Lesson #3: Learning about the amazing world of stock images and “giving credit to whom credit is due”

There is a story in the Bible that has influenced my thinking when it comes to giving thanks. Thoughts of this account run through my mind on a very regular basis as I go about my next treasured digital art design.

Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy (KJV)

Luke 17:11-19 - Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” 14 When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Giving thanks and giving credit to whom credit is due is right in so many ways. Of course, we want to first give credit and thanks to the Father for giving us the ability and talent to do what we do, to learn what we learn, and to have what we have. And then we give credit and thanks to those whom God used to help train us along the way. We thank our parents, our friends, family, pastors, teachers, mentors, and leaders; the list should go on and on. These wonderful people are worthy of our thanks because they give us information and guidance to help make
our lives better, many times at their own personal expense. All too often they are not thanked enough. I have come to the personal conclusion that I want to be like the Samaritan who came back and gave thanks. I hope you will too!

How does giving thanks have anything to do with digital art or small business you may ask? A lot, I tell you! See, in the world of digital art, there are a gazillion things one ought to be thankful for and give proper credit to. It helps those who provide that service or product, and it gives the thankful heart favor in their eyes, and they too become thankful for the appreciation they’ve been given. It’s a cycle of kindness that starts with giving and continues on by thanking.

Here are some of the tools I use and am so very thankful for in my profession as a digital artist:

- Adobe Photoshop®
- Adobe Illustrator®
- Corel Draw®
- Corel Painter®
- Wacom® Tablet
- Teachers/Instructors
- Plugin authors for Photoshop and Illustrator
- Stock image providers

Remember in my last lesson when I said, “You cannot have a good design if you do not have good images”?

Many people can take great photos with a good camera, a good eye, and proper lighting, but from my own experience, it is much harder to take a great photo than one thinks. I am a stock provider for a few professional stock sites, and the criteria for loading the stock images were no small feat for me. There are, however, many hobby photographers and stock providers who share their wonderful stock on various sites that do not have stiff requirements purely out of enjoyment. You can find a world of wonderful stock photos on these sites, and many times all they ask in return is that you give thank them for providing the image. Trust me, it’s a big deal. It will give them energy to share more. If, instead, thanks is not given, it may discourage these providers, and they’ll take their images down and do something else.

I saw a meme and thought it so true. It read:

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

A person who feels appreciated will always do more than is expected.
I believe this is true in the home and in business. I’m reminded of the books I used to read when I was a newlywed and how the authors would encourage the readers to be thankful of their partners. It told me how anytime my husband would do something good that I should give special thanks to him for his efforts. Before I knew it, my husband would do this good thing more often in order to get the desired results of appreciation. Did this work in our marriage? Yes, indeed! Same is true with raising our children or our relationship with our parents. When we see a good or desired behavior and we show sincere gratitude, that action is more likely to be repeated. It may take a bit of practice if you’re not used to giving thanks; the other person may not respond right away to it. But if you keep it up, you’ll no doubt see the positive effects of simply saying thank you on a more regular basis.

Some people love appreciation and are absolutely energized by it more than others, but I am convinced that all people love a little (if not a lot) of gratitude and will respond well to it, providing future positive results in return.

Again, this can be seen in business as well. When you show gratitude for a teacher, an employee, or a supplier, you will be encouraging them to do more positive things in the future: positive services, classes, and products. It only gets better and better!

Here is an example of showing thanks and credit for the use of some free stock images. There is a large membership website called DeviantArt. It has thousands of free stock images from hobby photographers, designers, and even models. However, I will give you a strong warning. As with most stock image websites, it does not have conservative standards for the images it shows. I, personally, am very careful where I browse for my images. Many of the members upload pictures that may offend your faith and conservative values. At the same time, there are thousands of believers sharing their faith, their amazing artwork, their free stock and photography images as well. Please view this site with a parent!

What you see in the above photo-manipulation project is about five different stock images I found on Deviantart back in 2010. When I posted the finished product, I gave the requested
credit and a big thank you for allowing me to use the stock images in my project, called the “Peacock Princess.”

Giving credit is as simple as saying:  
**The Following DA Stocks Were Used in this Project with Much Gratitude!**

![Peacock Feathers](image1)
![Hills and Valley](image2)
![Castle and Lake](image3)
![Roses and Path](image4)

Sometimes I include the stock author name along with the stock image title and link. Later I would visit the stock pages, thanking the stock provider and letting them know I used their stock images. I usually post a link to my work in the comments field. The link is great for them to check out my work, but it’s also great for me because other visitors will come and check out my work as well. And if the link goes to my website, it builds up my website ratings with the search engines, giving me better SEO. Again, giving thanks is good in so many ways and for so many reasons.

