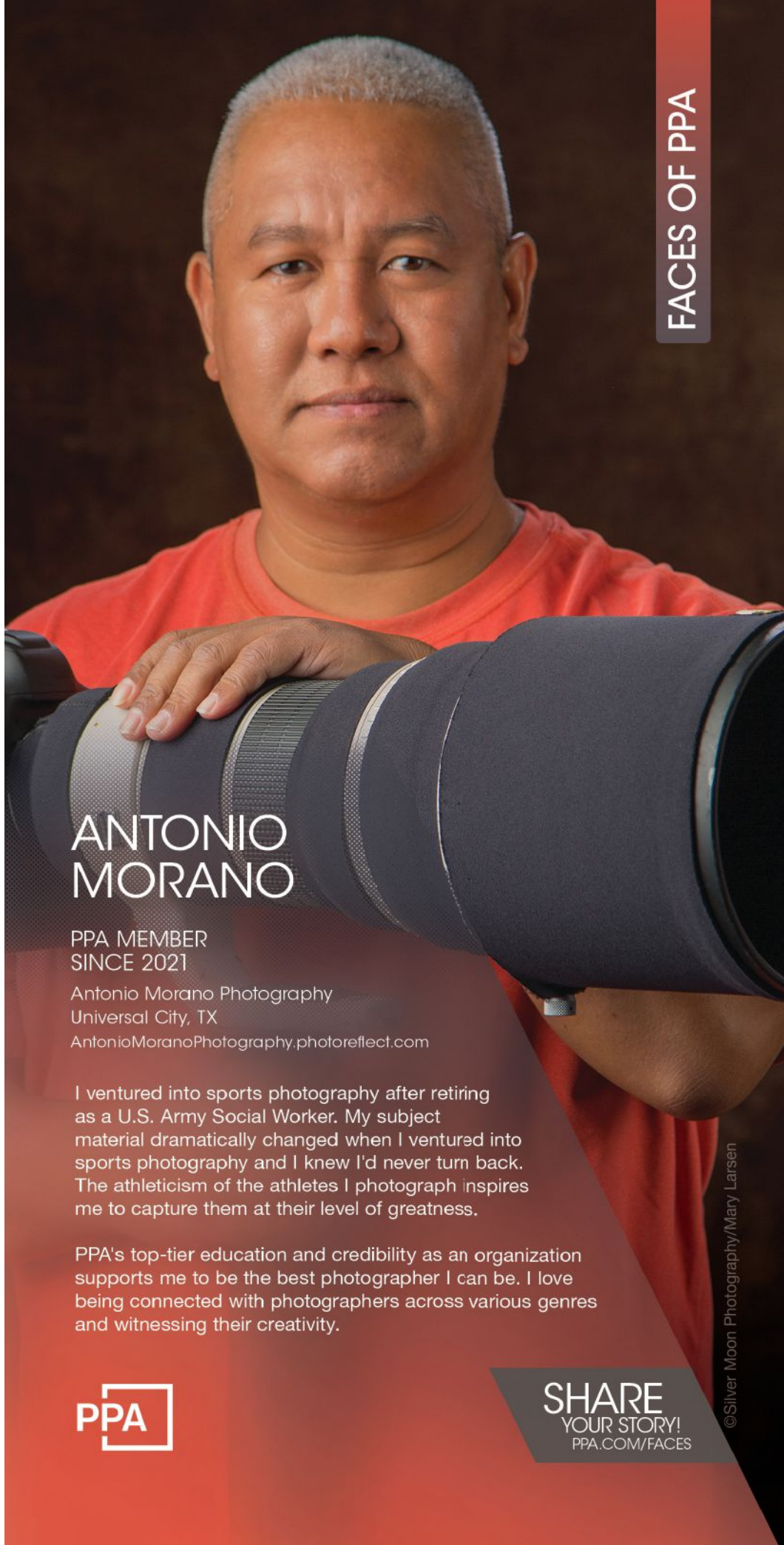
"If you can take all these steps, your workday will be streamlined and more efficient," says Rosenow. "You'll feel better, less stressed. And as a bonus, you will have more time to focus on what you do really well so you can make more money."

A SINGLE PLATFORM

Rosenow advocates doing the bag dump process from beginning to end, not in increments. Approach it in a piecemeal fashion, and you're likely to end up using a bunch of software applications for specific tasks.

This can create a disjointed project management process that's even more stressful. Instead, says Rosenow, commit to doing it all at once, then see if there's a single digital platform that can help you do everything. There are dozens of small business management and studio management platforms to choose from, including 17hats, HoneyBook, Dubsado, Sprout Studio, and others.

Using a single platform is a help to clients



ANTONIO MORANO

PPA MEMBER
SINCE 2021

Antonio Morano Photography
Universal City, TX

AntonioMoranoPhotography.photorelect.com

I ventured into sports photography after retiring as a U.S. Army Social Worker. My subject material dramatically changed when I ventured into sports photography and I knew I'd never turn back. The athleticism of the athletes I photograph inspires me to capture them at their level of greatness.

PPA's top-tier education and credibility as an organization supports me to be the best photographer I can be. I love being connected with photographers across various genres and witnessing their creativity.



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as well. If they can do everything through one portal—scheduling, invoices, communications—they'll be happier and you'll have less need to create individual communications to address their needs.

AVOID CLUTTER

We're constantly bombarded by new technology, new platforms, and the next great thing. Every time you're tempted to try something, ask yourself why. Why would I add this to my tech stack? Why would I sign up for this new platform? Does it make my life easier or simply add some cool features? If the answer isn't compelling, skip it.

STAY CURRENT

Doing research, watching demos, and staying up on new trends is a good use of your time. But balance that with an assessment of whether or not these new developments can produce a tangible benefit for your business. "Staying on the cutting edge is important as long as you're being thoughtful and pragmatic about what you're doing," says Rosenow. Always go back to the why.

LET GO

Track the time and money you spend on different activities and assess the return on



those investments. You might believe something is generating revenue, but there's no way to confirm that without look at the data. Make sure the story you're telling yourself about your business is actually true. If it's not, drop that activity and move on.

MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITY COST

Delegating is a way to maximize opportunity cost. Investing time in one task means you can't spend that time doing something else. Consider the best use of your time as a photographer and a business owner. If you're bogged down doing administrative tasks, think about how much more money you could make during that time if you weren't doing those things. Then consider the long-term opportunity cost to continue doing everything in your business instead of focusing on the work that generates income and can only be done by you.

AUTOMATE FOR PERSONALIZATION

Photographers sometimes shy away from automation because they don't want their business to feel robotic. "However, I encourage people to think about how automation can make their business feel more personal," says Rosenow. "When you automate certain routine tasks, like scheduling or follow-up



emails, then you can spend more time adding personal touches where it really matters, like sending thank you gifts, making a personal call, or writing a note."

SCHEDULE FOR YOU

When scheduling, set up your calendar to take meetings or do specific tasks only on certain days. Don't offer people unlimited access to your calendar, and don't ask what's best for others when scheduling a meeting. When you do that, you give up control of your schedule and end up with meetings spread out all week. That's rarely productive because meetings require preparation, and action items need to be addressed afterward. "This myth that we tell ourselves that we're going to get other things done in these pockets in between meetings, it rarely happens to the level we think it will," says Rosenow. "And that leads to lack of productivity and frustration." •



More from Kate Rosenow
workwellwithkate.com

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The Value of Client Insight

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Wouldn't it be great if you could learn all sorts of valuable insights about your clients before meeting them? That would allow you to design customized experiences for each of them that would ultimately lead to higher sales. Well, you can. An automated questionnaire can set you up for success from your very first client interaction. This is more than a simple document sent via email. We're talking about a dynamic tool that's linked to your studio management software that can provide an integrated experience for clients while helping you manage your sales process more effectively.

Your Wedding Day
Due date: Aug 01, 2022

Sarah Bellum Photography
WEDDING SPECIALISTS

Who designed your dress and where was it purchased?

How many guests will be attending?

Please list your wedding party and their relation to you.

Is there anything extra special you'll be incorporating into your wedding day?

Vendor Information: Venue, Caterer, Day of Planner, Florist, DJ/Band.

Can we follow you on social media?

Please send us a link to your wedding registry.

Questionnaire Options
Enter a title and due date for the questionnaire

Title: Onboarding - Wedding - Bk Display Title: Your Wedding Day

ADD QUESTION **SHORT QUESTIONS**

- Short Answer**
Space for clients to enter a single line.
- Long Answer**
Space for clients to enter multiple lines.
- Yes/No**
Choose a simple yes or no.
- Choose from a List**
Choose an answer from a list.
- Checkboxes**
Choose multiple answers from a list.
- Date**
Choose a date.
- Heading**
Text for things such as headings and titles.
- Text**
Text for things such as intro and directions.
- Related Contact**
Get info about related contacts.
- Image**
Add an image (jpg/png).
- File**
Add a file.

INFORM YOUR PHOTO SESSIONS

"The more you know, the greater the opportunity to sell," says Liz Wilcox of small business management software company 17hats. "With the right questions, you can learn about family dynamics, identify important details, and even determine how to set up your space to make sure you're creating the right mood."

