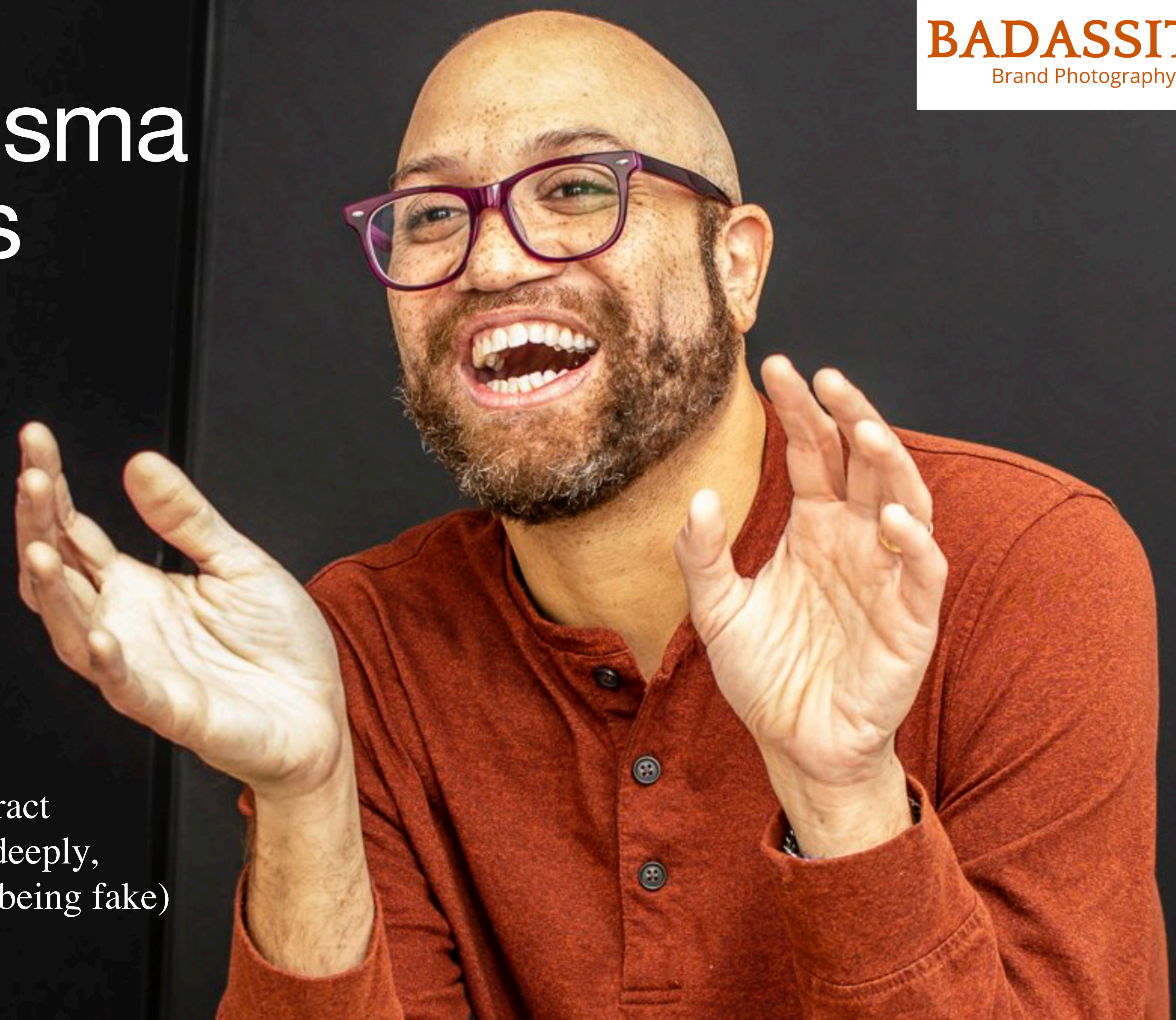


# Visual Charisma for Coaches

Elevate your online authority, attract next-level clients, connect more deeply, and create more impact (without being fake)



# Welcome

Are you a veteran transformational coach, consultant, speaker or author struggling to stand out in a crowded marketplace? Are you keen to take your business to the next level — in visibility, authority, relationship-building?

Words alone won't get you noticed. They require too much time and effort from the reader to get noticed. While you're busy explaining your value, your client has already scrolled you by.

DIY selfies and re-purposed photos won't set you apart. They frankly make you look like a dilettante. Again, your potential clients pass you by.

Conventional headshots won't work. They are frankly boring and position you as just another generic, cookie-cutter "professional". Your uniqueness doesn't come through.

