

BUILDING PAGES



workshop taught by Debbie Hodge

Lesson 4: Foundations

- The Design
- Variations
- Sketch
- Your Turn

THE DESIGN

If the wise man builds his house upon the rocks, what does the wise scrapper build a page upon? A foundation, of course! But, then, that begs the question: what is a good page foundation?

In this lesson we'll look at foundations as being either: 1) an underlying grid structure, or 2) that first layer you put onto the page. That first element (or layer) is what connects the other elements to the background canvas. It affects the placement of each additional layer and element as you arrange them to achieve balance and unity.

We will look at these kinds of foundations and foundation pieces.

- the page itself
- compartments
- alignment
- inner mat
- imprecise mat
- partial mat
- non-paper foundation pieces



VARIATIONS

the page itself (grid)

We discussed this approach in Lesson #1: Blocked. As in "Good Times," elements fill the page from edge to edge.



compartments (grid)

On "Everybody Choose One Boat," a hand-drawn outline defines several compartments to hold the page elements. Title, photos, journaling, and embellishments all have a spot.



alignments (grid)

"Making Your Acquaintance" relies upon the white space of gutters and margins to define a grid foundation that accommodates all page elements. This white space is created by strong alignments: the beginning and ends of each title word and journaling are all lined up with the left and right edges of the photos.

centered inner mat

A square mat (or a series of square mats) mounted with even margins makes a good foundation for an inner grid design.

The elements of "Oh! The Dishes You'll Do" are organized on 10" x 10" mat. This mat is mounted with equal margins all around. Rounded corners and a very narrow margin within this mat add appealing detail. All elements are placed upon the mat. Embellish-



ments at bottom left and middle right extend off the mat to ground it to the background canvas.

"Coffee Mates" includes a series of square center-mounted mats, with the central one holding page elements in a grid arrangement. The flourishes that back up this mat at top left and bottom right connect (or ground) the inner canvas to its mat and help keep this fun page from being too linear. You might even consider them the foundation piece.

imprecise mat

A piece of paper (or even an area defined by stitching or paint) that houses most of the page elements can serve as a foundation that connects the elements to the page and keeps them from a free-floating feeling.



Take a look at “Persistence is the Up Side of Stubborn” shown here with and without a foundation (or grounding) mat.

While both pages work, I prefer the matted version. The mat is a blue textured paper with distressed edges placed beneath most of the elements. The stapled

strip of smaller photos falls off the right edge for a casual look.

Two more examples of this approach follow on the next page.



A patterned paper block backs up layers of paper, photo, and embellishments on "T43." This block is mounted low and to the right of center. The title and journaling spot sit partially upon the mat thus grounding this inner canvas to the background canvas and creating asymmetrical white space around it.

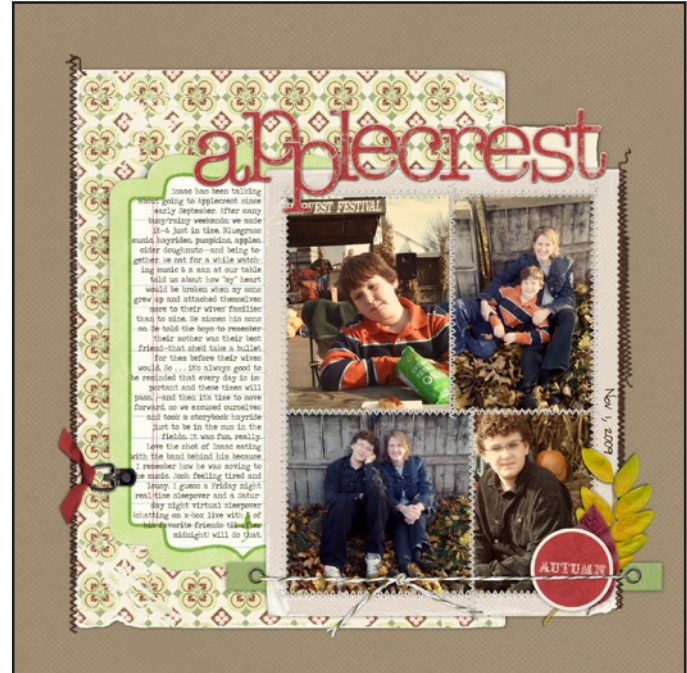


The mat on "Dadz in the Hood" is cut with slanted sides and non-square corners for a loose and fun look. Elements spill off and ground it in three spots.