INFORM YOUR SALES SESSIONS

Use the questionnaire responses to determine what products your clients will be interested in purchasing, and then tailor each sales session accordingly. You can get valuable insights by including leading questions, like "Have you seen photography displays at your friends' houses that you like?" or "Do you have portrait displays of other children that you want to match?"

SCREEN POTENTIAL CLIENTS

When you receive a lead, you can send a questionnaire that will help qualify that lead before getting too far into your booking process. With some of today's automated systems, you can even set up questionnaires so when someone answers a question a certain way, an automated workflow is triggered, such as a series of client intake emails.

USE AUTOMATION TO STREAMLINE

An automated questionnaire can be used to reduce phone calls, emails, and in-person interviews. It's a good idea to create a questionnaire template for each service you offer and send it automatically after a booking, suggests Wilcox. If you include questions with conditional logic (if/then questions), the questionnaire can automatically provide follow-up questions based on responses, which leads to a more customized experience for every client.

Software created by 17hats allows you to create automated client questionnaires featuring conditional logic, customizable fields, and features for mapping answers to contacts. The bottom line: Learn about clients so you can craft the best personalized experience for them.



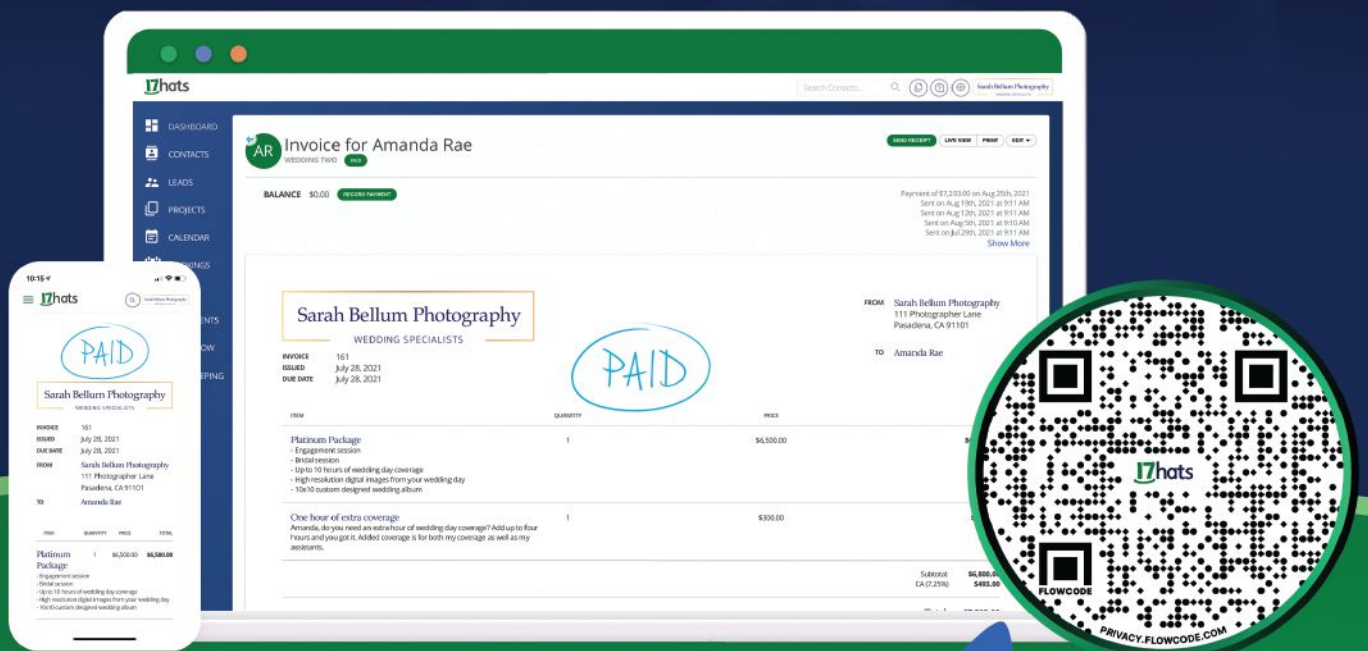
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Whether you are new to your photography business, or looking to scale with album sales, RedTree Albums offers heirloom products at every price point. The Lite Album and Hard- cover Books are simplified albums designed specifically for budget-minded clients. The RedTree and Fine Art Album lines are luxury display options featuring museum-grade printing and custom cover options. Design a sample album for your studio and see the difference for yourself.

redtreealbums.com

PROMOTE THE ARCHIVAL DIFFERENCE

“True heirloom products should be made from archival materials designed to last,” explains Whitney Neal of premium album and display product maker RedTree Albums. “This means no plastics, the best leathers and fabrics, acid-free papers and boards, archival glue that doesn’t break down, and more. The final product can be passed down from generation to generation.”

ELEVATE YOUR BRAND

It’s important to choose products that offer a level of craftsmanship that fits the artistry you put into your photography. Neal suggests looking for heirloom albums and matted products that are crafted by hand and involve a human touch at every step. The result is a custom-made work of art that clients view as one of a kind—and value as such.

THE HEIRLOOM DIFFERENCE

Client education is crucial. Make sure clients understand that your heirloom photography products are exclusively available to professional photographers, and the quality does not compare to consumer-grade products. The easiest way to demonstrate the difference is with a sample that they can see and feel.

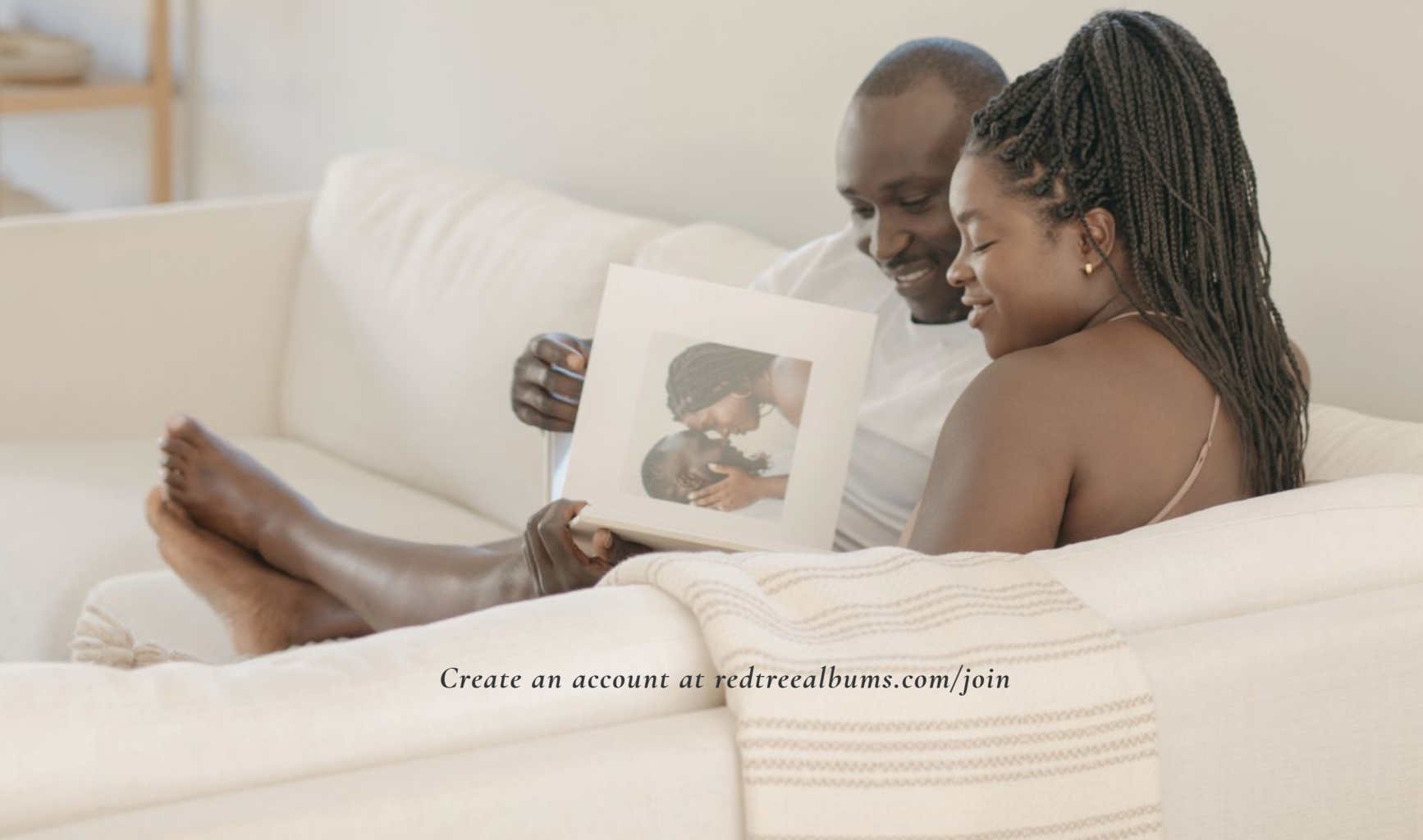
TALK EARLY AND OFTEN

The most successful photographers talk about their heirloom product options early in the client relationship, and they bring them up often throughout the process. They also show them frequently—on social media, on their website, and in person. Never assume that clients will ask; initiate the conversation because helping clients find the best product option is an essential part of good customer service.

