

Peter Ellis

And the P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle

BY CHARMAINE BELEELE

There is a tiny green book on my desk by Byrd Baggett, author and editor, *The Pocket Power Book of Motivation*. He defines the word "people" this way: "People Expect Openness, Passion, Love and Excellence." Master Photographer Peter Ellis of South Wales in the UK has mastered this unique epigram, almost as if he himself had created it.

Ellis is the only photographer in Wales, "who has two Fellowships in Wedding photography and one in portraiture." He is also the only photographer in the UK to hold the Honorary Accolade of Lifetime Photographic Excellence, given by WPPI. This charismatic speaker, teacher and photographer has garnered awards in industrial, illustrative and portrait categories, as well as weddings. He has a paramount zeal for wedding photography. And for P.E.O.P.L.E.

For the "P" in the epigram, Peter Ellis has no mercy for the lukewarm wedding photographer. "P" is for people, and in this case, people who are getting married, contracted to him. He stated, "I love what I do. If you are a photographer who does not like one aspect of your career, don't do it, pass it to another photographer who does like doing it. In turn, he will probably send you work that he/she does not like doing." And he added that wedding photographers had better make their PEOPLE "laugh and be happy because a happy customer is one who will be back and will recommend you to others."

This leads directly into the first "E" of the P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle: Expectations! Like it or not, clients have great expectations of their wedding images, not only of photographic quality, but the more human expectations of first class professional treatment. Peter advised, "Remember you are a memory-maker, not just a photographer and as such you should make those memories, happy memories, and not ones that the bride and groom will look back on and say, 'the photographer spoiled our day because...' Yes, we have all heard the horror stories about other photographers, so don't join them. I know I don't! Do you?"

The third quality of the P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle, the "O", for "openness," leads to some strong advice, "You have got to love weddings to do them. If you are a male you must turn off your male side and turn on your female

side. Once you have learned this, your wedding photography, and your approach will improve by leaps and bounds." Unless you are a Sir Lawrence Olivier, or Meryl Streep, openness can not be faked.

The fourth letter in the P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle, "P" for "passion" can be seen not only in the body of work Ellis has created, but also in the work of the teachers he admires, the mentors who have helped him be the artist he is today. From UK photographer Peter Lowry he

found "guidance and belief." Monte Zucker "lit fires of enthusiasm," for him and he expressed gratitude to Steven Rudd for "his off the wall approach to weddings and portraits." Mario Testrone advanced his techniques by teaching him "the modern approach to portraiture." About passion for the craft of photography, he stated, "Become a



sponge for all styles and types of photography."

Peter feels that one way the photographer can feed the fires of his or her passion is by studying with professional organizations. "WPPI has provided the education, together with the BIPP and the MPA. They have all helped me to develop my craft and opened up new avenues." He added, "They place challenges in your path to help you to reach your goals."

Another way to help intensify passion for the art is through competition. Peter keeps competition in its proper perspective by saying, "Whether it is via regional or national competition, qualifications or just to make you say I can do that, they are there to help and guide you, so use them. Your competitions and your professional associations have a goldmine of information at their fingertips."

In the most humble of voices, Peter recounts one of his most exciting award experiences: "The WPPI awarded one of my prints a perfect 100, which was fantastic, and it was equally wonderful to have six photographs published in the WPPI Annual. I just had to ring the WPPI when I learned about my scores. Just to pass on my thanks to such wonderful judges. We all know judges are wonderful when they are giving us awards, but when they don't, then that's another story." With a big grin he continued, "I know what I mean because I

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Guess Who's Online?

Send your online address to WPPI, Editor, "Guess Who's Online?" P.O. Box 2003, Santa Monica, CA 90406; or send it via the web.

- **WPPI:** www.wppinow.com
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The Wedding Photography Contract Part II

A THREE-PART SERIES BY B.J. KHALIFAH

This is part two of a three-part series. In part one we covered some terminology and the "face" sheet. Let's now cover some definitions and the "terms and conditions" part of your wedding contract.

PLEASE NOTE: The first thing I should again mention is that I am not a lawyer nor do I wish to become one. Photography is what I enjoy. Always have your wedding photo contract reviewed by a competent attorney in your own state; it's faster, cheaper and easier to be sure you are on firm ground.

