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'Just Believe'

 By Sharon Male
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Three years ago, Rodney Washington started taking photos to unwind on his days off from his high-pressure job as a supervisor at the Four Seasons hotel in Los Angeles.

“Photography was a creative outlet for me,” he says. “I was working with people who had very high expectations, a lot of demands, a lot of money. When you’re in that environment, you’re just giving and giving until there’s nothing left of you at the end of the day. It was important for me to do something that took me out of my head and allowed me time express myself.”

He bought an inexpensive camera and a photography book, then started shooting—mostly flowers, the ocean, “whatever was around.” When he showed his photos to colleagues at work, they

were impressed. Several asked him to photograph their families.

“People started to recognize my style, and I started getting asked to shoot more,” he explains. “It happened very organically. I didn’t have a master plan.”

Soon, Washington’s photography became much more than a hobby.

“I’ve been told that I have a way of capturing something in people’s eyes,” he says. “I look past their overall physical attractiveness. I’m more interested in expressions of the face—I like the idea of telling a story with the person.”

He left the Four Seasons last year and now runs his own photography studio. Despite the challenges, he says, he’s glad he chose to pursue his passion—and that anyone can make the same choice.

“Don’t ever wait for a perfect time, because there’s no such thing,” he says. “Complaining about a job you don’t like can drain you, so decide what you want and direct your actions that way. Eventually, everything else will catch up to that goal. Just believe.”

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