The way to stand out in a crowded marketplace is to communicate your singular presence visually -- in an instant -- with vivid, authentic personal brand images that give potential clients the sense that there is something unique about you that meets their unspoken need. I call this *visual charisma*.

Here's a simple guide to visual charisma to take your personal brand photography to the next level.

Dan Lewis  
Brand Illumination Photographer



# What is Visual Charisma?

Recently I was reading an article on what makes Vogue covers so iconic and special, and I ran across an expression: VISUAL CHARISMA

Boom! That's exactly what I'm after when I photograph my clients. (And what every transformational leader deserves.) Visual charisma is the name of my game.

For me charisma is not some special, supernatural endowment granted only to the cool kids or specially heroic individuals. It's simply the essence of you -- fully aligned and congruent -- inspired, empowered, and creatively expressed. THAT'S what I want to create in the personal brand images of my clients.

That's what these iconic magazine covers like Vogue express about their subjects. They possess:

**Presence** - the arresting sense that this individual is truly present before me in this photograph

**Uniqueness** - the individuality of this person is focus of the image

**Congruence** of every element of the photograph, which reads as confidence

**Iconic** - the individual in this image stands for and expresses something larger than themselves

**Expressive Style** - the formal qualities of the photograph are distinctive and add to the charisma of the individual

And that's why I created a creative process to draw out and express the unique essence of my clients in memorable, eye-catching images.

That is my desire for you in every photograph I make.



**Seven Jobs Your Personal  
Brand Images Should Be  
Accomplishing for You**

# 1. Capture attention amongst a sea of online faces

The internet is crowded with faces competing for my attention. A creative, vivid image of you can stop the scroll long enough to take a look at what you have to offer.

Matt is a marketing consultant and teacher who also does styling, lighting, and photography for glam rock acts. Matt's image is arresting for four reasons:

1. The direct, unapologetic gaze of those green eyes. They stop me cold every time I look at this image.
2. The idiosyncratic 360 degree fur collar is edgy and out there. (The classic stone background further accentuates the contemporary collar.) What's his story? I'm curious about him.
3. Matt's clasped hands add a deeper, reflective quality to him . Again, what's his story? I feel there's more to him than meets the eye.
4. The tilted background suggests offbeat, disruptive.

Obviously, this is not a run-of-the-mill business headshot. This guy has something going on I may want to connect with. Or not. Polarizing responses are a good thing.



## 2. Create an Emotional Connection

Every client engagement is a budding relationship. And creating that relationship begins before you ever meet. When a potential client sees your image on your website or social media you want them to feel drawn to you at an emotional level. Your image should spark that "You had me at hello" moment.

One key way to create emotional connection with you is making literal eye contact in your photographs.

Notice how your eye is drawn immediately to the direct eye contact in coach Beryl's image. Beryl is a warm, welcoming presence with all her clients, and it shows in her photo. I get the sense of a connection with a person, not just what Beryl looks like.

Contrast this photo with the unfocused, deer-in-the-headlights looks you see in many headshots. There's a lack of presence and authentic engagement, and so no sense of connection. (Beryl's "before" photo, while attractive, just doesn't connect as deeply.)

Are your personal brand images creating emotional connection that will draw new clients?



### 3. Express your unique way of being present with your clients

What's the singular way you show up for your clients? What qualities of BEING do you bring into a room?

Coach Roxanne came to me recently wanting new personal brand images that would reflect her focus on executive coaching at this stage of her career.

As we solicited reflections from Roxanne's clients, the words trust, grounded, and listener kept emerging. And on our calls together she showed up as this rock-solid, grounding presence who genuinely cares.

THAT'S what we wanted to be sure to express in her photos.

I knew immediately I wanted to place Roxanne in a context of stone for its solidity and stability. (Notice how the gentle arc of the window ridges subtly softens any harsh edges. And how the tangled chaos of vines in the background contrasts with the dependability of the stone.)

Roxanne has an exquisite sense of style and picked a vivid blue leather jacket with a non-traditional cut that works so well with her blue glasses. There's another contrast at work here as well: a traditional setting paired with a contemporary wardrobe. Compelling photos are the result of just this kind of vivid contrast.

The result is an arresting expression of Roxanne's wisdom, solidity, and trustworthiness.



## 4. Establish your professional authority

Your potential client comes to your website looking for an expert who can help them solve their problem or get them what they want. "Can you help me?" is the question that colors all of their perceptions of your site. As I view your photo, does this look like the expert who can deliver the results I want?

I call this authority.

