



Visual Charisma for Coaches

7 Ways to Attract More Right-Fit
Clients with Vivid Personal Brand
Photography

Dan Lewis
Brand Illumination Photographer

Welcome! I'm Dan Lewis.

I'm so glad you found *Visual Charisma for Coaches*!

Are you a seasoned transformational coach, consultant, speaker, or leader keen to take your business to the next level — in visibility, authority, relationship-building, and impact?

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

Generic stock photos won't set you apart. They make you look like a tired clone of everyone else. Again, your potential clients pass you by.

Conventional headshots fall short. They're frankly boring — and position you as just another commodified, cookie-cutter "professional". **Your uniqueness doesn't come through.**

A key way to elevate your visibility, authority, and impact is to **presence yourself visually** — in an instant — with vivid, authentic personal brand images that give right-fit clients the sense that there is something unique about you that meets their unspoken need. I call this *visual charisma*.

Here's a simple introduction to visual charisma — customized for coaches — to **take your personal brand photography to the next level.**

Own your badassity!

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Charisma? Who, Me?

Unsure about that word *charisma* applied to you? I get it. We're all schooled to be modest, and *charisma* just seems too much.

But for me charisma isn't some supernatural endowment granted only to movie stars, the cool kids, or specially heroic individuals. It's simply **the essence of you — aligned, inspired, empowered.**

Charisma is a power and attractiveness rooted in your unique way of showing up in the world — be it loud or quiet, bold or gentle, edgy or soft, yin or yang, masculine or feminine. It's simply YOU, unimpeded, unapologetic, authentic. We often call it confidence.

That's what iconic magazine covers like Vogue or GQ express about their subjects with *visualized* charisma. These images typically possess:

An **arresting presence** - A vivid, unapologetic image with real presence commands your attention.

A **distinctive uniqueness** - The individuality of this person is focus of the image. (The conventional business headshot puts you in a box of mere inoffensive pleasantness.)

A **dynamic harmony** - Every element of the image — setting, wardrobe, body language, expression, composition — comes together to say something about this individual.

An **expressive style** - The pictorial qualities of the photograph are distinctive and enhance the charisma of the individual.

And that's why I developed a creative process to draw out and express your unique essence in memorable, eye-catching images with visual charisma. **You deserve no less.**



Seven Key Ways Your Personal Brand Images Should Be Working 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 instructor 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 sets off the contemporary collar by contrast.) 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 something offbeat or 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. **Be clear who you're for. And who you're not.**



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 by making literal eye contact in your photographs.

Notice how your eye is drawn immediately to coach Beryl's direct gaze. As human beings we're hard-wired to read faces — and especially eye contact. Beryl is a warm, welcoming presence with all her clients, and it shows in her photo. I get the sense of a direct connection with a person, not just here's what Beryl looks like.

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

Are your personal brand photos 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 that encounter?

Coach Roxanne came to me 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 contemporary cut that works so well with her blue glasses. There's another contrast at work here as well: a traditional setting paired with a hip, contemporary wardrobe. **Compelling photos are often the result of just this kind of juxtaposition of opposites.**

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?

