



PHOTOS *without* FEAR

How to show your face without freaking out

WWW.REBECCAHOLMESPHTOGRAPHY.COM

Hello!

I'm a people photographer and film maker, Mum of three girls, recovering photo-avoider and regular gin sampler.

**I create out of the ordinary
photography for big-hearted folk.**

I capture what makes you unique - in your business, and in your family.



I understand first hand...

My friends tell me that this is a lovely, relaxed photo of me in my 'happy place' - my garden.

But what do I see?

- Big tummy
- Double, saggy chin
- Thin hair
- Age lines
- Fat legs
- A face that's not good looking if it isn't smiling

(yes, a relative once told me I could 'get away with being fat because I had a nice smile'... really).



Why do I care about this stuff?

My girls already criticise their appearance, and they're just children.

95% of my clients find being in front of the camera difficult. They criticise themselves at least once, but usually multiple times throughout a session... And it's heartbreaking.

I've seen children as young as Primary 1 criticise how they look in photos.

The fact that I struggle to be in a photograph annoys me a LOT!



You might be thinking...
"That's ok... I don't need any photos of me"

think again

"My work speaks for itself I don't need to show up in my marketing!"

YES you do!

People buy from people.

They EASILY buy from people they feel they feel like they know, like and trust (think about if you've ever bought from a friend). Photos and film are the BEST way to build that know-like-trust factor.

We are hard wired to prefer faces to text or objects.

Our world is filled with imagery, to compete out you need to join in.



Would you be more enticed to buy from this person?



Hi there and welcome, it's so lovely to have you here!

If you've got this far I take it you're looking for something different?

Simple, considered and beautiful jewellery is what you'll find here at Molly Ginnelly Jewellery. I pride myself on making beautiful pieces of jewellery, going that extra mile and making the experience a lovely one for you.

So maybe you want to know a little about me and what I do? I'm Molly, the designer, maker and the creative being here at Molly Ginnelly Jewellery.

Working from my home studio on the Fife coastal path for over 10 years is the perfect place to be inspired and content in my work place. Often found walking the dog along the coastal path when I'm not working, it's a happy place to be right?!

I could happily live on tea and biscuits here at my little empire and my studio is always welcome for appointments to be made in person or by zoom or video call.



Or this one?



Hi there and welcome, it's so lovely to have you here!

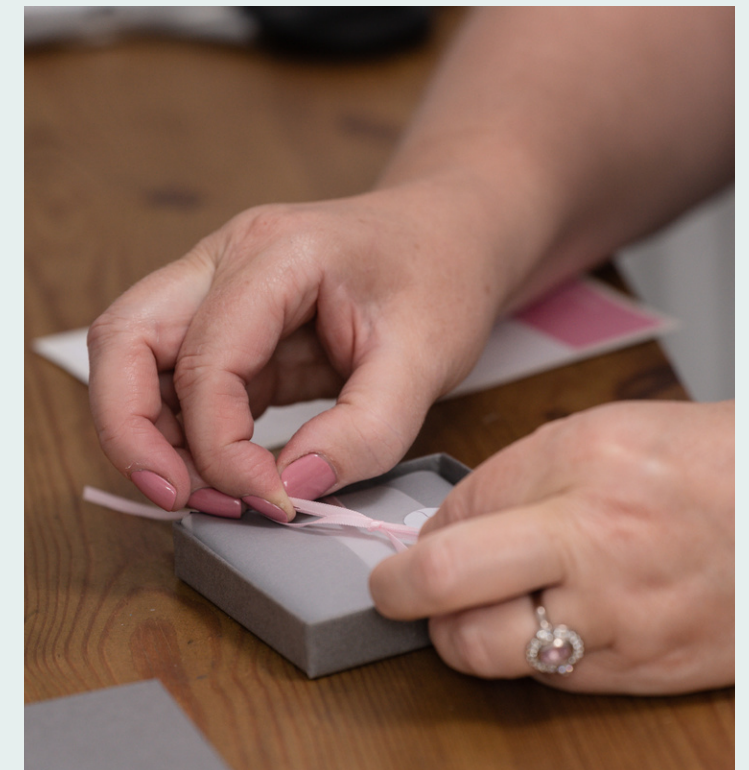
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"I don't need to be in photos with my family though..."

