

## PREPARING FOR YOUR PORTRAIT

A well executed photography session requires a good deal of planning on behalf of both the photographer, and the subjects. Great portraits rarely happen by chance. Everybody involved has a part to play, so we have created this guide to assist our clients in our mutual quest for a beautiful portrait that they will cherish.

### Ladies –

- Long hair is beautiful, but can be a problem in outdoor portraits. If your portrait session is outside, keep in mind that the wind may either add to the final look of your portrait, or it may detract from it. Usually, it is an undesirable element creating stray hairs in the face, or unbalanced symmetry. These issues are easily overcome with a bit of forethought.
- Make-up techniques in photography sessions differ from photographer to photographer, but the general rule is that it should be applied *slightly* heavier than on a normal day. This however, is only a suggestion. If you feel more comfortable applying your make-up normally, then by all means do so. Cover any blemishes as you normally would. Do not assume that you need excessive “powder” or cover-up as you may have seen in the movies or on News Anchors. News Anchors and the like are working under a totally different light source and imaging equipment than photographers use. These make-up techniques are unnecessary and very noticeable with the extremely high-definition camera equipment that photographers use. With make-up, the general rule of thumb is “just slightly more than usual”.

### Clothing –

Attire is one of the most important elements of a successful photo shoot with both individuals, and especially with groups. Feel free to dress as formally or informally as you like. We are more concerned with two particular elements of that attire; the **color** and distracting **designs and patterns**.

- 1. Color** - Ensure that all colors are similar in appearance. For example, if you want a family portrait, and also want everyone in the portrait to have different color shirts on, you should plan to have everyone in a similar *value*. Value could be defined as the relative lightness or darkness of a color. In other words, if the image was in black and white, the shirts would look similarly light or dark. A great way to gauge the value of a color when choosing it for a shoot, is to squint your eyes when looking at them. The goal is to not have one shirt overpowering another. For example, imagine a portrait with two people in it. One has a red shirt, and the other has a white shirt. The person with the red shirt will be the focal point of that image every time. The goal is to create balance in the image, and to not have any one person the focal point. Avoid very colorful shirts, such as bright red as these colors can actually bounce colored light onto the face creating unnatural flesh tones.
- 2. Designs and Patterns** - Keep to solid colors. Any pattern, design, logo, or graphic will stand out in a portrait and lead the viewer's eyes away from where it should be – on you. The goal is always to lead the viewer's eyes to the *people* in the portrait, and not to their choice of clothing. Black is indeed slimming, but white does not necessarily add weight. A great idea is to dress in different colored pastels, although you may have a hard time convincing dad to put on his light pink polo.

From the above advice on attire, you can see why it is common to see families dressed in white or black, or similarly colored polos and blue jeans in their family portraits. Earth tones, blacks, grays, whites, and pastels are all good choices.

- 3. Glasses** - Opinions differ on including glasses in photos. We believe that they are not a permanent part of someone, and thus should be left out of portraits. Glasses can also create unsightly glares in photos that may or may not be fixable. We suggest that glasses be taken off, but do not require this by any means. If you choose to take them off, be sure to take them off early enough to reduce or eliminate the red spots created by the pads where the glasses rest on the nose.

**Punctuality** - It is absolutely critical to be on time. This is especially true for outdoor portraits, since photography is the art of capturing light. The word photography itself

comes from two Greek words, loosely translated meaning “drawing with light”. It’s safe to assume that being late for a session could result in less than expected quality of light, and a missed opportunity at producing the finest quality portrait. If by chance the photographer has another session scheduled after yours, being late could have an impact on the amount of time to take the photos, and thus the number of images you have to choose from. If your session is outdoors and you are unsure about exactly where the location is, please allow yourself enough time to find the location.

*Punctuality, as you can imagine, is one of the biggest issues involved with portrait creating. Please help us serve you, and our other clients the best we can by being on time. Thank you so much!*

**Kiddos** - Children are a great joy to photograph, and we love being trusted to capture them at this particular point in their lives. With a bit of planning, our children’s sessions can be adorable and fun. Schedule your session when they are bright-eyed and well rested. Snacks and drinks are more than welcomed to keep them rejuvenated. In-fact, anything that you feel will keep them interested and refreshed is most welcomed! If we decide to enlist you, the parents, in directing their attention towards the camera, be sure to stand very close and behind the photographer so that the kids aren’t looking off into the distance at you, but rather into the lens. Try to keep the “attention getting” to a minimum unless requested by the photographer, as it may prove to be more distracting than helpful. Too many voices calling out to them at once can be overwhelming for a little one. The key to great children’s photography is to create a comfortable, interesting and fun atmosphere in which to capture them, and to bring them well rested! Be patient! Sometimes even photographers have a hard time getting that perfect photo of our own kids!

**Other helpful tips on the perfect portrait session** - Have a light snack before coming to your portrait session. Get plenty of rest the night before. Empty bladders make for a far more enjoyable session. Be on time to avoid scheduling conflicts. Expect to have fun and laugh! Don’t wear Def-Leopard t-shirts.

*We look forward to seeing you!*

BRAD WALTERS  
PHOTOGRAPHY

