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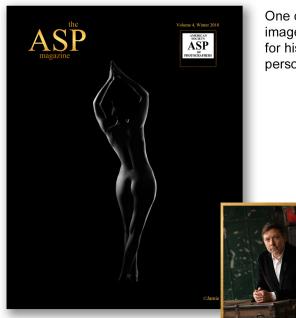
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# Stripped to My Core

Jamie Hayes' personal paper and Fellowship images

On the Cover



One of Jamie's Fellowship images. Turn to page 9 for his images and personal paper.

"Everyone

has

someone

who provides

what we

need to

make it

through the

day."

#### The Parachute

I recently became aware of this story and felt compelled to share it with you.

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was hit by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience!

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"



"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said "Good morning, how are you?" or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor." Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

So I ask you "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what we need to make it through the day. Let me point out that we needed many kinds of parachutes when our plane is shot down over enemy territory - we needed a physical parachute, a mental parachute, an emotional parachute, and a spiritual parachute

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail

President's Message

Gabriel Alonso M.Photog., Cr., CPP,F-ASP

to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachutes.

I am sharing this as my way of thanking you for your part in packing my parachute. And I hope you will do the same to those who have helped pack yours!

Sometimes, we wonder why friends keep forwarding jokes to us without writing a word. Maybe this could explain it! When you are very busy, but still want to keep in touch, guess what you do you forward jokes. And to let you know that you are remembered, guess what you get? A forwarded joke. So, my friend, don't think that you've been sent just another forwarded joke, but that you've been thought of today and your friend on the other end of your computer wanted to send you a smile, just helping you pack your parachute.

Peace. ◆

### ASP at Imaging USA

#### ASP booth open during trade show hours

Stop at the booth and pickup your custom ASP luggage tag

#### Saturday, January 19th, 2019

7:00pm - 9:00pm - ASP Saturday Shindig - Honoring PPA's First-time Degree Recipients

Georgia World Congress Center, Registration A

#### Sunday, January 20th, 2019

8:00am - 9:00am - ASP General Membership Meeting Omni Hotel, International Ballroom C, North Tower 9:00am - 11:00am - ASP Board of Governors Meeting Omni Hotel, International Ballroom C, North Tower

#### Monday, January 21st, 2019

6:30pm - 7:45pm - ASP Pre-Gala Cocktail Hour 8:00pm - 10:30pm - ASP Annual Awards Gala (Black-tie optional) Non-members always welcome. Purchase tickets at www.asofp.com Omni Hotel, International Ballroom

#### ASP Group Trip - April 2020 - YES, 2020 plan now!!!

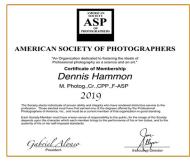
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Call Leslie Ann Kitten for questions at (806) 239-3227.



#### **ASP Membership Certificates are available**

ASP Membership Certificates are available on request. Contact ASP Executive Director, Jon Allyn at jonallyn@aol.com, by phone at 414-871-6600 or through the ASP website.



Lindsay Betz

"When

we give,

we help

fuel

something

greater than

ourselves."

#### "Reach your Full Potential"

by Lindsay Betz, CPP

When I was five years old, my parents started paying me an allowance. In the beginning, it was three dimes: one to give to church, one to save in my piggy bank, and one to spend. Embedded in three simple coins was a life-long lesson of the key activities for our money: giving, saving, and spending. The amount changed over time, yet the principles remain. Among my passions, and specifically one of my favorite topics to teach and speak upon, are finances. For so many, finances bring confusion, frustration, and pressure, and all too often, the stress of it all causes some to avoid paying attention altogether. Yet, the behaviors and habits of your finances hold a significant key to your success. Intentionality must happen for finances, and when we aren't intentional, we unfortunately sabotage our full

potential, both for our businesses and for our families. Photographers are, on the whole, a group of creatives. Numbers tend to not be a strength, but that doesn't mean it's unattainable to gain the essential knowledge and skills to ensure your finances fuel your success. Among the essentials are the following:

#### 1. Give with gratitude.

Giving may not seem like a starting place for finances, yet I've seen the value of giving throughout years of little and of much. When we give, we help fuel something greater than ourselves. We ignite positivity by making a difference with causes that matter. Faith is a significant aspect to my family's life rhythms, but regardless of whether your giving is faith-based, the act of giving roots your decisions in gratitude. There are so many needs in the world and numerous organizations to which you can give. Remember that giving includes time, talents, and treasures; therefore, giving includes donating your photography skills to an organization doing work that resonates with your heart. By weaving regular giving into both your business and family finances, all the other decisions you make with money benefit from beginning with gratitude, recognizing your blessings, and the resulting positivity that overflows into your business activities and client interactions.

