**Your Guide to Looking Great In Portraits**

 I know, I know, that title is about as bland as it gets! But I want to make sure *you* don’t look bland in your pictures. This is nothing fancy, just a few hints and tips to help you get the most out of this. Much of this advice is for both guys and gals, so it’s pretty “unisex.” Hope you don’t mind!

 First thing? Your skin. You may not realize it, but it’s the largest organ in your body.

And it’s actually the first thing people notice when they see you, consciously or not. If you’re having a breakout, take care of it, of course, but it’s not a disaster. There *is* this thing called “photo editing” - and I’m not bad at it. So don’t run and hide, okay? But, yeah, it’s better if I *don’t* have to PhotoShop it. And maybe get a facial, or use a face mask. Yeah, you too, guys!

 Use some petroleum jelly around your eyes, and on your smile lines the night before the shoot. *Yeah, you too, guys!* It’s not the manliest thing in the world, but it’s just for one night. Can you stand that? I use it every night…and people have never guessed my age correctly. Seriously.

 Girls, do a run-through with your makeup, either with a makeup artist if you’re hiring one, or with yourself, if you‘re doing it. We need to talk about the kind of light I’ll use during the shoot, too. Here’s why: the light the photographer uses for the shoot is the kind of light you need to use to put your makeup on. Makeup really does look different in different light. And it can either look too heavy or too “blah” if you put it on in one light…and shoot in another. So try to wait until you get to the shoot, and put it on under the light we’ll be using. Make sense?

 For clothes, guys and dolls, do a run-through on *that.* Try on all the outfits you’re thinking of wearing, to feel comfortable in them. It’s kind of like breaking in new shoes for a special event. And figure out what shades you look good in, patterns, fabrics, all that. We want you looking and feeling your best. And think about the location where we’ll be shooting. If it’s dark, black can totally disappear in that case. Or a light color could be too strong. Let’s talk about that at the consultation, too.

 Check out a fashion magazine or two. *Yeah, you too, guys!* (That seems to be my favorite phrase here. There’s always GQ for you.) See what the new trends are, and if you’d like to wear them. Of course, classics always work, too. If you’re really not sure, ask a stylish friend, or hire a fashion consultant. It’s worth the money and time.

 Hair? You’ve GOTTA take care of that. Dry, frizzy hair? Well, I can’t fix that with editing. Sorry. And your roots? I color my hair, so I know about that! Make sure your hair is clean, soft, healthy, and the color looks good. Use a deep conditioner before the shoot.

 If you’re thinking of losing a few pounds - yeah, sorry, that camera really does add the proverbial ten pounds, it’s for real - do it now, well before your shoot. But do it wisely. Crash diets really suck your energy, and make you look bad in photos. Not what you want, huh? Just eat as well as you can in the days or weeks before. And do a little strength training and cardio.

You never know what mischief we might get into during the shoot - what crazy things we’ll think up to do! - so you need to be “up to the task.”

 Get a good night’s sleep. I’m a professional insomniac, so I know how terrible you can look in pictures when the Sandman hit the road during the night. You can even reschedule if you don’t sleep well. I understand, believe me.

 Try not to drink too much alcohol the night before. Hangovers are not good for your mood, or, frankly, your face. Ditto for “recreational drugs,” if you use them. Not judging you here, just wanna get a good picture.

 Think about the jewelry and accessories you want to wear. I’d put on one good, “strong” accessory, like a gorgeous ring. (I have a blue topaz ring that looks like a swimming pool, it’s so big and blue, and I’ve let people wear that in pictures. The blond girl in the website? She’s wearing it.) You don’t want people looking at all your accessories; you want them looking at *you.*

A lot of this is all common sense, yes, but taking care of all these things adds up. I love making people look and feel good. That’s all this is about!

 See you at the shoot.