



LIGHTEN UP #1: Laugh At Yourself

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I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose.

~Woody Allen

INTRODUCTION

I've always said that if I don't laugh, I'll cry. Sure, that's meant to be light hearted, but think about it. If you can laugh at yourself, it means you don't take yourself too seriously. Look at it from my perspective: I have four kids, two jobs, a cat, a wicked schedule, and a whirlwind of activity around me at all times. There are times when all I CAN do is laugh. So I do. A lot. And a lot of that laughter, as well as the reasons for it, finds its way into my scrapbook pages.

My husband tells me that I provide myself with all sorts of material for my own scrapbook. He does have a point there! But still, I know that my kids like it when I make them laugh. The choir that I direct enjoys it when I get a little goofy during rehearsal --and my husband may roll his eyes, but he enjoys a bit of humor as much as anyone else. (So there.)

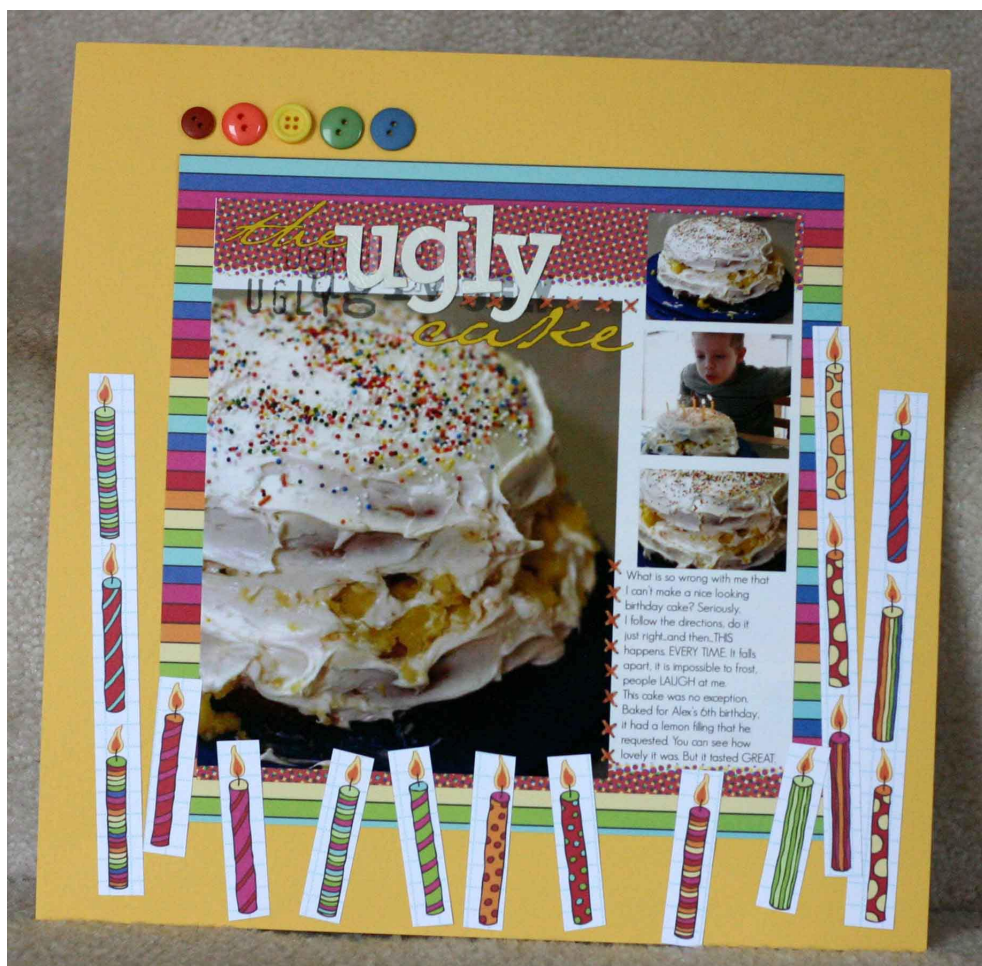
So, get silly for a while. Drop your inhibitions and laugh at yourself. It's OK. Being funny can be a good thing!