#### 2. Intentionality: It's the behaviors (not the amount) that matter.

Money flows, and we'll either tell our money where it needs to go or look up later and wonder where it went. It's important to know your natural tendency—spender vs. saver—and cultivate healthy behaviors for both. In the continual refinement phase of a mature business, overspending happens more easily when the sales are flowing. The busy season boon is often the most important time to pay attention to the spending within your business. To control spending, set limits to places like entertainment and business meals for each month and stick to those limits. Ensure that the busy months set aside the funds that you'll need in the slower season, whether for equipment purchases, marketing, conventions, and/or payroll. Know all the categories for retained earnings in your business and make sure to fund each as the year unfolds. Always remember that overspending in the business impacts the amount you are able to pay yourself. Keeping the big picture in mind keeps your spending on course throughout all the seasons of your business.

Likewise, it's also important that we enjoy the reward of working hard in the busy seasons, so intentionally choose reasonable rewards to enjoy. This could be a bonus amount the business pays you at the end of the busy season or a special dinner. It could be a trip you

"Reach your Full Potential" continued on next page

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can look forward to taking in the slower months. There are certainly times when a splurge is earned, and when you do so intentionally, you can enjoy it without regret.

I frequently hear photographers asking how to make more money. The typical answers include increasing prices and/or reducing costs. I find that intentionality is the third way to make more money without doing either of the typical answers. When you truly become intentional with giving every dollar an assignment (across both saving and spending categories), you inevitably experience a "raise" as you find the places where overspending has been happening. Set goals, set limits, and stick to them.

#### 3. Avoid debt.

Newer businesses tend to be more heavily pressured to take on debt; however, the debt trap can capture mature businesses owners too. It's easy to find many people eager to sell you the supposed benefits of debt. However, just as successful business owners typically grew a solid business foundation slowly over time, we can apply the value of time to the goals we set for each of our photography businesses. Remember that debt always introduces risk and traps your mindset in the past. Rather than look at debt as a tool for growth and success, plan ahead and save what you need for the future growth and goals. Saving up and paying cash keeps you forward-focused in your business. Research heavily supports you'll make smarter decisions when you cash flow your purchases.

#### 4. Plan for your dreams.

Dreaming and visioning are gifts, and established businesses must continue to vision for the continual refinements that keep their relevance and strength in each year. In our business, my photographer husband is the visionary. I'm an implementer. Give me the path, and I promise I will get us there, but do not expect me to vision that direction. He is the one with that gift. Thankfully, my husband is also one who makes his dreams happen with hard work and sacrifice. Our photography business is the biggest evidence of that.

We've all learned the importance of putting our goals and dreams in writing. Part of that is to look at the financial needs of our goals. Dreaming of hiring another staff member to help you find better balance for your time? Dreaming of a new studio space? Dreaming of that next camera? Dreaming of your next big trip? Make sure to determine the dollars it will take to realize that dream so you set aside funds over time and know when you can make that dream a reality. When we know what we are saving for, we make it happen. Our dreams drive our future reality, and the reality is that most dreams need finances. Know the need so you can save for it.

On the note of planning for the future, retirement savings is essential. Aim for 15% of your earnings and find a financial planner who can help you navigate to the best options for you.

#### 5. Ask before you buy.

I teach three key questions to ask before making the bigger purchases:

- Will this make me more profitable?
- Is my artistry/craft currently limited without this purchase?
- Have I determined that my current equipment is beyond repair?

"Reach your Full Potential" continued on page 7



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#### 6. Know your accountability partners.