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THE GOODS

Cinematic Slide

Sandmarc, a company that designs products for iPhone, GoPro, and other camera users, has added the Cinema Slider to its line of lenses, filters, tripods, and accessories. Made of carbon fiber and aluminum for durability, the slider weighs just 1.25 pounds. Each end has two folding legs that can be positioned as needed. A tripod mount fixed in the center allows the rails to be used in vertical and diagonal plane movements as well as horizontally.

The Cinema Slider is not motorized; users control the speed of the slider movement, which requires some practice for the smoothest captures. The slider has a weight capacity of 6.5 pounds and is compatible with iPhones 4 through 13 models, GoPro Hero 9 and 10, and DSLR and mirrorless camera and lens combinations up to 6 pounds. \$169.99 •



IMAGES COURTESY SANDMARC / sandmarc.com

Reach Within Reach

REVIEW: NIKKOR Z 100-400MM F/4.5-5.6 VR S LENS

By Ellis Vener

COURTESY NIKON / nikonusa.com



Pros

- Adept as a portrait lens
- Covers a broad focal length range
- Virtually no flare or distortion issues
- Inner Balance Technology maintains consistent center of gravity

Cons

- Can't compete with larger aperture prime lenses
- Removable tripod mount foot is not Arca-Swiss compatible

The Nikkor Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S is a general-purpose telephoto-to-zoom lens for the Nikon Z system. Optically, it holds its own compared to the other high-quality zoom lenses in the same range and has the advantage of being made for Nikon Z cameras.

For this review, I used the lens with a 45-megapixel Nikon Z 7II on various assignments and for personal work. The 100-400mm focal length range is suitable for almost, but not quite, everything at which you are likely to point a long lens. Still, it is not a substitute for a larger apertured, more specialized prime lens, such as the superb Nikkor Z MC 105mm VR S and Nikkor Z 400mm f/2.8 VR S lenses. It even performs well with indoor event photography, provided the room is reasonably well lit and you can tolerate high ISO settings.

Nikon made the strategic decision to emphasize reasonably priced and sized general-purpose Z series lenses with excellent optical qualities. The 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S fits squarely into this category. Although it weighs 50.6 ounces (just over 3 pounds), that isn't bad for a telephoto zoom. Like almost all lenses of this type, it extends as the focal length increases. The lens is an internal focus design with a 77mm non-rotating filter ring on the front. The complex optical formula consists of 25 elements in 20 groups.

The lens has weather-proofing seals, O-rings, and gaskets throughout. There are 10 controls on the body. In addition to the focus, zoom, and a programmable control ring (aperture control, exposure compensation settings, ISO sensitivity, and none), there are four

programmable L-FN2 buttons located between the zoom and manual focus rings. Between the focus and control rings on the left side of the lens are the single L-Fn button and an activation/menu control button for the white-on-black OLED display. Finally, close to the rear end of the lens is a pair of sliders. The upper one sets the focus mode to auto or manual, and the lower one gives you a focus range option of full-range or 3 meters to infinity.

The L-Fn buttons connect to your camera's custom controls f2 menus, allowing you to choose among the 24 available options. The OLED panel on the lens can display three information fields: f/stop, focus distance in meters or feet, and focal length.

Precision stepper motors move the elements needed for the lens's fast and surefooted autofocus performance. The vibration reduction (VR) system uses voice coil motors and works with the internal body image stabilization (IBIS) system built into all Nikon Z series cameras except the Z 50. The VR and IBIS combination, along with good physical technique on the part of the photographer, makes it possible to make vibration-free hand-held images at shutter speeds deep in the double-digit range, even at 400mm.

Beyond sharpness, optical performance is excellent across the entire focal length range with virtually no pincushion, barrel, or mustache types of distortion. As with almost all lenses, it performs better a stop or two down from wide open, but it's very sharp when wide open and, more surprising, acceptably sharp at the smallest apertures.



This capture was made with a Nikon Z 7II with VR and IBIS turned on, 1/500 second at f/5.6, ISO 1600.

The lens shines as a portrait lens, primarily when a session is not in a studio. What you give up in emotional and psychological proximity, you gain in working distance; this is useful for creative, non-standard lighting options and compositional choices that make your work stand out.

Instead of a focal length lock, Nikon uses what it calls “inner balance technology” in the lens. With typical telescoping lenses, the inner barrel containing the front elements and groups extend or retract as you change focal lengths, which changes the lens’s center of gravity and causes problems when using a gimbal or fluid-type tripod head. Nikon’s design moves elements toward the rear of the lens even farther back to maintain the lens’s center of gravity position. To keep the lens from inadvertently extending when the lens barrel points down, the tracks that move elements and groups are at right angles, creating drag.

As good as the lens is, it isn’t without flaws. Nikon, Canon, and Sony lenses don’t have an Arca-Swiss compatible quick-release beveled base on the removable tripod mount foot. Both Sigma and Tamron do this with similar size lenses. Many photographers use the Arca-Swiss quick-release system, and this would be a simple, genuinely utilitarian improvement.

The Nikkor Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S is priced at \$2,699.95. •



Even in dim lighting, the Nikkor Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S performs well. Because my position was fixed, I used a monopod to support the lens.

Sweet Light from Switzerland

REVIEW: ELINCHROM ONE

By Ellis Vener



As new cameras become ever more adept at capturing at high ISOs without noise or limited dynamic range, lighting manufacturers are introducing lower-powered, more mobile monolights. These mini-monos are sort of like super speedlights with either a built-in or removable battery, are TTL and HSS capable, and have roughly double the power of a full-size speedlight. Case in point: the Elinchrom One.

Mini-monolights, by which I mean small monolights in the 100 to 250 watt-second range, have become increasingly popular. These fill the niche when a speedlight isn't powerful enough, and the hassles that go along with more powerful lights (weight, bulk, larger stands, etc.) make them

impracticable. Part of what makes the speedlight and mini-mono approach more viable are the advances in camera sensor technology. For most modern full-frame mirrorless cameras, the new sensors deliver image quality at ISO 400 and, in some cases, ISO 1600, nearly matching base ISO quality. What if you need greater depth of field, and the mini-mono class lights are not quite powerful enough? With high-resolution workhorse full-frame cameras—like the Canon EOS R5, Nikon Z 7II and Z 9, and Sony Alpha 1 and A7RIV—you can choose to use a wider focal length. Those cameras' APS-C format option delivers a high-quality 20-megapixel image.

POWER AND CONTROL

The Elinchrom One has capacitors capable of letting loose a 131 watt-second electrical charge through its large-bore, nearly circular exposed flash tube and is designed primarily for working on location. An exposed flash tube means it does a better job of spreading light evenly



IMAGES © ELLIS VENER / ellisvener.com

For this portrait I used two Elinchrom One lights, each about 6 to 7 feet from the subject. I fitted the light on the left with an Elinchrom seven-inch grid reflector and the other with a 39-inch Rotalux Octa Softbox. In TTL mode using the Elinchrom Pro Transmitter, I set each light in different groups with the light on the left one stop underexposed.

into an umbrella, soft box, or reflector.

The Elinchrom One is built for TTL control through the Elinchrom Transmitter Pro or Transmitter Plus. In manual mode, you can set power in 1/10- or 1/3-stop increments from full (131 watt-seconds) down to minimum (7 watt-seconds). In standard mode using the t0.1 standard, flash durations range from 1/155 second at full power down to 1/1,530 second. In action mode, the flash duration range is considerably shorter: 1/650 to 1/7,000 second (see “Understanding Flash Duration,” right). In the control menu, you can choose three ways of describing output: the proprietary Elinchrom scale (0.1 to 4.3 for this light), the 1-10 scale (5.8 to 10), or watt-seconds.

STANDOUT FEATURES

It isn't the power, the user interface, or the internal rechargeable battery that sets the Elinchrom One apart from the competition. Instead, it is the flash's front end. Unlike similarly powered mini-monolights that bury the flash tube and

reflector inside the body of the light, the Elinchrom One uses a flash tube and glass cover that extend out from the flash. Behind the flash tube is a wrinkle-finish silver reflector with vents and a centrally placed 20-watt daylight-balanced LED modeling light.

A flash tube that extends from the body, even slightly, that's covered with a protective glass dome is a welcome design for people who use soft boxes and beauty dish reflectors. But what I find fascinating is that to make the One small enough to be easily portable, Elinchrom did away with its large-diameter standard reflector/modifier attachment. Currently, Elinchrom makes four OCF Series modifiers: a polycarbonate diffusion dome/flash tube protector (included), and a wide-angle reflector (16cm) suitable for use with umbrellas, a colored gel dome kit, and barn doors. The One is the first Elinchrom light I've worked with that's designed to take umbrellas with industry-standard 8mm-diameter shafts and a four-bladed barn door set.



I lit this family portrait with a single Elinchrom One in a Plume Wafer 75 soft box. The distance to the subject was approximately 6 feet. I used a Matthews Studio Hollywood Combo stand with a 40-inch C-Stand arm to place the light over the camera.

UNDERSTANDING FLASH DURATION

The International Organization of Standards has established two methods for stating flash duration. The one generally used in marketing is the t0.5 method, which measures the length of time the flash emits 50% or more of the peak amount of light produced at a given power setting. The t0.1 method measures only the period when the light emits 10% of a given power setting's peak. Although a t0.1 time is typically three times longer than the t0.5 period, t0.1 is more important because it measures the entire time the flash is emitting a photographically significant amount of light. For general photography, these measurements don't matter. But when gauging a flash's ability to freeze motion, pay attention to the t0.1 value.



