

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to episode number 12, how niching down can actually grow your business. My guest today is equine photographer, extraordinary Shelley Paulson. And this podcast is full of incredibly relevant nuggets, whether you are photographing horses, dogs, or even humans.

Speaker 2 ([00:21](#)):

Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. If you're a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host, pet photographer, travel addicts, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley.

Speaker 1 ([00:39](#)):

Hey everybody. Nicole vaguely here from hair of the dog. And I am here with Shelley Paulson from Shelley Paulson, photography up in what I like to call tiny pop, Minnesota up in Minneapolis. I'm an amazing equine photographer. Uh, I love horses, have written since I was eight, um, have been horse obsessed since then. So that is for many years and really Shelly is one of my most favorite equine photographers in the whole great big planet. So welcome Shelley. So excited. You're here. Thank you.

Speaker 3 ([01:09](#)):

Q. I'm so excited to be here and you are so kind.

Speaker 1 ([01:13](#)):

I love your work. It's so beautiful. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about you and your business and all that good stuff.

Speaker 3 ([01:18](#)):

Well, I'm kind of an old timer in the industry, at least, especially the equine industry. I have been shooting since 2004 so that is 16 years. I was actually doing graphic and web design and picked up a camera and to be able to just do a better job serving my cut my design customers, especially web design customers and as a lifelong horse lover slash owner I, it was just natural for me to turn the camera on horses and not to say that those early years were really good photography years for me, but it was where it's

Speaker 1 ([01:53](#)):

nice. That's awesome. Yeah, and I don't think any of us have really good first photography or so all of you guys out there that are sitting there and looking at your work and then looking at like the work of the photographers you admire and wondering why it doesn't look like that yet. It just takes time. Keep going because we've all been there.

Speaker 3 ([02:10](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And what I did first actually before really doing a lot of equine photography was I was a wedding and portrait photographer and did a lot, a lot, a lot of weddings over the course of about 12 years. And um, boy that's like photography bootcamp and I know people, yeah, I know a lot of people don't want to shoot weddings, but man, even if you can have a chance to second shoot for somebody, you have to, you learn how to think on the fly, work in any situation, work under stress, work in any

light. And so it, you know, even though I wish I could have just done horses my whole career, I feel like the wedding photography is what gave me the camera skills. I needed to be really good at what I do.

Speaker 1 ([02:48](#)):

Yeah, the weddings are a whole different, different other booths. I have some friends that do that and truly, I mean some of my most favorite photographers also are wedding photographers because that's why I tend to look for my inspiration really even outside of the photography industry in general. But the photographers that I tend to follow tend to be like really beautiful cutting edge wedding photographers, which you can learn so much from different genres and yeah, that, that whole being out on the wedding day, I have never shot a wedding. I've never second shot a wedding. I can only imagine how much it is. Like go, go, go and you better be ready to get the shot and you don't want to miss the first kiss and they're walking down the aisle and you're not going to be able to say, stop, wait, hold on, let me change my settings. Like you've gotta be ready to go.

Speaker 3 ([03:35](#)):

I mean, it's been, I don't know, like five years since I last shot a wedding and I still every once in a while have anxiety dreams about it. And my most common anxiety dream is they're walking down the aisle and I don't have a camera. I have the wrong camera, my battery's dead. I don't have a card. It's that processional was probably the biggest pain point for me and the biggest stress point for me in the whole thing. But I can't believe I still have dreams about it.

Speaker 1 ([04:01](#)):

So funny. I, I totally, I get it. My stress dreams tend to be my reoccurring dream is that I'm back working at one of my old zoo jobs at the national aviary where I worked for six years and was the assistant director of animal programs there that I would be back there like I was away and I would go back to the job, but I didn't know what I was supposed to do. And I'm just like walking around all day and I'm like, I don't know what to do. And it's just like, you wake up, you're like so stressed and you're so thankful. I'm like, all right, crazy. Oh, your heads are crazy things. Well, awesome. Yeah, no, that's fantastic. So tell us a little bit about your business now and what you, I mean, I know you focus on equine, but you know, there's a lot of, uh, depth can be to one genre. So tell us a little bit about what you focus on in your business today.