We all need people in our lives to encourage us and hold us accountable. When married, your spouse must be included in the financial decisions. You need unity and strong communication so you both are committed to the budget set. Regardless of whether your spouse works in the photography business, he or she still needs to be included in the goals and activities of the business since the health of the business is intimately tied to the amount that flows into your personal family finances. When you have business partners and/or staff, unity and communication of the goals and vision of the business are essential. While general staff members do not need to know the full financial picture of the business, business partners must have full awareness and make all financial decisions together and in unity.

Profitability and sustainability are essential for photographers, and while these keys I've shared are simple, hard work, discipline, and commitment are required, and few put these principles fully into practice. While varying levels of business success can happen apart from some of these principles, fully embracing them brings the highest level of success. Use these principles and evaluate your studio's performance—could a greater level of profitability and sustainability be achieved by putting one or more of these into practice? For the ones who do, these keys bring financial freedom, a solid foundation, and

Lindsay Betz and her husband, Jonathan, launched their business, Jonathan Betz Photography, in 2006, shortly after relocating from St. Louis to Colorado Springs. In addition to running their full-time, full-service photography studio specializing in high school senior and family portraits, Lindsay is a PPA Councilor, member of the PPA EDU Committee, and speaks nationally within the photographic industry. She'll return as an IUSA speaker in 2019, teaching a pre-con class on business foundations. She and Jonathan serve in the leadership of their PPA affiliate, Professional Photographers Guild of Colorado Springs.

the satisfaction of seeing dreams realized to their fullest potential. Every photographer deserves to be valued. Our clients value us with their purchases at the professional prices we set. Intentionality with our finances is how we value ourselves. Intentionality keeps our businesses healthy and allows each of us to love our families well. •

# ASP Proposed Slate

#### Executive Board

President-elect - Leslie Ann Kitten, M.Photog., Cr., CPP Vice President - Steve Clark, Cr. Photog., CPP Secretary/Treasurer - Sabina Cavalli, M.Photog., CPP

#### **Board of Governors**

Governor - Tony Corbell, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, Hon. EA-ASP

Governor - Ella Carlson, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, EA-ASP

Governor - Kevin Floyd, M.Photog., Cr., CPP

#### Incumbents:

Chairman of the Board - Gabriel Alonso, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, F-ASP

President - Don Raupp, M.Photog., Cr.

Governor - Karen Nakamura, M.Photog., M.Artist, Cr.

Governor - Rick Trummer, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, EA-ASP

\*\*Any ASP member in good standing wishing to run from the floor for governor must contact the Executive Director, Jon Allyn, within two weeks of this publication date to file papers of your intent.

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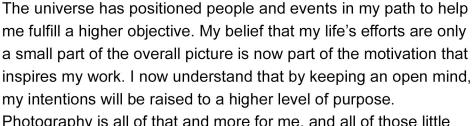
# "Stripped to My Core"

by Jamie Hayes, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, API, ABI, F-ASP



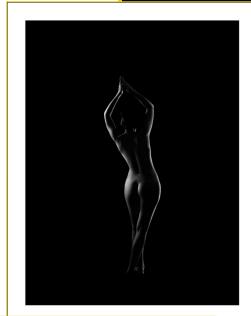
The date is April 16, 2016 and I have just finished a session that has had a profound effect on me. The hair on the back of my neck and down my arms is still tingling. This most recent session, in our most current project, would open my eyes to a new lighting style, raising my visual awareness and changing the way I interpret my own body awareness. For this reason, the decision to share

this body of work with you seems so perfect and effortless. As I put pen to paper for the first time ever, I surrendered to the process as did my photographic subjects that allowed themselves to be at their most vulnerable. Once again, in what seems like a long list of life's experiences, I have been stripped to my core.

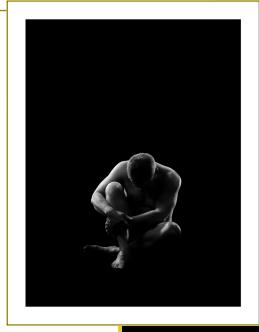


Photography is all of that and more for me, and all of those little hints that the universe calls upon me to consider are part of my own awareness. The more I open my eyes and heart, the more I will see, and the more that will be revealed to me. This is the reason I was born and wake up every morning giving thanks, hoping to make the world a better place with my talents as a photographic artist.