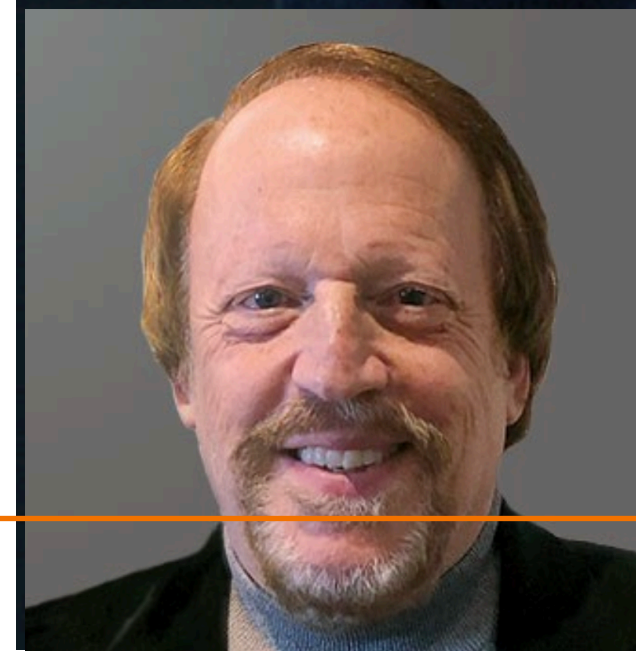
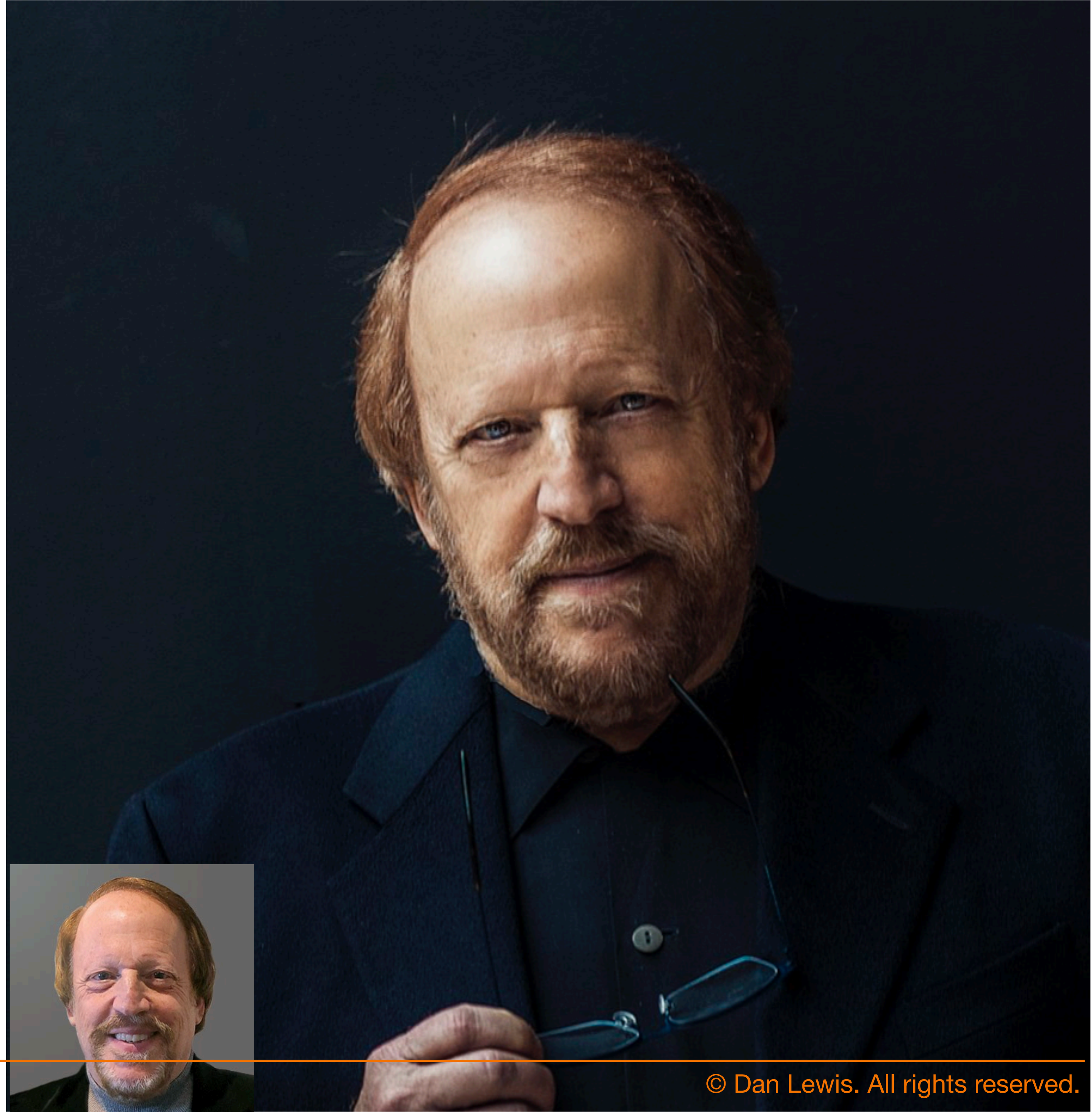
I call this authority.

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 thought leader Dan.

- The darkness of the image and Rembrandt lighting lend a gravitas to Dan. There's a seriousness and weightiness of purpose here.
- His piercing gaze is arresting and no-nonsense.
- The way Dan 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 or ingratiating.