Speaker 3 ([04:52](#)):

When I quit weddings, I went kind of headlong into the question photography. I decided I was going to make it my only focus. And it was a little scary because weddings were probably 80% of my income at that point. But it was amazing how when I just focused on one thing, I was able to really grow it very quickly. And within that first year of just mainly focusing on portraits, I started having companies wanting to hire me and publications, wanting to license my images for you know, magazines like, um, horse illustrated and horse and rider. And on top of that I was also getting requests to license my images for stock photography for brands and you know, just all, all sorts of opportunities. And so I quickly diversified my business from just portraits to all these other things of commercial and editorial. And I've always been, I've always loved teaching, I've always loved teaching people photography.

Speaker 3 ([05:44](#)):

And I'd had a mentoring program kind of off and on and in different forms. And so I continued to offer mentoring as well. So I, I really liked to have my business not just be one thing, because in these days

where we're dealing with a lot of uncertainty and maybe you know, are people gonna hire us for portraits coming up or, or not having just a lot of ways to make money in my business has just always been top of mind for me because I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket. I know that things can change. And like the current crisis we're in, I mean, it's really uncertain how many portrait sessions I'll be able to do this year and what people's comfort level is going to be with that. And so my business though has not really skipped a beat because of the other work that I have, the mentoring and the stock photography and you know, various other ways that I've set up to make money for myself. And so that's, I could tell right away that portraits wasn't going to be enough for me. Um, I could see that the industry was expanding, there were becoming a lot more portrait photographers and that they were charging a lot less than me. And so that was what really drove me to diversify my business. And right now that's feeling like it was a really smart move.

Speaker 1 ([06:52](#)):

Gotcha. Yeah. No, absolutely. There's one thing, there's two things actually that you said, but one I want to jump back to real quick how you said that you gave up the weddings that was basically your bread and butter of your business. [inaudible] go to equine, which is like a really scary thing to do. I did something similar. Gosh, I don't even know what year it was. I would have to look, it was probably about five years ago, maybe around 2015 2016 at the latest where I had started my business in 2010 is a family photographer and pet photographer because I thought there's no way you can do just pets like that. It's crazy. So like if I want to make enough money, I've got to do families too. So, and I liked doing the families. I didn't dislike it. Um, I did enjoy it, but it got to the point where I was so busy with my family photography that I was like, I need to make a decision because I don't have any more time to grow this pet photography thing.

Speaker 1 ([07:45](#)):

So I really, I had to make the decision and I made the decision to give up my families and stop shooting families, which at that point was a good 50 or 60% of my business. Like I was making 58 50,000 plus dollars a year on family photography, doing absolutely nothing to market it, like \$3,000 session averages. And I mean it was so easy, but I felt drawn to the pet stuff. So I feel like if when you're facing decisions like that, it's really telling when, when staying where you are so easy and makes so much sense on paper, but there's like this pool to make this other decision to take this scary leap. I feel like if you have that pool and you're like leaving something that's already good that you need to like listen to it and know that there's a reason you have that pool, you wouldn't have this insane desire to leave this really good comfortable place that you are if there wasn't something even better on the other side.

Speaker 3 ([08:44](#)):

That is so true and it's, you know, it's kind of a leap and the net will appear kind of thing. And I'm sure you experienced this too, but when you put, when you stopped dividing your attention and you put it all onto the thing, that was your passion. It didn't take long for that to grow back up to the level that you were at when you were, when you were dividing yourself.