Also remember these two important points:

- 1) There is no one true or correct answer; only the best options that apply to you.
- 2) You get what you negotiate for; if you are timid please stay at home.

Terms And Conditions

The terms and conditions is the part of the contract where you state what it takes to do business with your studio. You may wish to use some of the following terms and phrases in your wedding contract.

"The customer agrees to purchase the items listed above (in your face sheet) within the stated time period." It is considered reasonable to expect the client to complete the wedding album order within 30-60 days. If not you will be caught between vendors with current prices and a slow moving client; not a good position to be in.

"The retainer (is/is not) refundable and (is/is not) credited to the total amount of this agreement." Chose one or the other. **Try not to use the word deposit.** (Please refer to part one of this series of articles.) With this clause you are more protected if the client changes specifications of the wedding contract.

"Each wedding is considered one order, all orders must go through the bride and/or groom; the customer is responsible for all orders placed." This clause reduces the number of people you must deal with. Remember: your agreement is with the bride and groom, not Aunt ABC in another state. Dealing with one or two people is much easier than dealing with many, especially when money is involved.

"The customer is liable for all costs of collection plus all legal fees." If you do not get paid

and end up in a legal situation, this clause will remind them that if you "win" in court they are going to pay the cost of your lawyer and theirs. It is wise to let them pay for your legal expense if they started trouble.

"There is a stated time limit during the wedding day after which there is an overtime charge of \$XX.xx per hour." This critically import item is missed by many seasoned pros. This refers to the face sheet that states the amount of time involved, the start time and the finish time. This will prevent the client from unwisely consuming your time. A good example is: the bridal dance was planned to start at 7:30 p.m., but the maid of honor decided to take her child home to the babysitter. The bridal dance now starts at 9:30 p.m. (while you waited for two hours) and goes until 10:00 p.m. If you were previously told you would be done by 8:30 p.m. you are now required to stay extra time. You should be compensated for this wasted time. If not, your pay per hour just nose-dived.

"Title (possession) of all photographs and albums shall remain with the Studio until paid for." **This is critical!** This clause allows the client to have their wonderful photos only after they are paid for. If you hand over the photos before you are paid you may be in a weak bargaining position.

"Partial payments for partial deliveries of final order are not allowed." This will permit the client to understand that all of the photos ordered are to be picked up and paid for before any of the photos are released. This will protect you from being stuck with changed orders.

If you use credit cards put your own terminology about how and when you want to be paid. *"A check/credit card will/will not be accepted for a retainer, the second payment, or pre-payment of an order. All other payments must be paid in cash, certified check or money order/ credit card ; no exceptions."* Always state how, when and in what form you wish to be paid. Leave no room for creative interpretation.

"There is a \$XX.00 return check/non sufficient funds fee/stopped credit card charge fee." (Check the legality of this phrase with your local attorney or credit card vendor, first). If the client denies you payment for which you are entitled, you are going to have plenty of headaches collecting your fees.

"Customer agrees to accept delivery of, and render payment due at, preview delivery within

XX days of being notified." Remember, there are time limits on everything. The longer you wait at each step in the process the more difficult your job becomes. With this clause you wish to prevent elongating the entire process of purchasing the wedding photos.

If you post your photos on the Internet for sale, you must state so in your bid sheet and contract, and receive PRIOR approval from the client. If other people will have their photos posted to the 'net you must inform the families and as many other people as possible. Some individuals will not like having their privacy or photos posted to a web site. There is potential for problems here, but how much is to be determined as the new technology unfolds.

"This is a binding contract and may only be altered in writing." Changes to the contract should always be clear and well stated, with ALL parties to the contract informed.

"Proofs: (are/are not included) and are for the purpose of making a selection of final photos desired and must be returned to the Studio in the time stated, in original condition to avoid penalty and must be returned to the Studio within XX days of delivery to the customer to avoid a XX% or \$ XX.00 surcharge or late fee."

This should be stated also in your price/bid sheet.

