

THE SHY PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE TO CONFIDENCE

BY LAUREN LIM

“ IF WE ALL DID THE THINGS WE ARE CAPABLE OF
DOING, WE WOULD LITERALLY ASTOUND OURSELVES.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON

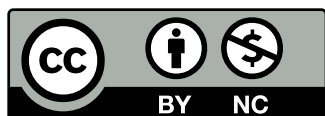


LEGAL STUFF

LET'S GET IT OUT OF THE WAY, SHALL WE?

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Hello There!



I'M LAUREN. I'M STOKED TO VIRTUALLY MEET YOU THROUGH A BOOK.

How futuristic of us!

I'm a photographer, although I suppose you guessed that from the title. You're clever like that.

I'm also a super shy person—have been since I was just a wee lass. It never really was a big deal though. Being quiet isn't necessarily a bad thing.

But when you become a photographer, whether a pro or hobbyist, you find out pretty quick that shyness isn't going to help you very much.

In fact, *confidence is one of the biggest keys to success.*

That's true in photography, in business, and yup, in life.

Contents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 07 A Story | 54 Boosting Confidence During Meetings |
| 09 Why I Wrote This Book For You | 63 Boosting Confidence While Traveling |
| 11 Why Confidence Is Crazy Important | 70 Maintaining Confidence Over The Long Term |
| 31 What Is Confidence + Why Isn't It Enough? | 93 The Big Ideas Behind Confidence |
| 33 What Is Shyness? | 103 Staying Humble |
| 34 Boosting Confidence During A Shoot | 106 Final Thoughts |

A Story

I'LL START OFF BY GIVING YOU MY SHY-PHOTOGRAPHER STORY

Don't worry, we're going to start talking about how this all relates to you in a jiffy. But I think with a topic like this, knowing who you're chatting with is pretty important.

I also want you to know that confidence is possible even if you're incredibly shy. And the best way to prove that to you is to tell you just how incredibly shy I was.

As a young one I struggled constantly with shyness. I remember bursting out in tears in Grade 1 because my teacher called my name out in a song. My parents had to come in and talk to her.

In fact, I'd get so nervous about going to school that I'd get physically sick to my stomach.

It was a tough time.

The problem with being really shy is that you tend to avoid situations that make you feel uncomfortable. You never push yourself to get over that shyness, and it sticks with you.

*Confidence is possible even
if you're incredibly shy.*

MY SHYNESS FOLLOWED ME ALL THROUGH SCHOOL.

In 4 years of University classes I didn't make a single new friend. I know. Poor me. Someone cue the tiny violins.

Then I met a guy. His name is Rob. You might know him. We went off travelling together, and became instantly obsessed with photography.

During that trip we decided to go pro and become wedding photographers. We're a bit impulsive like that.

The tricky part of all this was that I didn't actually know the first thing about photography. Terms like aperture and shutter speed were like gibberish to me.

Add to that the fact that a wedding photographer needs to be able to talk to lots of people, and I hope you'll be able to appreciate how incredibly terrified I was.

But, with a lot of hard work, I've conquered my shyness. I've been a professional photographer for 5 years; have travelled the world; and spent time teaching, public speaking, and a whole lot of "sharing my feelings" online to thousands of readers. I've loved every moment.

All of that awesome stuff came from learning how to be confident. I truly believe that confidence is one of the biggest advantages you can have in photography, and I'm excited to get to share with you how I found it.

Why I Wrote This Book For You

YOU MIGHT WONDER WHY I'M SO EXCITED TO SHARE ALL THIS PERSONAL INFO WITH YOU. YOU MIGHT THINK I'M CRAZY.

Well, I am crazy. About photography. I think it's the greatest thing before and after sliced bread. Through photos even shy folks like me can "express themselves". That right there is a huge confidence booster!

And then, when you make your passion for photography a big part of your life, you become super happy. Yep, another confidence booster.

I want you to enjoy photography as much as I do, and get in on that happiness. I'm just big into sharing like that. Sharing is caring, y'know.

But I know that it can be extremely hard to find your confidence as a photographer. Especially if you are shy.

Here's the twist. I know something else. It's that when you *do* find that confidence, your photography improves by leaps and bounds. Your business improves dramatically. And, most awesomely of all, your life improves.

If I can help you improve in so many ways just by writing this book, well, that sounds pretty darn awesome to me.

When you do find that confidence, your photography improves by leaps and bounds.



THE OTHER REASON FOR THIS BOOK IS THAT I WANT YOU TO HAVE SOME SUPPORT.

I was really lucky to have Rob there to support me on the tough days. Let me tell you, I definitely had really tough days. I've thought of completely giving up on this career on multiple occasions. No lie. I didn't believe I could ever find the confidence I needed to be a great photographer.

But Rob stuck with me, and gave me the help I needed to keep at it. Without him, I don't think I'd be here writing to you.

So, since not everyone has a partner in their business, I know that you might need a hand in finding your confidence. At the risk of sounding intensely sappy, I'm here for you.

I've done it. I know you can too. And this e-book is me doing my darndest to help you get there.

Why Confidence is Crazy Important

LET'S START OFF BY FIGURING OUT WHY CONFIDENCE IS SO IMPORTANT, AND WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE IT A BIG GOAL FOR YOURSELF.

Sound good? Onward!

Confidence is critical in every aspect of being a photographer, whether you're a pro or hobbyist. It's fundamental to great images and great business. Does that sound important enough?

I know you like details. So how about we look at some of the specific situations where confidence comes into play?

We'll start with the professional stuff, and then talk about a couple situations where it's important even for the hobbyist shooters.



BOOKING CLIENTS

BOOKING CLIENTS IS THE FIRST STEP WHEN IT COMES TO RUNNING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS.

If they aren't coming in the door, it doesn't matter if you're wildly confident when you shoot. You don't have anyone to shoot. So let's start at the very beginning, and see how confidence plays a role.

Ok. *Thought-experiment time*. Consider a booking experience from your clients' perspective. This can happen in a face-to-face meeting, or via email. Same deal.

They're coming in with a bunch of questions. Questions that they won't verbalize, but that you'll need to answer for them.



THE BIGGEST QUESTION IS, OF COURSE, **WHY SHOULD THEY BOOK YOU?**

What makes you better than all the other photographers they've seen? Why should they care about you and your work? What value are you going to provide them? Are you worth the investment? Will they enjoy their time with you? Will they enjoy the final product?

Does just hearing that list of questions make you nervous? If it does, that's probably a good sign that you don't have enough confidence in yourself yet.

And hey, that's not all they're wondering. They have a deep down worry that they aren't letting you know about...

Can they trust you with a whole lot of their hard-earned money?

I hope you noticed the very, very important word in that sentence. Nope, I'm not talking about money...

I'M TALKING ABOUT TRUST.