YES you do!

Your family need photographs of you to remember you by when you're gone.

It is a proven fact that children's self esteem is positively impacted when photographs of them with their loved ones are displayed around the home.

Photographs of you with your family cement the love you have for them, even when times are tough.



That's great Bec, but I'm sh*t scared
about being in front of the camera.

I hate myself in photos

My teeth are horrible

My tummy looks huge

My face looks silly

I've got a horrible double chin

I look tense in photos

No one wants to
see photos of me

But I look so old

I'm so awkward

Can you photoshop the
wrinkles?

Photos never look like me

I've got a really weird smile

I just want photos of the kids

I've put on too much
weight for photos

I'll break the camera

I haven't lost the baby weight

Can you photoshop off two stone?

I look 'fugly' in every photo I've ever seen of myself

Being in front of the camera can feel

Exposing
Too intimate
Awkward
Intimidating
Scary

Right?

But guess what?

There are scientifically researched,
legitimate psychological reasons why it's
so damn hard.



Self-enhancement bias

Gives us the tendency to think of our "own traits and abilities more favourably than is objectively warranted".*

Researchers showed people two photos of themselves - one true-to-life, one manipulated to look 'enhanced'. When asked to choose which looked most like them, people chose the manipulated photograph.

- Epley and Whitchurch 2008, p1159



Mere-exposure effect

The more we see something, the more we like it.

However, the image we see in the mirror is backwards to what everyone else sees – to what we see in photographs.

Research has shown that individuals prefer a mirror image of themselves, whereas other people prefer the images of that individual the right way round.

This is often why many people prefer selfies to a photograph taken by someone else – because a selfie is a mirror image.



We see what we want to see, or what we expect to see

What we think of ourselves forms what some psychologists refer to as a 'self-concept'.

We form a strong idea of who and what we think we are.

Our brain then feeds that idea back to us every time we look in the mirror, to confirm that what we think we know is true.

So if we approach the mirror or the photo with a self concept of 'I'm overweight and I have a big nose', then our brains are hard wired to show us exactly that... Regardless of whether it's true.





It's not socially acceptable

We are conditioned not to like photos of ourselves.

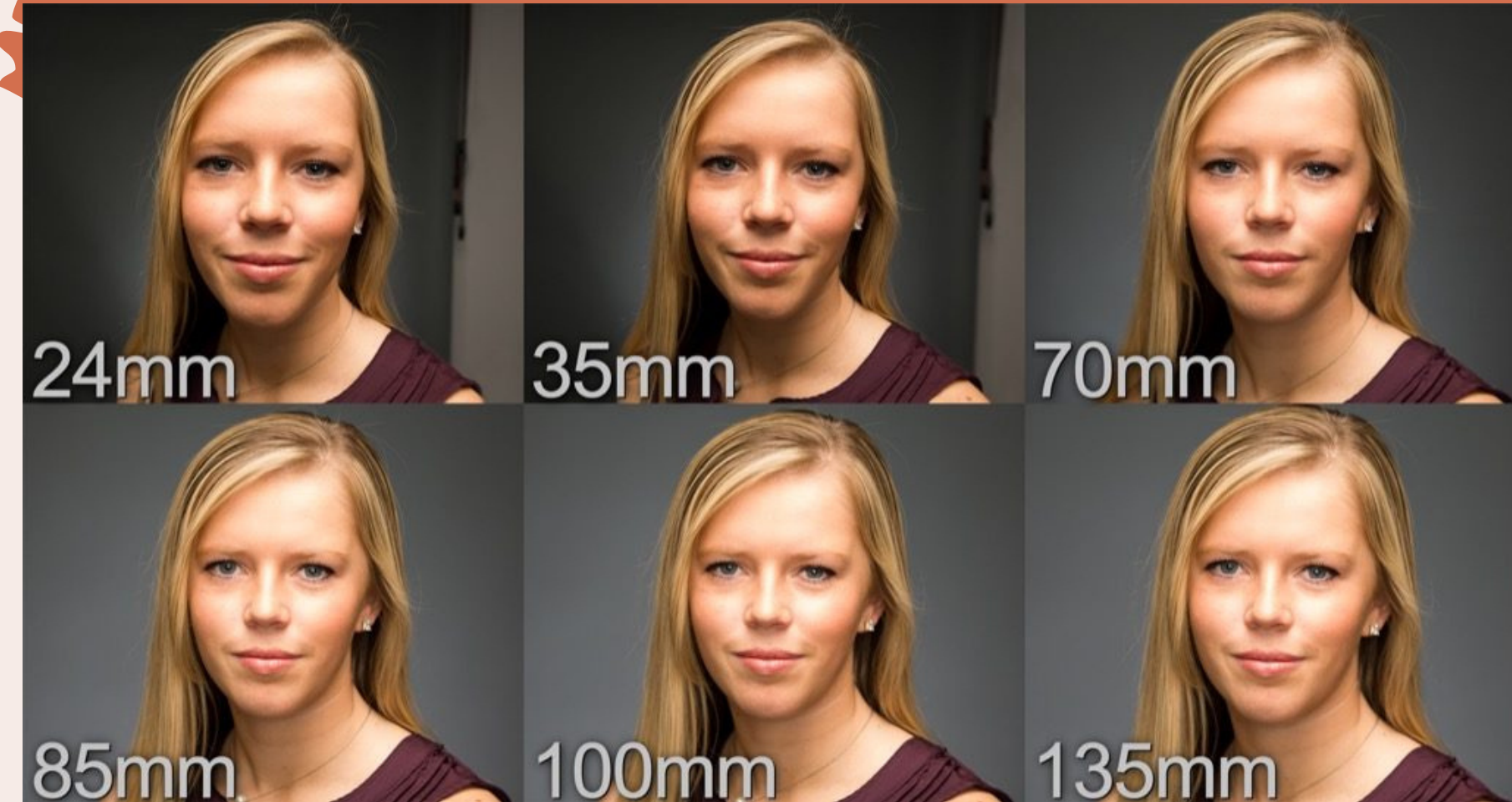
If we came out in public and said 'hey, that's a great photo of me' we'd be seen as big-headed, self centred and 'up ourselves'.

