

John Lehman

# FROM HOW TO WOW!

Outdoor  
Portrait Photography



# WHY I PHOTOGRAPH PEOPLE

- ✘ Documenting family events and the important people in life
- ✘ The Human Element makes photography meaningful to me.
- ✘ People have been the primary focus of my photos for over 50 years.





# THINGS TO PONDER

- ✘ Know where you want to start, you don't need to know where you will finish.
  - + Take the shots you need first, then take the ones you want, and also take the ones the model wants.



# THE PICTURE YOU NEED TO TAKE





# THE PICTURE THEY WANT YOU TO TAKE



# MORE THINGS TO PONDER

- ✘ Photography is about vision-You can take a great picture with any device, if you **see** it.
- ✘ “The act of seeing is the moment of fun”
  - Jay Maisel
- ✘ Use the equipment you have, it’s usually enough(I am not good at following this one)—improvise.
- ✘ Equipment serves the vision. ***Learn to run your equipment and then learn to see.***



# THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE



- ✘ When taking a portrait
  - + Slow down, look, listen, ask, engage and talk about something that really matters. (Joyce Tenneson)
  - + **Ask yourself—what makes me want to photograph this person(s)—what is there about him/her that I want to capture?**

# INSPIRATION—BEFORE THE SHOOT

Spend time thinking about your vision(s) for what you want. Make notes-Save ideas



Seek your vision from things that inspire you—music, magazines, etc.

Then ask yourself:

**Who** do I need to make this vision work?

Models, Assistants, etc.

**What** do I need to make this work?

Equipment, props, location, etc.

Preplan all you can and then relax and enjoy!



# DETAILS-BEFORE THE OUTDOOR SHOOT

- ✘ Communicate with the model.
- ✘ Charge your batteries (the real ones and your creativity)
- ✘ ***Scope out the location at the time of day you want to shoot***, if the weather could be bad, have an alternate plan.



# LET'S SHOOT

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Identify what attracts you about the person(s) and the setting and hone in on that.

- ✘ In a public place? WATCH Your gear!
- ✘ Set up all you can before the model is ready





# LET'S SHOOT 2



- ✘ Decide what you want in the frame and what you don't.
- + A photograph is what you put a frame around—what is in and what is out.
- + ***Work the scene from all angles.***

# NEGATIVE SPACE IS A POSITIVE

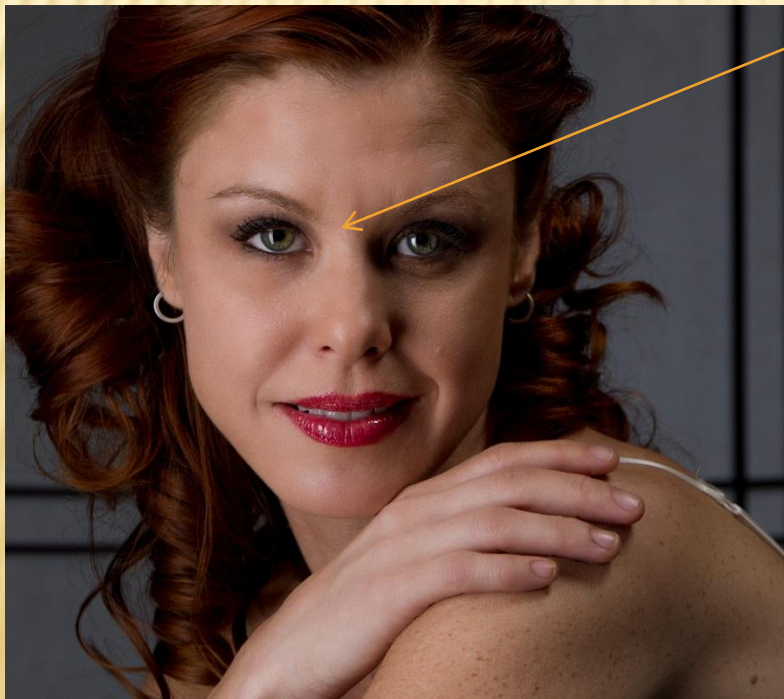
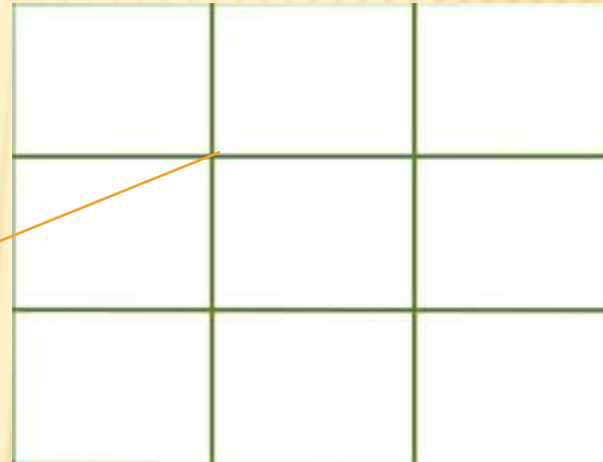