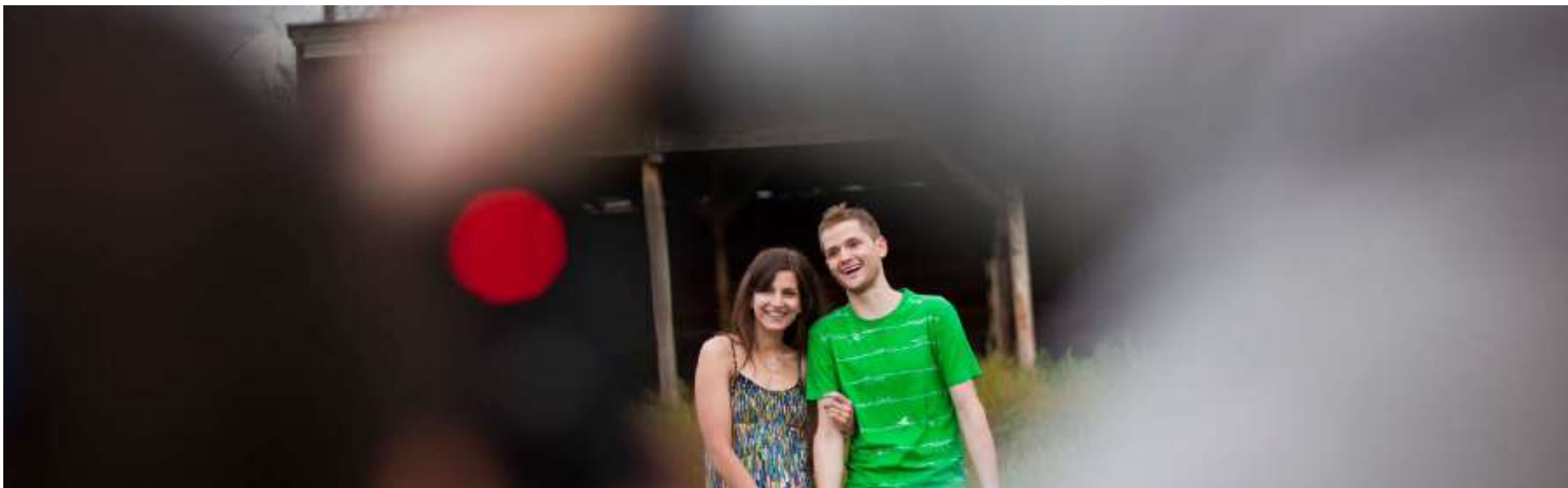
Great client relationships are built around trust. You want your clients to believe in you.

But how can they believe in you if you don't absolutely totally believe in yourself?

You need confidence.

Believing in yourself, your skills, and your value is one of the best booking techniques possible. It's honest. It's genuine. It's a direct reflection of your passion and excitement for what you do.

Doesn't that sound like a truly fun way to book clients?



SHOOTING YOUR CLIENTS

DURING A SHOOT YOUR CONFIDENCE IS PUT TO THE SUPREME TEST.

There is no time when it's more important, and no time when it's more difficult.

You are in complete control and all eyes are on you. Not only do you need to stay confident and relaxed yourself, but it's also up to you to make your clients feel relaxed.

It's a big job. Really big.

YOU SEE, A CONFIDENT PHOTOGRAPHER PUTS THEIR SUBJECTS AT EASE.

And that's critical. Having your photo taken is a stressful experience for many people, and unless the photographer acts in a way to ease that stress, the photos will not be good.

Yep, it's that simple. *Stressed people do not make for good photos.*

Clients need to feel comfortable enough to open up and be themselves for you to create truly great images of them. And to do that, they need to trust you.

There's that trust word again. It just keeps sneaking in, doesn't it? But here it's absolutely critical. Your clients need to trust that you are going to take care of them, photographically speaking.

Ready for another thought experiment? Of course you are.

Imagine yourself on the other side of the camera. In your clients' shoes.

Actually, hold on. You can do me one better. Get photographed yourself, in a full session, the same way your clients do. If you really want to understand what your subjects go through, and know what to do to make the experience a great one, this is a must. If you haven't had it done before, write it down on your to-do list right now.

I'm not joking. This is absolutely critical if you really want to be a great photographer of people. You must first be a great understander of people.



BUT, SINCE I KNOW THAT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU TO SET THAT UP, WE'LL CONTINUE WITH OUR THOUGHT EXPERIMENT FOR NOW.

Promise me you'll do that though, ok? Cool.

Alright, so, you're being photographed. But the photographer doesn't have any confidence. He's fiddling with his equipment, and seems unsure of what to do. Or maybe she's hesitant in the directions she gives you. Or maybe it's as simple as the fact that she isn't talking very much with you.

Whatever the case, I'm sure you can imagine that you, as the subject, would feel quite uncomfortable. You'd start thinking "This guy doesn't know what he's doing. These photos aren't going to turn out very well."

Yikes. That's the absolute last thing you could ever want your client to think during a shoot! Am I right??

But confidence is funny that way. Vince Lombardi, one of the best known football coaches of all time, described it perfectly when he said this...

“ CONFIDENCE IS CONTAGIOUS.

SO IS LACK OF CONFIDENCE.

VINCE LOMBARDI

WANT YOUR CLIENTS TO BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR SKILLS? THEN BE CONFIDENT IN YOURSELF.

They'll relax, open up, and be genuinely excited about what you're doing. That's the recipe for exceptional portraits. But, fail to show that confidence, and they'll have feelings of doubt and worry creeping into their minds. It's a downward spiral from there, my friend.

There's a second reason why confidence is so important during a shoot. And it's pretty simple.

If you are confident, you are going to take better images. Straight up.

You'll be comfortable with what you're doing, and have more mental energy to focus on finding something exceptional to photograph. But if you're stuck doubting yourself, and wasting precious thought power on worrying, you just won't be able to create something awesome.

I don't really have to drive that point home, do I? We all want to create awesome images. Confidence is a critical part of doing that.



SELLING YOUR WORK

OH, SALES. THE PERENNIAL BANE OF THE ARTIST.

I doubt this is going to come as much of a surprise by this point in the book, but, believe it or not, one of the fundamentals of sales is confidence.

Now, I'm not going to pretend that great sales are as simple as having more confidence. It takes a lot of learning and practice to really get a handle on charging properly for your art. But I will tell you that when you have confidence, sales can be a lot more successful and enjoyable. Yes. Enjoyable.

What I'm specifically talking about is confidence in the value of what you're selling. You need to believe that what you are offering is worth the price tag you've attached to it.

Why is this belief so important? Do you know what I'm going to say?

TRUST. IT'S ALL ABOUT TRUST.

Your clients are looking to trust you to capture moments, and present them in a beautiful way. If you prove to them that you can do that, they'll support you. With their money.

The vast majority of that proof will come simply from your own confidence in your abilities. Yes, things like a great portfolio and great branding are important. But I will argue that the confidence you display is just as important as the images you present.

It's simple. You're the photographer. You're the expert in these matters of photographic art. Convince them that you will do a great job, and they'll believe you.

This puts a lot of responsibility on you. I won't joke around about that. You need to deliver on your promises. But, after you work your butt off, pour your heart into it, and deliver, you'll have some very happy clients on your hands who are thrilled to invest in your photos.

They'll believe in the value of your work precisely when you do.



PURSUING YOUR PHOTO DREAMS

BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER IS NOT AN EASY TASK.

It takes a lot of work, and a lot of risk. This is not an arena for the faint of heart.

Does that mean that if you aren't confident you shouldn't become a pro? Absolutely not.

Shall we have another quote to elegantly illustrate my next point?

“ IT’S NOT HOW GOOD YOU ARE, IT’S HOW GOOD YOU
WANT TO BE.

PAUL ARDEN

JUST BECAUSE YOU AREN'T CONFIDENT NOW, DOESN'T
MEAN THAT YOU CAN'T BECOME CONFIDENT.

But you must understand that unless you take the steps toward
gaining that confidence, you will likely never find the success you
are looking for.

So, my dear friend (look at how close we've become already!),
please read on. There's much more to understand about this
majestic creature we call confidence. But have hope!

There is action you can take right away to begin to slay the drag-
ons of doubt and shyness, and take your rightful place as Ruler
of the Land of Awesome Photography!



PHOTOGRAPHING FRIENDS + FAMILY

THIS IS WHERE CONFIDENCE BECOMES IMPORTANT EVEN IF YOU'RE A HOBBYIST.

Even if you're a hobbyist and have no intentions of selling your work or dealing with clients, confidence will make a big difference in your images.

But wait pros, don't go away. You should absolutely be photographing your friends, family and daily life as well. No excuses. That stuff is important.

So, why would confidence matter here? They are your friends and family, after all. You don't need to sell them anything, and they (hopefully) already like you. It should be easy right?