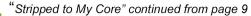
Photography has always been my life's purpose. Nothing fulfills my soul like photographing people. Even so, I rarely use my camera if I am not photographing a client session. I have tried many times to join my friends and colleagues when they get up at the crack of dawn to photograph a sunrise, but it doesn't inspire me unless I am capturing the essence of a person. Part of my creative process includes winning the client's trust, getting the perfect capture, and selling a portrait. The financial reward is part the validation for my talents and hard work. I need that momentum, energy and expectations of a client's financial investment for me to produce for them. The fact that they are making this financial investment validates the trust they are putting in me and the satisfaction of my work. Every session, every project, must be profitable to my business in some way. My success depends on it, not just for me, but for my support team as well.







"Stripped to My Core" continued on page 10





I have always been fascinated by the way I see other people, but have never really been happy with my own appearance. Based on conversations with my clients, I believe it is all too common to have difficulty looking at oneself in a photograph. I do not think that I'm attractive, and I have never had a portrait of myself that would make me say, "Wow! I really do look good!" My body awareness is one of resolution, not affirmation. However, my awareness and that way of thinking changed while creating my latest project. Believing that all of the life lessons that I have experienced up to this point have allowed me the creative outlet to manifest these portraits, truly inspires me. My love for lighting, intertwined with my knowledge and experience, has helped me learn to properly light the human body, male or female, without hesitation or reservation.



I grew up in Verona, Virginia. Verona is a tiny one-stop-light bedroom community outside the metropolis of Staunton. My parents divorced when my sister and I were young. My mother worked three jobs just to make ends meet, but she always seemed to find a way to provide us with everything we asked for, even if she had to work a little more that week to pay for it. Our Friday night ritual involved grocery shopping in Staunton. My sister, Cindy and I would fight over who got to lick and assemble the books of S&H Green Stamps. It was these books of stamps that bought my first Kodak 110 with a flash cube extender. I had to have every accessory available for that fantastic slim matte black box

that would open up the world for me, and strip me to my core at the same time. Soon thereafter, I began a long and wonderful journey in photography, involving any person that was willing to pose in front of my camera. Yes, I could not help myself, even back then. I still remember the first roll of film we dropped off at the drug store. I was so excited to see what I had created. Yes me, all by myself, without the help of anyone else. For the first time there would be no critique of my inefficiencies or lack of skills according to someone else's opinion. It was at this very moment that I declared that I would be a photographer for the rest of my life.



My first baseball coach told me that I lacked hand/eye coordination, and therefore, I should try something else. This was one of the first times I was stripped to my core. My dad was not around much, and when he was, he wasn't the most attentive and supportive to Cindy and me. I envied the "normal" father and son activities that were all around me, the ones that my dad never had enough time to participate in. His idea of bonding with my sister and I, involved taking us to the local Moose Lodge with a brown bagged fifth of Canadian Mist with a white sticker on the front, with the name Jimmy smeared in bold black letters. For my 18th birthday, dad surprised me with a membership to the Moose Lodge not

the kind of surprise I was expecting! My mother tried hard to make up for his short

"Stripped to My Core" continued on next page

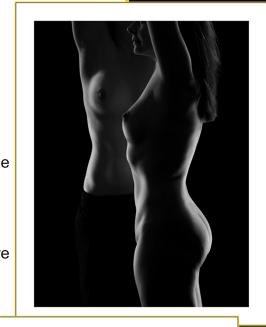
comings, she did everything she could to comfort me. I had, what I considered to be, a normal, happy childhood. My sister and I never felt that our family dynamic was much different than that of our friends or relatives. Although my father's hurtful words will forever strip me to my core.

