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DESIGN PRINCIPLES for the SCRAPBOOK PAGE

{LESSON FOUR} Design Principle of Alignment

The principle of alignment tells us to consciously place each element on the page with a consideration for its relation to other elements on the page. Using alignments, you can create visual connections between elements, even if they are not next to one another.

While the landscape photo at the top of “Carry a Big Stick” is separated from the block of four photos below by a wide gutter, alignments connect it to them nonetheless. The left edge of the photo lines up with the left edges of the two photos below on the left—and the same is true for the right side.

The title block and the journaling block also share side edge alignments. By right justifying the journaling, the gutter between journaling and photos is made clear—adding to the strength of this vertical line.

To use alignments well, look for a strong line and make it stronger with clear alignments.



alignment and unity

Alignment and unity. In Lesson #3, I talked about unity – about the idea that the whole design is more important than any individual element or grouping. Alignments are a great tool for unifying and organizing the material on your page so that the viewer can take it in and understand and enjoy it.

The elements on “After Our Seder” are organized into two columns. The column to the left is created with edge alignments – alignments of the left and right edges of each paper strip, photo, and piece of trim.

There are also center alignments in this piece. The brad and the bracketed paper above the series of photos are centered. Additionally, the journaling and smaller photo to the right are all “center” aligned.



alignment and white space

Alignment and white space. White space refers to the areas of your page that are not filled with elements. White space not only gives the eye a resting point, it provides contrast and helps elements stand out. It's a great tool for grouping elements—and it helps you establish a hierarchy. (Think back to Lesson #2 on Emphasis to remember why this is important).

align with the photo edges. The effect of these alignments is to create page margins and gutters—which are the white space on this page. See how powerful alignments are?

Now here's the important part about white space and alignments: alignments can define the white space on your page.

“Joshua is Twelve” is a controlled and linear layout with all photo and journaling block edges aligned. Even the left and right edges of the title and decorative bars



creating alignments

To create alignments, find a strong line and use it – emphasize it – make it stronger. Place each element in relation to another element. And then . . . once you have a strong line, break out purposefully to keep things interesting.

creating alignments | centered alignment

Centered alignments. Aligning elements upon their center points (either vertically or horizontally) is often discouraged in design because it can be dull. The reasons for this have to do with asymmetry frequently being more visually interesting than symmetry.

Symmetrical or center-aligned designs are often used for formal design pieces like wedding invitations. Setting yourself the task to make a center-aligned design that has pizzazz is a great way to push yourself to designing in a new way.

“Stuffededs” is a page in which the elements are center aligned – except for the embellishments at top right and bottom left of the photo. While this is a center-aligned design, I really like it. Perhaps it’s the curves and whimsical elements that save it from feeling overly formal and give it a bit of energy.



creating alignments | edge alignment

Edge alignments. Photos, blocks of journaling, and mats (all typically rectangular shapes) lend themselves to edge alignment. It is these kinds of alignments that create the organizing white space of margins and gutters.

Once you've purposefully incorporated alignments (and, thus, defined white space), it's O.K. and often essential to purposefully break those alignments for design interest.

On "My Inheritance" the edges of each title line, each photo, each strip of paper, and the journaling block all align with other elements. The embellishment cluster at right then breaks out of those lines to add interest and break into the white space and keep it from being totally symmetrical and regular and even dull.



creating alignments | edge alignment

“Mast Way Goodbye” uses edge alignments to organize 10 busy photos onto one two-page spread. The block of photos to the left is from the “graduation” ceremony. The strip through the middle is from the party afterward. The two remaining photos (which are not aligned) are details of my son and the decorations.



Notice how the right and left title edges are aligned with the photo block. It's attention to these kinds of details that will give you a strong page design.

creating alignments | axis alignment

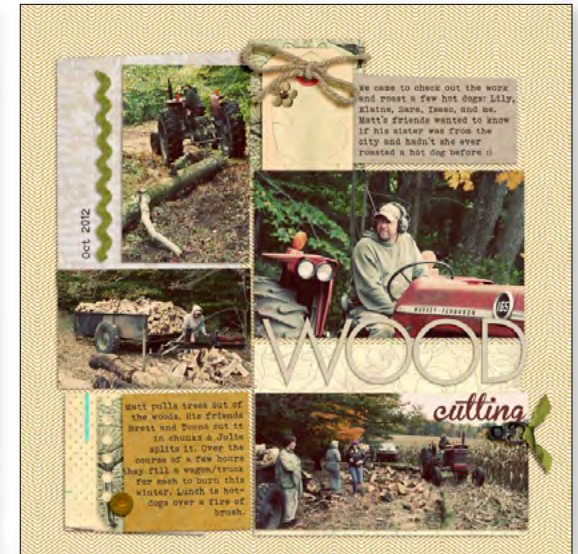
You may align your elements along an axis. For example, you may have items in two columns, and those items might have varying widths. They they won't align on both edges for neat columns. Try aligning the ones in the left column along their right edges and then the ones in the right column along their left edges. The result will be a strong axis line between the two.

“Fast Forward” aligns the page elements along a vertical axis that runs between the two photos and the journaling. It's emphasized with strips of ribbon and stitching. Notice how the journaling on the right is left justified and the journaling on the left is right justified (remember: find a line and make it stronger).



The pieces of “Wood Cutting are arranged along an axis that runs between two columns. The right edges of everything in the first column are aligned and the left edges of everything in the second column are aligned.

On “Beach Days” a relaxed and imprecise horizontal axis run between the two rows of photos in the photo grouping. It organizes and provide a guide for working with photos of different sizes.



summary

Arrange your elements to create lines that make sense, that organize your page, and that just look good.

Look for opportunities to create lines. And if you're going to make a line: make it a strong one. Don't go half-way with it.

See how photos, paper strips, brushwork, journaling blocks and title work all align on "Pool Days."

For more reading on alignments, check out the Get It Scrapped blog:

- [Strengthen your scrapbook page design with alignments](#)
- [Justification that strengthens scrapbook page design](#)

