

## Design 101: CREATING A FOCAL POINT

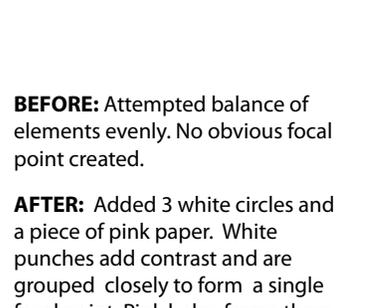
A focal point is the part of the card that catches the recipient's eye first. The stronger your focal point is the better your final card design will turn out, so planning ahead can have a big payoff.

- The focal point can be placed in the center of the card, or off-set to one side.
- It's typically the largest element on the card. It is often an image but it could also be the sentiment or even an embellishment like a silk flower or a tag.
- In more advanced designs a focal point can also be a special element or technique, like a unique fold or a die-cut window in the card front.
- There are many ways to create a focal point. In a simple design your focal point can consist of one image or embellishment, but you can also create a focal point that consists of several smaller elements grouped together.
- When your design contains a number of elements, often one of the easiest ways to strengthen it is to bring them together so that they form a single focal point. A simple tip to commit to memory when creating a focal point from several elements is to use uneven numbers. Choose 3 or 5 as opposed to 2 or 4. Group the items close together or even overlapping so they easily create a single unit.



**BEFORE:** Two elements each on it's own portion of background results in a split feeling. The flower and the tag are roughly the same size and compete for attention.

**AFTER:** Slightly larger flower introduces variation and draws attention to it first. Elements much closer together to create one strong focal point. Focal point consists of 3 combined elements (flower, tag and ribbon).



**BEFORE:** Attempted balance of elements evenly. No obvious focal point created.

**AFTER:** Added 3 white circles and a piece of pink paper. White punches add contrast and are grouped closely to form a single focal point. Pink helps frame them as one unit.



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

**BEFORE:** Focal point is image/sentiment combination, the largest element on the card.

**AFTER:** Adding contrast of white background makes it much stronger. Bordering the image in the pink frames, separates & makes it slightly larger overall for better proportion of image to background.



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

**BEFORE:** Attempted balance by spreading elements out around card. They compete for the viewers attention.

**AFTER:** Grouping closely to one side and tying the ribbon into the center creates one strong focal point

As you're practicing creating strong focal points you can test how you're doing by asking a couple of people what part of the card their eye is first drawn too. When you have a strong, planned out focal point virtually every viewer will easily reply with the same answer. Of course it takes a bit of extra time to plan and analyze your designs but with enough practice it will become almost second nature and the results will be well worth the effort.