# COMPOSITION

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- ✘ Know the rules and then be willing to break them.
  - + Rule of thirds:



# COMPOSITION CONTINUED

## ✦ Leading Lines:

Helps to draw the person's eye into the primary subject.





# NATURAL FRAMES

- ✘ Look for natural frames to add compositional elements

Door frames

Tree limbs

Rock arches

Windows



# LIGHTING IN THE OUTDOORS

Once you know what you want to shoot, then you need to figure out how to light it.

## + Options:

- × Natural light (sun or shade)
- × Reflectors to bring the light to the person
- × Diffusers to keep some of the light off the person
- × Flash (fill or for primary lighting)





# NATURAL LIGHTING

- ✘ Open Shade is a great option
  - + Under a tree, an overhang, etc.
- ✘ If there is no shade, you can create it with a diffuser.





# MIXED SUN AND SHADE

Sun coming in through an open window or through trees adds drama to the image but can be hard to manage due to the difference in brightness and contrast.

Three things to do:

1. Move the person around so that you can control the contrast
2. Diffuse the sun coming into the scene
3. Increase the brightness in the shade with flash or a reflector.





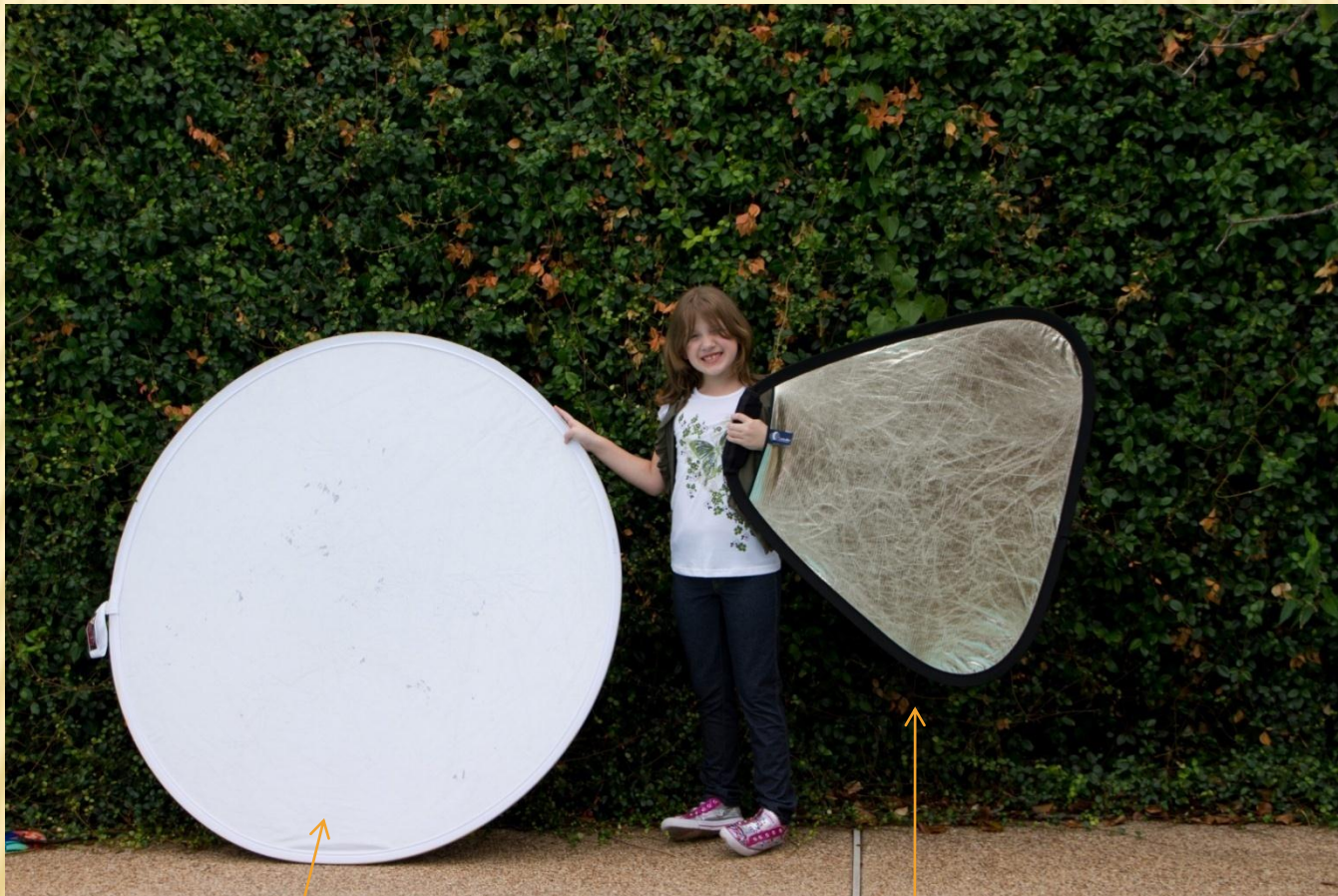