Photographing people became my reason for existence and nothing made me happier. To this day, I get goose bumps when I "get the shot". I actually have a physical reaction to photographing, and it is amazing! Years later, it was my cousin David, also very interested in photography, who exposed me to my first DSLR. He was a month older than me and we were inseparable. His parents owned a gas station in Staunton, which afforded them a very comfortable life with all the pleasures and treasures that go with having money. We would spend hours looking through the Sears catalog, drooling over the new fully-loaded Chinon camera bodies, lenses and the Vivitar 285 flash. We set up a makeshift darkroom in their spare bathroom, complete with developing trays and a safelight, which is where we hid a TokeMaster bong under the cabinet in a paper safe labeled, "photographic paper, do not open". We would spend hours in there waiting for the smell of "Fixer" to dissipate, developing our futures and making big plans for when we became famous rock band photographers and dreaming of having the opportunity to photograph an album cover for the likes of Styx, Little

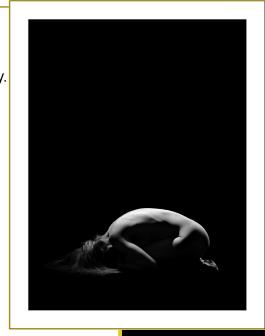
A summer of carrying concrete in five gallon buckets, over a hill, for my dad's fence company earned me \$300, which was enough money to buy my very own DSLR, a Vivitar 220SL from Glen's Fair Price store in Harrisonburg. My grandmother, who loved to drive fast and run red lights, was more than happy to take me so I could make the purchase. It's no wonder we nicknamed her lead foot Mary. I still have that camera today.

I booked my first wedding at the age of fifteen, convincing my best friend Vince to act as my chauffeur and second shooter (yes, a second shooter in 1980!). I had him park around the corner so that the bride and groom would not know that I was not old enough to drive a car. I guess my long, winged-back, parted in the middle bangs hid my innocence well.

By my first year in high school, I was the primary yearbook photographer, leaving class whenever I wanted, to cover a "pressing" assignment. After graduation, with a whopping \$1500 for college, I found a small photography school on the side of a mountain in White Sulfur Springs, WV, that fit my budget.







"Stripped to My Core" continued on page 12

Feat or Kansas. Those were the days!



The school was run by Marshall Booker, a small, frail man who had operated a successful studio in the Greenbrier Hotel with his business partner, Nancy Raspberry. After a three-hour interview, I knew this was the place for me. Unfortunately, Marshall passed away before classes began. Life had stripped him to his core and now chain-smoking, 5-foot tall Nancy would become my first mentor. Our group of 12 students had "textbook" studies each morning. Every afternoon, we would conquer an assignment that involved photographing, film processing, proofing, selling, retouching, printing then delivering the photographs to the client. We did this for four months. This work would prepare us for almost any type of paying job in photography we could imagine.



My first real job came just two days after I completed the four month course. I was hired by Hubert Gentry, who was a bastard, but he was incredibly talented and solely responsible for the technical skills I now master. One of my jobs was to run the front projector systems that were built into 40 foot trailers pulled by duel wheeled trucks. We would use those mobile studios to photograph schools. We were on the cutting edge of technology for that time period. I was immediately drawn to technology (this addiction would show up again much later with our first digital camera purchase at a whopping \$25,000 in 1998 and most recently with the onset of drones.) Six years later, making only \$5.25 per hour and \$75 per wedding, I needed more, and there was no real future in the Shenandoah Valley, so I interviewed with Hubert's biggest arch nemesis, Laney Caston, in Richmond, Virginia. This new job doubled my salary and offered more promise for a fantastic future in photography. I packed my bags and moved east. Laney taught

me how to really make money selling portraits, however he worked me into the ground. I had had enough! Stripped to my core yet again. Daniel Butler, my closest photographer friend and co-worker, gave me exactly one year to open my own studio or he would "kick my ass!". On March 1, 1995, I opened my own studio with my crazy idea of branding Richmond's first garden studio. With my permed mullet, banded collar silk shirts, gold nugget earring and matching pinky ring, I began to set the world on fire.