"In the event Xxxxx Photo company (the Studio) for any reason shall fail to perform services under this contract, the Studio agrees to refund all moneys paid to date under this contract and all parties to this contract hereby agree that said refund shall terminate any further liability to this agreement." If your photos (or an employed photographer) fail to please the client and your studio ends up in court, you may have to pay more than the stated amount of your contract. You may have to repay the entire cost of the wedding. As stated many times above, put limits on everything. Here you are putting a limit as to the amount of possible damages you are willing to incur. The terminology must be perfect here, read: Consult a local attorney before you insert this clause.

"That the amount of the liability cannot exceed the amount (not value) of this contract." This reaffirms the paragraph above and states the limits a second time. It is not overkill but it does state the limit. This part of the contract can save your sanity.

In conclusion, following the basic rules listed above may help you avoid losing control of your business. Our next installment will cover other parts of the contract, including disclaimers and requirements. Good shooting.

WPPI member B.J. Khalifah is a full time photographer, based in Grosse Pointe Park, Illinois, specializing in weddings and commercial subjects. He may be reached at www.bjkphoto.com. B.J. was a speaker at WPPI 2002 in Las Vegas, NV.

Hy Sheanin 1909–2002

The original founder of Rangefinder Publishing Company, Hy Sheanin, died on July 20 at 9:15 a.m. Hy, along with co-founder Janet Victor, started *Rangefinder* magazine in June 1952 as a newsletter for Los Angeles area photographers. Under the guidance of Hy and Hy's son Steve, the



company flourished and grew, and in 1981 WPI (now WPPI) was formed and held its first annual convention.

Hy is survived by his wife Millie, son Steve, daughter Carol, granddaughter Wendy, grandsons Aaron and Ben and great granddaughter, Samantha. The funeral service was held on July 22 at Mount Sinai in Los Angeles.

All who knew Hy respected him and appreciated his intelligence and fine sense of humor. He will be missed by all of us who make up the Rangefinder family—Ed.

Important Dates For WPPI 2003

16x20 Print Competition Deadline:
December, 9, 2002

Album Competition Deadline:
January 6, 2003

Convention Dates:
February 1–6, 2003

16x20 Print Competition:
February 1, 2003

Album Competition:
February 2, 2003

8x10 Print Competition Deadline:
August 15, 2002

- **Barbara Columbo:** e-mail: bc11@rmi.net
- **Mike Colon:** e-mail: mike@mikecolon.com
- **Maria Conlon, Elegant Wedding Photography:** e-mail: JMC2874@aol.com
- **Michael Connors, More Photos:** e-mail: kk@wdweb.com; web: www.morephotos.com
- **Cherie Conrad:** e-mail: cherie_conrad@la.kirkland.com
- **Jeff Cook:** e-mail: lensman39@yahoo.com
- **Mike Cook:** e-mail: cooke@qnet.com
- **Kim Cooley, Expressive Images:** e-mail: scooley1@gte.net
- **David L. Cornelius, On-Sight Photography:** e-mail: onsigthp@aol.com; web: www.onsightphoto.com
- **Michael Cornish:** e-mail: picturethis@home.com; web: www.mcornishphoto.com
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"Typically, I wear Armani or Versace to weddings, as I insist on maintaining a professional image."

For over 22 years, Tony Florez, owner of Tony Florez Photography, Inc., located in Laguna Niguel, California, has been creating unique and dramatic wedding images. Having photographed over 5000 weddings to date, he has developed and perfected an approach to photographing weddings and engagement portraiture, which he calls "Neo Art Photography." Although Tony is a newcomer to WPPI, only having joined in 2001, he is no stranger to the photo industry.

History/Background: Tony Florez' photography interest dates back to age eight, when a friend with a camera piqued his curiosity. That early fascination with photography continued with Tony working on the school yearbook staff, and other ventures. By age 18, he was photographing full-time for an elite Chicago studio, while attending Harper College.

In 1980, he moved to Southern California. Upon his arrival, he contacted the studio with the largest ad in the *Yellow Pages*, assuming it was also the most successful. Having already honed his skills, he was immediately hired, and worked there for about five years. Clearly paying his dues, Tony often photographed five to seven weddings per day at a chapel associated with the studio. During that time, he also learned the business aspects of studio operations, and how he would do things differently when opening his own studio.