# REFLECTORS

- ✘ A variety of reflectors are available in various sizes and colors. They are good for putting light into an area where there is not enough.

Large  
Reflector  
sending  
light in thru  
doorway in  
direction  
shown



# VARIETY OF REFLECTORS



Colors: White, Silver, Gold, Mixed (gold/silver, silver/white)



# DIFFUSERS

- ✘ These will provide instant shade, or provide an instant softbox through which to shoot a flash.
  - + These are often inexpensive
  - + Can be as simple as a large piece of ripstop nylon from fabric store



**Diffuser  
over  
her  
head**



# DIFFUSERS

These  
are often  
\$30-80

Ripstop  
Nylon  
from  
fabric  
store is  
\$8/yard  
at 54 in.  
wide





# FLASH OUTDOORS



- ✘ Can be main or fill
- ✘ Adds a lot of sparkle and drama to images



Canon Speedlight with a small beauty dish and a CTO gel. Remotely fired and set to camera right

# FILL FLASH TO BRING OUT SUBJECT



Flash on a  
bracket beside  
the camera



# MODIFY SPEEDLIGHT FLASH FOR BEST RESULTS

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- ✘ Shoot through a diffuser
- ✘ Use a soft box or umbrella (less expensive)
- ✘ Use a small difuser on the flash on top of your camera.
- ✘ Bounce it off something like a wall or reflector
- ✘ Get the flash off the camera with remote triggers or with a cord.

