

# Remarkable Photographs

by Randall Munson, CSP

Great pictures are the hallmark of the National Geographic magazine. Every issue contains incredibly vivid, striking, and often emotionally moving photographs. Other magazines have professional photographers and good pictures but they don't reach the level of excellence exhibited every month, in every issue, of National Geographic.

They don't print exceptional photographs because they only take exceptional photographs. They print exceptional photographs because they take lots and lots of good photographs and buried within all those very good photographs are the remarkable ones that we see in the magazine.

William L. "Bill" Allen, editor of National Geographic magazine said that for an average article they shoot 40,000 pictures and use 20. Their success rate is only one out of two thousand! Their professional photographs fail to make the magazine 99.95% of the time.

National Geographic photographers are willing to try things; lots of things. They try different angles, filters, lighting, perspectives, film, composition, speeds, seasons and lenses. They don't expect every photograph to be great. They know that a lot of the things they try won't work well. An essential part of their success is the willingness to try things with no assurance of success. They are willing to work hard on something and then discard it and start over.

What could you accomplish if you were willing to work hard on something and then discard it and start over if it doesn't pan out?

By the way, National Geographic doesn't just take lots of pictures and hope they get lucky. According to Bill Allen, they plan more than 24 issues ahead. Careful planning and free experimentation are compatible elements of success.

## SOURCE:

Interview on TV 12/04

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