The business took off like wildfire with the help of my third and fourth mentors, Stewart and Susan Powers. Without their help and guidance, it would have not been possible to charge \$125 per 8x10. At this time, there was no other option, because I only had \$1500 to my name and two mortgages due in 30 days. Failure was not a possibility! Their

greatest gift to me was the advice to only enter paid client work in competition, and all at

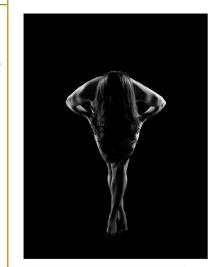
"Stripped to My Core" continued on next page www.ASofP.com • Winter 2018 the cost of paying forward the knowledge they gave to me to newer, younger photographers. This is the reason I began to present programs to professional photography associations and earn my Photographic Craftsman degree. The Powers then introduced me to mentor number five, Hanson Fong. I was enamored with his flow posing and analytical views of creating well composed and well-lit images.

In less than one year I was overwhelmed with the success of the studio and I needed help - a lot of help. Enter Mary Fisk-Taylor, a client from Caston's Studio, who I had photographed in her wedding gown, at The Jefferson Hotel. She now had her precious three month old daughter, Alex, and shared with me that she had been trying to find me because she had "the most amazing experience" with her bridal portrait session, and really loved the way she looked for the first time ever in a picture. She told her mom, Debbie, that I would be photographing her children someday, and that day had come.

After four sessions photographing Alex, with delivery time that was not even close to acceptable, Mary offered to help out part-time. I remember the first time I put my big foot in my mouth, telling her that I would "teach her how we answer the phone properly". Anyone that knows Mary knows that she is never at a loss for words, but somehow she managed to not say a word and just observed everything for the first several months. I remember overhearing her first interaction with a client on the telephone - following that interaction, I offered Mary half of the business. I knew that with her amazing business skills and my photography skills, we would be great together. It was a match made in heaven and hell, all in one. With my family history of never admitting mistakes or acknowledging anyone else's opinions, I could be somewhat of a challenge. I am certain that she didn't realize what she had signed on for, but thank goodness she is still hanging in there with me. She is my biggest fan, strongest critic, best friend and always has my best interest at heart. I truly love her. She helps me be all that I can be. It has been one hell of a journey over the past 22 years and I would not trade a minute of our time together. We are daymarried. Yes, she has a real husband, he really does exist. Mary is very important to me. I would not be the person or photographer I am today without her.

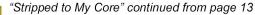
I am extremely thankful for all of the wonderful people that I have met in my more than 25 years as a PPA member, who have shared their knowledge and insight with me. Image competitions have made me the photographer











I am today and the ever-evolving photographer that I continue to develop into. Randy McNeilly, with his wisdom and thoughtfulness in regards to judging, to the business practices I have learned from Ann Monteith, and to too many to name, who are so special to me. I am so thankful that I can call all of them my friends.

Although creating classic portraiture and oil paintings for our clients is my favorite part of any day, we all need some kind of personal project to feed our souls. Photographing the female body inspires me. It was a subscription to Playboy on my 18th birthday that hooked me on lighting the human body. I couldn't wait for the next issue so that I could take a sharpie to the centerfold and try to diagram what light was used to accent each and every curve of the girl-next-door. It is nothing for me to

use 10, 15 or 20 lights in a set to achieve the desired mood. For these types of images I'm an available light photographer. I will use every light available.

My biggest thrill was attending a seminar in Las Vegas, hosted by my favorite Playboy and celebrity photographer, Arney Freytag, After the lecture part of his presentation, I pulled up a chair as close to him as I could and quickly announced that I have visually stalked him for over 30 years, and I had a long list of questions that he needed answer for me. I threw all sorts of questions at him all at once, hoping for some magical formula he used based on the leg-totorso ratio or some fancy light modifier or gel combination he used on all of his models that gave him that "oh so recognizable style and finesse" to his images. He explained that, as a child, he would sit on the floor beside his mother's easel as she painted with light onto her

stretched canvas panels to create the mood she intended, and the reason he lights a woman the way he does is because it feels good to him visually. I was dumbfounded and speechless. He literally should have dropped the microphone right then and there on the floor because immediately left the building, headed to the pool cabanas and ordered bottle service. From that moment on, I decided to light the women I photographed my way, not his way, not anyone else's way. I finally found what I was looking for and I had it all along! But I had to strip it all back to my core to see it clearly.