Positioning of the Plume Wafer 75 soft box



Once the sun had gone down, I captured these bikers with the same lighting setup as described on the previous page.

But the big news is that the One is compatible with the best light modifier mount in the photography industry: Profoto's ratchet-locking 1.5-inch-wide rubber collar. Using standard Elinchrom light modifiers on the One requires either the included rubber collar that slides on the front of the light or Elinchrom's \$179.95 EL-Profoto adapter, which has a locking Elinchrom collar on the front and a Profoto collar on the rear. The included collar has two lugs that fit the Elinchrom bayonet and works with smaller Elinchrom metal reflectors. Bigger Elinchrom mount modifiers require the EL-Profoto adapter. Or you can use Profoto mount reflectors or

third-party speed rings for Profoto lights.

MORE FEATURES

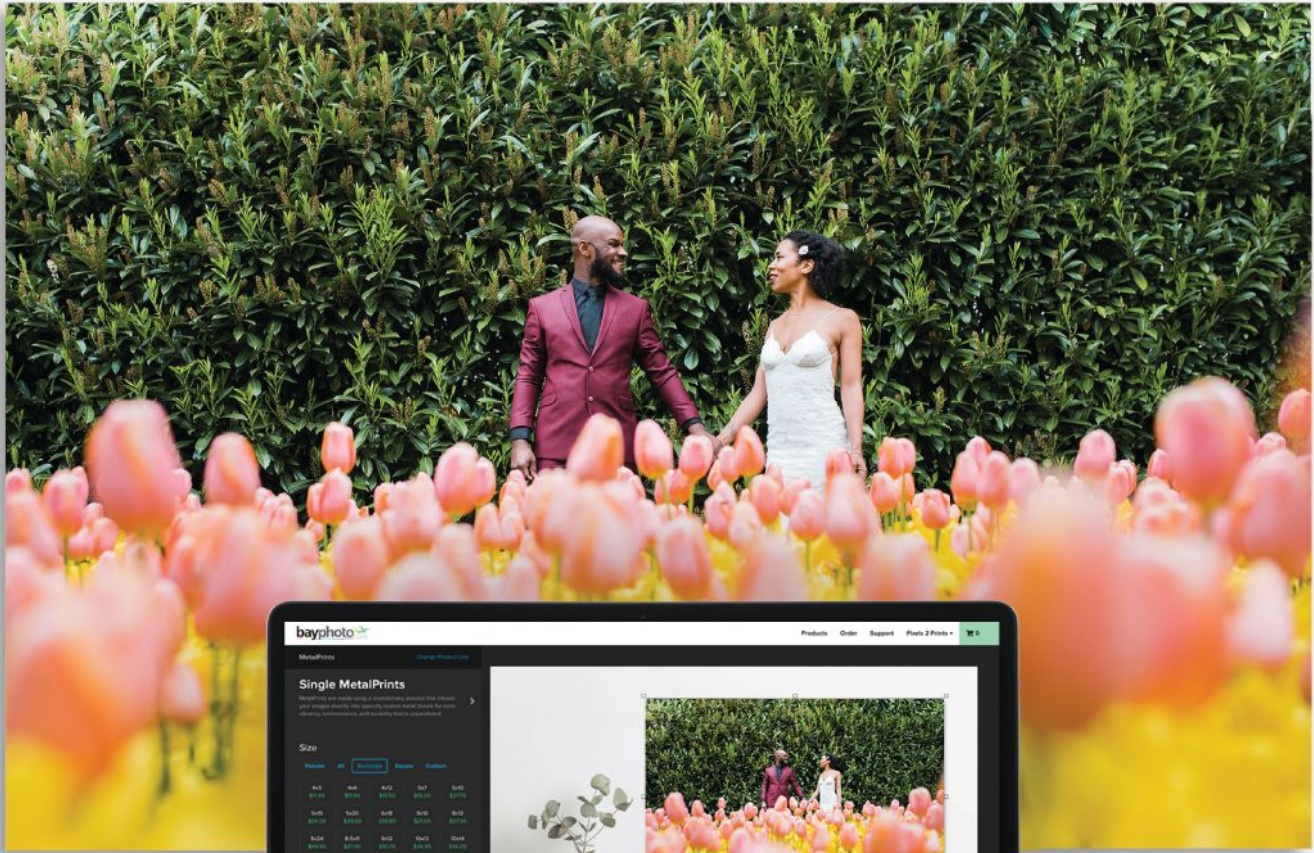
Like the similarly sized Godox AD 100 Pro and AD300 Pro and Profoto's B10X and forthcoming A2 mini-monos, the Elinchrom One has a removable combination stand and umbrella mount. This mount screws into a 1/4"-20 thread receiver. The removable stand mount opens up other mounting options, including using it on a heavy-duty flash bracket as a potent near-camera light.

Other features include built-in Bluetooth for controlling your lights through Elinchrom's iOS app; 20 frequency channels for each of

the four groups that are color-coded for easy identification; dimmable modeling light with a color temperature range from 2,700 to 6,500K; and active charging through the USB-C port so it can be used while it's connected to a power bank or an AC-to-USB-C adapter.

The Elinchrom One retails for \$999.99. A two-light kit is \$1,999. Each comes with a protective case, and the two-light kit includes a backpack. While there are both less and more expensive mini-monolights, the combination of Elinchrom reliability, power, mounting versatility, and additional practical features place the Elinchrom One in a sweet spot for working photographers. •

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NATURE



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Kristi Odom

KRISTI ODOM DELIVERS
THE POWER OF
NONHUMAN EMOTION

BY ERIC MINTON



STORIES



he hand reaches across the image, palm up, fingers beckoning. It looks like it's reaching in supplication, for food, maybe, or, just as likely, connection. With long fingers, boney arm, and skin covered in bristly fur, it is the arm of a white-bearded gibbon in Borneo and perfectly represents wildlife photographer Kristi Odom's life mission.

The image's power is in what it is and what it seems to be. "It's an endangered gibbon with its arm out," Odom says, "and that arm out makes me think it's asking for help, asking for the story to be told. It's a nice one to pull people in." Which the image has been doing for almost 20 years. One of Odom's earliest award-winning wildlife pictures, it has been displayed at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and occupies a central place on her website home page. When she took it, she was a wedding photographer.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Labeling herself a visual artist, Odom tells Earth's stories through photography and workshops. Her images are visually powerful pieces of art, and some accompany her articles published in *The Washington Post* and online for National Geographic. Odom's seminars and destination photography workshops promote conservation while providing one-on-one photography tips. "It is my mission to connect people



A close-up photograph of an elephant's head, focusing on its eye and the textured, wrinkled skin. The elephant's eye is dark and surrounded by deep, concentric wrinkles. The skin is a mix of brown and grey tones, showing significant texture and some peeling or cracking. The background is dark and out of focus.

“I want people to experience the personalities and emotions of animals.”

emotionally to wildlife through visual art and wildlife adventures. I want people to experience the personalities and emotions of animals,” Odom states on her website.

But not in anthropomorphic ways. “Animals have their own emotions; they don’t have the same emotions as us,” she says in a Zoom call from her home in Longmont, Colorado. “Animals don’t have the facial expressions, the tears, and the smiling that we have, so I think there’s a lot of power to gestures and touch and things like that.” Similar to the gibbon’s arm, many of Odom’s wildlife images are closeups: a bear cub’s head looking back over its shoulder against the backdrop of its mother’s furry back; an elephant’s trunk curling around its tusks; a dragonfly’s back; an orangutan’s hand slapped over the back of its shoulder.

Odom doesn’t go into the wild seeking preconceived compositions. “It’s more a case of opening my eyes to see and to feel. And the animals give us their personalities if we watch close enough and study them close enough.” For every photo, she asks herself three questions: What do I see? What do I feel? What can I eliminate? She sees a gibbon threatened with extinction; she feels a connection to the outstretched arm; she frames the arm tight with a minimum depth of field. The emotions she’s portraying may be her own, but that still serves her purpose to tell

the species’ story of losing habitat to global warming, falling into traffickers’ hands, or otherwise suffering from a homocentric worldview.

“Photographing how I’m feeling is important to being an individual and an artist in the industry,” she says, and tells of the first time she photographed sharks. Frightened when she went into the water, “The first thing I saw was simplicity and peace.” So, she shot silhouettes to focus on the sharks’ simple forms.

