

LESLEY BOHIM PHOTOGRAPHY



Authenticity, Alignment, and Action **The Magic Behind Iconic Portraits**

How to get beautiful, brandworthy photographs that project your authentic self.

A great photo is everything to an entrepreneur.

Research shows that **you and your business have seven seconds to make an impression**, and positive initial experiences can create long-lasting business relationships. This is especially important for your online presence as people will judge you based on your images long before they judge your abilities. As the saying goes, a picture's worth a thousand words, so your pictures need to tell potential clients who you are and what you stand for.

The most important quality in a photo is that it looks like you. I want to be able to know you and trust you through your photos. I want to see your essence and personality show through. I want to see you--the authentic you (but on your best day). I want to take one look at your website image, have it tell me a little about you, and be invited to dive in to explore more of your work.

These insights will make it easy for you to prepare for your photo session, so you can show up to your shoot feeling calm and confident. The more prepared you are, the better your images will be. The better the images showcase the real you, the more clients and more success you will have.



If you use these tips, and show up prepared for your photo session, then you will have done the work that counts. This will give you the satisfaction of having everything you need to bring your best self to your session. From that point on, you will be collaborating with your photographer and having fun creating your iconic brand portraits.



The Inside Scoop from Lesley

Some really great performers, most actors, and models love the camera, and, come to think of it, most men don't mind it either. In fact, in my experience, women

face the most difficulty when preparing to be the subject of a photo shoot. And the older we get, the harder it gets.

You'd think that, as a photographer, I would love having my photo taken. But I don't! Like a lot of us, my head is full of negative self talk:

- Ugh, I'm exhausted just thinking about it.
- I am not that photogenic
- I need to lose 10 lbs.
- What I see in the mirror and in real life isn't what I see in my photos.
- I'm not a stylist--I have no idea what to wear.

What I do before a brand photo session of myself is to remember all of the positive things everyone else has said to me over the years.. No need for the mean girl inside my head to have any say in this process!

My mission is to help you see how beautiful you really are. **True beauty is not skin deep.**

STEP 1: Be yourself.

In order to be your genuine self, you need to get to know who you are deep down... and embrace it. The more you showcase your glorious self, the more easily people will see you, understand who you are, and know what you stand for. That's when success will join you.

As a photographer, I need to know these things to be able to capture the real you. Infuse your photos with this self-love by asking yourself these questions:



- **Am I being authentic in my messaging?** Does it feel right? Does it feel connected to my values in business and in life?
- **What qualities do my clients most often compliment?** (ex. "We love your energy!" "Her expertise is second to none.") Write these qualities down and bring them with you to your photo session.

Before I step in front of the camera, I promise myself to have fun, to laugh, and to breathe. It always helps so much because joy is one of my essences, and I love to have fun in my photo shoots.

STEP 2: Focus on your mission

Authenticity is the key to attracting your 'tribe' and the right clients to you. Creating trust in your marketing (via your photos) and developing personal relationships will help you stand out and ultimately create lasting success. To figure out exactly what those photos should communicate, you will need to **know your mission--in business and for the photo**. Consider:

- **What are you trying to accomplish or say?** (ex. Approachable, smart, cheeky)
- **What problem do you solve?** (ex. "I help new moms get better sleep.")
- **What is your mission?** (big goal) What have you been put on this earth to do? (Ex. "Lesley cherishes the art of photography so deeply, she has made it her life's mission to help people find the beauty in themselves and showcase that in a photograph.") Write it down.

My goal when setting up a brand photo session for myself is to make sure that people 'see' me and allow my truth to shine through--and that usually involves a smile. I love life, I love to have fun, and I love a good laugh.



STEP 3: Define your style.

Style affects everything. From sales conversions to trustworthiness, research suggests that your appearance affects how powerful people think you are. Most people forget or speed through this part of the process because they don't understand how essential style is to setting the tone for your business.

If your face is your brand, then you need to be extra conscious of how you will be seen. You will need to show up dressed for success in whatever style works best for you. (For photos, I always recommend upleveling your style from what you consider your normal day-to-day biz wear.)

- **Cut, color, and style is everything.** Choose solids and colors that make your eyes pop. (There is a specific blue that makes my eyes stand out, so I always look for pieces in that color family). Wear your favorite clothes and never bring something that you don't already love to wear and get complimented on.
- **Create full outfits with clothes that fit.** Start from the ground up--shoes matter. Tailor your clothes to fit you--no matter what size you are--and you will feel amazing. A badly fitted jacket can make you look both unprepared and out of date--no matter what the scale says. (Pinterest is a really good resource for wardrobe ideas.)
- **Hire a stylist to help you out with your wardrobe.** I always recommend investing on a stylist or in a few classic looks for your closet (and future media events) so you aren't scrambling to find something to wear when you get the last minute call for a client meeting or a chance to speak at an event!



My personal style has evolved through the years, but I feel comfortable now saying that my style is Confident Casual--wearing sneakers with a signature jacket or jeans with a beautiful blouse. This translates a sense of ease and comfort for my clients when they are in the studio trying to get their best photos. Style is subtle but powerful.



STEP 4: Translate your mission and style into your images

All iconic photographs, whether soulful or happy, are magical because they open a window to the true self. Images like this align integrity, approachability, and personal style. Consider the image you want to project to the outside world. Do you need to elevate your style to step up your brand? What energy do you want your photos to reflect? A good smile or laugh, a contemplative look away or a serious black and white will go a long way in helping you create unique images. Think about:

- **What kinds of specific photos do you need?** Are you looking for a portrait? Lifestyle? Action? Full Length? Headshot? Do you need a specific image like an author shot for a book jacket cover or website? You might also want to think about the kinds of images you will need in the future when your business grows and takes off into the stratosphere (ex. media kit).
- **What overall feeling do you want to project?** (ex. Professional, approachable, light and airy, corporate, natural) Bring a few of these adjectives with you to the shoot.
- **Who are you marketing to?** Who will be seeing your photo? Who is your ultimate client? (ex. Conservative corporate? Freestyle fitness? Energetic entrepreneurs?) Remember, you've only got seven seconds to make that great first impression.

I like to project a sense of ease and friendliness so that my clients know that they will be able to relax in their photo session. When clients trust me, it is much easier to capture their most unique self.



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STEP 5: Show up.

I can't stress how important it is to be consistent: How you do one thing is how you do everything. This holds true in prepping for your photo session. Not only do you have to do your homework and figure out the "you" that you want to capture in the images, but you have to show up in an authentic way to make a lasting impression.

- **Be PRESENT!** Make sure you actually show up--and I don't mean just arriving at the studio. This is the moment you have to allow the photographer to see your true personality (your soul, if I may be so bold).
- **Let go.** Photography is 50% technical and 50% magic, and it's the magic that we are all striving to capture. You want to have that iconic portrait that WOWs your audience because it has really captured the real you! Allow the photographer to direct you and be open to the magic. All your preparation brought you to this moment, so collaborate, trust, and allow your true self to shine through so you can find that magical photograph.



Easy photo tip: SMILE

Smiles open up your face. They are welcoming and approachable. You are much more likely to attract clients when they initially see you smile than if you are serious in all of your photos. There is definitely a time and place for serious portraits, but to attract the right customers/clients you should use your best smile as it will open the door to your business.

'Showing up' requires me to be very present in my body, I remind myself to open my eyes and to look directly at the camera as if it were my best friend. Before the shoot I usually collect a few happy moments from my life that I can quickly recall when I am asked to smile. With just a thought, a natural smile blooms across my face.



For more examples of iconic branding images, check out my website:

<https://lesleybohm.com>

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