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



5. Radiate your relatable humanity.

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 person? Can they relate to me and I to them?

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 higher degree of vulnerability and candor on the part of the client is often 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 acceptance.
- Her body language is wide open and relaxed.
- Her outfit is relaxed and soft. The color palette is soft, pastel, nonconfrontational.
- 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.

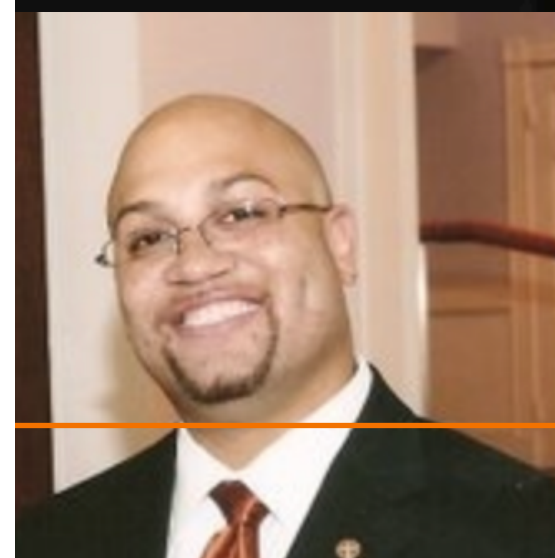
Let's face it. A conventional headshot puts you in a generic box. But real possibility is all about breaking out of our boxes! Shouldn't your signature images break the mold and prepare your clients to encounter new possibilities?

If you're unconventional, your personal brand photographs should be as provocative 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, we decided to focus on his joy and playfulness. 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 right-fit clients to take action.

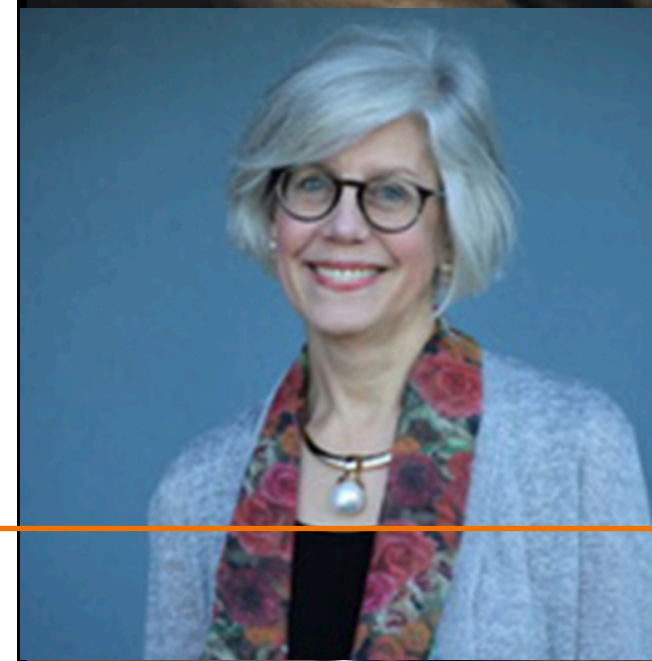
Ultimately you want your potential clients to take some action to respond to you. You've got some call to action on your home page, your landing page, contact page, social media post, or email, and now it's up to your site visitor to book a discovery session, download your lead magnet, or sign up for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



How well are your current brand photos working for you?

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

Pull up each of your brand photos on your computer monitor or phone. Put yourself in the shoes of a potential client who knows nothing about you, and answer each of the questions (opposite) as honestly and objectively as you can.

Rate each image on a 1-5 scale how well it fulfills each job.

Some tips:

Be kind to yourself. Remember these images are not the full truth of you. They are a 1/125th of a second slice of your ever-flowing expressions, filtered through a lens, an image sensor, and a particular 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!)

Capture attention. Does this image make an instant impression? View it on your phone at arm's length. Does it still make an impression?

☐

Create an emotional connection. Do you get a clear feeling toward this person when viewing the image? What feeling exactly?

☐

Express your unique way of being with your clients. Based only on this photo, what qualities does the person in this image possess?

☐

Establish your professional authority. Does the person in the photo convey professional authority? How so?

☐

Radiate your relatable humanity. Does the person in the photo convey warm approachability and humanity? How so?

☐

Build anticipation of new possibilities. Does the person in the image break out of the conventionality box in some way? How so?