By 1984, he was ready to start his own business, and opened his first gallery in North Orange County. Finding the area a bit too conservative in terms of photography, Tony moved his gallery to Laguna Niguel in 1991. The move proved to be immensely lucrative, and business boomed. Tony receives more than 1000 inquires yearly, but generally shoots 70-80 weddings annually. He also photographs approximately 200 engagement sessions and family groups. His wife Ashlee manages the business, with one full-time employee, Farah Velten, assisting in the day to day operations of the gallery.

Philosophy/Approach: "My philosophy encompasses a different approach to photography," Tony Florez says. "To me, the most important aspect about photography is the feeling captured in an image. To capture true feel-



ings in my work, I begin by building a relationship with the couple prior to the session. This close association enables them to trust me to capture the essence of their relationship. As each couple is unique, our relationship enables me to adjust my technique to what works best for them. Some couples portray immense passion, others, the excitement of true love, but all couples are overwhelmingly filled with emotions. When one views my work, these feelings are clearly evident."

Tony gains inspiration from great artists, like those from the Renaissance period.

"Image is everything!" states Tony. "In most businesses, this starts with the owner. Typically, I wear Armani or Versace to weddings, as I insist on maintaining a professional image. Most of my clothes are purchased in Europe, and I love attending fashion shows to see the latest trends. We take the Nordstrom approach to photography, in that each client is handled with extreme graciousness and courtesy. This is clearly evident in the high number of personal referrals I receive."

Approximately 80% of Tony's business comes from direct referrals, and 20% is generated from the website and advertising.

Over the past 20 years, photography styles and trends have changed drastically. Tony keeps abreast of the latest technology and advances, and incorporates these into his work. Shooting both digitally and with traditional film allows him to offer clients greater versatility and a wider range of products. He and Ashlee do all of the Photoshop manipulations on the studio's Macintosh computers. For film work, Tony uses Hasselblad, Hasselblad X-Pan, Nikon F5 cameras, and Nikon DX-1 for digital capture.

Using primarily available light, Tony prefers the higher speed films from ISO 400 to 3200. He shoots color, black and white and infrared. Whenever extra light is needed,





he uses Metz flash units and the Nikon dedicated flash on the DX-1.

Lighting Philosophy: "I understand natural light very well, so I use the flash only as accent.... to open up shadow areas and for large reception rooms. I also use reflectors. My lighting is tailored to each situation, and how to best set the romantic or playful mood for the couple," Tony Florez explains.

Neo Art Style: "Neo Art is a new term we've coined to describe our fresh, unique approach to photography. My images are not posed in the traditional sense, but carefully choreographed. On the wedding day, I am creating artistic photojournalistic images as well. Looking through the viewfinder, I discover what is unusual about each image, and how I can make it more dramatic. I am particular about what I photograph. I don't just snap the shutter all day hoping for some cool images by playing the numbers game," Florez says.

"While many photographers feel that posing is taboo, I believe it is more a matter of a photographer not knowing how to work with clients, or not knowing how to pose a good shot. I cannot understand why many photographers still use a tripod. To maintain versatility and be able to work in each moment, you've got to move quickly. It's not unusual for me to be up on a chair, or down on the grass. I'm constantly moving all over the place to capture unique angles. I've never been one to follow the pack, so to speak. With all the photographers jumping on the photojournalistic bandwagon, there's not too much that differentiates one photographer's work from another's—except a beautiful location and the presentation. Given my totally different style, I've been able to prevent direct competition."

Engagement portraits are the trademark of this studio. Unlike many photographers who include an engagement session with the wedding package, Tony markets this aspect separately. Clients fly in from around the world for his engagement sessions, because Tony delivers enchanting, intimate images, which are different from other studios. Typical sales from engagement sessions range from \$3000– \$5000, and are a lucrative source of studio revenues. Unique limestone-mounted and glass-mounted images are also available at Florez' studio. Engagement portrait sessions are shown to clients on slides in a private viewing room with soft lighting and classical music. This relaxing atmosphere allows clients to relax and enjoy the presentation.

Celebrity Weddings: Last Spring, Tony photographed the beautiful wedding of Gladys Knight, of Gladys Knight & the Pips fame. "I



was completely taken by surprise about a week later to see my images published in *The National Enquirer*. On the cover of the *Enquirer*, you can clearly see my hand and wedding ring in the image.

