

Creating a Mood

In the scrapbook presentation of a family's history or even a small portion of an individual's life, we use pictures, journaling and small memorabilia to tell our story. Still, too often, the drama of an event, the mood of a time, or the joy of a moment fall victim to the inadequacy of words and the dimensional restraints of the page. What then can we do to create emotions for others to feel, and to capture those deeper underlying things that we describe as mood and tone? The answers lie in the backgrounds, the colors, the textures of your page. These details are too often created to complement the photo rather than the emotions or mood going on in the photo. For instance, the picture of a couple having an quiet, candlelit dinner could have a background of a dramatic shade of burgundy paper and sparks flying out of a chemistry beakers, or dark paper bordered with foreboding clouds, depending on whether the dinner was the beginning of a romance or the futile attempt to save one. Use satiny cloth and textured papers to create a soft, cozy mood and perhaps even your own drawings or designs that create dramatic emotions.

But what about those less descriptive emotions of apprehension, uncertainty, ambivalence? What might you do to express the feelings going on in the photos of such things as going off to college or that first day of kindergarten? One way to display those emotions is to create a background of those things to be encountered or achieved – for going off to college it might be a black cap and gown, a diploma, young people dancing to signify new friends, etc. – then cover them with vellum to blur the images, make the details unclear, creating the feeling of uncertainty or ambivalence. Or consider these suggestions to create other moods:

- Lightly splatter paint on your background paper for a fun but chaotic effect for events like a roller coaster ride or a child's first birthday party at home.
- Lightly wet "emotional" words (not your journaling) and allow it to dry. The streaked effect will convey a "strong emotion" feeling.
- For a "tears" mood, water spot your paper with an eyedropper or your fingertips, but don't allow it to run. Use this on backgrounds for obituaries or sad moments.

And what about those wonderful old photos from generations past? You may not have even known those people let alone know how they were feeling! This is a great opportunity to express your own emotions and impressions about your family and what those pictures mean to you. Soft, muted colors or those stately patterned papers designed for black and white photos might be

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perfect to display the elegance and gentle pride you feel when you look through your diverse heritage. Something more bold might be dictated for the heads of families, something dramatic for the civil war hero. You get the idea. Backgrounds, die cuts, borders and stickers can be used to express your interpretation of who these people are and what they mean to you. This not only will tell people about your family and ancestors but it will also tell future generations something about you so that they might pick the appropriate backgrounds when they journal about and proudly display photos of you.

Good luck and have fun!

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