WELL, IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE ME, YOU'LL KNOW THAT'S NOT ALWAYS THE CASE.

I actually feel more awkward shooting people I've known for a long time. They know me in roles other than "photographer", and I worry that hopping around with a big camera might look silly to them.

No one said shyness is logical.

Luckily for us, confidence is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Act like the people around you should respect the fact that you're enthusiastically photographing daily life, and they will.

Though they might comment at first, and maybe even joke around that you're the paparazzi, just keep at it. Keep shooting. Smile when they joke, and then shoot some more. Soon enough they'll realize that this is something worthwhile, simply by your act of doing it. They'll start to forget about it, and become comfortable with you always shooting. And when they're comfortable, you'll become more comfortable as well.

That is majorly exciting! See, once you have that balance with your friends and family, you'll create better images of them. Guaranteed.

It takes a bit of breaking out of your comfort zone, as you'll be interacting with them in a way you never have before. But do it anyway, because it's completely worth it. And not just because it's important to document your life (which we really think it is)...



IT CAN ALSO RESULT IN THE BEST WORK YOU'VE EVER CREATED.

In my career as a professional photographer I genuinely believe I've created some of my best images when I've focused on shooting the people in my own life.

Those shoots are sometimes the most nerve-wracking of all, and I worry about them for months. But, in the end, they have provided some of the most profound and intense photographic experiences of all.

Confidence is awesome.



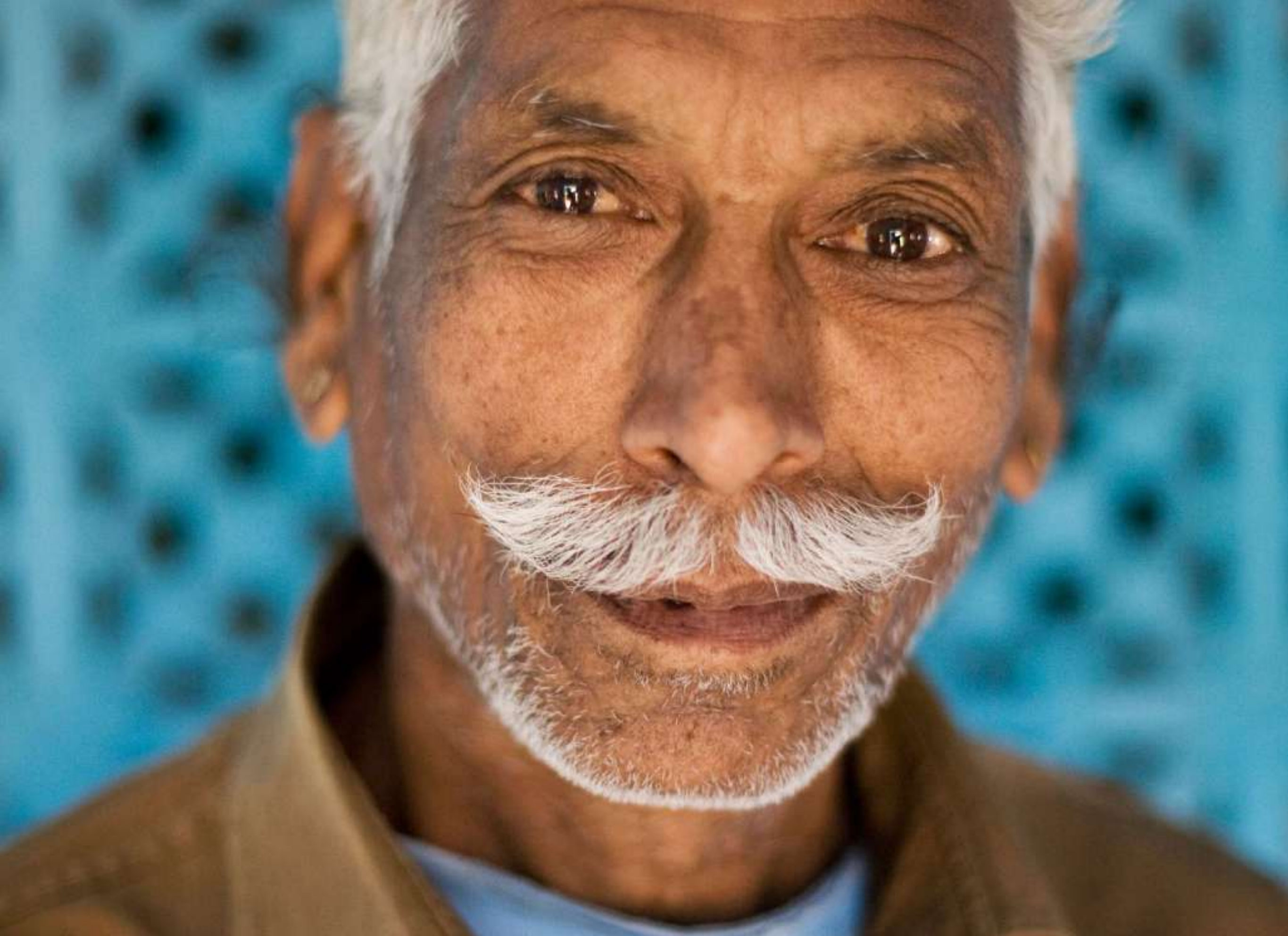
SHOOTING WHILE YOU TRAVEL

I SEE SOMETHING ODD WHEN I LOOK AT A LOT OF TRAVEL PHOTOS. I SEE CITIES WITHOUT PEOPLE. IT'S SO STRANGE...

I suspect the problem isn't a lack of humans. Or the fact that flowers and buildings are simply far more interesting. I suspect that it has something to do with that pesky lack of confidence we've been talking about.

Here's the thing. People are almost everywhere when you travel. Unless you're going crazy remote, the countries you're visiting are interesting because of the folks that live there.

Don't believe me? Who makes the food you enjoy when you go on a culinary adventure? How about the art you discover as you search for beauty? Those magnificent buildings you explore?



YEP. PEOPLE MADE ALL OF THOSE THINGS. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT??

The people of a culture are just as essential to the story as the products of their creation.

They should be equally captured when you travel and photograph your experience.

In reality, this is much easier said than done.

Consider the fact that you're in a place where nothing is familiar, add some language barriers into the mix, and you have yourself a pretty terrifying situation for a shy photographer. But don't fear! You can find the confidence to bust down those barriers, and start creating travel images that reflect the true nature of the places you visit.

How? Well, you have to read on for those secrets! Keep at it. You're an all-star.

What Is Confidence + Why Isn't It Enough?

HERE'S THE TRICKY THING ABOUT CONFIDENCE.

It's very easy to describe, and yet can be maddeningly difficult to attain.

Confidence is a belief in yourself and your abilities.

It is the freedom from doubt.

And, like I've been saying this whole time, it is essential to real success. Luckily confidence is a learned skill. Anyone can become confident. Some may have an easier time than others, but in the end we can all get there.

But just feeling confident is only half the battle. You need to act as well. And to act you need something more...

YOU NEED COURAGE.

Courage is acting on your confidence and bravely chasing down your dreams.

Well, I'll tell you that I have been scared many times in my career. Downright terrified. And I know I'm not alone when I feel that way. At times like that I like to look at the great thinkers before me, and hope that they have some insight.

Mark Twain said something that has helped me keep going forward in those moments of uncertainty...

“Courage is not the lack of fear. It is acting in spite of it.”

What more can I say than that? You want to succeed? Push past the fear.

What Is Shyness?

IT'S JUST AS SIMPLE AS CONFIDENCE, AND JUST AS TRICKSY.

Shyness is feeling uncomfortable, self-conscious, nervous or awkward around people.

Those are a lot of ways to say that it is *fear*.