partial mat

These layouts each have a foundation piece that underlies only some of the elements. I refer to it as a foundation because it is what grounds the elements to the page. Additionally, its presence affects the placement of all other elements.

The foundation piece on "Applecrest" is a rectangular block of patterned paper set off to the left. On "Hey, Girlfriend" a square block of brown paper with border stitching is the foundation piece. "Ice Storm" sits upon a corner flourished square.



Here are two more layouts with partial mats as their foundation pieces. In previous examples, we've seen rectangular blocks acting as foundations. Your foundation piece does not have to be a rectangle.

The foundation piece on "Bulkhead Watch" is half of a die-cut bracketed piece of paper.



The foundation for "The Best Part" is several strips of paper in different colors and different prints.

non-paper foundation pieces

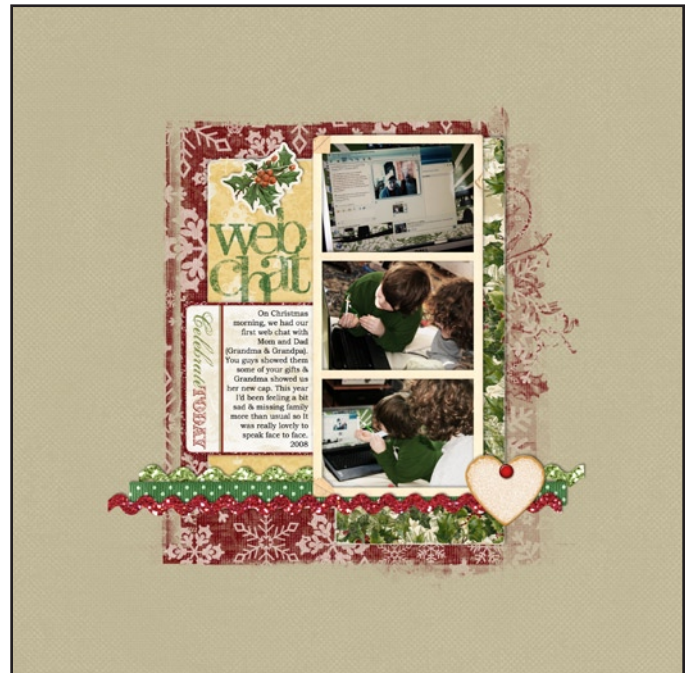
Your foundation piece does not have to be a block of paper. You could use paint, stamps, digital brushes/masks, hand-drawn elements, stitching, or anything else you can think of to act as that first anchoring layer.

The foundation piece of "Web Chat" is a "stamped" red block. I used a digital mask. For a paper page, use paint or a stamp and ink.