WEDDINGS OPENED THE DOOR

Odom marketed herself as a destination wedding photographer to pay her way to nature photography in exotic places: She visited Borneo while working a wedding in Thailand. “So many people for so long told me I needed to specify, to find one genre and stick with it,” she says. “I find that to not be the best advice.” Weddings helped her understand the power in photographing emotion. “And then the wildlife photography showed me a nontraditional way of seeing emotion, through gestures, when eyes are closed,” she says. “Animals really taught me how to watch body language.” Applying that to wedding photography earned her awards and a Nikon ambassadorship. That gave her the confidence to make wildlife photography her







ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

DATE: August 2016

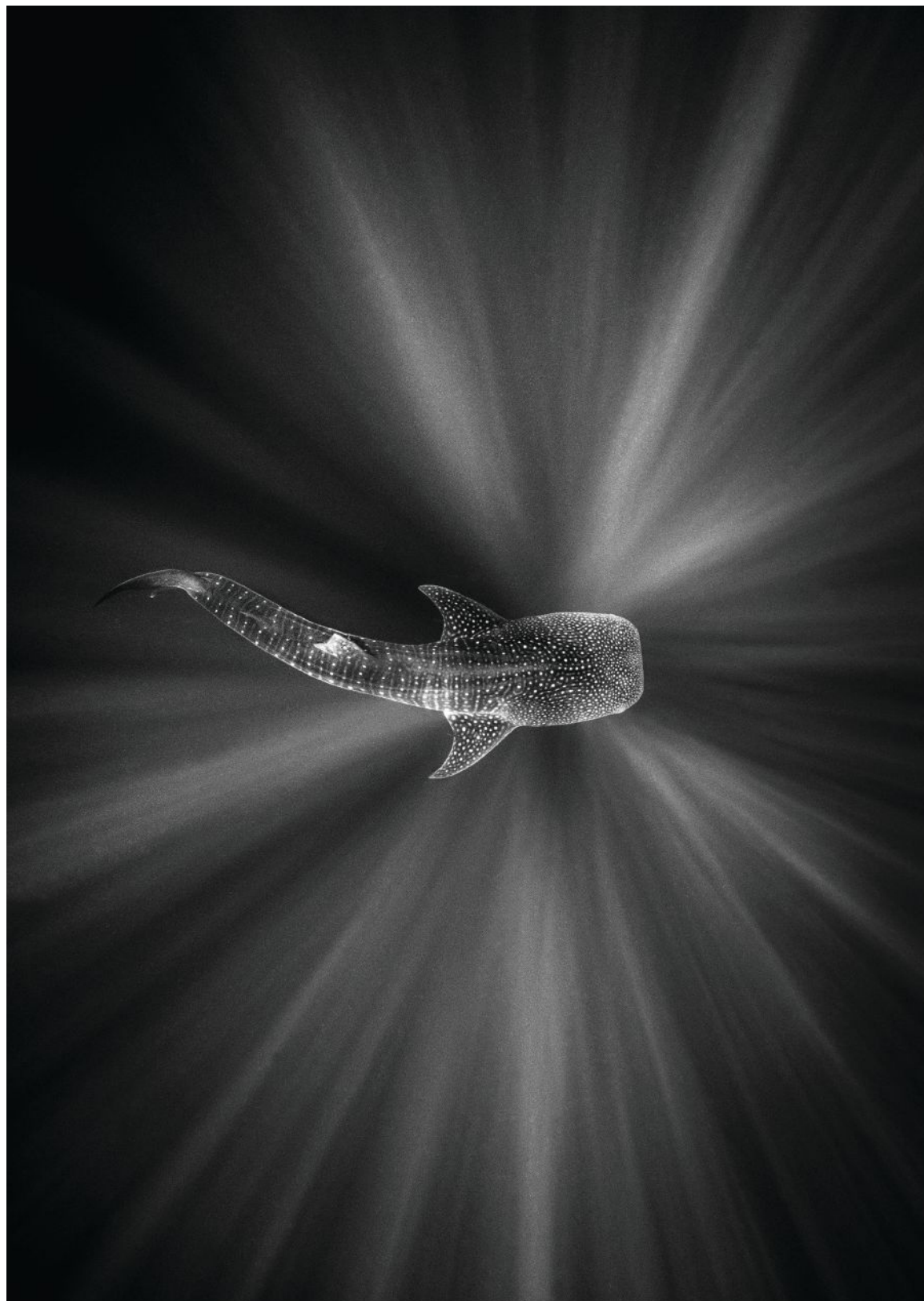
LOCATION: Cenderawasih
Bay, Papua, Indonesia

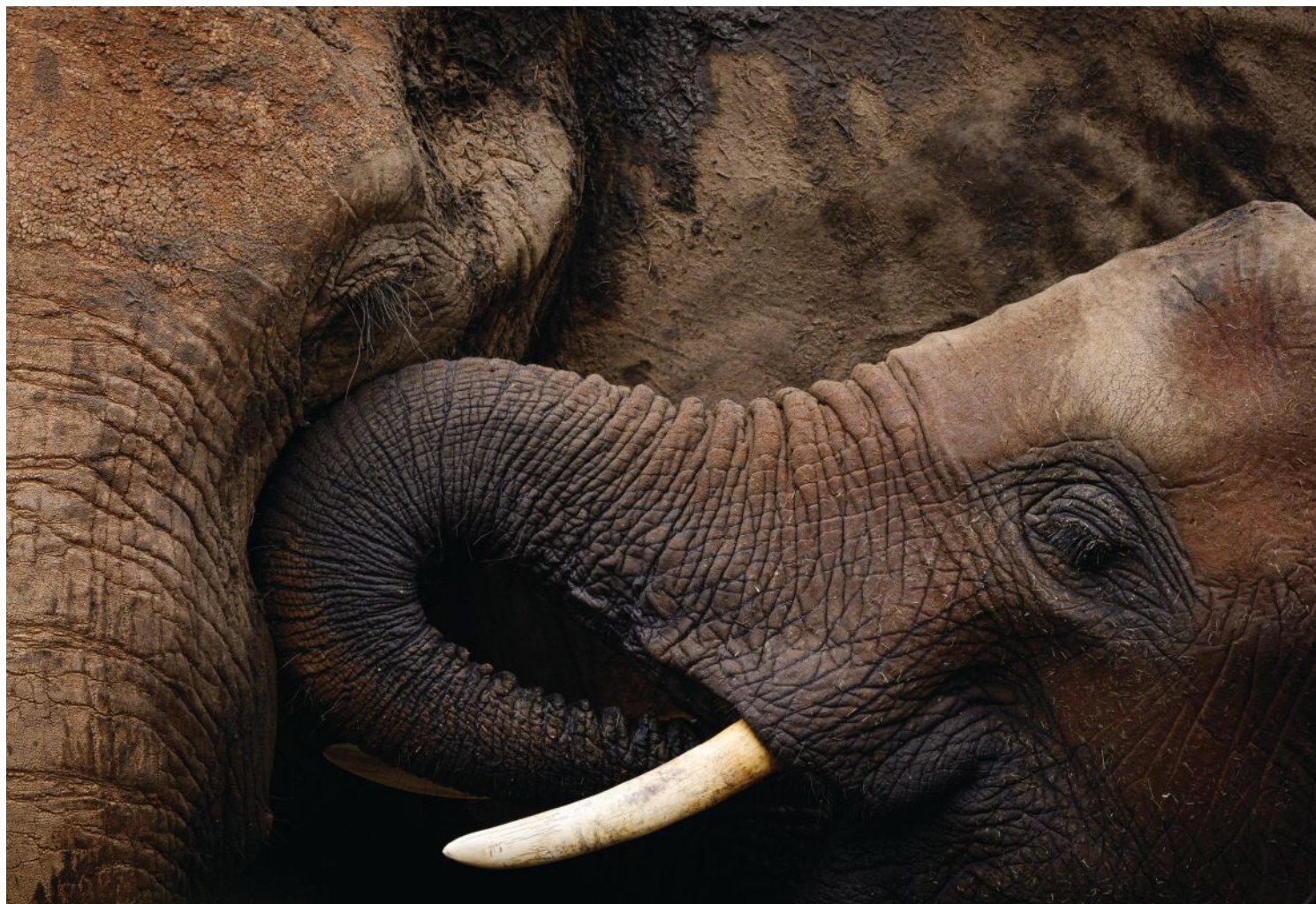
SUBJECT: Whale shark

EQUIPMENT: Nikon D750
with AF-S Nikkor 20mm
f/1.8G ED in an underwater
housing, 1/320 second at
f/5.6, ISO 1000

PHOTOGRAPHER'S

COMMENTS: "Diffraction occurs when an obstacle causes light to bend. I tried scuba diving to get great shots of these whale sharks. Then, while snorkeling, I noticed that the bright sunlight diffracted around my body, casting these beautiful light rays that moved with me. I wanted the diffraction pattern to meet the patterns of the spots on the back on the whale shark. I swam hard and fast—accidentally swimming into a school of jellyfish (and I wasn't wearing a wetsuit)—and finally hit the right spot where I could put my shadow on the giant animal so that the light stripes would meet the whale shark's amazing spotted pattern. This photo was on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History for one year after it won a Nature's Best Photography Award. I was excited to share my love for the beauty I see in nature with the museum's millions of annual visitors."





full-time vocation four years ago, “Which was very, very hard because wedding photography is lucrative,” she says.

It was not the first time she passed up higher earnings for a passion. Odom was a math whiz growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, and headed down an engineering career path. She was particularly close to her grandfather. “I used to be a big introvert, and he was, too. We played cards all the time together.” He enjoyed photography, and she started seeing his life, travels, passions, and love of family through his photos. Noticing her interest in his photography, he left the 15-year-old Odom his camera along with his Georgia Tech class ring when he passed away.