Speaker 1 ([09:04](#)):

Exactly. Absolutely. And then you know, people start to know you as the expert in that area. Like I no longer was known in Pittsburgh as you know. Oh family photographer that also does pet by was, you know, the pet photographer that, that so many people in Pittsburgh would go to when they heard pet photographer and that other photographers recommended me as a pet photographer because you

know, I was specialized in that one little niche. So yeah, niching down like that, if that is where your, your passion is is so worthwhile for so many reasons. And I know there's some people out there that do, you know, do a couple of different things and they love a couple of different things and there's nothing wrong with that. But if you're feeling, feeling pooled to really like specialize, I think there's a lot of benefits for that. And again, you want to be pulled to be doing that if it wasn't, didn't have the potential to be even better than where you are right now.

Speaker 3 ([09:52](#)):

Well, and I think, you know, like we can be in the hair of the dog blog group and you know, in these kind of niche Facebook groups and communities and feel like everyone's doing the same thing we're doing. Everyone's doing pets, everyone's doing courses. Right. But I am in a group of photographers that are like regular wedding and portrait photographers and they're like, Oh, you're so specialized. You're such a niche. You, you know, you serve such a niche. And sometimes it's hard for me to keep in mind that this is really specialized. This is really a niche because I'm exposed to people in my niche, all you know, every day. And so it is still, um, you know, really small. Um, I dunno, segment of the population that we serve.

Speaker 1 ([10:32](#)):

Absolutely. And then you look to, so you're in Minneapolis, I'm here in Charlotte, both decent sized cities. And if you look around and counted how many wedding photographers are in our cities and how many like family portrait or children's portrait photographers or newborn photographers are in our cities. And then how many pet or equine photographers around our cities. I mean, I can count number of equine photographers here on one hand and I can count the number of pet photographers barely on two. I mean like maybe there's six or seven that I know of. Maybe there's more that I'm not aware of, but it's still a very, very small specialized niche. And people get so worried about, Oh my gosh, there's so much competition. There's so much competition. Yes, there is more competition than when we started. When I started in 2010 I think there were probably like five pet photographers in the country and now, Oh, now there's five in a city. But there's so many more clients than five pet photographers can possibly manage or to equine photographers can possibly manage because there's, there's just more than we can do on our own. Cause what I could take like 50 clients a year.

Speaker 3 ([11:41](#)):

Yeah. I mean there's really that, that limitation is, you know, sometimes we can get really caught up in the idea of competition. And then I'm like, well, there's how many horse owners in just my area, not mention places I might travel to, you know, if there's three photographers, we still can't probably handle, not that everyone's hiring a photographer, but you know, we can't all handle if one person can't handle an entire market, styles can be different too.

Speaker 1 ([12:07](#)):

Absolutely. Yep. So yeah, and one of the benefits, I think once there starts to be more quote competition in our areas is having more people serving that same market brings more market awareness to the market where people before were like, Oh wait, I can hire an equine photographer, I can hire a dog photographer. What I mean, cause how many times, I know this happens for me all the time where people are like, Oh, what do you do? I'm a pet photographer and photographers get it. But people that aren't photographers are like, I'm sorry, what? Try selling them. You're in equine photography. They're like, at least they know pet. But uh, yeah. It's so funny because outside of our niche and we feel like, Oh my gosh, it's so saturated and this and that. But I mean, so many people don't even know that this is a

thing. So the more photographers equine photographers, the more people know it's a thing. The more people can look for the thing. They can find different photographers, compare our styles, choose who they love. And um, yeah, I think it just builds more business for everyone all around.

Speaker 3 ([13:12](#)):

I agree. I think that it creates the market.

Speaker 1 ([13:15](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. I also want to touch on one other thing that you mentioned before about multiple income streams and portrait photography and things like that. I totally get it. I love having my multiple income streams. I love having my multiple interests. Like I, if you told me I had to choose between being a photographer or educating my photography community, I think I would probably choose educating my photography community and then be really sad that I couldn't photograph anymore. But I want to encourage people to, those of us that are listening and you know, might be feeling like, Oh man, I don't know if I can make a profitable business out of just focusing on photography. It is definitely possible and the key, there's a couple of keys there. I think number one is we need to make sure we're not selling a commodity, so buy commodity in the photography world.