WAYS TO GET THOSE LAUGH-AT-YOURSELF MOMENTS ONTO YOUR PAGES**1. Document something you do that others always find amusing.**

Nobody's perfect. (Some of us less than others!) Invariably we are going to do something that just cracks someone else up. In my case, this happens every time I try to make a birthday cake. I'm not really sure what happens. I follow the directions on the package, I grease the pan, I let the cake cool completely, but every last time, the cake falls apart. I then try to repair the parts and pieces with frosting, and it always ends up in a big mess. I will have you know, however, that they always taste just fine, and, in fact, my family now looks forward to Mom's weird cakes. I think they would be disappointed if I made a nice-looking one.

"The Ugly Cake" is a layout that documents one cake in particular, my oldest son's 6th birthday cake, but really talks about how I can't seem to get it right when I bake. Wasn't that a gorgeous cake? Yeah...right.

JOURNALING for "The Ugly Cake": What is SO wrong with me that I can't make a nice looking birthday cake? Seriously. I follow the directions, do it just right, and then THIS happens. EVERY TIME. It falls apart, it is impossible to frost, people LAUGH at me. This cake was no exception. Baked for Alex's 6th birthday, it had a lemon filling that he requested. You can see how lovely it was. But it tasted GREAT.



How I scrapbooked my amusement with myself in "The Ugly Cake:"

- ◇ Photos. I wanted a closeup shot of the cake in question, so I used a large photo as well as smaller ones of different cake angles. I was able to play with photo placement and journaling digitally, and use some smaller photos of the cake as well as my son enjoying it on his birthday. This is an 8" x 8" digital layout printed and placed on a 12" x 12" paper, then embellished.
- ◇ Journaling. I wanted to keep this light-hearted (after all, I am laughing at myself!) so I wrote it as if I were speaking to someone. There are some broken up sentences, capitalized words, etc. The overall effect comes off as informal and light-hearted.
- ◇ Embellishments. I am a fairly simple scrapper, so I use minimal embellishments. The birthday candle paper was perfect for this page. I just cut it apart and randomly placed candles on the page. The buttons tie in the colors, and I'm done.

2. Scrapbook about your quirks: interesting, weird or funny.

Quirks. We all have them. (I think I have more than others!) What things do you do that others don't? When I used to blog a "7 Random Things about Me" tag got passed around a lot. People love to document what makes them unique. Dig deep and find the things that make you YOU--and funny!

"I Could Never Make This Stuff Up" is the title of this layout, and it's actually something I say a lot when recounting stories of myself or my family. Somehow, it seems to fit.

How I documented my quirks in "I Could Never Make This Stuff Up"

- ◇ **Photos.** Rather than use one photo of myself, I chose three photos that were somewhat alike but from different perspectives and angles. To me, this makes the overall design more interesting and reinforces the subject of the layout: me!
- ◇ **Journaling.** In addition to the journaling that sits below the photos, I chose to list my quirks right over the photos. Ways to do this:
 - print to vellum and layer it over your photos
 - use a photo-editing program and create a layer over the photos. Fill that layer with white and reduce its opacity so that the photos still show through. Put your type on another layer above all of these.
 - with a pen or photo-editing software, journal in the light parts of your photos.



