

Portrait Retouching and Healing with Ease

One of my schools sent me this great photo of their principal they want to use to open their faculty section, and they said, "We love our principal, but the photo shows every itty, bitty flaw in his face. Can you help?" Of course! Here's what to do.

1. First we need to get the color and the exposure correct. The best way to do that is to open the photo using Camera RAW. So choose File>Open, and when the dialog box pops open, choose your photo with one click.
2. Then, at the bottom of the Open dialog, find the Format drop-down menu where it currently says JPEG. Click and choose Camera Raw. This will open the photo in the Camera Raw plug-in. (Figure A)
3. In Camera Raw, adjust the sliders on the right side until you get the exposure and color balance the way you want it and then click Open to open the photo in Photoshop. (Figure B)
4. Create a new layer in the Layers panel and name it "Spot Healing."
5. Click J to select the Spot Healing Brush. In the Options bar, choose Sample All Layers. (Figure C)
6. Reduce the brush size (using the bracket keys) until the brush is just a hair larger than the blemishes you want to remove. With the new layer active, click on them to make them disappear. Remember to click each only once.
7. Create another new layer on top of the Spot Healing layer. Name it "Healing Brush." Then choose the Healing Brush tool (it's under the Spot Healing Brush tool). Again, make sure that Sample All Layers is selected in the Options bar.
8. With the Spot Healing Brush, you must specify a source so hold down Alt (Option on a Mac) and click on an area of good skin as close as possible to something you want to fix (in this case the lines in his throat). Then release the Alt (Option on a Mac) key and paint out the lines. Continue to hold down the Alt (Option on a Mac) key to click new source points and paint out all the artifacts you want to remove.
9. From time to time while doing steps 6 and 8, turn off the visibility on those layers so you can see how much you have removed.
10. As much as we would all like to look years younger, sometimes too much retouching is way too noticeable so you may want to put back just a little bit. After all, no one is perfect. To do that, click on that top layer, and move the transparency slider at the top of the Layers panel to around 75 or so and see how it looks.
11. One last thing. Let's whiten the teeth a little. To do that select, the Background layer in the Layers panel. Using the Lasso tool, make a selection around the teeth.
12. Choose Select>Modify>Feather and type a 1 in the dialog box. Then click OK.
13. Choose Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Drag the Saturation slider to the left to remove any yellow, and then drag the brightness slider to the right to brighten the teeth.
14. Save a copy of your file as a JPEG for uploading to YTO or for placement in InDesign using Picture Placer.