Whatever your skill, expertise, super power, or result, you want to convey - at an emotional level - that you've indeed got the goods. You're an authority. It's got to come across in your photo. Simply a pleasant, "nice guy" won't do.

Here's a high-authority photo of leadership thought leader Dan.

- The darkness of the image and Rembrandt shadows lend a gravitas to Dan. There's a seriousness of purpose here.
- His piercing gaze is arresting and no-nonsense.
- The way he holds his glasses reinforces his gaze. It's a little cliché, but I think it works.
- His mouth is neutral. He's not "making nice" or softening his edge to be more approachable.

Dan's image is a more extreme example of how authority works in brand images. How well do your brand images convey your professional authority?





## 5. Radiate your relatability

Unfortunately, we've all dealt with knowledgeable experts who are, frankly, not a joy to work with. Once you've established your ability to deliver results, the second question on your potential client's mind is, can I work with this individual? Can they relate to me?

This quality is important for any profession, but particularly so for high-touch, high-relationship professions such as therapists and coaches. Professional relationships in which a degree of vulnerability on the part of the client is required.

Here's a photo of psychotherapist Brianna. Her essence words include heart, centered, and humility. Brianna is approachability and empathy personified.

Her warm welcoming smile radiates.  
Her body language is wide open and relaxed.  
Her outfit is relaxed and soft. The color palette is soft, pastel.  
The roughness of the bricks accentuates the softness of Brianna by way of contrast.

You'll want your relatability photo to go beyond simply being inoffensively pleasant! You want to really express warm, active welcome.

How well do your brand images convey your warmth and welcome?



## 6. Build anticipation of new possibilities

Your clients want to meet someone who can rock their world. They want to taste the possibility of real change in their lives and businesses through engagement with you.

Let's face it. A conventional headshot puts you in a generic box. But real possibility is all about breaking out of our boxes! Shouldn't your signature images break the mold and prepare your clients to encounter new possibilities?

Your personal brand photographs should be as unique and unconventional as you are.

Darrick is a Unitarian minister and one of the most joyous people I've ever met. Besides ministry Darrick has a background in theater, acting and improvisation. We determined his essence words include: Welcoming Warmth, Grounded Grace, and Joyous Play.

In our photo session, I coached Darrick to talk with his hands. The broad, laugh-out-loud smile and those expressive hands express Darrick's unconventionality perfectly.

Don't settle for "nice" in your personal brand photos. Lean into your edge, your difference, to suggest new possibilities.



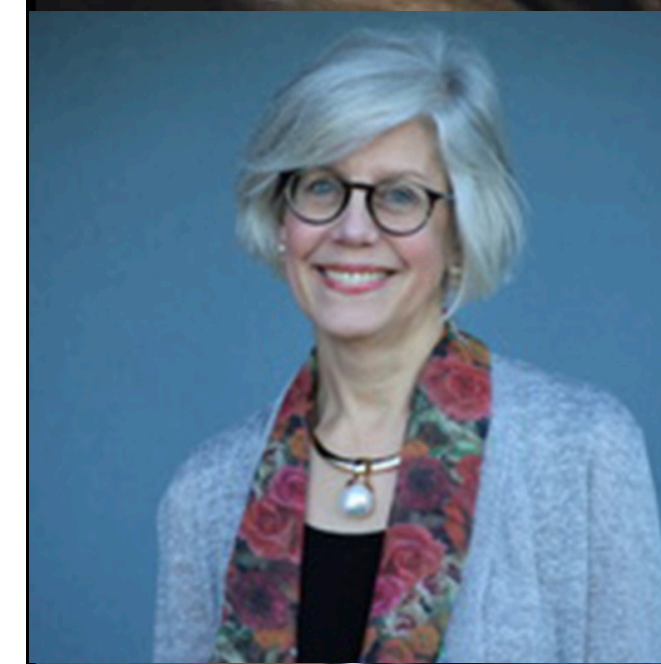
## 7. Inspire action

Ultimately you want your potential clients to take some action to respond to you. You've got some call to action on your home page, your landing page, contact page, social media post, or email, and now it's up to the to your site visitor to book a discovery session, download your lead magnet, or sign up for your program.

I have a lot to say about contact pages, but I'll make just one point. You want to make saying yes to you as warm and connected an experience as possible. And that means means connecting that act to you personally. You want your site visitor to feel that they are saying yes to a person, to YOU with the warmest, most welcoming image of yourself you have. This inviting, "come out and play" image is one of the core images of your essential image portfolio. (Aren't you continually making invitations in your marketing?)

