

Imaging for Creative Solutions and Decisions

By Leonard Lang, Ph.D

I'm sure many of you are familiar with photographer Ansel Adams' inspiring views of nature, especially Yellowstone. His works reportedly have been seen by more people than any other photographer.

Adams had a theory about photography, "visualization" that came as a breakthrough moment early in his career. As described by *Apogee* Magazine, "In 1927, he created what he called his first print using "visualization," in which he determined the qualities of the final print even before he snapped the shutter."

His specific ideas around photography might give us all a rough template for how to approach our lifework vision or reach any goal. Let's see by taking a snapshot of his process.

First, Adams saw a scene that impressed him (in 1927, the face of Half Dome in Yosemite). He looked hard and appreciatively at what was before him.

- In short, he faced squarely **what life placed before him**, given his initial interests and actions. He wasn't negative about it.

He knew that the scene would not by itself allow him to produce the image he wanted to have for his photograph.

- In other words, he **wanted something more** or different than what was currently there, something that would express how he felt, something deep within him.

He then saw in his mind's eye an image that did fully express his vision. He knew that wasn't going to just happen if he hung out long enough or snapped a hundred shots (an option that wasn't available anyhow).

- In other words, he **got clear what he did want** and realized that his current approach wouldn't get him there.

He then figured out what use of filters and darkroom work would make his mind's image appear in the real world. Eventually, he developed a complex technical process that others could also follow to transform what they encountered into the photograph they imagined.

- In other words, he **drew on all his training, talents and resources to come up with a process to achieve his goal**, and then shared that process with others so they too could achieve their goals.

Adams wrote of his first breakthrough picture: "I can still recall the excitement of seeing the visualization 'come true' when I removed the plate from the fixing bath for examination. The desired values were all there This was one of the most exciting moments of my photographic career."

- In other words, **it worked** for him. Does this help you?

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