# OUTDOORS WITH SOFTBOX



Both are lit with  
a speedlight  
shot into a 1'X  
3' strip box  
triggered  
remotely





# SPEEDLIGHT SOFTBOXES



Lasolite softbox and a  
Speedlight on a  
lightweight stand

Remote triggering with long ETL  
cord or radio slaves

Lumaquest 15"  
folding softbox





# UMBRELLA 6' WESTCOTT FOR FLASH



Umbrella  
as fill for  
shadow



Umbrella  
as main  
light





# IMAGES WITH OFF CAMERA MODIFIERS



Folding Lumaquest



Small Beauty Dish

Lasolite Box



# CAMERA SETTING CHOICES

## ✘ Shutter Speed

- + Is there going to be movement? Needs to be faster
- + Using flash? Limits the shutter speeds you can use to your camera sync speed or less.
- + The lower the shutter speed the more ambient light you will get. Aperture controls the exposure in a flash image.



# FAST SHUTTER SPEED TO STOP ACTION



A higher ISO is often needed in the shade to stop the action

# APERTURE

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- ✘ A large aperture (f 2.8-f4 for example) blurs the backgrounds and foregrounds.
- ✘ A small aperture (f11 and up) will keep much of the surroundings in focus.
- ✘ More than one person? Use a high enough aperture to be sure they are all in focus. (f8-11 usually works)
- ✘ Which feeds your vision? Better yet, try several!



# OPEN APERTURE FOR BLURRED SURROUNDINGS

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# SMALLER APERTURE TO KEEP IT IN FOCUS





# POSING

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- ✘ Watch the model for natural ways he/she sits, moves, etc.
- ✘ Ask her how she would usually sit if she were on the ground, a bench, etc.
- ✘ Ask the model to bring outfits or props that are meaningful to them and ask about them and use them.

# GOOD OUTDOOR POSES



**Jeff Smith's Posing Techniques for Location Portrait Photography (Good Resource)**





# MORE POSES



# WORKING WITH MODELS- BEFORE THE SHOOT

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- ✘ Before the shoot, give the model some key words to describe your vision: grungy, soft, sexy, vintage, etc. and ask him/her to bring outfits and props that express those ideas.
- ✘ If possible send them sample pictures or tear sheets. Have them tear things out.
- ✘ Seek their ideas as well.



# WORKING WITH THE MODEL AT THE SHOOT

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- ✘ Talk and interact, if you don't know the person, have some conversation starters if you need some.
- ✘ Don't be afraid to be silly with kids.
- ✘ Watch for unguarded moments, take images when they don't expect you to.
- ✘ Have them look away, shake out their limbs, look down and then look up, etc.
- ✘ Shoot movement—walking, running, etc.

# FOCUSING ON OTHER THINGS GETS THE MODEL RELAXED





# RESOURCES:

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- ✗ Remote Radio Triggers:
  - + Pocket Wizard **Flex System**-all camera stores
  - + Radio Poppers-[www.radiopopper.com](http://www.radiopopper.com)
- ✗ Extended E TTL chords:
  - + [www.flashzebra.com](http://www.flashzebra.com) has them for several brands.
- ✗ Books:
  - + Joe McNally's books **The Moment it Clicks** and **Hotshoe Diary** are inspirational and **Nikon** Focused.
  - + Syl Arena: **Speedlighter's Handbook** a must have for creative **Canon** off camera flash. He's the Guru.
  - + Posing: **Jeff Smith** and **Billy Pegram** each have several that are quite good.
  - + Inspiration: **Chris Orwig**: Visual Poetry.



I hope this presentation will light a fire for you inspirationally and get you out to ...

## Shoot!

Experiment  
and don't be  
afraid to suck

On the web:

[johnlehman.zenfolio.com](http://johnlehman.zenfolio.com) (new site)

[windsweptphoto.fotki.com](http://windsweptphoto.fotki.com)

flickr: windsweptphoto





The Portrait matters  
because life is fleeting,  
and we will not be  
here forever

All we have in life are  
people and moments.  
The portrait captures  
both simultaneously  
and tells a story about  
the characters in our  
lives.

David duChemin



**TAVIAN WITH HIS MOM  
HE WAS KILLED BY A DRUNK DRIVER 6 MONTHS  
AFTER WE TOOK HIS PICTURE**