Someone from the paparazzi was shooting over my shoulder. Also, as I choreographed Gladys and William walking in the sunset overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, the paparazzi was shooting from an upstairs room with a long lens. However, it was an incredibly beautiful wedding. Gladys was so thrilled with her photographs that she purchased every single image," Florez says.

Tony just returned from photographing a large wedding for one of the Dallas Cowboys at the Peninsula Hotel in Chicago. With his reputation growing among the rich and famous, Tony has hired a publicist to handle the media inquiries for the gallery.

WPPI Membership: "WPPI is a fantastic organization and I wish I'd been involved in it sooner. The benefits for me are the opportunities to preview the latest equipment and accessories at the trade show, and of course, to socialize with other photographers. The speakers provide a great educational source, as well as reference material. In 2003, I hope to give a program on my Neo Art Style at WPPI," Tony Florez says.

Winning several awards in the 2002 WPPI print competition, he plans to increase his entries in the future.

Future Plans: Current projects for Tony include radio and television interviews, fashion shows, public speaking, and completing his photography book. "I am more focused on where photography is going, not what other photographers are doing

today," Tony explains. "To stay ahead of the game, you've got to love photography with your heart and soul. You can't be content just following the latest trend."

"I work hard so I can play hard. I enjoy reaping the full rewards of a successful business. Whether it's relaxing at our ocean-front vacation home in Bodega Bay, or visiting our friends' private island off the coast of Manila, I like to go all-out when I'm on vacation. My wife Ashlee grew up in Europe, and is fluent in several languages. We hope to instill a strong sense of culture in our daughter as she grows up. And, I can't help but hope that she shows an interest in photography," Tony concludes.

Readers may see Tony Florez' work at: www.tonyflorez.com.

Linda May is a writer living in the Midwest.

Peter Ellis

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have been there, not only as a competitor, but also as a judge, both beloved and unloved! Competitions are a means to an end for me because they show me how I stand in the world of photography and that I am not being left behind. Competition has a fantastic learning curve. You are only as good as your last photograph, so you have to always keep trying."

Perhaps deeper than the "passion" is the fifth element of the people

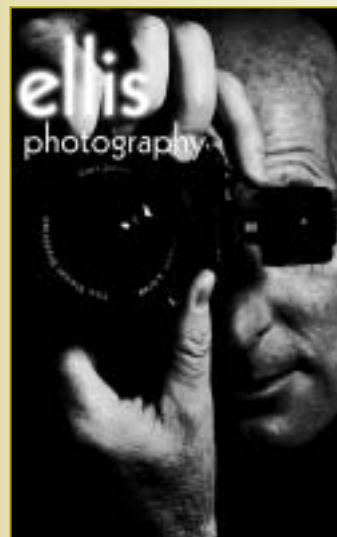
principle, "L" stands for "love." Love of the wedding and portrait photographer's art? Certainly. But even more, love for the people, the clients. Peter stated, "To do first-class wedding portraiture, you must learn to think at 500 miles per minute, watch for the smallest detail, work fast but carefully and politely—always keep them happy. Help them to enjoy having their photographs taken. It's not a trip to the dentist. It's capturing a moment of extreme happiness that they and their children will look back upon." Another "L" word that figures heavily in the Peter Ellis philosophy of life,

love, and wedding photography must be "laughter." It is part of the Ellis character and style as speaker. Not since the Yanks met "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" have so many Americans laughed out loud at 7:00 a.m., as they did at the 2002 WPPI Convention when Peter quipped, "We think you're MAD for getting up this early!" As the standing-room-only crowd guffawed, he launched into the real story of how he became a photographer. "I became a photographer rather by mistake, actually. I needed the job. They gave me the assignment and a camera and off I went. Luckily there was a news photographer at the event also. Every time I needed to change film, I ran over to him, and he would load and unload the film for me. All in all I shot about 12 rolls of film and I

was feeling quite proud of myself when they said, "Fine. Go process them." So I processed them and then I had to say 'FOCUS? YOU MEAN I WAS SUPPOSED TO FOCUS?' All in all, about six frames were sharp."

