

THE PRO PHOTOGRAPHER MANIFESTO

10 HABITS
of SUCCESSFUL PROS

CHRISTA MEOLA

A NOTE FROM CHRISTA

Being fortunate enough to work and teach alongside professional photographers at the top of their game, many of whom are also my dear friends, I have observed certain behaviors and beliefs shared by them all that contribute to their success and distinguish them from the photographers that struggle.

I am equally lucky to be surrounded by newer photographers, my enthusiastic students, through my workshops and my mentoring program. This affords me the illuminating opportunity to observe the main differences in habits of the two groups.

I wrote this Manifesto for pro's and newbies alike. As professional photographers, we all need to be reminded of good habits from time to time. For those just starting out, it's great to encourage wise habits from the beginning.

It's my sincere wish that these 10 Habits of Successful Pro's help you enjoy greater success!

Good fortune to you!

Christa Meola

ps. The following list is the top ten habits that I observe time and again in successful pro photographers, but is by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to drop me a note on my blog and let me know if you have one you'd like to add - I'd love to hear from you.



I KNOW MYSELF, MY BRAND, AND MY CLIENT

My business is born from and based on what I find meaningful, what attracts my eye, what I think is important, and how I want to serve the world. I know what moves me, and I pay attention to what pulls on my heartstrings. I bring myself to my brand and all that I do. I'm not trying to be something I'm not. I'm not focused on the competition - hell, I don't even think of other photographers as competition. I don't try to please everyone, be affordable to all, or turn every inquiry into a client. I know what qualifies a person as my client, and I focus my energies strictly on thrilling her.





2

I VALUE MY TALENT AND TIME

I respect my talent and my time, and my pricing reflects that. I have confidence in my price list and stand behind it because it was thoughtfully developed and not pulled out of thin air. I never compete on price, and I don't compare myself with the 100 dollar photographer down the block, Uncle Harry with a pro camera, or the mall portrait studio. I align my pricing with the value I provide, not what I think people can afford.

3

I SHOW UP WITH ALL THAT I AM

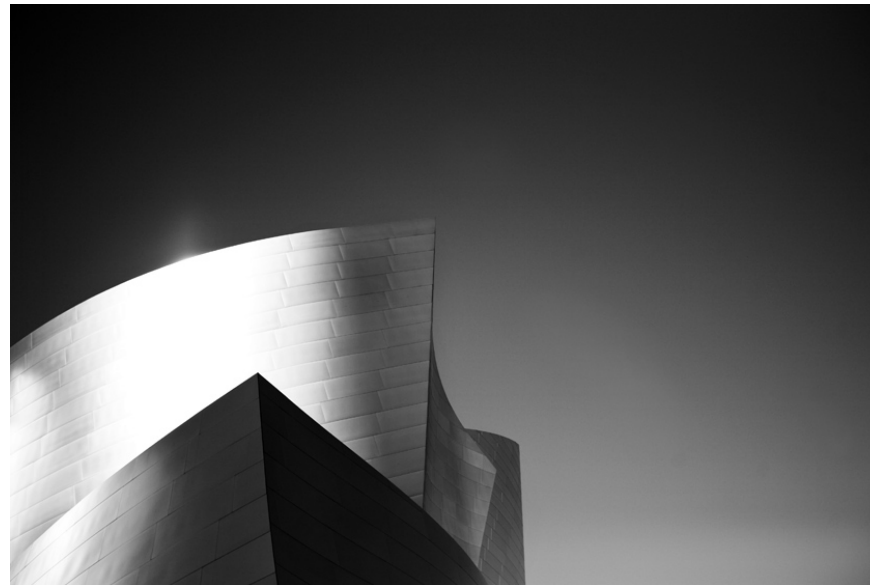
I don't leave my creativity in the car when I arrive on location. I bring my art, my heart, my gut instinct, resourcefulness, spontaneity, determination, professionalism and passion on set. Although I am in service to my client, I am in the driver's seat and my job is to deliver not only what she wants, but also what she doesn't even know she wants and needs.



4

I KNOW MY GEAR INSIDE AND OUT

I know my gear like the back of my hand. I read the manual. Cover to cover. A few times. My equipment is treated with respect and care, and always ready, batteries charged, cards formatted. I use the minimum amount of equipment necessary to create my desired outcome, and I have a back-up in case of equipment failure. I use my gear as a tool to carry out my vision, and I know my best equipment is my artistry and judgement.





