

explore the world of challenges a bit and gained a new appreciation for what they can offer.

5 Lessons Learned from Scrapbooking Challenges

1. Creativity is enhanced

When you are given a set of instructions for a challenge -- such as a list of supplies to include in your design -- your own creativity will come into play through the products you choose and how you use them. Mix bold patterns together, use a funky color combination, add embellishments in an unexpected way, combine a variety of alphabets for a unique title. Instead of seeing the challenge as limiting, find ways to push your creativity within the established boundaries.

2. Get out of your comfort zone

When we get into a groove and do the same thing over and over, our pages can start to look stale and boring. Challenges can stretch us in new directions. In a product challenge you start with the products rather than the photos. Color challenges might have you use a colors you never use. A journaling challenge gets you to think about the story before you do anything else. Figuring out how to create layouts in all these different scenarios helps you to strengthen your scrapbooking skills.

3. The art of flexibility

Challenges can provide you with a framework to get started, but don't be afraid to stray when you need to. If black cardstock wasn't on the list but you need it to mat a photo to achieve contrast, use it. Maybe you have to turn your photos to black and white to get them to work with the pattern papers. Don't take the challenge so literally that you create a page you won't enjoy. Add and subtract products as needed to achieve a look you are happy with.

4. Seeing a different perspective

Sometimes challenges can help us makes connections with our photos and stories that we might have missed. Many journaling challenges, like creating a Then and Now layout or journaling about a childhood memory, can send you off in a direction you never would have thought of. Use these challenges to spark ideas for photos you may have forgotten about or help you develop stories for photos you've skipped for the lack of a story.

5. The key to scrapbooking faster

Limiting product choices can help you create layouts quickly. Because you make your selections ahead of time based on the challenge criteria, there are fewer decisions to make as you create.