In his early days, he also did not know very much about protocol. No press box or flimsy barriers for him at the Silver Anniversary with the Queen, Prince Philip and other members of the Royal Family. He just blithely popped forward and began shooting up a storm.

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Are Your Customers Loyal or Just Lazy?

MARK TILL

You photograph a child three months old. The parents return for an additional sitting when the child is six months. Is this customer loyal or was he or she too lazy to find another photographer?

Customers who make repeat purchases may be doing so not because they are enthralled with your work, but because they didn't want to put forth the effort to find a replacement or they may believe the alternative is no better. In other words, they were too lazy to make a change. However, because the customer returned for an additional sitting, the tendency is to assume he or she is a happy, loyal customer.

REPURCHASE IS A BEHAVIOR

I'm sure there are a few of you reading this and saying, "Who cares, I booked two sittings." True. However the long-term success of your business ultimately depends on customer loyalty. Lazy customers do business with you, not because you are the best, but because it is convenient or economical (at the time) to do so.

Let's face it, we're all creatures of habit. Each of us has a "Comfort Zone." It brings order and harmony to our everyday lives. We tend to wake up and go to bed at the same time and take the same path to and from work. We have a favorite restaurant and probably order the same meal each time we go there. The same can be said for which album company we use or which lab processes our work.

You continue with these relationships often out of habit, not loyalty. Consider the bank you use. If you have ever had to switch banks, you know what a pain it can be. Think of all the bills you pay out of your checking account. You have to notify each one in writing of the change. The entire process can take several months to complete. So you stay where you are because it is too much of a hassle to make a change and, even if you did, there is often no guarantee the new vendor will be any better. However, given a compelling enough reason to make a change, even the laziest of customers can switch to your competitors. Herein lies the risk. Do you bet that your customers will be too lazy to look elsewhere, or do you take an active role in developing customer loyalty?

LOYALTY IS A STATE OF MIND

Loyal customers are not easily seduced by the competition. Their relationship is based on trust and respect. There is a strong emotional bond between you and your customer that goes beyond a simple business transaction.

The true value of a loyal customer goes beyond what they purchase. How many of you have become friends with some of your clients and vendors? The relationship is clearly different. They are the source of your referrals. Loyal customers are willing to put their reputation on the line to endorse you, not just because of the quality of work you provide, but how you treat customers. When they refer you, you make them look good by the way you treat those they referred to you. Customers who come to you by way of referral have a higher retention rate and are more likely to refer additional business to you. And so the cycle repeats itself, over and over, filling your business with loyal (profitable) clients.

Unfortunately, many businesses is never give themselves a chance to develop loyal customers because they never take the time to follow up with those who are currently doing business with