Speaker 1 ([14:07](#)):

I think those are just digital files only. So if you're just like, Hey, I get the whole disc, we don't even do desk. You get a whole download of all the images for \$300 that is not necessarily going to be sustainable. People are going to look at your work, compare you on cost to the other person. Even if you're way better than like they still are looking at of that via cost and really at less than, you know, a thousand \$1,500 per session, you would have a really, really hard pressed to build a profitable business if you're spending like more than six hours per client, which by the time we do all the admin and the editing and the shooting and the traveling to the shoots, we're there at least I know I spend about 10 hours per client for my photography business, but there's always room in every market for service and for excellence and for quality products.

Speaker 1 ([14:58](#)):

And those are the types of things that you can earn several thousand dollars per session if you are really playing in the right sandbox. So if you have this dream of being a portrait photographer or you know, becoming an equine photographer or pet photographer or a family photographer or whatever kind of photographer, number one is to really hone in on your craft. Number two is to really learn the business of the sides of these businesses. Now all portrait businesses really can run pretty similarly no matter what you're photographing. Weddings is a little bit of a different animal, but once you have those in place, then you can start working on the marketing and your messaging and sharing what you have with the world in a way that is a higher level of service that you no longer compete against all the shoot and burners at the lower end of the market.

Speaker 1 ([15:46](#)):

Because my clients don't have the time to deal with getting images and doing things on their own. They want me to give them full service. Like here's your final piece of art. Put a nail in the wall. It has done that, that if you're talking to them and, and you know, having your messaging and sharing your value of what you offer, you can't find clients like that in every market because there's always people in, you know, in markets purchasing luxury products, even in markets that we have today and crazy trends,

2020 in the middle of or post cobot world, there are still going to be people that have disposable income. I then venturing to guess here that once this economy, you know, starts to shift in that we can actually leave our house, that there's going to be so many people that, that have like not spent any money in months because we're in our house, we're not traveling, we're not eating out, we're not like doing home improvements.

Speaker 1 ([16:41](#)):

Like we're not doing anything. So people are going to have disposable income and they're going to be ready to do that. Even if the unemployment rate gets up to like 20, 25%, that's still 75% of the economy that is gainfully employed. So everybody needs to choose to focus on those. And, um, yeah, just wanted to just mention those couple of things. For those of you that are like, Oh wait, you know, I want to become a portrait photographer. You absolutely can build a business in that way. And once you start to get the basics of your workflow and how your process goes from, you know, getting your clients in the door and working with your clients and delaying, once that's all kind of settled, then you can start looking at those other revenue streams of stock photography, commercial photography and all that other stuff that, um, that you were talking about too. This is, I mean, this is a topic I'm pretty passionate about too because I used to believe that it was the best photographer who would get the most clients. Yes. Like, and so I worked super hard on my craft. Like I, I'm, I've learned everything I can learn and I'm still learning like in such a, such a, you know, learner's mindset is super important. But, um, this year what I've been

Speaker 3 ([17:50](#)):

spending a lot of time learning is about how to do a better job selling and servicing my clients. And it's made me realize that as long as you are creating professional quality work, you do not have to be an exceptional demographer then, uh, in order to make really good money, you actually, if you are better at business and serving your clients and helping them through that sales process, you will make more money than somebody who is better, you know, technically better or they have prettier photos. Whatever you define as better, they don't have good business skills. If they don't have good service skills, if they're shooting burn, uh, you will make so much more money than them. 100% yeah, and I actually have a, an analogy on my website because I'm one of two equine photographers in my area who does in person sales. And so I really want to highlight that in my, on my website I have with this page that that likens it to going out to eat.