After this project, I decided I wanted to create my own free fantasy stock images with rules of my own. You can see my credit request from the following link. Some stock providers have more rules; others have less. Always be mindful of a person’s personal stock rules. Being a stock provider can be a very timely experience, so please respect their rules as you would want yours to be respected. In future lessons, I’ll show you how you can become a professional stock supplier too.

There is a difference between **free** stock images and **paid**-for stock images. The main difference is the paid-for stock images will usually have similar rules of use but less limitations. Paid-for stock images also do not normally request a credit link back. The free stock image providers usually do request a credit link back. This credit link helps them and encourages them to provide more, as discussed earlier, but it can be somewhat wearisome when you have a lot going on and forget where you found the stock image in the first place. Or, you don’t really want to give all your resources away to designers who are your competitors.

I love using stock images in all my projects. I’ve created hundreds of my own stock images, but when I considered the time it took to create my own stock library and the fact that there was never enough of my own stock images to choose from, I came to the conclusion that I like referring to other professional stock image sites most of all. It’s just a lot easier and faster that way.

I’ll provide some stock image site recommendations in the near future.

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**Activity Time!**

**Keyword you’ll use in this project:** Thank you

Let’s create a digital art picture in Photoshop or with a free comparable software image editor. Use the words: Thank you. Give this your best shot, whether you’re new to digital art or if you’re experienced. I’ll provide you the guidelines and instructions below. You can give a printout to someone you are very thankful for and dedicate the image to them. As well, in the future, you can use this same image to create hundreds of products that say “thank you” for people to actually buy. I’ll show you how in my upcoming lessons for creating real products people can buy. I have personally sold many “thank you” cards, key chains, and other thank you gift items over the years.

So, let’s have some fun and give a lot of thanks!

Choose four primary colors you would like to work with. You can use one color with three different shades if you like. Find their color numbers as well as their color names and write them below for reference. See my example below.

**You can browse through the different color options here:**

[http://madetobeunique.com/color-chart](http://madetobeunique.com/color-chart)
Your Color Pallet

1 Color:  Add your color choice here. *(Example: #2B60DE Royal Blue)*

2 Color:

3 Color:

4 Color:

5 Color:  Black - leave this as a default color that you can almost always use anywhere

6 Color:  White - leave this as a default color that you can almost always use anywhere

Fonts to use in this project

1 Font:  Arial

2 Font:  Times Roman

3 Font:  Brush Script

Notice how I have a whole bunch of thank yous in a straight row on my hanging decoration. There are many ways you can have your thank yous. Try going up and down, backward, tilted, with spaces, without spaces, large fonts and small fonts. Make it unique; make it fun. For this project, use the same primary colors listed above, and the same three fonts. We’ll discuss fonts in a future lesson, so please use those I’ve listed for now and make it as unique as you can.

Common Project Standards and Practices

- Make your image size 4000 x 4000 pixels; this is a useful size for making a variety of products in the future.
- **Save your work often.** *(You can use Control + S for a quick save; give this a try if you’re not familiar with this quick keyboard saving step.)*
- Save your project in a PSD (Photoshop document) if you are working in Photoshop. You can use it later on to change the size and move things around easily. This is wonderful when you want to use the same design in different sizes and still have it look great.
Here are some video guides from YouTube® to help you in this project. While many video tutorials you find online may focus on specific Photoshop versions such as Photoshop C5 or C6, many of the tools and capabilities are the same. However, they may be placed in another area of your Photoshop version. Feel free to email me if you need help finding specific tools to finish your project.

- How to set the image size
- How to save your project in Photoshop for editing later in PSD or JPG for print or sharing online
- Different fun ways to use fonts/text in your project

In my next lesson, I will show you how to change the image size so you can email your image to your friends and family or share a smaller version of the image elsewhere—your website or your favorite social networks.

Sharing the large file size (such as 4000 x 4000 pixels) online is NOT recommended. The large file size should be kept privately on your own computer, unless you don’t mind other people using it for their own personal profit. If someone gets hold of your image and they like it, they can basically do the same thing you would (create products for sale) using your image. The largest image size is the most valuable, so keep it safe unless you’re okay with sharing it.

Another reason to make your images smaller when sharing with friends is that it’s a much smaller file size for them to download and save. So, they’ll most likely be glad you reduced the size anyway.

Okay, that’s a wrap!

Consider sharing your finished picture with me, with a friend, or with some family members. You can send it to me either by email at crystal@madetobeunique.com, or you can post it to my new Made To Be Unique Facebook® Class Group for others to enjoy as well.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/128214837606410

Email me if you enjoy my class or if you have any questions. It helps me produce more classes like this and even helps me perfect them as I chug along!
Blessings!

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Stay tuned for my next lesson called:
Graphic designer wages.
Plus, a quick image size and compression guide.