CALENDAR: Seminars, Workshops, Conventions & Trade Shows

Duckspool Workshops: Expanding Your Creativity with Other Media with John Goto	August 1-4	Contact Peter Goldfield 0044 (0) 1823 451305; www.duckspool.com; photographers@duckspool.com.
Santa Fe Workshops: Contemporary B/W Portraits with Paul Elledge & Leasha Overturf	August 4-10	Santa Fe, NM. Contact SF Workshops, P.O. Box 9916, Santa Fe, NM 87504; www.santafeworkshops.com or (505) 983-1400, fax (505) 989-8604.
Duckspool Workshops: All Levels with Fay Godwin	August 15-20	Contact Peter Goldfield 0044 (0) 1823 451305; www.duckspool.com; photographers@duckspool.com.
A Week of Wilderness Photography and Fun with Monte Ely, Minnesota at Fall Lake	Aug. 17-23	Ely, MN. Contact Monte Zucker to register; e-mail: Mzphotog@aol.com, (941) 918-0904. A limited number of registrants will be accepted. Price: \$350, including meals.
John Sexton Photography Workshops Advanced Large-Format Black & White Techniques	August 18-30	Carmel Valley, CA. Contact Laura Bayless, 291 Los Agrinemsors, Carmel Valley, CA; (831) 659-3130; www.johnsexton.com or info@johnsexton.com.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	August 20	Nashville, TN. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	August 21	Kansas City, MO. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	August 22	Chicago, IL. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
EPIC 2002 School of Evidence Photography and Digital Imaging	August 21-25	Contact: Evidence Photographers International Council, 600 Main St., Honesdale, PA 18431 (800) 356-3742; www.epic-photo.org.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	Sept. 9	Seattle, WA. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	Sept. 10	San Francisco, CA. \$40 reg. fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	Sept. 11	Los Angeles, CA. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
The Power Of Light presented by Tony Corbell— A 20-city U.S. tour	Sept. 12	San Diego, CA. \$40 registration fee. Contact: www.corbellproductions.com or call 858-538-4524, or write to Corbell Productions / Power of Light Tour, 8476 Florissant Ct., San Diego, CA 92129.
Photographing the Wee Ones Learn to Have Style with Children's Portraits	Sept. 15-16	Contact Charles Vandersluys, PPA Certified, M.Photos., Cr., (905) 354-8692 Niagara Falls, Ontario Canada; e-mail bvphoto@on.aibn.com; web: http://prophotoworkshop.homestead.com.
The Julia Dean Photo Workshops From Provence to Paris (Shoot to Show)	Sept. 22-29	France. Contact: Julia Dean & Associates, 3111 Ocean Front Walk, Suite 102, Marina del Rey, CA 90292; (310) 821-0909; www.juliadean.com, julia@juliadean.com.
The Julia Dean Photo Workshops A Journey to Patxcuaro, Mexico/Day of the Dead Celebration	Sept. 22-29	Mexico. Contact: Julia Dean & Associates, 3111 Ocean Front Walk, Suite 102, Marina del Rey, CA 90292; (310) 821-0909; www.juliadean.com, julia@juliadean.com.
Montes Zucker's Five-day Class in Whitewater, WI	Sept 23-27	Contact Monte Zucker to register; e-mail: Mzphotog@aol.com, (941) 918-0904.
The Black & White of It— Brides on Location with Charles Vandersluys	Oct. 13-14	Contact Charles Vandersluys, PPA Certified, M.Photos., Cr., (905) 354-8692 Niagara Falls, Ontario Canada; e-mail bvphoto@on.aibn.com; web: http://prophotoworkshop.homestead.com.
WPPI 2003: Convention and Trade Show at Bally's Las Vegas	Feb. 2-6	Contact: WPPI, 1312 Lincoln Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 451-0090, ext. 310 or 319; fax: (310) 395-9058; www.wppinow.com.

them. (Only 13% of photographers routinely contact their customers after each sale.) Consider data from the following study:

- The average business never hears from 96% of its customers who are unhappy.
- For every complaint received, there are 26 complaints you don't hear about, 6 of which are (what the customers believes to be) a serious complaint.
- The average customer who has a problem tells 9-10 other people about the problem.
- 13% of customers who have a problem with your company tell 20 or more people.
- Complainers are more likely to do business again even if their complaint was not properly handled.
- Of those who do complain, 54-70% will do business again if their problem is resolved.
- If the problem is resolved quickly, the retention rate rises to 95%.

THE MYTH OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMS:

Quickly resolving customer complaints is one of the most valuable tools you have in building customer loyalty. It sends a positive message to your customers: You care about them and you are interested in building a long-term relationship that goes beyond the current

transaction.

Too often, businesses try to buy their customers' loyalty rather than improve their relationship. Take retail coupons, for example. The idea was to encourage people to buy their product by offering them an economic incentive to do so. No surprise, the competition did the same thing with some even honoring their competitor's coupons. Instead of creating loyal customers, the stores trained the public to wait for the coupon, which has a negative impact on their overall profitability.

A different approach with similar consequences is service contracts. Wireless companies give phones away if you agree to use their service for one or two years. Does this make you a loyal customer? No, when your contract expires, given the right incentives, you can be enticed to switch.

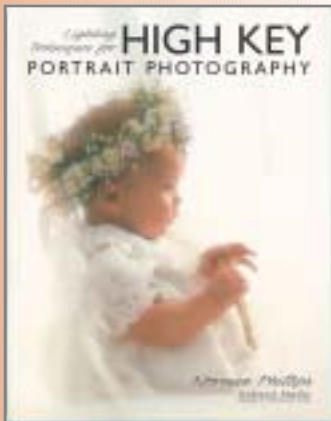
Customer loyalty is created by nurturing personal relationships. Forget the fancy gimmicks and promotions, take the time to find out what is important to your best (loyal) customers and if a problem arises, fix it and fix it quickly. While your competitors are playing musical chairs with bargain hunters, you're creating customers for life.