Speaker 3 ([18:49](#)):

And you can either go to fast food or you can do fine dining and at the end you're fed right, your belly is full, you're good to go for another day. But it's, I really highlight the experience. You know when you go to the, when you go to McDonald's, you walk up, you don't even talk to a person anymore really. You can just do the kiosk thing and your food. You get your food and you leave. Right? That's one kind of experience. But fine dining. You go and somebody greets you and they see you and they help you order and they bring your food and they, they come throughout the meal and they check on you. And you know, it's really that higher level of service that I'm really selling and I'm taking to a new level for 2020 I'm spending a lot more time on the front end, understanding what my clients are looking for so that I can truly customize the portrait experience for them.

Speaker 3 ([19:37](#)):

And I am so excited because I've, I've started that now with people that are starting required a book and I am like, I feel like my images are going to be better because I know the client better and know what they're looking for and what their heart is and how much they love their horse. And what they've done with them and what that horse means to them. I talked to one woman and she's like, I bought this horse with the inheritance money I got when my father died. But I've gotten that with just an online questionnaire and showing up and you know, I can show up to a session, I know where to shoot, I know what light to put people in. I have poses, I have those things mastered, but I didn't have the service, I didn't have the experience mastered and that's what I'm going for now. Not just because it's going to probably make more money for me, but because I think I'm going to enjoy it more. I know my clients are going to enjoy it more and they're going to talk about that experience to other people. Absolutely.

Speaker 1 ([20:30](#)):

Yeah. And that's the key. People are always asking like, what referral program should I have? I'm like, you don't need a referral program. You just need to knock the socks off of your clients and they are going to want to scream your name from the top of the mountain. Um, you know, when you have these amazing experiences that you make these deep connections with your clients and you create this artwork that they have a deep connection to because you've met the time to get to know them and what they love and what they're looking for. Then like all of that together, they can't help but talk about you. And I think that's the key to, to tapping that whole referral base so much to say, well, this might be a little crazy, but if they're not getting any referrals, I would really look at your process and make sure that you are exceeding expectations.

Speaker 1 ([21:14](#)):

Because even if you are meeting them so your client comes in, they kind of know what to expect and you, you provide good service. Like they're not upset about anything. There was nothing bad, there was nothing exceptional about it and they're not going to talk about it. It's just going to be like, Oh yeah, that was okay, that was good. It's fine. It was what I expected. But if you exceed those expectations, then you know, then they're going to talk. And really I think that is absolutely critical to be able to just exceed what our clients expect from us.

Speaker 3 ([21:43](#)):

Yeah. I mean it's, it's kind of like watching movies. You know, if you watch a movie that's, that's fine. You don't tell anyone about it. Right. You watch a great movie and you want to talk to everyone you know about it because it's like, Oh my gosh, this movie was so good. So yeah, absolutely I think good or different cause that works for things like tiger King too, which I will say I have not watched had expected. And it does your expectations cause you're like whatever, it seems crazy and then you watch, you're like this is way crazier than I could've ever. Hopefully your client experience isn't so crazy experiences. Not tiger King. Crazy. If it is for me to talk about your process

Speaker 1 ([22:33](#)):

more like Downton Abbey or something, which I've never actually watched all the shows I watch. It's so funny. So my kids are home, right? Cause there's no school till forever. And I was looking for something to watch with my like 12 to 13 year old daughter. She's going to be 13 soon. Just kind of like a weird age cause you can't really get to adult. But like she does like the kid stuff. And I realized that all of the shows that I watch are like really highly inappropriate for 12 year olds. They're like Ozark and Narcos and tiger carrying. I'm like okay, I'm going to find some more like clean cut entertainment in my life.

Speaker 3 ([23:05](#)):

Yeah. So yeah. So back back from that flex.