5

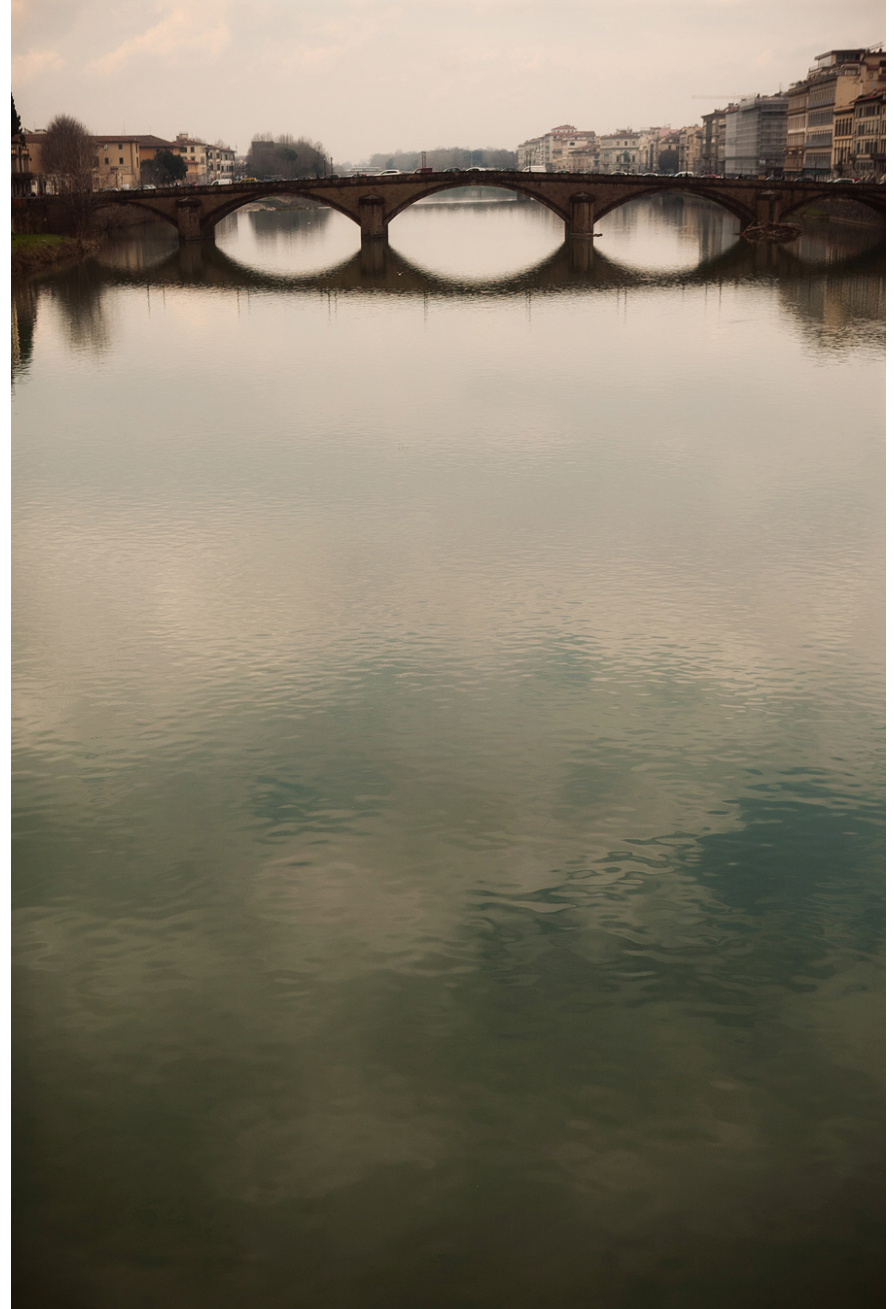
I SHOOT WITH INTENTION

I press the shutter when I am moved by what I see. I shoot to tell a story. I choose this angle and not that angle, because this one drives my point home. I crop in camera. Everything in my frame is intended to be there. I love negative space. I don't randomly shoot like rapid gunfire, but I choose the moment whether consciously planned out and orchestrated or a snap judgment based on instinct.

6

I ADAPT

I have a compelling picture in my mind of what I'd like to create in this photograph, but can adapt for a successful outcome. I can judge when I nail it, when it's not working, when I see something even better, when I need to persist, or when I need to move on. Likewise, I know when to provide feedback and direction to subjects, or when to keep quiet and just let things happen..



7

I EMBRACE COLLABORATION

My work is elevated when working with a team of other professionals who excel in their given specialty. I seek out collaborative projects and hire specialists, from hair stylists to digital artists, so I can focus on my role of photographer. I appreciate each individual's talent, encourage their full participation, and acknowledge their role in a successful shoot.



8

I EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

I go the extra mile and exceed expectations from initial client contact through product delivery and beyond. I underpromise and overdeliver. I set myself up for success at each stage of the game. Every effort I extend for my client is a pleasure, and I surprise and delight her with unexpected added value. This is how I create raving fans.



9

I SELL EXPERIENCE AND EMOTION

I sell emotion, not images, prints, cds, or albums. None of these products are what people actually desire - it's the emotions they evoke. I make sure I shoot for, capture, and deliver emotion. I also sell the experience - my photographs are a reminder of the experience that created them, and I make sure that the shoot is a positive one that exceeds expectations.



10

I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF IMAGERY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

I am deeply passionate about what I do and strongly believe in photography's power to illuminate and influence humanity. I love providing the gift of creating how people remember their lives, empowering an individual to redefine herself, and creating a lasting visual reminder of how incredible life is.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHRISTA MEOLA is professional photographer who travels internationally for commissioned projects and conducts photography workshops and mentorship programs for fellow pro's. She's written a book on how to photograph women, **EXPOSED: Redefining Boudoir** and writes a **blog**.

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