It's a fear of rejection. We worry that people won't like us. We worry that we'll say something embarrassing. We worry that people won't believe in what we're doing.

It's a fear of failure. We worry that we won't know what to do in the middle of the shoot. We worry that we won't get any good photos. We worry that we won't book any clients. And we worry that we'll fail as a photographer.

Man. It sucks to feel that way. Trust me, I know each and every one of those feelings personally. And they definitely are not awesome.

Are you ready for the good news? Yep. It's time to talk about the techniques you can use to start boosting your confidence right away, and telling your shyness to scram! Let's go!

Boosting Confidence During A Shoot

LET'S KICK IT OFF WITH THE SHOOT.

These are immediate actions you can take to start feeling more confident. That's my favourite thing about this stuff, it really starts working instantly.

First off, I'll note that this is a bit of a "fake it until you make it" scenario. You need to act confident, even if you're shaking in your booties.

Diane Arbus had a slightly more powerful way to say it:

"Regardless of how you feel inside, always try to look like a winner. Even if you are behind, a sustained look of control and confidence can give you a mental edge that results in victory."

That's good news! Simply by acting confident you can succeed. Then, as a result, you'll truly feel confident. It's cyclical.

So now let's talk about these nifty tricks and techniques that help you act confident...

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

THIS SIMPLE ACT CAN DO MORE TO BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE THAN ANY OTHER TRICK.

Just grab some friends, get out there, and practice shooting them.

I did three full shoots like this before I ever considered shooting clients. I made all my big mistakes with people who would understand and not sue me. Do this with any type of shoot and you'll be mega confident when it's time for the real deal.

PRE-SCOUT YOUR LOCATION

VISIT YOUR LOCATION BEFORE YOUR SESSION TO FEEL CALM AND IN CONTROL WHEN YOU'RE ACTUALLY SHOOTING.

The best way to do this is to go at the same time of day as when the session will occur, so you have the best understanding of what the light will be like. And walk—don't drive. Go slow, and take the time to really look around you.

This won't always be possible, but whenever you have a chance to do this you'll see that will really help your confidence. And your images will benefit as a result!



PLAN A ROUTE

WHEN YOU'RE PRE-SCOUTING YOUR LOCATION, CHOOSE A SPECIFIC ROUTE TO FOLLOW.

And I mean specific. Know where you'll start, where you'll go next, and maybe even some poses you'd like to try at each spot.

Am I saying that you need to follow this route exactly? Of course not.

When you shoot you should follow your instincts, and allow inspiration and creativity to guide you. But, if you have a route, you'll won't find yourself hesitating on what to do. You will confidently decide where you'll shoot next, and never have to worry about the pressure of needing to make something up on the spot.

REHEARSE THEIR NAMES

I'M ABSOLUTELY DREADFUL AT REMEMBERING NAMES. WHEN I DON'T TRY.

But, if I make a concentrated effort to remember a name, it's actually quite easy. You just need to practice.

Before a shoot check your client's file, and make sure you know the names of every person you'll be shooting. If you can't remember someone's name in the middle of the session you will start freaking out and lose focus. There goes your confidence out the window. You need to have those names locked up.

Now, this is easy for portrait sessions with just a few people, but a bit harder for large wedding parties. If you try, though, and even write their names on a piece of paper you keep in your pocket, they will absolutely appreciate the effort. Even if you stumble.

People care about their names. Always use them.

GET THERE EARLY

RUSHING TO BE ON TIME IS THE WORST WAY TO START OFF A PHOTO SHOOT.

It takes a considerable mental effort to regain your focus after stressing about being late. And if your clients are there already, and you have to jump into action from the moment you step out of the car? Yikes. That's really tough, even if you have a lot of experience.

Do yourself a huge favour, and aim to always arrive at a shoot at least 20 minutes early. If you are any later than that, you're late. Give yourself at least 5 minutes to quietly focus on the task ahead, and get your head in the right place.

You can also use the time to take one last walk around the location and make sure everything looks good. Then take a moment to just relax, breathe deep and get excited.

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE

GO INTO A SHOOT WITH A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE.

Understanding this will help focus your efforts while shooting. And, at the end, you will be confident that you've accomplished your goals. You'll walk away feeling great about the session.

This will be different for every shoot, and every photographer. How do you know what you need to achieve? Just ask yourself.

Why did the client want their photos taken? Where do they intend to put the final images? How many keepers are you looking to present? Are you going to need shots for an album? A wall print? What groupings do you need to shoot? And so on. Write out a list of the questions you need to ask yourself.

If you don't know what you need to achieve, how do you know when you're finished? And if you've done well? Not knowing those things can cause a lot of anxiety. Not cool.

ORGANIZE THE SHOOT

WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE, YOU CAN ORGANIZE YOUR SHOOT SO THAT YOU GET THOSE CRITICAL IMAGES AT THE START OF THE SESSION.

Getting your must-have shots first ensures that you won't forget, or have to rush at the end.

Once they're done you can relax, play, and get really creative knowing that you've already achieved your goal. This is when some of your best work will happen, so prepare yourself for awesomeness.



UNDERSTAND THE TECHNICAL STUFF

THIS IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST WAYS TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE YOUR CONFIDENCE.

You need to absolutely master the technical stuff to be truly confident in your skills.

For us that came from shooting in full Manual mode. It forced us to really understand what was going on with our camera. We were more confident because we knew that we were in control.

Study and learn and practice the technical stuff. It doesn't make a great photographer, but it's essential to being a great photographer. Know what I mean?

KEEP IT SIMPLE

AS MUCH FUN AS IT IS TO EXPERIMENT, IT CAN OFTEN CAUSE A LOT OF ANXIETY.

New techniques, tons of lenses, complex lighting systems, different cameras, or crazy locations are all awesome. But these things can do a lot to stress you out if you don't have complete confidence in your ability to pull it off perfectly.

When you keep things simple you are able to give your clients your full attention. You'll have the mental energy necessary to figure out how to make them feel comfortable. If you struggle with confidence, keep things simple until you build up the certainty that you can effectively shoot with anything, anywhere.

A confident photographer with a simple setup will always create better images than one with all the latest gadgets, and no idea how to use them.

DRESS WELL

DRESSING WELL IS ALWAYS A GREAT CONFIDENCE BOOSTER.

You'll want to be comfortable in what you're wearing, as you need to move and shoot, but be sure to be looking great. Take a shower, brush your teeth, and don't fear the iron.

You get bonus points if you consider your personal brand when you decide what to wear during your sessions.

ASK QUESTIONS

THIS WORKS BETTER THAN YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE.

Want great conversation? Ask great questions. It's really that simple.

People love when you are interested in them. You show that you care by asking questions. And a photographer that really cares is worth their weight in gold. The bonus is that it makes it much easier for you to focus on shooting when you don't have to do all the talking!

Just keep the conversation flowing with a list of questions. And yep, it can be an actual list that you ask everyone. Write it out for yourself if you are really shy. Doing this one simple thing makes all sessions infinitely more relaxing and interesting.

People are absolutely fascinating if you just take the time to find out!

PREPARE JOKES

HUMOR IS A GREAT WAY TO EASE TENSION AND CREATE A FUN ATMOSPHERE.

So look up a couple jokes and memorize them. It's that easy.

If you shoot with another person all the time they will just have to get used to hearing the same punch lines over and over. But, if they're nice, they'll pretend to laugh along anyway (Thanks, Rob.)

Entertaining people is tough, and if you try to be funny on the spot, you may accidentally say some rather embarrassing things. I'm not even going to mention my many examples...

So do a bit of prep work, and you'll feel far more confident that you can get that laugh when you need it.

SMILE

SO SIMPLE. SO EFFECTIVE.

Smile and the world smiles with you.

You'll automatically feel better (aren't smiles nifty that way?) and your clients will too.