☐

Inspire action. Am I genuinely drawn to connect with this person? Do I want to meet them?

☐

The BADASSITY Brand-Essence Process

Visual charisma takes a **process** to uncover and express your uniqueness. You can't just dress up, show up, and shoot to achieve next-level results.



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 in service of 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..



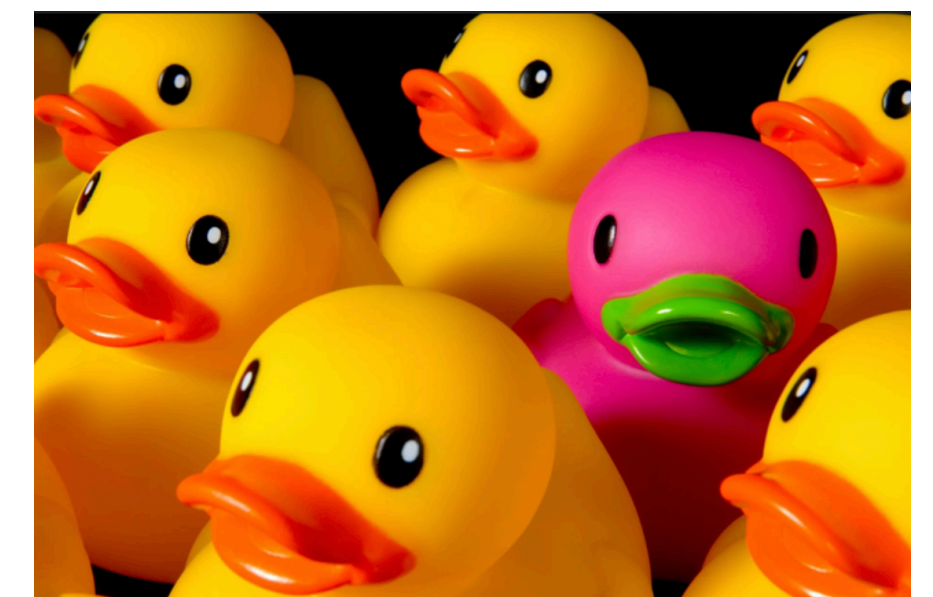
2 Frame It Design your unique visual story

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 Play It Express YOU 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 presence 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

Captured who I am beautifully

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

Gifted photographer, great listener, and coach

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

Didn't know I would get so much more than a photographer

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

Helped me clarify my coaching value proposition

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

Captured all me me — not just the surface me

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

A talent for drawing out the essence of a person

I have known Dan Lewis for many years and consider him the best headshot photographer I have ever worked with. He has a talent for drawing out the essence of a person—not just making them look good. He is also fun to work with, quirky, witty, and it is clear that he is also open to learning from his clients to be better at his craft. I HIGHLY recommend him!!

Beryl Stromsta, Life Coach

I felt beautiful in this no matter what

Dan has a wonderful presence and asked great questions about what I wanted to convey through my headshots. He gave great coaching to me in holding my poses and also walked me through the whole process. We partnered on deciding on what outfits/jewelry/makeup would show up best in the shots. I think the best thing about Dan is how he makes me feel inside — this is a vulnerable process — and I felt beautiful in this no matter what. I felt his intention to create images I loved. I'd highly recommend Dan!

Jillian Eichel-Dobray, Life and Relationship Coach

About Me

I'm a Chicago-based personal brand illumination photographer, presence coach, and artist. I help coaches, consultants, entrepreneurs, and other transformational leaders crystalize their uniqueness in vivid, authentic photos that get noticed and connect. I created Badassity Brand Photography (www.badassity.com) to empower my clients' online presence by shifting from vanilla headshot conventionality to iconic magazine-cover-worthy visual charisma.

I'm a passionate student of all things human. I hold an A.M. degree in religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School. I've 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. Call me a mash-up, a patchwork, or a confluence of many streams, I've coached creatives and entrepreneurs for over 20 years.

I live six blocks from Wrigley Field on the north side of Chicago and love to travel with my wife Rosalind to Europe for artistic inspiration. (Also got a thing for history and ruins.)

No one is you-er than you. Be more you.

Dan Lewis
Brand Illumination Photographer



Ready to elevate your business?

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

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

Schedule a brand illumination session today!

<https://www.badassity.com/contact>

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