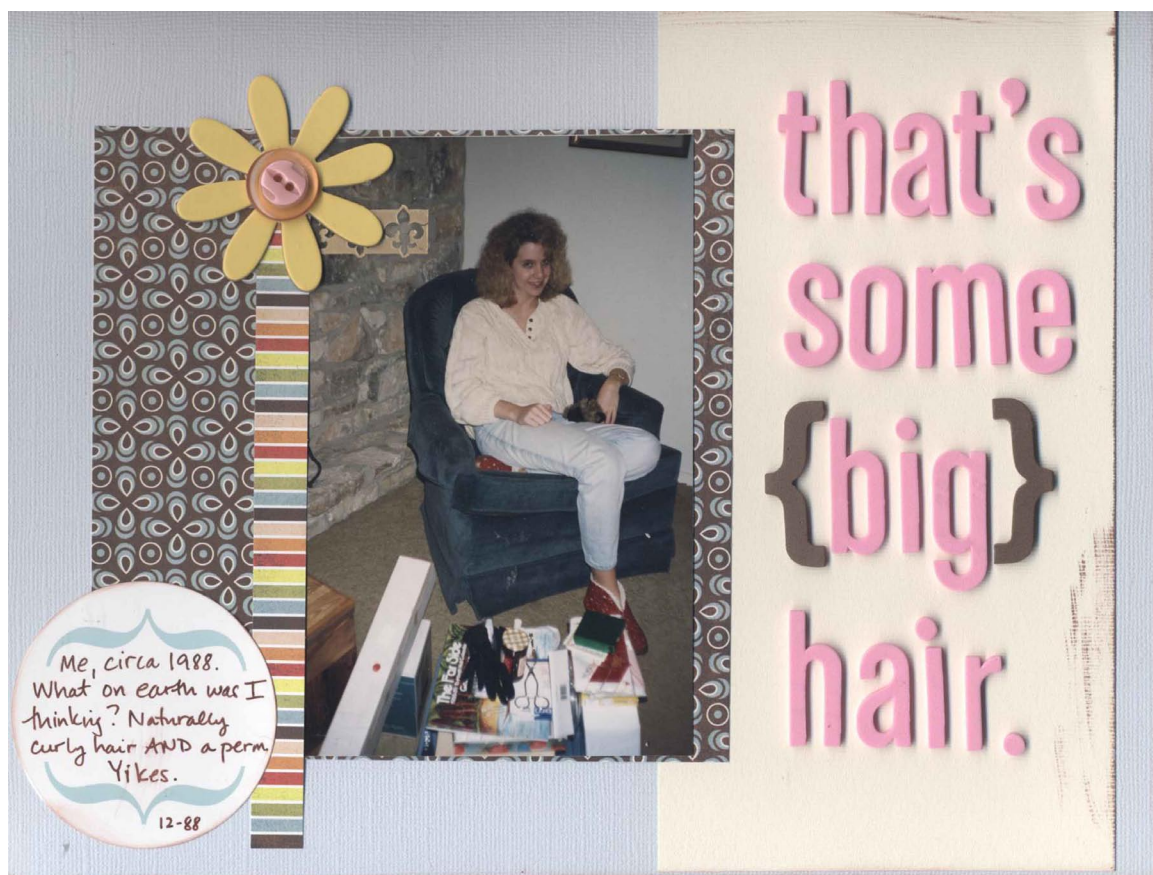
JOURNALING for "I Could Never Make This Stuff Up:" That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. My poor children will never lack for anecdotes about Mom and how...odd...she was. But you know what? I'm not boring. Life is interesting. And that's a good thing. Really. I'm serious.

3. Scrapbook your questionable fashion decisions.

Was your hair a tower of Aqua Net in the 80s? Were your granny glasses the height of fashion? Were you like my husband, who wore a red velvet leisure suit to his prom? (I am deadly serious here, folks. It wasn't pretty.) Did you win "Best Mullet" in high school? Or did you go for the rocker look with acid-washed jeans, big hair and Day-Glo accessories? Pull out those old photos and tell the stories of your fashion faux pas of days gone by!

I'll be honest with you. I grew up in Texas, in the 80s and 90s. The days of shoulder pads, blue eye shadow and rooster bangs, the ones that towered above the rest of your head. I remember standing in front of the mirror with hair spray and blow dryer in hand, trying to get my hair bigger, and bigger, and bigger!

This layout makes me cringe; well, at least the photo does. This was taken at the height of my Texas big hair days. For extra added bonus points, I also am sporting acid washed jeans!