HAVE FUN

NOT NECESSARILY AN EASY THING IF YOU'RE NERVOUS AND SHY.

But, the more you can work on ways to enjoy yourself during a shoot, and truly have fun, the more confident you'll become.

So get into it, enjoy the interaction with your clients, and remember that you have one of the most awesome jobs in the world.



KNOW THAT YOU'LL MAKE MISTAKES

YEP, YOU ARE DEFINITELY GOING TO MAKE SOME MISTAKES HERE AND THERE.

But you know what? It's not a big deal. You will live to shoot another day.

Mistakes are just learning experiences in hiding. Figure out what you can take from it, and move on.

And the best part? Most of the time your clients won't even know that you made a mistake! So don't start freaking out! Just stay calm, and keep shooting.

REVIEW

USE A POST-SHOOT REPORT CARD.

Especially when you're starting off, using post-shoot report cards can really help you pinpoint what you need to work on to improve your confidence.

There's a sample report card at the end of this book for you. Feel free to use that one, or create one of your own.

Whatever you use, review your shoots, and you'll see improvement in your work and increased confidence in yourself.

Boosting Confidence During Meetings

I'LL TELL YOU STRAIGHT UP THAT I USED TO BE TERRIFIED GOING INTO MEETINGS.
AND NAUSEOUS. AND SWEATY.

How on earth I booked clients in that state I'll never know.

Preparing yourself to be calm and confident in a meeting is one of the best things you can do to start booking more clients, and making more sales.

Here are the things I did to get over that sweatiness, and start enjoying myself in meetings.

PRACTICE

YEP, THAT PRACTICE STUFF AGAIN.

As ridiculous as it might sound, you should really practice a meeting before ever having one with a real client, especially if you're lacking confidence.

Get those friends of yours (you might need to bribe them for this one, it's not quite as fun as a photo shoot) and hold a mock meeting. If you're planning on doing sales sessions with your clients, practice one of those as well.

You'll be amazed at how unprepared you are to handle one of these if you've never done it before! What order should you do things in? What happens if they bring up tough questions? You'll figure out all the things you didn't even know you didn't know by practicing.

HAVE AN OUTLINE

THERE ARE A TON OF THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO DEAL WITH IN ANY MEETING, SO MAKE YOURSELF AN OUTLINE!

This is huge for feeling confident about how to handle your meetings. Simply write out the order you'd like to run the meeting in. Do you get drinks first? Then maybe you chat a bit. Next you ask a list of questions. Whatevskies.

Write it out. Heck, if you're really nervous put it on a cool clipboard and actually reference it during the meeting. Nothing wrong with that at all.

Eventually you'll have that sucker memorized, and you won't need it anymore. Think of it like training wheels.

When you feel like you might faint from nervousness, having an outline to look at will calm you down and you'll have the confidence necessary to control the meeting in just the way you want.

WRITE OUT THE IMPORTANT STUFF

THIS IS ALONG THE SAME LINE AS CREATING AN OUTLINE.

If there are important things that you need to communicate in your meeting, write it out beforehand. You don't want to try to remember all of that on top of trying to charm the people in front of you. Way too much work.

So write out the big ideas. The important questions. The “talking points” that describe why you're such an awesome photographer. Plan these out before meetings, not during.

LOOK GOOD + BE PREPARED

SAME DEAL AS WITH SHOOTING.

Dress nice. Brush your teeth. Clean up (I'm talking spotless) if you're having the meeting at home.

And be ready to go at least half an hour before the meeting. Rushing stresses you out, and zaps your confidence. And it's mega awkward if they show up early and you're not wearing pants...

SMILE + HAVE FUN

I SMILE SO MUCH DURING MEETINGS THAT MY CHEEKS HURT.

I'm not exaggerating.

Don't be the creepy person that smiles constantly without saying anything. That's weird.

But make sure to have fun, smile, and enjoy yourself. You'll feel more confident, and your clients will feel more comfortable.

MAKE EYE CONTACT

THIS CAN BE REALLY TOUGH FOR A SHY PERSON.

I used to have the hardest time making any eye contact at all. And that's a sure sign of a lack of confidence.

Look people in the eyes, and show that you're truly interested in what they're saying.

Don't stare though. That's creepy. Looking directly in someone's eyes and not looking away is a sign of aggression. And weirdo-ness. You have to move your point of focus. A general rule of thumb is to look at someone's eyes for 5 seconds, then look away briefly. You can look at other parts of their face, or off to the side. Then re-establish eye contact.

You can also try to match the amount of eye contact they're giving you so as to not make them uncomfortable.

This might sound hard to you, and if it's something you struggle with it will take practice. But the more you work at it, and push yourself to hold that contact even when you feel uncomfortable, you'll find your interactions with others will become more satisfying and engaging.

Soon enough you'll confidently hold eye contact, and show the world that you believe in what you're saying, and are truly interested in others. That's a super advantage.

ASK QUESTIONS

THE BEST WAY TO BE A MORE LIKEABLE PERSON.

Yep, it's my favourite trick again. Ask questions.

In meetings with clients you should always be listening way more than you are talking. This might come as a surprise, but your meetings are not about you. These meetings are about your clients, and figuring out what they want.

Once you've sorted that out, then you can tell them how you fill those wants. If you don't know what they want, how can you accurately show that you're the right shooter for them? Or recommend the right product?

So ask questions. Lots of questions. And be genuinely interested in the answers. That word genuine is very important. If you don't genuinely care about the clients you're talking to, you won't succeed. Simple.

REVIEW

REVIEWING YOUR PERFORMANCE AFTER A MEETING CAN HELP YOU PINPOINT WHAT YOU NEED TO WORK ON.

There's a sample report card at the end of this book, or you can make one yourself.

If you're struggling and feeling nervous this will help. Promise. Take control over your weaknesses, and work to improve on them. That's one of the best ways to gain confidence possible.

Boosting Confidence While Traveling

I WON'T PRETEND THAT THIS IS SIMPLE.

It takes practice, and a whole lot of pushing yourself outside your comfort zone. But the rewards are some of the most memorable travel photos you've ever created.

Once upon a time I was in India, walking along the Ganges. I saw a man with incredible long dreads, a bright red turban, and deep eyes. I wanted a photo. And I was terrified. It took about 5 minutes of walking around nearby to pump myself up, and then I went and asked. "Photo?" I took the shot, and that image has been one of the most popular photos we've ever created.

So the first lesson...



ASK

YOU CAN'T GET WHAT YOU DON'T ASK FOR.

Here's the key. What's the worst thing that can happen? They say no.

Not a big deal at all. Really. If someone says no, don't be upset. Smile, thank them anyway, and then continue on your way.

It's their right to say no, not your right to take the photo. Never forget that.

SMILE

I'M PRETTY KEEN ON SMILING, AREN'T I?

Well, it's for a good reason. When you approach someone to take their photo, the most important thing you can do is smile.

Here's the neat part: smiling is universal. You may travel in countries where you can't speak the language, but you can instantly break down that barrier with a genuine smile.

THANK THEM

YOU MUST, OF COURSE, SAY THANK YOU.

But if you can do more, that's better.

Remember, you are taking something from them when you take their photo, so work hard to show them you appreciate it.

Whenever we can, we give them a photo back, usually with our Fuji Instax. Or I make sure, at the very least, to show them the photo on the screen so they know what their image looked like.



LEARN A FEW IMPORTANT WORDS

ALWAYS LEARN TO SAY “THANK YOU” IN THE NATIVE TONGUE WHEREVER YOU GO.

That’s the first, and most important, phrase to know.

“Please” and “Help” are good ones too, but I think “Thank you” is the best.

You can learn to say “May I take your photo?” That’s a handy one. If I can’t remember it though, I just hold up my camera and say “Photo?”. That usually works.

