Essential Solutions for Page Design Problems
Dark Photos
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In this installment of Essential Solutions for Page Design Problems, I'm going to talk about the rule that gets broken more than any other.

Digital scrapbook pages almost always have one thing in common and that's pictures. There are a few exceptions, like art journal style pages or artistic style pages but in general, digital scrapbook pages almost always have at least one photo on them.

One of the most common problems with our photos is that they are too dark. Here's a visual example of a photo my sister sent me. Do you think it looks dark? Maybe a little? How about now? When I show you the edited version that's been brightened, it's clear

that the original photo was actually too dark to use as is. This problem is so easy to miss and yet just as easy to fix. Since we all know what photos are and why we use them on pages, let's get right to the design problem.

The Design Problem: Dark Photos

The design problem we can face when making our scrapbook pages is that we don't realize our photos are too dark. I know I've been guilty of this, and most likely so has anyone who's ever made a scrapbook page.

Main Reasons:

1. We're blinded by the subject.

What I mean by that is this: because the photo you're scrapping contains a picture of a loved one, all we see is their beautiful face. And that's good. We should care more about the loved one than the technical quality of the picture.

SUCH A SWEET PHOTO – HOW CAN ANYTHING BE WRONG WITH IT?

Because we're blinded by the love we have for the person, pet, or subject, we can overlook what's really going on with the photo.

SUCH A SWEET PHOTO – HOW CAN ANYTHING BE WRONG WITH IT?

2. Our monitors are not calibrated or are too bright.

The monitor you use, along with the brightness level of your screen, can make you think your photo is exposed properly when in fact, it isn't.

3. We don't stop and look at them.

I know that when I have used dark photos in the past, it was because I was so excited to use the photo, I didn't take the time to really look at it and see if it needed any edits. I spent all my time making a beautiful page design and then spent two seconds slapping the photo into place.

4. We can't tell there's anything wrong with the photo.

This can happen to anyone, but it can happen especially to people who are new to digital scrapbooking or digital photography. You know a good photo when you see it, but you have no idea why it's a good photo. The same goes for a bad photo. You know this isn't a good photo, but you don't know what's actually wrong with it.

While these aren't the only reasons a dark photo might be used on a page, these are the most common.

Solutions to Try:

1. Edit your photos before you use them on a page, **every single time**.

The first solution to consider regarding subject blindness is also the solution for when we don't stop and look at the photos. The solution is simple and yet so many of us don't do it. The solution to preventing dark photos is to edit them before we use them, **every single time**. Make editing your photos part of your page design workflow every single time. This will go a long way toward preventing photos that are too dark.

2. Calibrate your monitor.

Every single brand and model of monitor is different. Monitor calibration is no easy thing because of the variety out there. But here are some simple things you can try that don't involve all kinds of crazy tests.

• Try looking at the same photo on a different computer or another device. Does your photo look brighter on your phone? Then maybe your monitor is on the darker side and you need to increase your monitor's brightness so that you don't end up overexposing your pictures.

LOOK AT THE SAME PHOTO ON DIFFERENT DEVICES

• Print your photo onto high-quality photo paper. If you print your photo onto plain paper, this won't work. You need to use nice photo paper in order to have a more accurate idea of what the printed photo looks like. Compare your print to the screen. Do they look the same? Is the printed photo darker? If so, you may need to turn your monitor's brightness down so that you get a more accurate idea of your photo's exposure. Now I know neither of these calibration tests is foolproof, and you can spend lots of time and money on monitor calibration kits and still not get a perfect result. Just keep in mind that sometimes what you see on your screen isn't what you're actually getting.

PRINT THE PHOTO AND COMPARE TO SCREEN

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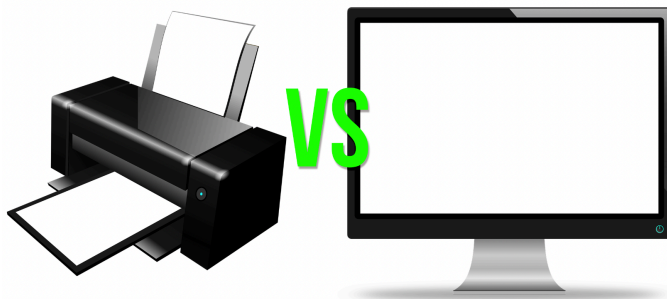
3. Take a basic photo editing class.

Sometimes, you just need help training your eye to see digital photos correctly. Here at Digital Scrapper, I offer a class called An Eye for Edits. In this class, I walk you through how to spot the top five missed photo edits, with dark photos being one of those top five. I teach you what to look for and how to tell if a photo needs editing. In the lecture that contains this video, you can find a link to a coupon code for a discount on the class price. It's ok if you need a little help. We all started somewhere and like you, I've had to take classes in order to improve my skills. And now, just to show the power a well-edited photo can have, let's look at a visual example.

Here's a scrapbook page before I make any edits to these photos. The photos aren't terrible. It's not impossible to see the subjects, and their faces are visible. However, the photos are dark and could use some brightening.

And here's the page now that I've edited the photos. Wow! Just editing the photos took my page from a little drab to happy and bright. Their smiles look happier, the page looks brighter, and overall my layout is improved because I took two minutes to edit my photos before I put them on my scrapbook page.

And in case that doesn't sell you, here's a before and after, side-by-side. Here is where you can truly see the difference good photos make. The page with the bright and properly exposed photos looks happier and more visually pleasing.

So to recap, the design problem is not realizing the photos we're using are too dark.

The solutions can vary based on the reason, but if you:

• always edit your photos before you use them on a page,
• take a little time to calibrate your monitor,
• and if needed, take a photo editing class to help you get an eye for edits,

your pages will be much happier and brighter going forward.

Winter Fun!

SNOW STORM

CHILL VIBES
loading

BUNDLE UP!

January & february of 2022

In Chicago, the winter of 2022 gave Jordyn & M.J. plenty of opportunities to play in the snow. They were pulled on sleds, made snowmen, and got to make snow angels as well as some other winter activities. It's always fun getting to see pictures and videos of them enjoying themselves no matter what the activity. I love that I get the chance to document these memories for them. It's a fun way to show them I love them! Soon enough, they are going to be adults and they'll love being able to look back at these pages.

Credits:
Page: Jenifer Juris
Photos: Jodi Finley
Kit: Snow Time by Just Jaimee
Font: Pinky Spring