The ring may have represented what seemed her predestined path—she received a full electrical engineering scholarship to Georgia Tech to specialize in photovoltaics—but when she pulled out her grandfather’s camera, she realized she could hide behind it and still be at the

party. She also found her voice, “And the voice was coming through in the photography,” she says. “I could share experiences, and it started bringing me out of my shell.” She began photographing college sports and covered concerts for RollingStone.com. It was a concert that, on her 21st birthday, diverted her from a high-salary engineering career to clambering over mountain rocks photographing Micky Mouse-eared pikas.

BLAME BONO

“I blame Bono,” she says, but it has nothing to do with the U2 front man’s save-the-planet ways. Odom was in the camera pit when U2 began playing “Beautiful Day” and Bono sang it to her, his face so close to her lens the resulting image represents him as a barely discernible blur. “It was one of those moments where I was shaking with excitement, thinking, if photography can take me here, imagine where



I could go," she says. "It was really hard to get into my electrical engineering classes the next day." That moment alone convinced Odom to pursue a photography career instead of photovoltaics, but she also took the song's lyrics as a pointed message: "It's a beautiful day, don't let it get away." "In a lot of ways that relates to photography and the fact that we do get to keep all these beautiful moments."

Upon concluding her junior year at Georgia Tech, Odom transferred to the University of South Wales in Sidney, Australia, to earn a degree in fine arts with a concentration in photomedia. Transitioning from a math-based, logic-centric curriculum to creative thinking was hard. "I almost failed out of fine arts, and I was used to having high honors," she says. "It took me a really long time to think creatively and express myself and who am I and what I wanted people to see in my work." Still photographing concerts for *Rolling Stone*, she knew the technical aspects of lighting and photography, just not how to put emotion into her self-assigned work.

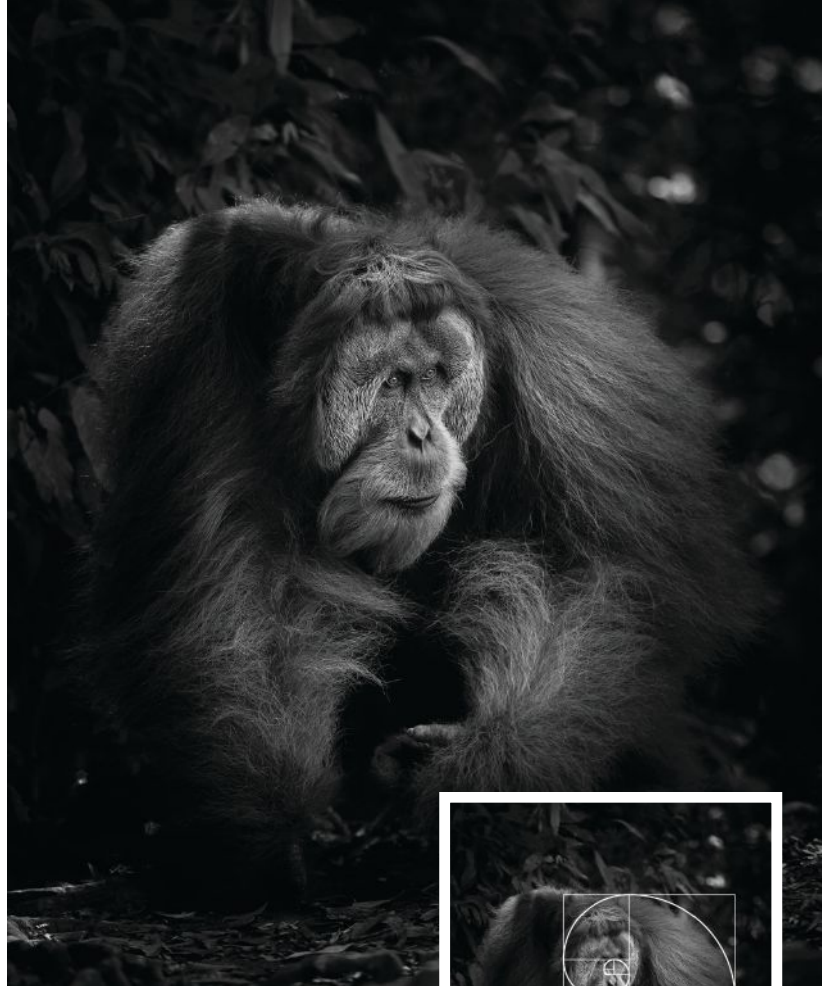
And then, math provided her artistic breakthrough when a teacher showed her how to use lines and geometrical shapes to lead eye movement in an image's composition. Her wildlife images rely on triangles, circles, squares, and diamonds in their composition, as well as her favorite mathematical sequence, the Fibonacci spiral.

A FOUND PATH

Despite her mathematical bearings, Odom loves embracing randomness, she says. "I think a lot of times our paths find us." Such as the time she traveled to Ecuador to participate in a seminar, tested positive for COVID-19, and quarantined eight days in a hotel room reading tourism brochures. A doctor cleared her two days before her flight, so though Odom missed the seminar, she was able to visit one of the lodges advertising its hummingbirds. "When I saw the hummingbird over my shoulder, it was the most amazing moment of sheer beauty," she says.

She next attended a conference in Las Vegas, where Nikon asked if she had an idea for a campaign promoting its new Nikkor Z 400mm f/2.8 TC mirrorless lens. "I said, hummingbirds, Ecuador." A couple weeks later, she was back in Ecuador for a "Birds of Ecuador" video, which Nikon recently released. She's scheduled one of her 2023 workshops for Ecuador. "It's funny that things that might be misfortune, if we look at it the right way, open doors in different directions."

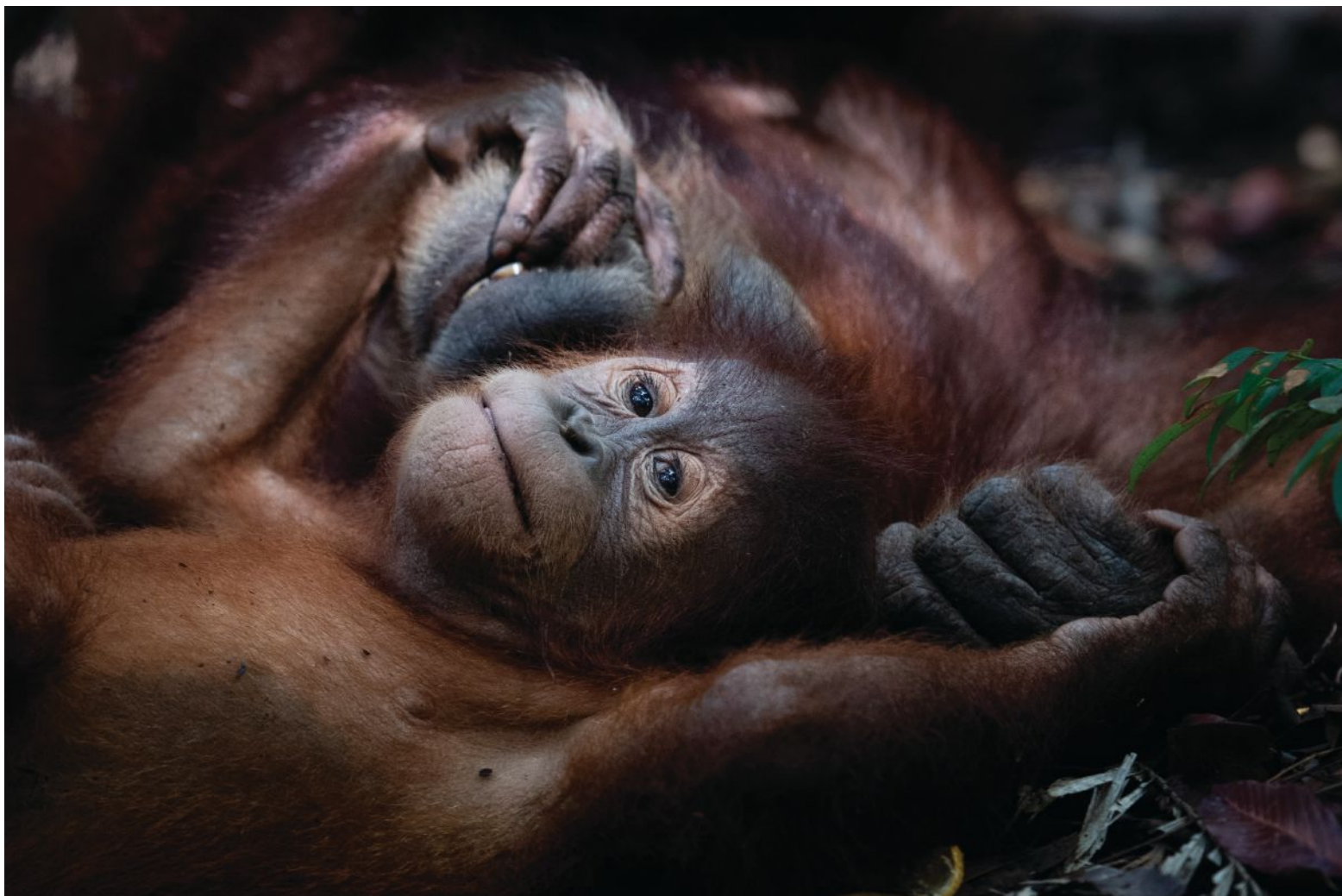
In that workshop, she not only will be able to experience the birds of Ecuador once again, she will also live vicariously through her students as they experience them for the first time. "I love sharing passion for photography, for the planet, for wildlife, and I love teaching," she says. "I



MATHEMATICAL PRECISION

Kristi Odom was a competition-winning math student in high school before receiving a full-ride engineering scholarship at Georgia Tech. The Fibonacci sequence is her favorite mathematical sequence—"Yes, I have a favorite mathematical sequence," the self-described nerd says—in which each number is the sum of two preceding numbers: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, and so on. The concept is used in algorithms and other math-based structures, and the spiraling diagram of the sequence occurs often in nature.