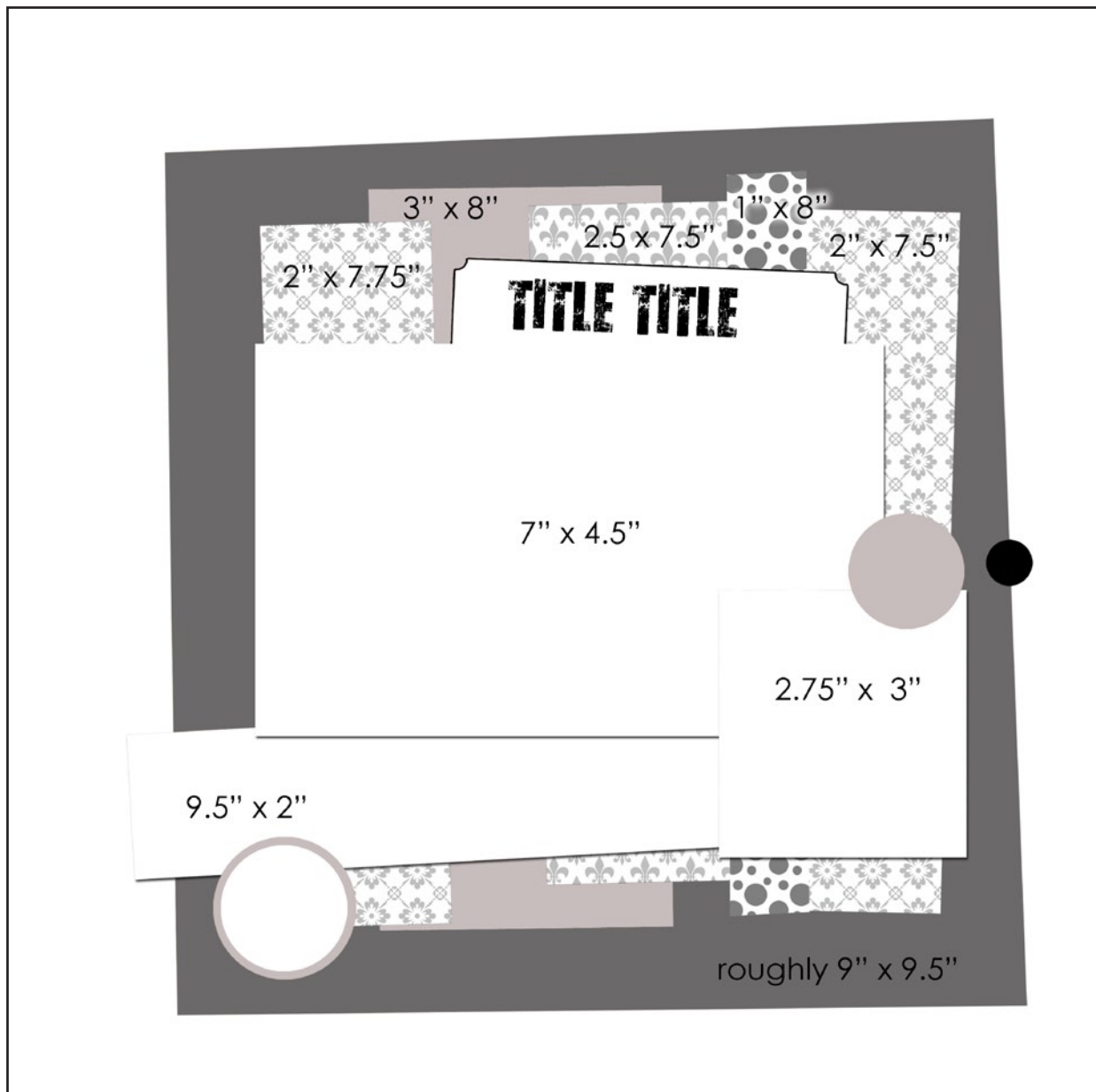
On the untitled page above, a block of hand-drawn lettering is the foundation piece.

"Stick in the Muds" is based upon a circle that is defined by stitching holes and shaped text.



SKETCH

Today's sketch is the basis for "Dadz in the Hood" on page 5 and includes an imprecise mat. [Click to download layered psd file for digital pages.](#)



YOUR TURN

Now it's your turn to make a page consciously thinking about your foundation piece.

Look through magazines or online galleries at non-blocked layouts. As you look through the layouts, look for foundation pieces to see what you like and what you think works well.

Make a page that has a "partial mat" as first described on page 6 of this lesson. Your partial mat or foundation piece can be of paper, paint, ink--or anything else that works for your page.