Society EXPECTS you to think badly of yourself - it's ingrained into our culture.

Cameras and lenses don't always help!

Different cameras and lenses (in particular) can distort our features so they look nothing like what we see in the mirror.

Which of these images is really her?



<https://www.dpmag.com/gear/lenses/picking-the-perfect-lens-for-portraits/>

It's not a wonder getting in front of a
camera is SO HARD!


Here's the key:

All of this is in YOUR head! Thoughts that can be challenged and changed.

What we think determines our reality.

Literally no one else thinks like this about you
- NO ONE.

Everyone else sees you just as you are.
They've been seeing you as you are for as long as they've known you.

A large, light blue circular brushstroke with a textured, hand-painted appearance is centered on a solid yellow background. The brushstroke has irregular, feathered edges and some darker blue accents, giving it a dynamic and artistic feel.

So how can we
feel better about
being in
photographs?



1.

Baby steps

See this as a self-development project, something that will take months, possibly years for you to improve.

Use photographs as an opportunity to practice acceptance and growth.

2.

Be clear on your 'Why'

Why are you doing this?

Is it for your business?

Is it for your family?

Is it for you?



3.

Comfort

Start by only taking photographs when you feel at your best - clothes you like, hair done.

Listen to your favourite music, have your favourite drink...

Make yourself feel good before attempting a photograph.

(Work your way up to make-up free photographs in your pyjamas)



4.

Get some distance

Take the photograph, then don't look at it - for days or weeks if needed.

Give yourself some distance between the emotion of having your photograph taken and the end result.



Affirmations

I look great, just as I am
Obstacles and challenges strengthen me
My work makes a difference
I am strong, confident and powerful
I am proud of myself!

All my thoughts and efforts lead me to the success I desire
I deserve to be seen in my business
I am grateful to be doing work I love and enjoy
I am driven by passion and purpose
I am stronger than my negative thoughts
I am going to give today my all and hold nothing back
I give today my all and hold nothing back.
My heart is filled with peace, love and joy
I love the person staring back at me in the mirror
I do not compare myself
I am grateful for my body - for everything it allows me to do
I choose to be kind to myself
I am proud of myself!

5.

Practice positive self talk and/or affirmations

Actually, practice them - in the mirror!

Rewire the well-trodden pathways of your brain.