Speaker 1 ([23:14](#)):

So with your portrait clients, who tends to be kind of your target market and your business now? I know when I'm doing my equine stuff that's kind of a mix between like high school seniors and then usually sometimes kind of adult or you know, no kids at home really still is the same common denominator of my general target clients.

Speaker 3 ([23:34](#)):

Yeah. Seniors are definitely a target client. You know, I think if you're a senior and you want horses in your photo, you want to hire an equine photographer, equestrian photographer, because horses are harder to photograph than they. And I've seen when even equine senior photographers try like, well that, that's nice, you know? But it doesn't have that impact that, you know, a horse lover would have or somebody that at least knew how to properly photograph horses would have. Right. But the other, I would say probably my second biggest niche is people who are, was horses are very old or they're going to be lost to some kind of disease where they know that the horse has, um, just a limited amount of time left. I call these remember sessions and they're really, really precious to me. I priced them quite a discount because I don't want the finances to be a burden for someone when they're faced with that situation.

Speaker 3 ([24:24](#)):

Yeah. I have a 28 year old horse, so, uh, you know, Maggie Sue, she's, well, she'll be 28th. I'm on the 4th of May and she's just, you know, she's still really healthy, but I made sure to get some photos with her last year because you just, at that age, you just never know. And so, yes. Um, yeah. So, and then, you know, aside from that, you know, it's sometimes it's families. I do quite a few families where the families ride together. They have horses. Yeah. It's then it kind of a mix. After that. I, I love portrait sessions. No matter what I do, I'll never stop doing portrait sessions.

Speaker 1 ([25:03](#)):

Nice. That's awesome. Um, so that brings up an important point though for you know, a high school senior or a family, uh, an important skill if you want to be an equine photographer and really a pet photographer too cause we still have people involved is human posing. Um, because that's pretty critical. I mean the horses is definitely important in the dogs that we can't forget about directing our humans so that they look great and love the images as well.

Speaker 3 ([25:28](#)):

Yeah, that's really true. And I recently taught a equine photography retreat in Florida and I watched somebody else do posing and then I taught my own posing class and, and it was kind of a mind blowing experience because it made me realize that I pose differently like the different people pose differently in that the posing has a ton to do with how the end product feels. Cause the other person I watched you posing is more of a fashion style photographer. She's studied a lot of Lara Jade and just, and she, she's really about the girl and making the girl look, you know, really beautiful and very much like a, like a model. And I love that. I love her work, I love her. But for me that's not my value is like I'm not into fashion, I don't wear a lot of makeup, you know, I don't do my hair and I tend to attract that client.

Speaker 3 ([26:22](#)):

And so some of my girls show up and they don't even do their makeup for their senior session because there are girls, there are horse girls and that's, they want to be authentic and I don't impose, you know, I don't tell people they have to get hair and makeup and I realized that my posing is actually very minimal. It's more about setting a stage. Like you know, I'm going to have you stand here and I give them a few flattering things to do and then I just tweak. If something feels awkward to me, I'll tweak it. If they feel stiff, I'll get them to loosen up. But it's really about, it's about setting different stages. And then letting them interact with the horse in that state on that stage or maybe having them reach up and touch the horse in a different place or in a different way.

Speaker 3 ([27:05](#)):

But I'm very, I'm almost hands off when it comes to posing and I would call it maybe more of a natural posing technique. And it's not one's right or wrong, but I, I don't think I ever contrasted it before in that way that made me go, huh. That. Yeah, that is really, and then, cause I actually took some photos that one of her styles shoots just to play with my mirrorless camera. And I was like, they all look like her pictures. And it was because of how she posed everything. And I was like, this is actually a bigger deal than I originally thought. That's fantastic. Who is not photography? People would probably love to look at her work and you could just see the difference. Yes. It's Christie Marie photography and she's a dear, dear friend of mine. And, um, and that was really, really fun to watch her work and direct her model and all of that.

