

be **real**



scrapbook
your stories
with meaning
that endures



by **Debbie Hodge**

get it
scrapped!



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Seldom, very seldom, does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised or a little mistaken.

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"It is not time or opportunity that is to determine intimacy; it is disposition alone. Seven years would be insufficient to make some people acquainted with each other, and seven days are more than enough for others."

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Lesson #1: Discovering Meaning

Introduction

- Onto the page: Meaning
 1. Use concrete and significant details.
 2. Tell a story with narrative and scene.
 3. Combine images, color, and words to express a feeling.
 4. Zoom in and examine individual parts of an event.
 5. Zoom out and consider your subject in a larger context.
- Triggers

Seldom, very seldom, does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised or a little mistaken.

-- Jane Austen in *Emma*, 1816

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first of six “Be Real” lessons. The goal in all of these lessons is to make pages with everyday life and event photos that have more meaning. This first lesson is about understanding what meaning on a scrapbook page is and how you can achieve it.

Making sense of and recording your life through scrapbooking is immensely satisfying. A huge part of that has to do with managing memories—with adding to the ongoing story that is your life. We tell ourselves our stories, and then we tell other people our stories, often with changes. These stories can be entertaining, self-serving, inspired. They can change depending upon when in your life you tell



them. But somewhere behind these stories is something called the truth. Scrapbook pages that matter are working to get at and record some pieces of that truth—with an understanding of where the diarist-archiver-storyteller behind the message (you!) is in life right now.

Another thing that meaningful pages do is to go beyond the obvious, to make clear the bits we can't figure out from looking at the photos and integrating our own knowledge of the world. On a page about a fall outing to an orchard we know that apples can be sweet and crunchy, and if we see a photo of someone at the orchard biting into one, we make that connection without being told. What we don't know is that the high-schooler in the photos had to be begged to come along on the outing. Let your photos show the obvious. Use your journaling to tell us what we don't know. Use your design choices to create a mood that supports and expands upon the tone of your subject and stories.

WAYS TO GET MEANING ON YOUR PAGES

1. Use concrete and significant details.

Meaning doesn't have to be a grand epiphany. In "Puzzling" I scrapbooked an activity that's a regular part of my life: doing number and logic puzzles. I began my journaling by listing the physical items --books, pencils, erasers-- and then moved on to my behavior and preferences. The result is a page that shows I'm a little obsessive and unmoderated about this -- without ever using the word "obsessive."

Concrete details are those of images that can be sensed (seen, heard, touched, smelled, even tasted). Including details gives your



Journaling for "Puzzling" is on next page.

TRIGGERS

This section of each lesson will provide you with prompts or quotes or an exercise to get you thinking about the lesson's topic.

Perspective trigger #1: Quotes on assumptions, point of view and perspective.

While you may want to use the quotes in this sidebar on your pages as embellishments, your best results will come from thinking about them and using them jumpstart ideas and new understandings. Be sure to make notes as you consider them.

Perspective trigger #2: Point of view exercise. (See chart on next page.)

Pull out a stack of photos from an outing or gathering and use the chart on the following page to do the following:

1. Make a list of all the major participants.
2. For each participant imagine and record their answers to the following questions about the occasion:
 - what was your mood?
 - what did you want?
 - what did you get?
 - what was your favorite part?
 - what was your least favorite part?
 - which photo would you enlarge?
 - which photo would you toss?
3. Scrap a page while all these thoughts are fresh in your mind.

"One ship sails East,
And another West,
By the self-same winds that blow,
Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales,
That tells the way we go."—Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

"Assumptions are the termites of relationships."—Henry Winkler

"Won't you come into the garden? I would like my roses to see you."—Richard Brinsley Sheridan

"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own."—Henry Ford

"From a dog's point of view his master is an elongated and abnormally cunning dog."—Mabel L. Robinson

"When you look at yourself from a universal standpoint, something inside always reminds or informs you that there are bigger and better things to worry about."—Albert Einstein

"If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change."—Buddha

"We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be. And our attitudes and behaviors grow out of these assumptions."—Stephen R. Covey

"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."—Dom Helder Camara

"Normal is in the eyes of the beholder."—Whoopi Goldberg:

"Nothing's beautiful from every point of view."—Horace

"People who look through keyholes are apt to get the idea that most things are keyhole shaped."—Author Unknown

Perspective Trigger #2: Pull out a stack of photos from an outing or gathering and use the chart on the following page to do the following:

1. Make a list of all the major participants.
2. For each participant imagine and record their answers to the following questions about the occasion.
3. Scrap a page with these ideas fresh in your mind.

the people	what was your mood?	what did you want?	what did you get?	what was your favorite part?	what was your least favorite part?	which photo would you enlarge?	which photo would you toss?

2. Evoke an emotional response with color, image, motif and design choices.

On a scrapbook page, you have more than your journaling available for conveying a feeling. It's possible to use a combination of images, color, and motif to convey the joy or disappointment of a moment, place, or subject. In writing about art (specifically about Hamlet), T.S. Eliot talked about the "objective correlative," a set of objects, or a situation, or a chain of events that evoke an emotion in the audience. Rather than writing "He felt sad," in a story, the author can use weather, gestures, and even the things the character observes to the same purpose. On many of the pages you scrapbook, you will absolutely have a feeling or attitude about the subject you're scrapping. Consciously think about every choice you make to create a whole that's evocative of a mood or emotion.



JOURNALING for "I Think You Sparkle" Isaac, I've recently started calling you "Sparkles." In addition to always looking for a joke (combing your hair weird or dancing "like an Egyptian") you've become a constant companion to me on all kinds of errands and outings. What's more, you smile and yak as you show me things like ice scrapers at the gas station. You just enjoy getting out & being my company no matter where I'm going--even coming along to the hairdresser last week. Time with you is a joy. Love, Mom

Lesson #6: Expressing the Inexpressible

- Introduction
- Getting “hard-to-explain” feelings onto the page
 1. Explore fuzzy notions
 2. Tell it slant
 3. Accept complexity
 4. Springboard from the ordinary
 5. Use a central metaphor
- Triggers

“If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more.”

-- Jane Austen from Emma

INTRODUCTION

This is about getting those feelings that are hard to articulate in words onto the scrapbook page. Do you ever have a moment when you stop -- when you almost understand something or you have a fleeting idea but it's gone in a second? You have a feeling it's meaningful--but you need to pursue it farther to know. How do you stop and figure out and express thoughts that you can barely grab on to let alone explain in a clear cut way? Read on and try the following ideas.

GETTING HARD-TO-EXPLAIN FEELINGS ONTO THE PAGE

1. Explore fuzzy notions.

When you have one of those “gasps” -- one of those moments in which you feel you’re understanding something new or maybe only almost understanding it, follow that impulse with pen and paper. You probably won’t be able to write through it at that moment, but make a note to yourself of what was going on and what your “fuzzy notion” is. You may not even realize you have a fuzzy notion you want to pursue until it’s tapped at your consciousness a couple of times. That’s what happened to me when I had the original seed for “Seeing Me With You.” I would see attractive mothers with their children -- looking like ideal, pretty, competent, lovely mothers. Then I would think: *Oh my goodness! Imagine how I must look!* And then I thought: *How do I look?* And, what’s more, I thought: *How am I doing as a mom?* And finally: *Why haven’t I made this more important? What am I missing out on?*



When you do have time to write -- just start writing. Don't censor yourself. Don't worry about where it's going. When

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