I have selected my latest project created for our local LGBT theatre for my portfolio. Our studio was asked to sponsor a play, by a wonderful lesbian couple, that we had the honor of photographing their wedding. It was Richmond's first published gay wedding, five years ago. Julie is on

the board of the theatre and when she read the play entitled "Body Awareness," she

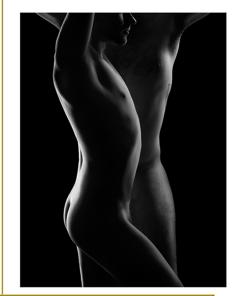




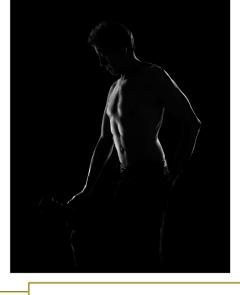


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immediately thought of us. She showed me the cover of the playbook that had a very small thumbnail that looked like the ridge of a mountain but in actuality it was the side hip of a woman in black and white. I suggested that we photograph their patrons and display the images inside the theatre since the play was about a photographer traveling the United States photographing nudes of women for an exhibit. In the story, one of the wives wanted to be photographed, but the other thought it was degrading to women. The story investigates the insecurities, fascinations and allure of being photographed nude, stripping to the core the stigma of society and the way we look at ourselves. I suggested that we also use the images to raise money for the theatre and bring public awareness to the theatre and this play. In true form for me, the project had to make money to truly inspire me.



Interestingly, I was able to convince all of the actors and actresses to allow me to photograph them, except one. Ironically she played the role of the wife wanting to be photographed. The resulting sessions were created in a five-week period, sprinkled amongst sessions already scheduled. I witnessed the same insecurities that I had about my own body with the individuals and couples I photographed, which took me on journey I did not expect. I had the realization that everybody, regardless of the flaws of time and no matter what age, shape, size, color, skin texture or gender, could be edge-lit and posed with the same lighting style to accentuate a hip or torso outline, butt or breast, and look flawless, sometimes for the first time ever. For many, this was this was the first time in their lives that they felt sexy and beautiful to someone they love. These are emotions I experience frequently with clothed subjects, but these were without clothing to hide what we usually do not like about ourselves. My newly created lighting style is ageless, size-less, colorless and race-less. It was an awareness of love through the eyes of someone who loves you, and more importantly, love for one's self through body awareness. For the first time ever, I literally had the exact same reaction to my own body awareness.



For decades I've have been photographing nudes of some of the most perfect female bodies with clothing and props to support the mood and feeling I had visualized. What I didn't expect was that everybody, regardless of the flaws of time, can be photographed to look and feel beautiful, alluring and even sexy in the natural way the universe designed us. Stripped to our core. My tools were primarily edge lighting, posing and the years of experience that I brought to this moment in time.

As each session progressed, I became more and more impressed with what I was able



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to create. It seemed as if physical dimensions and restrictions did not matter. I remember that I was so excited with the mood and feeling of the first session that I immediately had a vision and guide for the rest of the project. As each session presented me with a

> different set of "problems," the answers clearly revealed themselves.

This body of work represents where I currently am in my life and the challenges we all face as we get older. What I did not expect was the countless tears of joy expressed by each individual or couple as they viewed their unretouched images. It was as if no one had shown them how beautiful the human body was, and even more special, that the body was theirs. As I listened to the "oooohs" and "ahhhs" after each session, I realized that the universe was once again fulfilling my life's purpose and that I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, giving that acknowledgement of love to somebody else with my camera.

Love is love and it is the one thing we need to survive. Body awareness is something we all are sensitive to,

> no matter how old or young or big or small. We are all self-conscious about our bodies. This project brought out the awareness that everyone has the desire to look and feel beautiful, no matter what age, size, shape or gender.

My objective was to help my subjects, as well as others, to realize that in the hands of someone with a lifetime of experience capturing the human body in a beautiful light, magically changes forever how the people in our lives and the world see

themselves.

Stripped to the core...... ◆



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