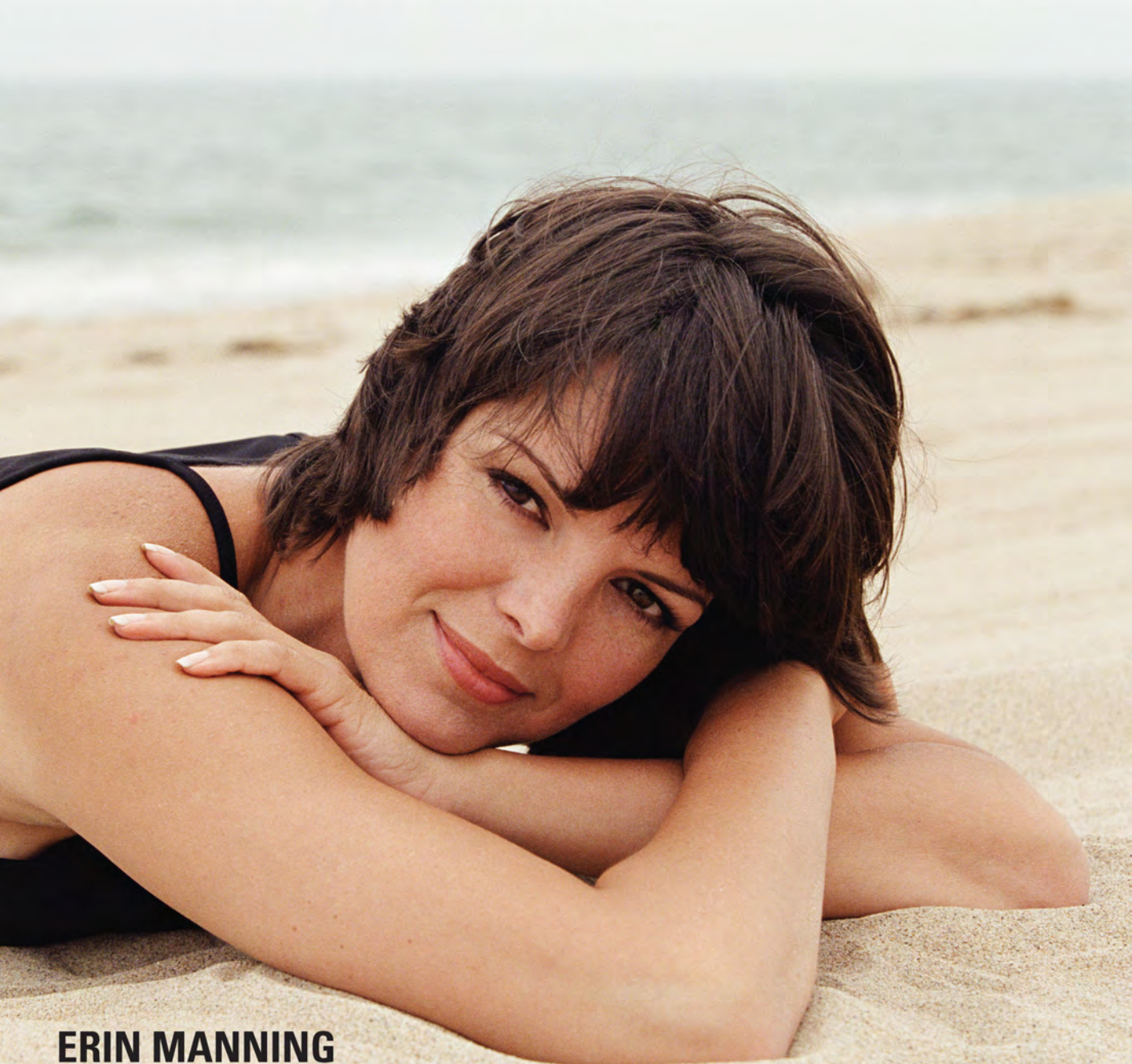




PORTRAIT AND CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO WORKSHOP

Develop your digital photography talent



ERIN MANNING



PORTRAIT AND CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO WORKSHOP

Erin Manning



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About the Author

Erin Manning is a professional photographer, teacher, and television personality living in Los Angeles, California. Television viewers know Erin best as the host of *The Whole Picture*, the Telly Award–winning digital photography show from HGTV-HD and DIY Network. She helps people understand photography and technology by translating technical mumbo-jumbo into everyday words and facilitating their learning with a clear, friendly teaching style.

Erin first fell in love with photography at age seven when she discovered Edward Steichen's book *The Family of Man*. That early encounter with images of people from all over the world shaped the direction she was to take with her photography — capturing moments with and between people.

Whether Erin is in front of the camera or behind it, photography has always been a part of her life and combines her experience and education in art, technology, and entertainment. She specializes in lifestyle imagery for clients such as AT&T, Bank of America, Disney, as well as various lifestyle magazines and healthcare organizations. Erin spent several years honing her craft by working as a commercial, portrait, and stock photographer, in addition to working for Getty Images and completing a degree in Studio Art/Graphic Design from Loyola Marymount University.

Erin is a member of the Advertising Photographers of America, the National Association of Photoshop Professionals, Women in Photography International, and the Los Angeles Digital Imaging Group, whose purpose is dedicated to advancing the art and science of digital imaging.



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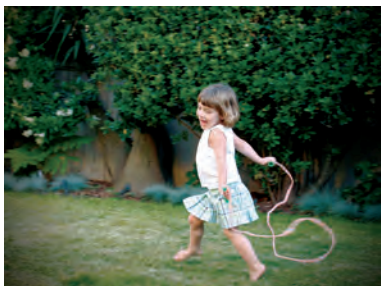
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*For my mother, who has encouraged me
and believed in me from the beginning,
and Michael, my inspiring, supportive visionary.*

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Introduction

Photography is a synthesis of so many things I care about — art, technology, creative expression, and connecting with people.