Here's a warm, welcoming image of coach Karen. A genuine smile (smiling with her eyes.) And notice how the point of view of the image is looking down on Karen sitting on steps. It subtly makes her more approachable. Her wardrobe is elevated but casual. I want to say yes to Karen.

Are your invitations to take action genuinely personal - connected to YOU?



# Are your current personal brand images working for you?

Now let's take a look at the brand images you're presently using.

Pull up each of your brand images on your monitor. Put yourself in the shoes of a potential client who has never encountered you. Answer each of the questions (opposite) as honestly and objectively as you can.

Rate each image on a 1-10 scale how well it fulfills each job.

Some tips:

Be kind to yourself. Remember these images are not you. They are a 1/125th of a second slice of your ever-flowing expressions, filtered through a lens, an image sensor, and a photographer's eye and reflexes.

Have a laugh. Start the exercise with your driver's license photo!

A given photo won't do all seven jobs. Authority images and relatability images tend to work in opposite directions, for example. The goal is to cover all these functions across your portfolio of images. (Don't have a portfolio of personal brand images? Let's talk!)



For each current image, ask:

1. **Capture attention.** Does this image make an instant impression? View the image on your phone at arm's length. Does it still make an impression?
2. **Create an emotional connection.** Do you get a clear feeling about this person when viewing the image? What feeling exactly?
3. **Express your unique way of being with your clients.** Based only on the photo, what qualities does the person in this image possess?
4. **Establish your professional authority.** Does the person in the image convey professional authority? How so?
5. **Radiate your relatability.** Does the person in the image convey warm approachability? How so?
6. **Build anticipation of new possibilities.** Does the person in the image break out of the box of conventionality in some way? How so?
7. **Inspire action.** Am I genuinely drawn to connect with this person? Do I want to meet them?

# The BADASSITY Brand-Essence Process

It takes a process to uncover, express, and communicate your uniqueness. You can't just dress up, show up and shoot.

## 1 Name It - Uncover your hidden badassity

First we'll uncover and name the most important thing you offer: the singular way you show up for others. I call this your essence. Step into that essence, truly own it, and you've found your badassity. Distinguishing and communicating this unique edge will set you apart from everyone else competing for clients' attention. And it's what we'll express in your images.



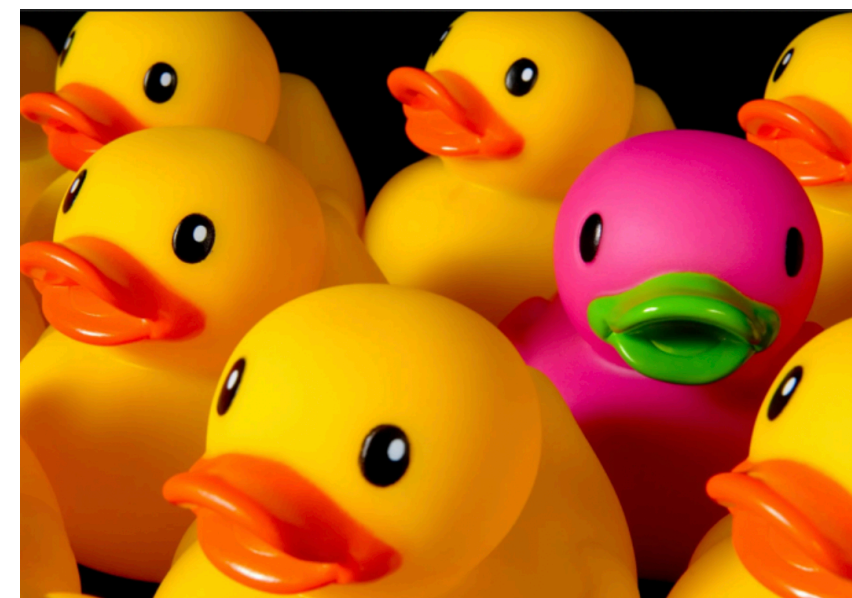
## 2 Design your unique visual story

Next we'll custom design your visual story to convey that badass brand-essence. To tell your story we'll use every element -- color, compositional geometry, point of view, creative lighting, motion, wardrobe, setting, emotion, body language -- to catch the eye and say, "Here is a man or woman that's up to something you want to be part of."



## 3 Express yourself in confident images

Now it's time for your photo session! I get it. We all get self-conscious in front of the camera. That's why my process includes coaching that gets you connected to yourself — which is the source of all true confidence and authentic expression. And why I approach every photo session like a play date with a mischievous co-conspirator!



# Client Testimonials

I'm a repeat customer. I knew I'd get a portrait, not a head shot, and I knew Dan would put a lot of thought into it.