Speaker 3 ([27:46](#)):

And so yeah, you can go to her website and she has some great educational videos on her site too with all all things equestrian photography. That's awesome. Yeah, cause I would say for your fear photography, when I look at it, I definitely feel the relationship, so I feel brings out that that relationship between horse and rider, which is one reason I think that people are so drawn to your work, so that's just really beautiful. I'm curious, I'm going to have to look up her work and see that. I mean you can look at that too with just different high school senior type of genres. You know there's, there's people that are a little bit more airy. There's people that are like high fashion, so there's, there's all these different ways that you can take the same genre of work and create the look that you love that resonates with you as from one one person that wears no makeup or rarely does her hair to another.

Speaker 3 ([28:36](#)):

You get it. Yeah. I think some of it's regional differences too because she's in Texas and I'm in, I'm in the Midwest and the upper Midwest, which is really, you know, it's just, we talk a lot about she and I about how different our clients are and the different expectations and so it actually makes sense for her in her area with, you know, she's doing a lot of the like, you know, people who show at the quarter horse Congress in the world show and all of that kind of stuff. I mean these, this, it's a whole different culture from eventing, which is exercise, which is big around my area. And even she does more shoots per year sometimes with people because in the South I think it's more acceptable to have photos of yourself and have them on your wall and have multiple photo shoots where around here there's this kind of weird humility in our culture that like you don't want to make too big of a deal about yourself around other people. And so yeah, it's been interesting to have a friend in a, a colleague and friend in a different market and and be able to understand that how things can vary just from region to region. That's true. That's awesome.

Speaker 1 ([29:42](#)):

Although I would venture to say too, I mean as long as you're in an area with enough people, you know that you're by a bigger city, that there's still people that would be attracted to both styles and all the cities, you know, so they would, the people that attracted those different styles kind of seek that photographer out. But there's definitely, it's some truth to, to the, to the different regions. I know for like high school seniors, I forget who I was talking to, but I feel it was Northeast or California, I have no idea, no idea where it was in the country, but they were like, we don't really have a high school senior market. I think it was New Jersey or something. Yeah, it's really a big Midwest thing and I think a little bit more like Southeast Texas kind of area where I was like, really? It's fascinating because I grew up in the Midwest and I'm like, what? You didn't do senior photographers like that's been going on since for as long as I can.

Speaker 3 ([30:30](#)):

Yeah. Let's say it's my parents, my my parents. My mom has a senior portrait. I mean it was all taken in a studio by of all the same photographer, but it's still a senior portrait

Speaker 1 ([30:39](#)):

with the numbers from the year you graduated, you're like, Hey,

Speaker 3 ([30:43](#)):

yeah, everybody had to wear the same black cloth across the head.

Speaker 1 ([30:47](#)):

Yes. Oh my gosh. Yeah. It's so good. Well, this conversation, Shelly, has been fantastic and before we go, actually it's a good segue. Talk about posing and learning the details of equine photography, quest, Trian, horse photography, whatever you want to call it. We have an awesome little, I'm not little, I don't want to say little because it has a ton of incredible information in it, educational thing and hair of the dog that you created and you want to tell people a little bit about what is in there and how it can help.

Speaker 3 ([31:17](#)):

Sure. I created a book, an ebook called the Quickstart guide to equestrian photography. And it's really aimed at people who maybe don't have a ton of experience, uh, Fatah photographing horses and people with horses or people who have some experience and are looking to maybe expand, especially in the area of posing. Um, the guide is really covers everything from horse behavior, how to read the horse, you know, which is kind of blends into the safety issues around horses versus our 1200 pound flight animals. And so if you're not careful, bad things can happen and have happened to me, which I share in the ebook. There's a little teaser. Um, and, and then I get into what gear I like to use posing. You know, just really by the time you're done with the book, you should be able to go out and do a great session with a horse and human and have success with it.