I also try to learn “Beautiful” and “Handsome” so I can tell people why I want to take their photo.

BE GENUINELY INTERESTED

YEP, I CAN NEVER GIVE THIS ADVICE ENOUGH.

It's the best advice I've ever received, and will ever give.

These are real people, with real interests and real feelings. Consider that before you ever ask for a photo.

Spend some time getting to know them, without the camera. Show that you actually care about them. Do that, and you'll have a much easier time asking for that photo. And getting it.

Maintaining Confidence Over the Long Term

BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER IS A MAGICAL JOB.

You get to create your art for a living, and that's super cool. But any profession that requires you to put so much of yourself into the work can be a confidence hazard. It's easy to feel wonderfully confident one day, and then certain that you are the worst photographer of all time the next.

In order to survive the challenges of this profession you need to be able to keep your confidence level high over the long term. You need to believe in yourself as a shooter and work hard towards your goals day after day after day. You can't do that if you aren't confident.

But maintaining your confidence day to day can be difficult. More difficult than it has ever been, in fact. Thanks to the internet we have instant access to the images of every photographer in the world, and as a result we can easily think that we just plain suck.

Well, you don't. You're learning, like every single other photographer in the world is learning. So buck up, read on, and let's get chatting about ways to be a confident cat going forward into your career.



KNOW WHY YOU DO THIS

WE'LL START WITH ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS.

You need to know just why you are doing this. And by this, I mean, *why on earth are you a photographer??*

Don't you know that it's not a "real" job?

Don't you know that there is a lot of competition out there?

Don't you know that takes a ton of work to be successful?

Don't you know that no one wants to pay for professional photography anymore because they all have their own fancy cameras?

Don't you know that you won't have weekends anymore?

Don't you know that you won't make much money all winter?

Don't you know that you'll have to deal with crying brides and screaming babies?

Don't you know that you'll spend most of your time in front of a computer, not behind a camera?

Don't you know that you will have to learn things like bookkeeping and marketing and sales and customer relations?

IF YOU KNOW WHY YOU'RE DOING IT, NONE OF THAT WILL EVEN PHASE YOU.

Who cares if it's a lot of work? It's one of the most rewarding careers imaginable.

Your photographic raison d'être will be for you alone to find out. Unfortunately I can't tell you some magic phrase and everything will become clear. In fact, it might take you a while to really figure this out. It took us about 4 years. Honest.

You might even need to experiment with a few different genres of photography before you understand what fundamentally drives you to pick up a camera. But the sooner you try to work this out, the sooner you'll find that supreme confidence that comes with knowing why you do what you do.

This is going to be deep, mushy stuff.

If you do this for the money, well, you would be better off being a lawyer or accountant or something. They make a whole lot more money with the same amount of work.

If you've chosen to be a photographer, there is a deep reason. Find it. Don't be afraid to really dive into yourself and think.

This type of confidence is what will get you through those really tough times. The times where you get so low that you wonder if it's really worth all the effort. You'll remember your reason, and know exactly why it is.

STUDY YOUR WORK

WITH ALL THAT MUSHY STUFF OUT OF THE WAY, LET'S GET PRACTICAL.

It's now time to talk about how you can start improving your long term confidence right away.

First off, you need to study your own work. And I don't mean that you look at it while you are sorting or editing for a client. I mean you study it. Spend time looking at your photos with the sole purpose of analyzing them.

Be highly critical.

Look at every image, and think not only about what makes it good, but about what you could have done to make it better.

YOU NEED TO GET USED TO THIS EXERCISE.

It's not particularly fun when you realize all the mistakes you made (because you absolutely will have made some). But it's essential.

A good time to do this is right after a shoot, while you still have the experience fresh in your mind. If you notice certain images as being great or poor, you will be able to make connections to the possible causes. Wait too long and you might forget the details of what happened, and you'll lose your ability to determine cause and effect.

Wondering why this is all so important? Read on partner, these next points are important ones.



KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

EVERY SINGLE PHOTOGRAPHER IN THE WORLD HAS STRENGTHS. GUARANTEED.

As a result of your study, you will start to see the things that you are good at. Maybe you're really great at making your subjects feel comfortable, so they have natural expressions. Maybe you're a whiz with interesting compositions.

Figure out what your strengths are, and write them down. Not only will this give you a confidence boost, because you'll realize that you really are good at something (and I promise that you are), but you'll also be able to start thinking of ways to play on those strengths.

AS PHOTOGRAPHERS WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT ABILITIES, AND NOT ONE OF US IS PERFECT AT EVERYTHING.

This is awesome news, because it means there will be variety in the industry. The more you can focus on what you do well, and build that into your business, the more you'll stand out and succeed.

The key here is that when you are determining your strengths you have to be realistic. False confidence is even worse than weak confidence for an artist. If you think you're the cat's pyjamas you won't see any reason to improve, and you're going to stagnate. Yuck.

Don't worry though, we're going to talk about how to avoid false confidence. But first, we need to do something painful, but essential.

KNOW YOUR WEAKNESSES

PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWING YOUR STRENGTHS IS BEING INTIMATELY AWARE OF YOUR WEAKNESSES.

That seems like a surefire recipe for destroyed confidence. I mean, we all have weaknesses, and some of those are biggies. Wouldn't spending time thinking about them make us want to crawl into bed and never come out?

Perhaps some days it would. I know I've had those days. Have I ever had those days...

But overall, *knowing your weaknesses is a key to confidence*. Really.

HERE'S THE DEAL.

Once you identify a weakness, you can put your energy towards improving on it. If you know that you aren't the greatest at posing, and it's stressing you out, just spend a few hours reading up on it! Study, prepare, and focus on it during your next shoot. Chances are you'll make dramatic improvements very quickly if you only know what you need to focus on.

When you can articulate your weaknesses, they no longer seem like things holding you back.

Instead, they are just areas to work on. The more weaknesses that you destroy through learning and practice, the more you'll feel in control of your work and your business. And that's a very big element of confidence.



NEVER STOP LEARNING. EVER.

THE FACT THAT YOU'RE HERE RIGHT NOW, READING THIS EPIC E-BOOK, SHOWS THAT YOU ARE DEDICATED TO LEARNING, AND I SALUTE YOU!

But it's very important for every photographer to realize that learning never never never ends. Did you get that? It NEVER ends.

Photography is a life-long career and passion. If you can dedicate yourself to learning and improving throughout that whole time, can you just imagine how far you can go? Holy smokes! The possibilities are incredible!

THE BONUS?

The more you learn the more confident you'll become. You'll have a clearer vision of where you are, where you want to go, and how to get there. It's all well and good to take an incredible photo by chance, but careers aren't built on single images. They are built on being able to consistently produce excellence.

Through continued learning you'll begin to create a large mental library of photographic knowledge. You'll easily be able to see why it is an incredible photo, and how you can achieve that incredibleness again. Or you'll see the flaws in your images, and know how to improve.

Confidence is not about being perfect. It's about knowing where you are, and that what you're doing is taking you somewhere.



SHOOT PERSONAL WORK

SHOOTING FOR YOURSELF IS ABSOLUTELY POSITIVELY 100% CRITICAL TO CONFIDENCE BUILDING.

Here's the thing. When you shoot for a client you are automatically constrained. There is a purpose you need to achieve, and that will change the way you approach things. This isn't bad, but it will prevent you from being absolutely free to experiment and explore.

Through experimenting, exploring and being completely unafraid to make mistakes, you will begin to find your personal vision that makes your work unique.

THAT'S WHEN THINGS GET FUN.

Once you start to tap into that personal store of inspiration and creativity, you'll become confident in knowing that you are creating art.

At that point it doesn't really matter who likes it, if you get 20 comments on the post, or if someone actually pays for it. Who cares?

You created art, completely by yourself, and it was unique and incredible.

