

www.StanleyLeary.com

How to improve your flash photography

November 2008



Give Stanley a call for your next project at 770.998.3504 or email him at stanley@stanleyleary.com.

Links

- [Bio](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Client List](#)
- [Past e.Newsletters](#)
- [360 Spherical Panoramas](#)

Speaking Engagements

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,
ATHENS, GEORGIA
Guest Lecturer, Nov 2008
Teaching Business Practices to
Photojournalism Students.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
NATIONS, KONA, HAWAII
Guest Lecturer, Feb 2009

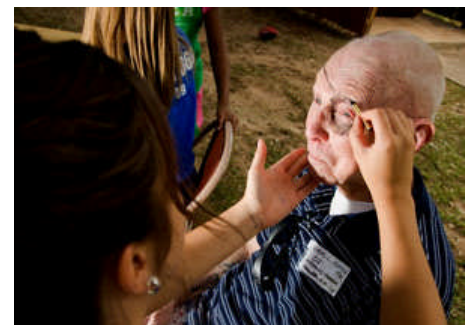
How to improve your flash photography



Danny Hightower, Athletic Director at Owasso High School in Owasso, Oklahoma.

This is the third article I have written on using your flash. My first one was about avoiding the dreadful red eye syndrome and here is a [link](#) to the article. The second one I wrote was about should you use flash or not and this article is [here](#) for you. I want to address specifically the technique of off camera flash in this e.Newsletter.

There are two angles which I prefer. First, having the light 45 degrees to the either side of the subject relative to the camera give a lighting affect used by the great artist Rembrandt. Rembrandt liked to have the light 45 degrees to the side of subject relative to his perspective and about 45 degrees up above his perspective as well. If the subject is looking straight at you will get a small triangle on the cheek which is on the opposite side of the light. The shape of the nose and brow help create this triangle. You may have to ask the subject to move their head just slightly to make this work just right.



This is an example of side lighting.

Teaching Lighting, Portraiture and Business Practices in School of Photography program.

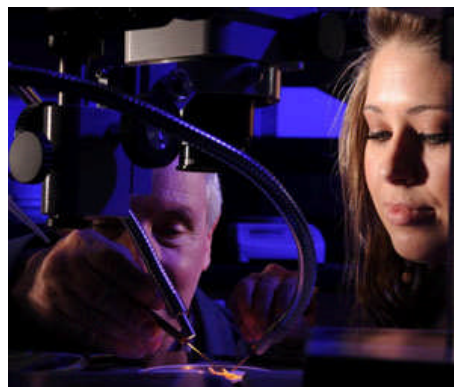
**SOUTHWESTERN
PHOTOJOURNALISM
CONFERENCE, FORT
WORTH, TEXAS**

Guest Speaker, Feb 2009
Teaching Business Practices

**REINHARDT COLLEGE,
WALESKA, GEORGIA**

Adjunct Professor, Spring 2009
Teaching Photojournalism

First let's start with what we do know about flash. We know that most cameras that come with a flash built in them give straight on harsh light and subject to red eye. This is due to how close the flash is to the lens. There are times this is the only option you may have for a situation. In this case getting the photo is more important than no photo. Almost every point and shoot has a flash built into them and most people's photos have this harsh look. The other place we see this straight on flash a lot is in crime scene photography, which has been made more famous through TV shows like the CSI series.



This is an example of off camera flash and dramatic lighting.

What we do know is when we use the flash on the camera pointed straight at the subject it will look like most all amateurs' photos and crime scene investigation photos. In other words anyone can get this type

Second, I think side lighting the subject works really well for people. This is where the light is 90 degrees from the camera on the left or right side of the subject.

There are basically two ways to achieve this technique. You can use a cable to go between your camera and flash. The second way is to use a remote to fire the flash.



Using cable to get the flash off the camera.

When using a cable (check your manual for the flash and camera to get the one for your camera) you will need to be very close physically to the subject to get this to work. The reason is the further back you are from the subject the angle between the lens and the flash relative to the subject will diminish and you will have photos that look more like on camera flash. One simple solution is to buy a longer cable. There is usually a limit as to how long this cable can be and still work with your

of photo and it is almost the norm when it comes to flash photography.

When creative directors, art directors and editors hire professional photographers, there is an assumption that is expected and not always stated. The professional is hired to get something *different* than what they would do with their camera. While picking a unique angle with a different lens may give the client something different, the minute the straight on flash is introduced it immediately looks like something they would or could have done very easily themselves.



The flash is 90 degrees off the axis of the camera.

flash.



Wireless SU-800 solution for getting the flash off the camera.

A little more expensive solution is to use a remote. There are two kinds of remotes for flashes: a generic radio remote and a wireless one designed to work with your flash. Both of these will let you place your flash away from the camera and each one has its advantage and disadvantage.

The advantage of the radio remote is it works up to a distance of up to 400 feet—depending on the unit. It works around walls and even through them. The disadvantage is if you need to adjust the power of the flash you must go to the flash and adjust it manually. Your TTL function—where the camera pretty much figures out the correct exposure is lost.

The advantage of the wireless system, like the SU-800 for Nikons, is you can control each flash unit separately through the unit. Your camera will fire

Lighting has more impact on a photograph than any other aspect in photography. Without light there are no photos and what kind of light determines much more than if you can see the subject. It actually helps shape the subject and creates a mood more so than camera angle or lens choice.

When shooting in black and white the direction of the light helps shape the object and can make a photo have more pop or subdued for example. In color the color of the light as well as the direction will help establish the mood. Theater type of lighting makes your subject look dramatic for example. And lot of white light can make something look clinical or even used to simulate the feel of being in heaven.

To avoid red eye I have mentioned in earlier articles bouncing your flash off a ceiling or wall. What I consider one of the most dramatic types of lighting requires your flash to be off the camera.

the units and since it is working in TTL mode will properly adjust the exposure. While both systems will let you use numerous flashes together, the TTL wireless system lets you ratio the lights from the unit and therefore you can look at your LCD and make an adjustment and never have to move. One more major advantage of the wireless system like the one for the Nikon, you can use a shutter speed greater than the sync speed of say 1/250. This opens up many possibilities—especially outside on sunny days.

Using off camera flash requires a lot of practice to master the technique.

Will your photos be better because you use this technique? Maybe, but most importantly they will look different and sometimes this is enough to get the attention of your audience.

You can hire Stanley to teach you and your office how to use this technique and others. Just give him a call.

[unsubscribe](#)

[subscribe](#)