Speaker 1 ([32:11](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And we have a little posing guide, like a digital custom app posing guide that you can have on your phone. So when you go to session you're like, Oh gosh, what should I do now? You can have some little brain freeze to the best of us and there's also your session kind of welcome guide or your questionnaire for your clients. That is part of that too, which is incredibly valuable. And for you

guys we were going to put it on another awesome super quick sale of \$77 that you guys can grab that special guide if you want to get started with equine photography, if you're doing pets and you want to add equines, it's really a fantastic, I've been shooting horses for while I've been around horses as I was eight and I've always photographed horses, not a ton, probably like four to five per year for the past, you know, five years or so.

Speaker 1 ([33:02](#)):

And I learned some things in there so there's still some, some great, great nuggets in there. No matter how long you guys had been photographing horses and if you want to check it out, you can go to [hair.of.thedogacademy.com/s P P](http://hair.of.thedogacademy.com/sPP) or Shelley Paulson photography. That'll take aim it to the page that tells you a little bit more about that. And I'm that's on sale from now until May 15th so you can save \$20 and it's only \$77. So definitely grab that. If you're interested in learning more about horses and Shelly, where can they find you if they want to learn more about your work or follow your teachings and all that good stuff that you have?

Speaker 3 ([33:39](#)):

Well I've got my main website, shelleypaulson.com and you can pretty much get everywhere from there. But one thing that I've done over the years is I've made quite a few videos like where I filmed myself kind of behind the lens. I give some tips and tricks on equine photography. I am finally at the point where I'm going to start making a few more, um, as I'm caught up with projects, thanks to cope in 1914. Um, but so I have a YouTube channel and so people can go to [youtube.com/shelley Paulson](http://youtube.com/shelleyPaulson) to see those videos. And then really an Instagram and Facebook is Shelly Paulson, photography in both of those places. And I post to my social media six days a week, seven seventh day. I rest, I don't do social media at all and I definitely don't post. So that's kinda how I, how I keep the information out there and yeah, I know it keeps me sane though. It's great.

Speaker 1 ([34:33](#)):

Oh wow. Yeah, that's always been my goal and I just, I can't keep up with it. Fantastic. Have you found, like, has that been a driver for marketing and business for you? Have you found it? I mean, you probably wouldn't still be doing it all the time if it wasn't only just a little bit beneficial, but have you, what have you found most beneficial about that?

Speaker 3 ([34:53](#)):

Um, I, you know, I just think, you know, keeping people engaged and keeping a lot of content out there. And I also really believe that showing that you're working breeds more work and, uh, so I'm obviously not making a lot of new content right now, but the content I'm putting out is related to things I'm working on right now. Like I just realized my stock photo library, so I shared a bunch of images that I just added there. I just wrote an article for a horse illustrated about my trip to Shanka Teagan asked tea glass fall. So I put one of those photos out. So I'm trying to just always show that I'm working and I'm busy and, and work breeds work.

Speaker 1 ([35:27](#)):

Absolutely. And if you guys are sending even home and you're like, man, but I can't work right now. Stupid coven. You can definitely do some personal projects. Um, you know, might not be able to shoot equine photos for your personal project if you don't have a horse. But you know, there's different things you can learn and you can always be learning some new editing. You can always be learning new

techniques. So now it's definitely a great time to jump into any education that you've had sitting around or new things you want to learn and figure out what it is that's going to make the best, the best business sense for you, for learning your craft or growing your business and seek out some education on those things. Of course. Um, you know, hair of the dog academy we have items of business materials and things like that. And if you're at all interested in equines, definitely check out Shelly's ebook. It is fantastic. Shelly, thank you so much for being with us. I think this was great. Yeah, so much great stuff in it. Well, you're so welcome. Thanks for having me on. Of course. We'll talk to you soon. Thanks again.

Speaker 2 ([36:24](#)):

Thanks for listening to this episode of hair of the dog podcast. If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review and while you're there, don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss our upcoming episodes. One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@www.hairofthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.