(you can download these affirmations)

6.

Environment

Be somewhere you're comfortable.

A photography studio may be too intimidating, try outdoors or in your home or office instead.



7.

Laugh, play, have fun

Ditch the posed look and make the photographs more natural.

Interact with others in the photograph.





8.

Ask for help and be willing to accept it!

Ask a partner, child or friend to take more photographs of you... Then don't stop them from doing it!

Wait a week before looking at them.

Don't censor or delete! It might be uncomfortable but it will get easier.

There will be a day you are SO thankful for these photographs.

9.

Remind yourself

Collect photographs of other people who are important to you. Look at these and be thankful for them.

Regularly remind yourself that they had to be brave enough to be in the frame, in order for you to be able to cherish it.



10. Happy thoughts

Make a list of happy things to think about when someone points a camera at you.

Train yourself to shift your focus to those happy things.

"If you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely."

Roald Dahl





11.

Practice

Don't be afraid to practice how to stand/move/look in the mirror if you feel able.

Think about how to hold your body/head, what smile you like best.

Make sure to keep this an affirmative, positive process.

12.

Stop dismissing compliments

Challenge yourself to say 'thank you' when a compliment is given, rather than dismissing it or disagreeing with it.

If someone tells you that a photograph of you is a nice photo - believe them. They know what you truly look like much better than you do



13.

Acknowledge that you are who you are

Seeing a photograph of yourself that you don't love DOESN'T change anything.

You still look exactly like you do to everyone else around you.

We can say over and over again how much we hate ourselves in the mirror, but maybe that's a way to cope with living in a world where being anything other than 'perfect' is somehow 'less'.





14.

Be careful with selfies

Be careful taking selfies as they only make us feel more attractive about ourselves.

According to the research others actually prefer to see us the 'right way around'.

15.

See yourself through the
eyes of those who love
you and what you do

Your partner, your family

Your delighted customers!

Your friends

To your children, you are the world -
a superhero



16.

Use the mere-exposure effect to your advantage

The more we see something, the more we like it.

Use this to your advantage by gently exposing yourself to photographs of yourself more often.

Be gentle and kind to yourself, and trust that it will get easier with time.



17.

Remember that you won't actually feel better about this in the future

This photo is from when I was training as a professional dancer. I was at my fittest and strongest.

(forgive the crazy costume)

I remember thinking EXACTLY the same things about my photograph and my body then, as I do now.

Others who I've questioned have reported the same. Time has NOT made it easier.

This is a MIND thing, not a body thing.





18.

Don't go it alone

If this is a BIG thing for you, please seek professional help. Chances are this is impacting other areas of your life too.

There are many wonderful counsellors who could help you through this.



19.

Find a lovely professional photographer

Find a professional photographer with experience in helping the photo-shy feel comfortable and love their photos.

Look for someone you can warm to, who you can trust and be honest with. The right photographer should feel like a dear friend.

Ideally you want someone with specific training in posing and capturing all your best angles.

And definitely someone who is willing to work with you until you have a set of photos you are proud of.



20.

Celebrate the wins

When you get a photo of yourself you love (and you will!)...

Frame it! Celebrate it!



"You yourself

as much as anybody in the entire universe,
deserve your love and affection"

BUDDHA

I am proud of
myself

I am perfect and complete just as I am

**Oh yes, please take
my photo!**

I look great in these photos

I am loved

Now I can confidently
show up in my business

**Wow! I love that
photo of me!**

I am beautiful

I deserve my own love and respect

**My mind is kind to
my body**

I am becoming more
confident in my own skin
every day

I love my body as it is
today

I choose how I feel about my _____

I deserve to be seen

I am thankful I am me

I am what I am
And what I am needs no
excuses!

Feeling brave enough to give it a try?

Use the hashtag #recoveringphotoavoider

Resources

- 'The Ultimate Guide to Brand Photography in Edinburgh'
- PDF of this presentation
- A printable copy of some useful affirmations
- 'How to Take Wall-worthy photos: 30 tips for novice photographers'

All of these resources can be found for free at

www.rebeccaholmesphotography.com/no-ties-networking



A small selection of
photos of me that
took a LOT of
courage to share 😊

Stay in touch

I mostly hang out on Instagram or LinkedIn

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@rebeccaholmesphotography

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