

## Portraiture Photography

1. Focus on the eyes: Make sure that at least one of the eyes is focused. When a person is looking at a portrait photo, the subconscious mind will always check if the eyes are in focus. If none of the eyes are in focus, we will regard the entire portrait as out of focus even though every other parts of the subject are all focused because that is how facial recognition works with human. When taking a group shot always focus on the closest person to the camera.
2. Lighting, Lighting & Lighting: Understand the amount of available light as well as the temperature of the available light so one is aware the amount of dynamic range (light to darkness) they have to work with to obtain the correct exposure. Window light is often very soft and diffused, let it hit your subject at an angle ( not looking straight out the window). Don't use your on camera flash as it hits the subject squarely and creates flat light which is very unflattering.
3. Custom White Balance: Understand the light temperature and spend time to custom white balance the camera before shooting. Digital Cameras are computers with lenses and they have limitations (believe it or not!) when it comes to recognizing the temperature of the light source. Get the custom white balance done in pre production so no guessing work is required for the post production.
4. Build Relationship: It's not an objects you are shooting, it's human beings so, treat them like so. Always have an open communication between you and your model(s). Have someone help you, it is far easier to have your subject talking to another person and laughing with them while you focus on getting the shot.
5. You are not a spy: Spy shoots are offensive even to the photographers themselves so make sure your subject is aware of you (and who you are) and have given you the permission to take their photos.
6. Try different perspectives: It's a 3D world we live in so stop taking straight on, eye-level only portrait. Never shoot kids or babies from standing height, get down to their level. Shoot up for "power", if you shoot from a lower angle up towards a subject you make them seem more powerful and taller. If shooting at midday in harsh sun have your subject face AWAY from the sun and overexpose or light with a flash to reduce harsh shadows
7. Pay attention to the Backgrounds: A lot of time, it is the background that tells the story so make sure to pick an interesting background. Use props... a scarf, a flower, a ball, even bubble gum to blow a bubble, people relax when they have something to play with.
8. Try different lenses: Different lens and focal length will create different effect between the background and your subjects. They also changes the shape of the subject!
9. Try different compositions: Use your creativity and pose your subject. Sometime the subject does not how to pose so it is up to you to create the story. Give the subject space to 'look" into by placing them in the side of the frame and have them look towards the other side. Think outside the box, don't have your subject just sit on a chair, have them jump, put babies in clothes too big for them, have babies in baskets, put kids bouncing on a bed.
10. Have fun and practice A Lot!: The only way to get comfortable shooting portrait is.... keep shooting more portraits!