The thinking starts with a consultation before the photo shoot. First we talked about what kind of photos I need for my work as a writer, and what my "brand" is as an author – that is, what kind of personality shines through my writing. We discussed clothing and places that would convey my personality without being cliché.

Then, during the shoot, he kept things relaxed and fun.

I love the results. I think I look like someone who enjoys their work, and that's exactly me. He captured who I am beautifully.

Sue Burke, Author

After talking with a colleague about his new headshot, I learned about Dan and his unique approach to helping you define your professional persona as well as capture the essence of who you are as a person in your photo.

Working with Dan was fun. The combination of coaching and professional photography is unique and just what I needed. Through his coaching I identified key elements of what defines me as an executive coach. The photos he took of me capture my "essence" and I'm now ready to move forward with my branding efforts.

If you are looking for someone who is not only a gifted photographer, but also kind, a great listener and coach, Dan is your guy.

Roxanne Hori, Executive Coach

I'm an independent business consultant working with digital health companies, foundations, and nonprofits. I was looking for a picture that conveyed more than a traditional headshot - one that showed my personality, conveyed humanity, and was differentiating. I didn't know that when I signed on to work with Dan, I would get that and so much more. Dan helped me launch the public face of my business. He spent the time to really get to know me, and in addition to beautiful strong photos, he helped me crystalize my value proposition, gather client testimonials, and sharpen my website. And most important, we had fun working together!

Arianna Klitziner, Business Consultant

I'm an executive and leadership coach. I've been working with Dan Lewis for the last month or so to shoot a new series of professional portraits following a bone marrow stem cell transplant I underwent last year. I wanted to know how other people see me and if they see me differently than they did before my cancer diagnosis and treatment.

A certified coach and photographer, Dan helped me clarify my coaching value proposition and gave me some great advice on reworking my website along the way. I can't recommend Dan highly enough, especially if you're a coach or independent consultant looking to better understand how you create value for your clients and how photography can help communicate that value.

Eric Fridman, Executive Coach

Dan is more than a person behind the camera. He is an artist. There is a reason Dan calls his company badassity - he captures and highlights each client's uniqueness and strengths. He took the time to get to know me and what I wanted from my headshots, consulted on my wardrobe, and chose a setting to match what I was going for in photos. The results far exceeded my expectations and captured me - all of me, not just the surface me - and it shows in his work. During the photoshoot, Dan was a delight. We laughed, joked, and had a blast together. He truly captured my unique badassity.

Ashley Donohue, Coach and Project Manager

Dan Lewis at Badassity Photography is an absolute gem. Not only does he have a wonderful self discovery exercise long before the session begins that is heart warming and brings in your thoughts so Dan can truly understand the essences that make up you, but he is fun to work with, talented while taking photos, is a great coach and extremely patient, especially with someone like me who is very uncomfortable and awkward in front of the camera. He worked with me all morning to bring out expression in my "dead face" (my words, not his), and we had such a fun time working together.

If you are looking for professional or personal photos that bring out the deepest parts of you that sometimes we are not privy to seeing the way others are, Dan is your guy!! I am so grateful to have spent half the day with Dan in Chicago and I will absolutely be back.

Sam Bergdahl, Marketing Consultant

## About Dan

Dan Lewis is a Chicago-based personal brand photographer, presence coach, and artist. He helps coaches, consultants, entrepreneurs, and other transformational leaders crystalize their uniqueness in vivid, authentic photos that get noticed and connect. Dan created Badassity Brand Photography ([www.badassity.com](http://www.badassity.com)) to empower his clients' online presence by shifting from vanilla headshot conventionality to iconic magazine-cover-worthy visual charisma.

A passionate student of all things human, Dan holds an A.M. degree in religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School. He has studied photography at the Art Institute of Chicago, coaching with ICF-certified Accomplishment Coaching, dramatic writing at Chicago Dramatists Workshop and improvisation at the Second City Training Center. Dan has coached creatives and entrepreneurs for over 20 years and taught compelling communication at the University of Chicago's Graham School of Continuing Studies.

He lives six blocks from Wrigley Field on the north side of Chicago and travels with his wife Rosalind to Europe for artistic inspiration.



# **Are you ready to elevate your business?**

**Are you a coach, consultant or transformational leader committed to growing your online authority?**

**Do you desire to connect more deeply with your ideal clients?**

**Are you committed to being boldly visible in service of sharing your unique gifts with right-fit clients?**

**Schedule an illumination session today**

<https://calendly.com/badassity/consultation>

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