Mark Till, Cr. Photog., is one of the country's leading authorities on helping photographers operate a lucrative business. He is the author of The Lucrative Photographer: How to Become Indispensable To Your Clients, Maximize Your Profitability. He is a frequent lecturer across the country and may be reached at (508) 655-9595 or via e-mail at mark@marktill.com.

WPPI News

ROOM RESERVATIONS!

No, it's not too early to begin thinking about WPPI 2003. The dates (write 'em down) are Feb. 1-6, 2003 at Bally's Las Vegas. The Print Competition will begin on February 1, 2003. The Standard Suite price at Bally's is \$129 per night. Reservation requests must be received by January 3, 2003. For more information call (702) 739-4111 or (800) 634-3434. Please use the WPPI reservation code when calling: #SBWAP3.



Norman Phillips' new book for Amherst Media is called *Lighting Techniques for High Key Portrait Photography* and it is perhaps the best collection of methods for producing high key that we've seen. Loaded with lighting diagrams and descriptive text, the book not only describes how to create the lighting effect, but also explains why the technique works and is effective. Norman Phillips is a master photographer who is the recipient of more than 150 awards, including WPPI's Accolade of Outstanding Photographic Excellence (AOPE). The book retails for \$29.95 and is available from Amherst Media, 155 Rano St., Ste. 300, Buffalo, NY 14207; (800) 622-3278, web: www.amherstmedia.com.

GET YOUR PRINTS READY!

This year's Convention and Trade Show is 5 weeks earlier than WPPI 2002. All print and album competition deadlines will also be earlier, so start planning now to get your prints ready for submission. Deadlines are listed on page 3.

Peter Ellis

continued from page 6



Fortunately, they did not condemn him to the Tower of London! Such were the skills of a beginner. He gave himself a year "to catch up with the United States in the field of wedding photography" and established his studio in Newport, South Wales. "It's not the biggest in the UK. It's about 23 feet long by 7 or so feet wide." His love for it shines through his laughter.

He honors the "L" for Love in the P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle at home as well as in business. In spite of the fact he averages 40-42 weddings of 250 guests per year, he still has time for the finer things, such as lovely long walks with his wife and their dog by their side. You also might find him clay shooting, or golfing. He said, "Only my golf is not that relaxing, that white ball seems to spoil a good walk!"

After the "L" for love, and for laughter, there is only one more letter in the Peter Ellis P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle. The "E" that stands for excellence. He spoke about his three fellowships, "Getting my



three Fellowships was the highlight of my career as I never even thought that I would ever be a Fellow. I must admit also, that getting my ALPE from WPPI was also a great honor and when I found out that I am the only person in the UK to hold this honor, it was a very great high." (Just to give you some perspective on this award, The Accolade of Lifetime Photographic Excellence, from WPPI, has been awarded to such legends as Don Blair and Monte Zucker. So Peter Ellis is in heady company indeed!) Excellent!

Constantly striving to attain excellence, Peter Ellis forecasts his own future, five years hence. "I hope that I will still be trying to reach the top of the tree. If I am not, it will only be my fault as the buck stops here. As for retirement, I don't think I will ever retire. I also know that my studio will soon be fully digital and I hope that I will be learn-



ing new and more mind-bending techniques."

He packages up the entire P.E.O.P.L.E. Principle in a bright ribbon upon which we see these people-oriented precepts: "As a wedding photographer, your brain, soul, and life is on the line, so, be insured, have a contract, give professional service for a professional fee, and go out and make people smile!"

You can see Peter Ellis' images at his website, www.ellis-photography.com, or have pleasant conversation and a cyber-pint with him at Peter@Ellisphoto.f9.co.uk.

CharMaine Beleele, with an MA in Communication, owns a small studio, Angel Kissed Studio, and teaches communication at Westark College. She also writes part-time for a small newspaper in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She can be reached via e-mail at: LBeleele@aol.com.