

My Experience as a Field Photographer

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As I try to think of a time where I have been in a leadership position my mind draws blank, I must be more like a sheep than a shepherd. However, there have been a few instances in my life where I have been placed in a role of authority. One instance I remember in particular involved me professionally shooting photographs for my high school at the Gala.

I have been taking photos as a hobby for about 3 years of my life. Within those 3 years of taking photographs, I was also a student in photography class my junior and senior year of high school. My strengths in photography are being able to creatively tell a story with my photos, highlight important architectural and fundamental details, and show the viewer something from a different perspective. These strengths and my experience allowed me to be chosen out of the other 15 aspiring photographers in my class to shoot for the Gala. Creativity is a leadership role mentioned in the "Solitude and Leadership" article by William Deresiewicz, "A good leader can think independently and solve problems in a complex setting around others or alone." Taking photos for an organization of this scale and this professionally had never been offered to me before, other than taking photos for a realtor, so of course I was quick to sign up and get started. However, I was also nervous because I would be in a new location with brand new people I had never met, and I was taking photos for, potentially, a company website and advertising.

As soon as I arrived at the Gala, I immediately started examining everything: the building, the layout, the people there, what they were wearing, which direction the people were walking in, where the sun was in the sky, and etc. It wasn't long until I ran into other real* photographers who were quick to introduce themselves and give me a couple of helpful tips for shooting indoors. Each photographer that I met conveyed different traits in their style of shooting. Ryan and a photographer for the local newspaper were more of a "wait for the right moment" type of people, while Whitney could "wait for the right moment," but also go up to people and pose them for shots. Again, each person I met had completely different characteristics and skills, but the person that I tried to replicate the most was Whitney. In the "Solitude and Leadership" article by William Deresiewicz, he mentions that a balance of both solitude and leadership are the essential qualities of a successful leader. I believe that Whitney had a perfect balance of solitude, shown by her ability to take candid photos flawlessly, and leadership, shown by her ability to take posed shots of people and become "friends" easily.

Throughout the night of shooting at the Gala, I tried my hardest to take excellent pictures of people and the atmosphere of the party. One thing I noticed was that the other photographers were solely focussing their shots on the people and only the people, whether that be candid shots or poses. Recognizing internally that as hard as I try to take the perfect shots of people at the Gala, I don't have the experience of my

competition, I decided to focus most of my time on the decorations and atmosphere of the Gala, shooting minimal shots of people. After I submitted all of my photos to the event leader of the Gala, I was followed up with an email thanking me for taking excellent shots of their setup and building. This ability that I have to be able to think creatively and adapt to my situation is what I believe allowed me to be the leader of my photography class and school for the Gala shooting. Only a fool would take photos of solely people in a setting with professional portrait photographers.

*I say real in the sense that they are professional photographers while I am just an amateur.