As a child, photography books like *The Family of Man* and pictures in the old family photo box mesmerized me. I didn't have an understanding of the mechanics of a camera and wasn't aware of basic composition, but I was drawn to the people in the photographs — their expressions, emotions, and relationships.

Inspired to create my own images, as an adult I began the journey toward becoming a photographer. The image shown here resonates with my sense of that journey — reaching out to explore the world of creativity and expression and connecting with it on a personal level. Along the way I've educated my “eye” in design, learned to “see” light in a different way, and now use my camera and equipment as tools for creating photographs that capture parts of people's lives.

This book is my effort to help you understand the technology and the basics for developing an artistic eye and to give you real-life techniques for connecting with, and photographing, people. Whether you are a beginning digital photographer with a compact camera or a more seasoned photo enthusiast with a DSLR, you will find the information you need to help advance your photography skills when photographing people in any situation, and those skills can take you far beyond just snapshots in any genre of photography!

My goal is to inform, inspire, and provide you with the skills and confidence to successfully use the digital camera as a tool to create and capture meaningful moments.



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WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE

OBSERVE AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

COMPOSE YOUR PICTURE

UNDERSTAND LIGHT

KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

COMPACT DIGITAL CAMERAS

DSLR CAMERAS

CHOOSE LENSES FOR YOUR DSLR



Before you dive headlong into your pursuit of photographing people, it is helpful to know some basics about how to best approach your subject, compose the photo, recognize the lighting, and use the equipment you have at your disposal. This chapter outlines these basics to get you started right as you begin to photograph people — whether a candid shot or a posed portrait.

OBSERVE AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

A person's appearance, personality, and relationships are interesting and unique, but how do you capture any of this in a photograph? Take the time to notice a person's special qualities, observe how they react, and make an effort to authentically connect. People want to feel respected, appreciated, and comfortable, and if you show an interest in them, they will respond to you and your camera. When you are photographing people, you are in a relationship, whether it lasts for a few minutes, a few hours, or a lifetime.

WHO ARE YOU PHOTOGRAPHING?

Decide what interests you about the person. Maybe the person has bright red hair and freckles, piercing green eyes, or a furrowed brow-of-experience. In addition to noting the unique physical attributes of your subject, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the relationship you have with this person?
- What is the relationship between the people you are photographing?

- What message are you trying to convey?
- What is the intent of this image?

These are all questions to think about when you plan to take pictures of people. Everyone interprets the world a little differently; show the world what you see in this person. For example, in 1-1, you'd never have known that Dylan was shy at first and quite serious. After a few funny stories, we laughed, and he felt comfortable enough to let me get up close and photograph his great freckles.

CAPTURE A SPECIAL MOMENT

A moment in time — that is what a photograph captures. But what is a special moment? How do you find it, and how do you encourage it?

One of my favorite photographers, Henri Cartier-Bresson, defines the decisive moment in a photograph as “the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression.” Whew! My translation — in a nanosecond, you must identify a special moment, have an intuitive sense of composition, and express what you see by capturing it with a camera.

You as the photographer need to decide when that moment occurs, whether it's a glance, an emotion, or a gesture that you think is important. You find that moment by observing what is going on around you and capturing it with technical confidence.

DIRECTING PEOPLE

There are two “directing” extremes when photographing people. One is to observe and be stealth-like in your approach; however, your

ABOUT THIS PHOTO *An authentic personality is easy to catch if you and your subject share a laugh.*
Taken at ISO 400, f/3.5, 1/60 sec. with a Canon Macro EF 50mm f/2.5 lens.



subjects may never know you are photographing them and have no connection to you or the camera. The other extreme is to pose people and demand a certain look, which may result in an unnatural-looking photograph with no depth of character or personality. I think there are many shades of gray between these two extremes, and choosing the best approach depends on what you intend to capture. Throughout this book I share some ideas, stories, and techniques that I have used to connect with people and encourage that special moment.

The following is a story about how I directed and connected with a four-year-old named Sophia,

who initially was not too happy about having her photograph taken, as shown in 1-2.

When I arrived at Sophia's house to photograph her family, she was intimidated by the activity, the photo equipment, and the presence of two people she didn't know: my assistant and me. She ran from us as we walked in the door. I had my camera, lenses, a tripod, diffuser, and reflectors along with some props: bubbles, a mirror, and long swaths of fabric netting. My goal was to create special family photographs depicting relationships and capturing special moments.

ABOUT THIS PHOTO *At first, Sophia felt I was an intruder. I like this picture, because she has a real expression on her face. Taken at ISO 200, f/4.0, 1/350 sec. with a Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L lens.*

1-2



I began the shoot by talking with everyone and gathering them all together for various shots where they were casually positioned, both standing and sitting. We laughed and conversed between the shots. When I was shooting the pictures, I kept talking and gave them feedback about how they looked and direction on what to do.

I moved the family to the backyard, turned on some music, and helped Sophia blow bubbles in an effort to gain her confidence. I gave her some fabric netting to play with, and still defiant, she gave a sourpuss look off-camera. It took a while

to build the trust, but eventually I was able to capture some great action shots of Sophia running around in the backyard, oblivious to being photographed, as shown in 1-3 and 1-4, capturing the kind of special moments I'd hoped for.



tip

When you're having your picture taken, you can't see how you look, which makes some people very self-conscious. People need feedback from their photographer. Encouraging comments and direction really help your subjects loosen up in front of the lens.