Odom reencountered Fibonacci when she was studying visual composition while earning her fine arts degree in photography. Painters use the sequence to direct the viewer's eye, including Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" and Vincent van Gogh's "Starry Night." Odom applies it to draw viewers tighter and tighter into the frame of her wildlife images, such as this portrait that lands the viewer's eyes on the orangutan's eyes.



See more images with this story along with
Kristi Odom's "Birds of Ecuador" video
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really want to teach more people to tell nature stories, I want to teach them how to be a better storyteller, I want to teach them how to be a better photographer, and I want to give them life-changing experiences at the same time." She believes mentoring other photographers to advocate for biodiversity in their own communities is just as effective as publishing her own photo stories in *National Geographic*.

Like her photos, her mission is suffused with infectious passion. "A lot of it is just looking at wildlife and the planet," she says. "That feeling of being small because we're in a place so big. And we share this world with so many amazing species and emotional beings that are not humans. I'm constantly inspired by wanting people to feel what I feel in nature, which is the sublime." •

Eric Minton is a writer and editor in Washington, D.C.

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TYRENDIA PENTECOST'S PATH TO ACHIEVEMENT

BY AMANDA ARNOLD





Like many photographers, Tyrenda Pentecost first picked up a camera to make photos of her family. Her son was playing football and made the U.S. National Team, so she purchased a Canon EOS Rebel T5i (“a huge investment for my family,” she says) and had a photographer friend adjust the settings for action sports. As a result, when Pentecost’s sister asked her to photograph her family, Pentecost did so in sports mode, she recalls with a

laugh. Soon, a photographer asked her to be a second shooter for a wedding, and she began devouring YouTube videos to advance her skills. She’s now in her eighth wedding season.

Over those eight years, Pentecost, who recently relocated from California to Boise, Idaho, has grappled with various challenges and learned to make her way in the wedding business. She shares her greatest lessons learned.

EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS SKILLS

“I built my business backward in that I became good at photography first and then focused on business second,” says Pentecost. She struggled early on to understand profit and loss statements and business accountability. Her advice to new photographers is to learn the business side first. What can you afford? How much do you want to invest in your business each year? Does what you’re planning to charge ultimately make sense for your family? Don’t pay so much attention to other photographers’ rates—personalize your financials for you and your family’s needs.

“There are always going to be photographers who can give you feedback and tips and resources for how to be a better shooter. But not many will teach you how to become a good business owner,” she says. Those are the mentors to seek out.

She also recommends taking a business 101 class at a local college. “I went back to college this year, and I’m finishing a degree in small business,” she says. “What I have learned has actually blown my mind.” Many of the photographers who run successful businesses have a background in marketing or a business degree, she says; her education in history didn’t give her relevant foundations.

One thing she’s learned from her classes is the benefit of passive income. “It’s important to understand as photographers that there are different ways to skin a cat,” she says. Some people look down on part-time photography work, she says, but having a second passive income is a great way to allow yourself some flexibility in your photography work. She’s currently looking into passive income options, including a small business focused on luggage for the traveling wedding photographer.



THE BEST WAYS TO ATTRACT CLIENTS

UNDERPROMISE AND OVERDELIVER. Most of Pentecost's clients come through word-of-mouth referrals. And she learned that to reap those referrals your customer service must go above and beyond. You can give clients a beautiful product, but if you don't deliver it in a timely manner, for example, they won't sing your praises, she says.

Her strategy for pleasing clients is to give them more than they anticipate by keeping their expectations in check. She tells clients she averages a certain number of images per hour but gives them well over that amount, including some complimentary black-and-white images. She says she'll post the images online within two weeks then posts them in three days. She might add a video or create a reel of their wedding to share. In the past, she's given clients a gift when they arrive at their engagement session—a custom picnic blanket with their initials or a signature lip balm (which she jokes they'll need for all the kissing they'll do for the session). She mails every client a welcome gift after they've selected her as their photographer. This could be a gift box of coffee with mugs or other custom items from local businesses. Her budget for these gifts is \$100 per client, but if they refer her one client, that's a \$5,000 job she wouldn't have earned without the referral, she notes.

NETWORK WITH WEDDING PLANNERS. It's best to have at least one loyal wedding planner who will send you referrals—two or three is even better. "I have one or two really loyal wedding planners who I have consistently worked with," she says. "They send me five or six weddings a year, and that is huge." She cultivated those relationships by offering some complimentary services to them. For example, she proposed doing their headshots as well as photographing wedding details such as invitations and centerpieces for their portfolios. Wedding planners often complain that photographers promise to send photos of wedding decor post-event but fail to follow through, so Pentecost makes it a point to do so. "Offer them anything that is a value add," says Pentecost, and don't ask them for anything, especially when you're starting out. If you offer to provide them with headshots or to photograph their invitations, meet them wherever it's convenient for them.





FILM IS GREATER

Pentecost made the shift to celluloid when she realized the work she admired most from other photographers had been made on medium-format film. "It just tells a different romantic level of the story," she says. "There is nothing like it. Digital can never emulate it." She also likes that film encourages her to slow down with her work and stay in the moment. It's better than digital at capturing the highlights and shadows, she says, and "You're able to shoot in harsher sunlight and still have a pretty aesthetic."

While she also uses a mirrorless camera setup, she loves the excitement she feels when film scans arrive in the mail. "It's like Christmas morning," she says. "I have to go home. I don't care where I'm at, I will come back to look at those film scans."





THE BEST POSING IS MOVEMENT

When Pentecost started out, she had a binder of poses that she screenshotted on her phone, referring to them as she posed subjects for portraits. The problem, she says, was that the images felt static. She realized that physical movement and a connection with the subjects through copious positive feedback were the keys to capturing great portraits of wedding couples.

She also learned to read clients' energy. One of her former posing tricks was to ask the couple to put their foreheads together. "It was awkward for some and really intimate for others," she says. She's learned that having people move into poses works better. She'll ask them to walk toward each other and grasp hands or walk side by side then lean into a kiss. She also makes wedding portraits in an environment away from the distractions of other people. When the bride's mom or maid of honor is watching, the subjects get tense. "I like to control the environment, and I like to bring the energy down and help my client relax," she says. "The less eyeballs that are on them, the more I can get out of them."

She has some techniques to get clients moving and to trigger genuine expression. She asks one subject to dip or spin the other. During an engagement session, she asks one to give the other a piggyback ride. She asks the bride to give the groom a squeeze from behind while she makes his photograph. And then there's her favorite: She pulls the groom aside and tells him to sneak up behind the bride while she's making the photo and whisper something inappropriate in her ear. She can't hear what they say, but 100% of the time it makes the bride laugh, she says. "Little cues like that evoke emotion."

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YOU'RE THE WEDDING PLANNER

When clients relay that there will be no day-of planner at the event, Pentecost inserts herself to fill that role. She sets up an hour-long meeting with the couple to walk through the day step by step. They might have a rough timeline from the venue, but Pentecost wants to be in control of what happens between those moments. When will the bride put on her gown? When will the couple do a first look? Will they go out for sunset portraits? It's important that she plans a more detailed timeline with clients than what the venue will provide.

SHOW POTENTIAL CLIENTS LOTS OF PHOTOS

"Hiring off of just an Instagram feed is dangerous, in my opinion," says Pentecost. Photos presented on social media are just the highlights of a photographer's work. Before a potential client selects her as their wedding photographer, Pentecost sends them one or two complete galleries of her portfolio so they can see the full range of her work and make a more informed decision. This is one way to set expectations, she says, as well as to ensure she and the couple are right for each other. •

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Real-Life Fairies



HEATHER LARKIN
SPRINKLES MAGIC INTO THE
LIVES OF CHILDREN

BY STEPHANIE BOOZER

When you look at Heather Larkin's portraits of cherubic newborns, glowing moms-to-be, and sprightly fairies, resilience probably isn't the first word that comes to mind. But fierce resilience is a defining trait of Larkin's, an underlying strength that's allowed her to create her magical world of Fairyography. With the help of flower garlands, flowy silks, and delicate wings, Larkin transforms mothers, babies, and children into the ethereal for an afternoon. Where her resilience plays a part is in the work you don't see—or that you don't realize you do see.

Based in Athens, Georgia, Larkin has been a photographer for nearly 20 years. Over the past 13, she's devoted a portion of her sessions to children with medical hardships or disabilities. It's an area of work that's near and dear to her heart, harkening back to her pre-photographer days as a preschool teacher. Children with disabilities were a focus of her college degree work, and Larkin found delight and fulfillment in working with children who the world sometimes overlooked, she says. Later, as a photographer, she found herself missing those interactions deeply and devised a plan to merge her background with her current work by donating a session to a girl nominated by the local community. She received only one nomination the first year, for a girl with a brain stem tumor.