Is there anything more confidence boosting than that?

BE UNIQUE. AVOID TRENDS.

TRENDS ARE LIKE TORNADOES.

They sweep through the industry at a rapid speed, changing the landscape, and, ultimately, causing some destruction.

These trend-tornadoes move extra fast these days, thanks to blogs, Twitter and Facebook. We're constantly exposed to photographers from across the globe, and when the rockstars of the industry all are doing one thing, it almost seems like a proven recipe for success. I mean, they're doing so well! Won't doing the same thing make you successful too?

Here's the problem. Trends seem awesome. They're popular, fun and simple. It's far easier to just follow a trend than to blaze your own trail. It seems like a guaranteed path.

But the longer you follow a trend the further you get pulled from your unique style.

It doesn't seem to matter much at the time. People will love your work because it's "in style"...

THE PROBLEM WITH TRENDS IS THAT THEY, BY THEIR NATURE, CHANGE.

If your work is built on the latest and greatest trend, and the winds change, suddenly you're left behind. And then what? Do you try to follow the new trend of the next photographer du jour? Do you stick with the old trend, and risk being considered passé?

If you follow trends your work won't have a strong footing, and you can quickly be left directionless. How can you have any confidence in yourself in that situation?

Avoid the trends. Stay true to your unique style. If you're studying your own images, and committing yourself to constant learning, you are sure to develop a body of work that is amazing in its own right.

It will be reflective of you, not the latest fad.



AVOID AN EXTERNAL LOCUS OF APPROVAL

NOW I'M GOING TO THROW AROUND SOME BIG WORDS.

But they are important ones.

Right now we exist in a world filled with blog comments, features, Facebook friends and likes, Twitter followers, replies, contests, awards, Top 10 lists, interviews, and about a million other things designed to give people attention.

This might seem like it would be great for confidence. Wrong!

WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU START TO CARE A LOT ABOUT THOSE THINGS?

Well, you move your locus of approval to external sources. That means you need other people to approve of what you do in order for you to feel good about it. And yourself. That's bad.

Your feelings of happiness and success should come from inside. They should depend on whether you personally feel you did a good job. If you start to need at least 10 blog comments before you feel like it was a good shoot, or get upset because no one “Liked” that image you put up, you're walking a dangerous path.

You are no longer in control of your confidence, and are relying on others to make you feel assured of your worth.

Stop caring how many comments you have, or Facebook friends, or whatever. Focus on yourself and your clients, and let the rest of it just happen, but not affect you.

It's definitely not an easy thing to do, as we all enjoy the approval and positive attention of others! But the more you can rely on yourself to determine what was good or bad work, the more you'll be able to maintain confidence in yourself.



TREAD CAREFULLY ON BLOGS, TWITTER + FACEBOOK

THE SOCIAL INTERNET IS LOVELY.

You can keep in touch with your friends, connect with photographers from around the world, and access unlimited amounts of advice and inspiration.

But the social internet is also a very strange place. A place where nothing is quite as it seems...

YOU SEE, BLOGS AND TWITTER ACCOUNTS AND FACEBOOK PAGES ARE A HIGHLIGHTS REEL.

People will show you their best work, tell you when they booked an exciting job, or share when someone said something great about them.

They don't tell you when they shot a terrible image, or had an unhappy client, or just had a bad day. They don't tell you if they're struggling to make ends meet, or having a hard time bringing in new clients.

And yet we don't realize this. We read the blogs and Twitter streams of our favourite photographer and think they are bullet-proof.

It's not that they are being dishonest. Blogs and Twitter are fantastic marketing tools, and using them to promote your business is smart. But when you are looking at those things as another photographer, and not as a client, it's easy to have an unrealistic perception of their success.

And that makes you feel bad about yourself! Because you see your mistakes and your terrible photos; you live through those tough days, and have to deal with those unhappy clients.

In the end you see a big disconnect between what your favourite photographer shares with the world, and your own personal experience.. That gap can be a huge confidence killer.

WHAT'S THE KEY TO OVERCOMING THIS?

Well, understanding the situation is a big first step. If you realize that they have gone through tough times, made mistakes, and struggled, you'll realize that you aren't alone in your challenges.

The second step is to understand why you're visiting that blog. If you are going for inspiration, you should be taking notes. Literally. Study what they do, figure out *why* you like it, and analyze. If you're going to "life stalk" (that is, to see what they're up to in a "reality TV" sort of sense) then be honest with yourself about it. Know that you might be left feeling disappointed in yourself if they keep talking about their success, and you are having trouble finding yours.

When I started to find that certain blogs or Twitter accounts were confidence killers for me, and that I would feel down after reading them, I just stopped checking them. I felt so much better instantly.

Being aware of your own confidence killing triggers will help you out a lot. You can make sure you spend your time in places that make you feel empowered to do better, rather than feeling upset that you don't live up to someone else's highlights reel.



VOLUNTEER

FIND A WAY TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY WITH YOUR UNIQUE TALENTS AS A PHOTOGRAPHER.

Trust me, you can find a way to do it. You'll quickly realize that what you do is very valuable and highly in demand. You'll help others, foster goodwill, make amazing connections, and feel great. All things that help your confidence.

Helping others while helping yourself? Good deal.

HAVE A SUPPORT NETWORK

AS MUCH AS PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE CONNECTED TO THEIR WORK, WE MUST REALIZE THAT WE ARE NOT WHAT WE DO.

We are not our portfolios or our businesses. We are individuals outside of that, and are valuable regardless of our photographic success.

Having a group of friends who will love you, no matter what, is vital to your confidence. They will help you realize your inherent worth. These are the people who care about the parts of you that have nothing to do with photography. They will support you whether you are successful or not.

If you know that, failure no longer matters. You'll still have wonderful friends, and that's so much more valuable than anything else.

UNDERSTAND JUST HOW IMPORTANT YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK IS,
AND TREAT THEM ACCORDINGLY.

It's all too easy to get caught up in work, and neglect your friends. We've all done it, and it's not a good thing at all. Especially when you realize just how crucial they are to your confidence.

Some of your support network will probably be made up of other photographers. That's wonderful, since they will understand a lot of what you're going through. They can sympathize, provide advice, and a real sense of camaraderie.

But don't be afraid to befriend those outside the industry. In fact, it might just be necessary. You'll need someone to bring you back into the world where f-stops and golden light aren't necessarily thrilling dinner topics.

The Big Ideas Behind Confidence

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT A LOT OF SPECIFIC THINGS YOU CAN START DOING RIGHT AWAY TO BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE.

That's all lovely stuff, and I hope you start implementing some of those techniques right away!

But, to finish this book up, let's talk about some of the big ideas about confidence. There is no trick to making these things happen. They are all part of a general outlook on life and business.

Heavy. But in a really really good way. Read on.

GENUINELY CARE

THIS HAS BECOME A MANTRA OF MINE, AND FOR GOOD REASON.

It all came about after I read “How to Win Friends and Influence People”. That small book with the silly sounding title changed my whole outlook on life.

It’s just another way to state the Golden Rule. There’s a reason it’s the Golden Rule and not the Copper Rule or something. It’s valuable information.

Treat people well. Really well. Care about every person you meet. The more you do that, the more you enjoy life, business, work, play, and everything in between. Honestly.

If you’d like to hear me talk a whole lot more about this idea, and the book, and how they relate to photography, check out my [Book Report on Photography Concentrate](#). But do that later, ok? Let’s keep talking about this confidence stuff!

BE POSITIVE

IT'S SIMPLE. BE POSITIVE.

It's all too easy to get negative about yourself, and that will absolutely destroy your confidence.

So focus on what you do well. Understand your weaknesses as temporary. Surround yourself with positive people. Give positive energy to those around you.