How I dealt with "fashion" in "That's Some Big Hair"

- ◇ Title. The title is actually larger than the photo here. It's the point I wanted to make, and using letter stickers (in this case, Thickers) conveys that point nicely.
- ◇ Journaling. I used a cardstock journaling sticker for this, and it holds all the facts I wanted to document as well as adding a circle to offset the rectangles in the rest of the layout.
- ◇ Embellishments. This photo has a little tear at the upper left corner, so I used a paper strip and a chipboard flower to hide it. I like to use embellishments both to enhance my layout AND to cover mistakes.

4. Document things you do that amuse you.

My kids like to tell me that I'm easily amused. They have a point. I do a lot of things just for the comedic value to myself. One example is decorating for holidays. I have a lot of silly little decorations that I put out for no other reason than the fact that they crack me up.

The best example of this is my annual "barfing jack-o-lantern." This started after I saw photos of someone else's pumpkins that looked like this, and I quickly copied this and made it a tradition. It never fails to make me laugh every year. A bonus is that the kids, and the neighborhood kids, love the puking pumpkins as well, but I'd do it for me anyway.

How I cracked myself up with "Best Pumpkin Ever"

- ◇ Photo. The pumpkin takes center stage -- as it should. One large photo is often enough to make your point.
- ◇ Design. I surrounded the large pumpkin photo with Halloween-ish paper and embellishments--enough to enhance but not so much it distracts. The photo is to the left and balances the title and journaling on the right.



5. Scrapbook the things you choose to laugh at rather than cry over.

This comes back to what I said in the introduction: sometimes I say that if I didn't laugh, I'd cry. I know we all have things we just have to laugh at - otherwise they would be a never-ending source of frustration to us.

My hair (is this a theme? First big hair and now crazy hair?) absolutely drives me crazy, and that is on good days. It behaves even worse than my children most of the time. It just seems to have a mind of its own. What can I do? Scrapbook about it!

How I managed to laugh in "Every Single Day"

- ◇ Photos. I will admit to taking a photo of myself specifically for this layout. My hair was particularly messy that day, and it fit the subject matter perfectly. Don't be afraid to stage a photo to make your point.
- ◇ Embellishment. I went with a monochromatic color theme on this layout, and I found the perfect symbol of this woman with the universal "no" sign for a head. Get creative in your embellishments; clip art or Internet images may help you find the perfect finishing touch.

JOURNALING for "Every Single Day:" Recently I heard on the radio that women can't get through a day without saying the words "my hair." I believe it. MY HAIR is the bane of my existence at times. Curly when I want it to be straight, flat when I want it to be curly, hard to manage, resistant to styling...I have had ENOUGH! Would anyone like to trade?



TRIGGERS

Trigger #1: Quotes for laughing at yourself.

The quotes in the sidebar are some of my favorites involving laughing at yourself. Use one or more in a layout, or just use them to think about subject matter for a page. The important thing is to think about YOU and why YOU are funny.

Trigger #2: Photos that make you laugh at yourself.

1. Go to your stash of photos -- on the computer or prints, recent or old--and select a random folder or packet of photos or album page.
2. Look through these randomly selected photos, and pick out the ones that make you laugh. Now find some of yourself that are amusing, or ones that you took because they cracked you up.
3. Why did they make you laugh? Write it down. Keep going until you have 4-5 photos that make you laugh at yourself.
4. Think about this: Is there a common theme? What is it?
5. Use these photos, or the stories behind them, as a starting point for a scrapbook page.

Quotes: Laugh at Yourself

Never be afraid to laugh at yourself, after all, you could be missing out on the joke of the century. -Dame Edna

Laugh at yourself first, before anyone else can. -Elsa Maxwell

Laugh at yourself, but don't ever aim your doubt at yourself. Be bold. -Alan Alda

If you can't laugh at yourself, then how can you laugh at anybody else? I think people see the human side of you when you do that. -Payne Stewart

You grow up the day you have your first real laugh, at yourself. -Ethel Barrymore

I thought my life would seem more interesting with a musical score and a laugh track. -Calvin & Hobbes