"I feel so naive looking back," says Larkin. "But at the time it didn't cross my mind that she might not get better. I wanted her to feel amazing and give her something to make herself feel better later on, while she was getting chemo and losing her hair."

Unfortunately, the tumor proved fatal. The girl's portraits were displayed at her funeral, and Larkin was devastated.

"I was heartbroken, absolutely heartbroken," says Larkin. "I could see a little bit of myself in this girl, and I so wanted her to live. Not only for herself and her parents, but the world needed what she had to offer, and she didn't get a chance."

At the funeral, the girl's parents told Larkin that she would never know how much those portraits meant to them—a tangible remembrance to hold onto when they couldn't hold their daughter. Heart-





sick, Larkin didn't think she could handle another session like that. But time brought fresh hope. She decided to try again a couple of years later, thinking the odds were in her favor for a happier ending.

"I thought it would get me back on the horse, so to speak," says Larkin.

This time, she selected a girl with a heart condition.

"We did a beautiful session with her sisters, and she looked like this perfect little pixie with this tiny nose and big blue eyes, like she was sculpted out of pure magic," says Larkin. Five months after the session, the child had a heart attack and died. Larkin found herself at another funeral hearing from another set of parents about the impact of her portraits.

"I was wrecked again," she says of the girl's death.

Here's where Larkin's strength took hold and changed the narrative. A year after that second funeral, she had a real-

ization. "I thought, what if I do this again and I meet all kinds of kids, and instead of picking just one, I pick them all," says Larkin. "I can make them all feel amazing."

For a third time, Larkin called for recommendations of girls who needed a pick-me-up. She received nominations for girls with cancer, heart defects, early onset arthritis, developmental disabilities, the full gamut of children who needed to feel good about themselves and not set apart from their peers. She designed a once-a-year program to provide a free session to everyone who was nominated during the August application window. If the children had the interest and capacity to accept, she provided a session. Some kids were too sick to make it or weren't interested in participating, but for the ones who were willing and able, a session was available. Now, Larkin typically takes on about 10 to 12 of these sessions each year in addition to her client work in



WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE CONSTRAINTS

Photographing children who have certain medical conditions or disabilities requires preparation. A child with autism may not like a photographer to be close, notes Larkin, while a child with Down syndrome may prefer it. You'll want to understand the subject's preferences so you can select the right lens and behave accordingly. Understanding what you're likely to encounter with each subject will allow you to prepare your equipment and session appropriately. Larkin offers advice based on her experience.

TALK TO THE FAMILY. Parents are the people who best understand their children's needs and preferences, so check in with them first. Learn about the child's physical capabilities as well as their emotional or behavioral needs. Some clients may not be able to walk far or stand for long. Location, parking, nearby amenities—all of those considerations should be discussed in advance with the family.

TREAT EVERY CHILD AS A CHILD, NOT AS A DIAGNOSIS. Parents often tell Larkin they don't want their child treated differently from other children. They want the same considerations and level of attention, without assumptions that an illness or disability will preclude their child from participating in the session. Don't assume a child in a wheelchair can't be taken out of the chair or that a child doesn't understand what's going on around them, for example.

TALK TO THE CHILD. Building on the last point, Larkin says it's important to speak to the child directly. Don't assume they won't understand, and don't use a different voice than you do with adults.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE IMPACT YOU'RE CREATING. As Larkin well knows, it can be easy to get sidelined by the knowledge that some of her subjects won't ever make a recovery. But by focusing on the joy you're bringing, the magic you're creating, you can be part of the positive side of the equation. "Most of these kids are just thrilled to do this," she says. "I always go back to [the fact that] the child is so much more than their diagnosis."





maternity, newborn, and child portraiture. The experience has been rewarding.

"I have met girls who are so much more than their diagnosis," says Larkin. "I feel so privileged to see these girls and share them with everyone else."

The work is uplifting for Larkin, even with the inevitable losses that come with it. But she takes comfort in knowing that her work has made an important impact on the families left behind. In many cases, she understands the sad ending her client will face. One child, for example has Leigh syndrome, a mitochondrial disease that prevents the body from turning sugar into energy. People with this disease typically don't live past the age of five, although some live long enough to see their 21st birthday. The client was six at the time.

"She is one of the cutest, sweetest, kindest little girls," says Larkin. "I cried the entire way home from the session because I know at some point they will lose her. It's not a maybe."

But some stories have a happier ending, like the nomination that initially sunk Larkin's heart to her stomach: a long-time client who'd been diagnosed with a brain tumor. Fortunately, a successful surgery led the girl to a full recovery.

Larkin's friends tease her about her Pollyanna-like ability to tap into a deep spring of seemingly eternal optimism. Making each client feel special for an afternoon and creating a positive experience for each family is the fairy dust that buoys Larkin's drive to keep moving forward.

"I get super sad and really angry that the world can be this callous and cruel," she says. "And I'll think that I don't want to do this anymore. But then another year rolls around and I say I'll do it again because I realize the impact I'm making is helping their lives. The sadness gets to me, but it doesn't stay." •

Stephanie Boozer is a writer in Charleston, South Carolina.

Learn from Heather Larkin at Imaging USA 2023
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ESSENTIAL CONFERENCE INFO

COUNTDOWN TO IMAGING USA

It's the season of pumpkin spice and Autumn breezes, but it won't be long before January ushers in the hottest photography conference of 2023. Imaging USA kicks off Jan. 22 in Nashville, Tennessee, for three

full days of education, inspiration, and collaboration. Here's some of what's in store for attendees.

imagingusa.com

KEYNOTE SESSIONS

Every year, Imaging USA begins with an opening keynote speaker guaranteed to capture your attention.



Simon T. Bailey

In "Spark the Customer Experience," Simon T. Bailey will discuss how customers crave not only personalized experiences with their photographer, but empathetic ones.

In this session, Bailey will address attracting and retaining customers in a growing global market, turning customers into loyal fans, and creating unforgettable moments that keep clients coming back. Bailey explains how to accelerate revenue by placing care and service at the heart of customer experience.

In the final session of the conference, Julie Solomon is set to deliver a compelling closing keynote, "Get What You Want: How to Go from Unseen to Unstoppable." She coaches photographers to look deeper at the stories and unconscious



Julie Solomon

beliefs that hinder success by blasting through self-doubt, setting boundaries, and negotiating with confidence. Attendees will leave Imaging USA feeling motivated and empowered with authentic strategies for business growth and personal development.

PRE-CON CLASSES

There's a not-so-secret added feature of Imaging USA; pre-conference classes take place for three days leading up to the conference, from Jan. 19-21. These are small-group settings featuring in-depth instruction that delve deep to lay the groundwork for success. Expert instructors are able to offer more individualized guidance in sessions that range from a half-day to multi-day classes. Photo-shop techniques, lighting, business, and other topics are offered, as is a three-day prep class for photographers readying themselves to sit for their certified professional photographer exam. Pre-cons require early registration for an additional fee. Most typically sell out.



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AWARDS NIGHT



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Everyone loves a good awards ceremony. Attendees are invited to celebrate the work of peers at PPA's Award and Degree Ceremony followed by the Grand Imaging Awards program.

PARTIES



©ADRIANA BOCANEGRA

Kick off the conference at the Imaging USA Welcome Party Sunday, Jan. 22 in the Opry Delta Ballroom. Re-connect with old friends and make new ones. Snacks, live music, and a cash bar are there for everyone's enjoyment. One last chance to bust a move is at the Closing Party Tuesday, Jan. 24. Admission to the parties is included in the All-Access Pass. •

What New Parents Want

INSIGHTS ON CONSUMERS

Every portrait is unique, but photographers of newborns understand that their niche is itself a one-of-a-kind undertaking. There's a short window of time when it's possible to capture many of the newborn poses parents want to see. Plus, there are essential health and safety precautions that photographers need to take around babies.

A new research report for PPA members gives insights into what a newborn's parents are looking for when they're thinking of having baby's first portraits made. Among the findings:

- Consumers seriously consider only one or two photographers before making a decision.
- Before scheduling meetings with potential photographers, consumers look online for both information and inspiration.
- Being able to meet with photographers in person before they hire someone is important to consumers.
- Even though clients have a budget in mind, more than one-quarter say they spent more than they'd planned when they made their purchase decisions.

This report includes details about con-



sumer motivations, expectations, and experiences with newborn photography that will help photographers enhance or begin

a newborn portrait offering. Download the full report online. • ppa.com/research



HELP FOR SELLING YOUR SERVICES

DOWNLOAD CUSTOMIZABLE PRICELIST TEMPLATES

Your brand image is crucial to communicating a clear message. It tells the world what you're all about and opens the door to finding your most valued target clients. To ensure that you're sending a brand-consistent message to consumers, make sure that all your communications—social media posts, marketing materials, website, your language and clothing—are consistent.

To help members prepare materials that are professional, customized, and thorough, PPA has released downloadable price list templates that allow you to present your services in a format that best speaks to your business. Portrait and wedding themes can be customized to any photographic specialty. The templates come in three designs: classic, minimalist, and Bohemian.

These templates are fully editable layered Photoshop files, allowing them to be customized to fit any brand. Download a template, add your images, prices, and logos, and change the color palette to suit your needs. •

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There's never been a better time to get involved. After all, it's together that we thrive.

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