Make a mistake? Instead of dwelling on it, put your energy towards figuring out how to avoid making it in the future. Getting stuck on a problem? Know that you *will* eventually solve it, take a break, and come back when you're feeling positive that you can conquer it.

When it comes to others, be careful. It's so easy to get into negative places, and bash on other photographers for their work, their approach to business, or their style. Whatever. What does that achieve? Nothing at all. In fact, it puts negativity into yourself, and that negativity spreads into other areas. Don't do it.

Focus on the positive, remove negativity from your life, and you'll be more confident in yourself, and a more attractive person in general. Win win win.

TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME

THIS IS ONE THAT I HAVE TO REPEAT TO MYSELF ALL THE TIME.

In fact I've made a Mary Poppins-esque song out of it. No, I won't sing it to you. But I'll tell you about the idea.

That darn internet. It seems to make life better and worse simultaneously. We can achieve so much more than ever before with it, but we also can see how much others achieve, and feel poorly about our own meagre efforts.

Don't feel that way! Seriously! Everyone started at the beginning. And then they took it one step at a time until they got to where they are now.

You can get to anywhere you want if you just take it one step at a time. Be patient. Don't rush.

Enjoy the ride.

TAKE ACTION

YOU KNOW THOSE PEOPLE OUT THERE DOING AWESOME THINGS THAT YOU WISH YOU WERE DOING? KNOW HOW THEY GOT THERE?

Simple. They took action. They got up and did something. They made decisions.

If you want to change your life, your job, your business, or your photography, you have to act. Sitting around talking about it makes you feel good, because it feels like you're acting. But you're not.

Even if you start off with small actions, take action. Always think of ways to take another step towards that goal by acting.

Act. Acting. Action. Have I used those words enough now that you are ready to take action?

KNOW THAT FAILURE IS OK

ONCE YOU TAKE ACTION, YOU CAN RUN INTO FAILURES AND MISTAKES.

And those are a couple of the biggest confidence killers out there. They can be so scary that they even prevent you from acting at all. Don't let them do that! Even when they do happen (and they will) it's not a big deal. They happen to everyone. The successful ones are simply the ones who keep going.

See, lots of people give up after a failure or a mistake. It's easy to look at them as proof that we can't do something.

False!

Failures and mistakes are simply learning experiences in disguise. As soon as you see them as such, the fear just melts away. Next time you make a mistake or fail in some way, know that it's ok. Every single person in history does the exact same thing. We're human. We mess up. Let's get over it, and move forward.

That's the key. Moving forward. Don't let the mistake paralyze you. Learn from it, figure out how you can take that blip and use the information to make yourself stronger. Then move forward and keep working towards your goal.

YOU HAVE IT IN YOU

ONE OF OUR ABSOLUTE FAVOURITE BEATLES SONGS IS CALLED
“WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU”.

It’s very “out there” but has incredible lyrics. One of my favourites is this:

Try to realize it’s all within yourself

No one else can make you change

- George Harrison

This is up to you. If you want to make a change, you’re the only one who can do it.

But this is the best part. You have everything within you that you need to achieve your dreams. You don’t need to “get” anything. It’s all in you, right now.

DREAM BIG

YOU WILL ONLY ACHIEVE AS MUCH AS YOU INTEND TO.

If you want to change the world, you can. Just intend to.

So, the question is, how big do you want to go? *How much success would you like?*

If you feel yourself holding back on those dreams, and trying to be realistic, stop. These are dreams. They are supposed to be big.

So dream big. Imagine life precisely as you wish it. Then start working towards that. It's definitely not going to happen overnight, so don't expect that. But don't be afraid to aim high.

Shall we have a quote?

“ IF YOU CAN IMAGINE IT, YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT;
IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN BECOME IT.

WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

BE HAPPY

AND FINALLY, BE HAPPY.

Life is lovely, if you want it to be. As a photographer you have a huge advantage in this realm. You can feel pure joy from simply seeing the light on a building, the colour of a flower, or the perfect alignment of cars in the street.

Beauty is everywhere. Appreciate it, photograph it, and be happy that you get to see it.

You also get to spend time with very cool people. Take the time to appreciate their company, and be happy for it.

Best of all, you get to spend your life photographing! *What could be happier than that?*

Staying Humble

NOW THAT I'VE GONE AND MADE YOU A SUPREMELY CONFIDENT PERSON, LET'S STEP BACK AND TALK ABOUT BEING HUMBLE.

As I mentioned earlier, false confidence is worse than weak confidence. It stagnates your work, and makes you a rather unpleasant person to be around.

So be humble. Always.

How do you do that? Well, this one is incredibly simple.

REGARDING PHOTOGRAPHY

Study the masters. Anyone who looks at the work of Cartier-Bresson or Avedon should have no problem understanding that they are still far from greatness. Nothing is more humbling than seeing the art of someone who literally dedicated their entire life to creating beauty.

REGARDING OTHERS

Know that everyone you ever meet has something they can teach you. Everyone. That's a very humbling idea. None of us are perfect, or know everything. Wisdom often comes from the most unexpected places.

If you'll allow it, I have one last quote for you. I spent 4 years in University, and, ironically, consider this to be the absolute most important thing I learned. It's a quote from Socrates.

“ THE ONLY REAL WISDOM IS KNOWING
YOU KNOW NOTHING

SOCRATES

WE'RE ALL JUST LEARNING IN THIS BIG CRAZY
GAME CALLED LIFE.

None of us really knows much for certain. But when you realize that you're a student of everything, and search for as much knowledge and understanding as you can, you'll be wise, while remaining eternally humble.

Final Thoughts

IF YOU'VE REACHED THE END HERE, I HAVE TO GIVE YOU A BIG E-HUG, AND A THANK YOU.

This was a long one, and we ended things off on a pretty deep philosophical level. But here's the thing. This confidence stuff is hefty. It's not easy, not foolproof, and forever in flux.

But the more we can try to learn, help others, and just *care*, well, I think we all have a super chance of living out our dreams.

So go forward with confidence, my friend. You have skills, you have strengths, and your photography is valuable.

Believe it.



Share + Care

THIS E-BOOK IS FREE FOR A REASON.

We genuinely hope that you enjoyed this e-book, and that you feel more confident going forward with your photography! That will make us extremely happy. You're the reason we do this.

We really want to help a lot of photographers with this book. But we need your help!

If you know anyone who would find this information useful, please help us spread the word!

Email the link to your friends, Facebook Like the main book page, and tweet about it!

Thank you :)



Click here to Tweet now!

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WANT TO GET SUPER PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS?

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Post Shoot Report Card

CLIENTS: _____

NOTES:

DATE: _____

SHOOT TYPE: _____

OVERALL IMPRESSION OF SHOOT:

THINGS THAT WENT WELL:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

IDEAS FOR FUTURE SHOOT:

Post Meeting Report Card

CLIENTS: _____

NOTES:

DATE: _____

SALE DETAILS: _____

OVERALL IMPRESSION OF MEETING:

THINGS THAT WENT WELL:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

THOUGHTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

Confidence Worksheets

HOW WILL CONFIDENCE HELP YOU AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

WHY ARE YOU SHY?

WHY ARE YOU A PHOTOGRAPHER?

Confidence Worksheets

WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

HOW CAN YOU FOCUS ON THOSE TO IMPROVE YOUR WORK OR YOUR BUSINESS?

WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

Confidence Worksheets

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN TO ELIMINATE THOSE WEAKNESSES?

WHAT KIND OF WORK WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHOOT FOR ONLY YOURSELF?

WHAT MAKES YOU AND YOUR WORK UNIQUE?

Confidence Worksheets

WHAT IS YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC DREAM?

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE WITH YOUR WORK/BUSINESS IN ONE YEAR? FIVE YEARS? TEN YEARS?

WHAT ACTION CAN YOU TAKE RIGHT NOW TO START WORKING TOWARDS THAT?
