

5

Seeing Other Perspectives

Examining Photographs of Clients Taken by Others

Readers may find the following comments quite familiar. "Wait a minute. My hair's not right." "You like that photo of me? Uck! I think it's dreadful!" "I don't mind you having a snapshot of me, but only from the shoulders up until I lose more weight." "Oh, I can never relax in front of the camera. Just hurry up and take the picture anyway 'cause it won't look right no matter what I do." "No, it's not all right to take my picture." "Wow, you made me look absolutely wonderful! Thank you!" These kinds of comments are likely to sound familiar to anyone who has ever tried to take a picture of someone else. Most of us have opinions about how photographs of us will or should turn out, and most of us nevertheless cooperate with the photographer, unless we strongly dislike the person wanting to capture our image on their film. Sometimes we arrange to have photos taken of us, for example, in portrait studios. However, these are in a sense like self-portraits because we keep most of the control over production and possession of the image.

This chapter is about those other kinds of photos made of us by friends, family members, or even strangers: snapshots made for other people's reasons rather than our own. Although we are often permitted to view the results and sometimes welcome to give our honest feedback, the photograph is theirs, not ours, to keep. And while it is a photo of us, it shows us through someone else's eyes and perceptual filters.

The key word in speaking of photographs is *take*, and in a sense, photographers "take" us; we become partly theirs, at least metaphorically. Their "having" us is a demonstration that some sort of a relationship or inter-

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p68-69