



CHOOSING WHAT STAMP SETS & SUPPLIES TO BUY

Learning how to make wise choices when it comes to purchasing craft supplies can save us lots of money, and stop us ending up with supplies that we seldom or never use.

I have narrowed down some things to think about before I purchase anything. There is so much out there and there is always something new which brings a constant pull for more, but do I really need more when my shelves are already bursting?

There is some criteria for how to choose the stamps that are best for me and it is based on the kinds of cards I like to make and what I'll actually feel good giving to friends and family.

So what is right for me?

First, it's important to **KNOW MYSELF** and **MY STYLE**.

I look at the supplies I've bought already, and see quite a few stamp sets that I've only used once or twice. Usually that's because **THEY DIDN'T FIT MY STYLE**.

What is **MY STYLE**? Nature, flowers, butterflies, all with a touch of elegance.

When I choose stamp sets that complement my style :

- I'll make cards that make me smile
- I'll feel more confident using the stamps
- I won't feel guilty about not using the ones that don't fit my style

When I choose stamp sets that show off my style, I'll make impressive cards, cards that I love, that I'm proud of and that I will want to share with others... flowers, butterflies, nature, elegance, versatility.

Second, I look for **VERSATILITY**.

I imagine how many ways I might be able to use the stamp sets I'm considering:

- are the sentiments appropriate for the kinds of occasions I make cards for
- when I look on Pinterest do all the cards made from a set look pretty similar or is there a lot of variation
- does the set have more than one stamp I could use as a focal point
- does it include stamps that can create interesting background texture

Third, what **OCCASIONS** do I need cards for?

- do I celebrate birthdays and other occasions for kids and grandkids
- do I have lots of family members having weddings and births
- do I need stamps for masculine cards
- do I just like to make striking cards I can use for any occasion

Some additional questions to ask myself :

Can I choose my stamps based on the IMAGES themselves?

If I like the images and greetings would I buy the set regardless of whether it's rubber or photopolymer?

If I like the image but not the sentiments would it be a good buy?

If I like the sentiment and not the image would it be worth the money spent?

Rubber stamps vs photopolymer : what do I prefer?

Rubber stamps are more durable than photopolymer and better for certain techniques. However, it's easier for me to get a clear and crisp stamped impression with rubber stamps.

Photopolymer is a softer material than rubber, so it's easier to apply too much PRESSURE on my stamp, which can then result in an unevenly stamped image. Photopolymer are more economical than cling mounted rubber stamps. It's easier to stamp exactly where you want to with a photopolymer stamp because you can see right through them.

Solid stamp images versus outline images : solid don't need colouring in, outline do. What do I prefer? Definitely solid.

Some favourite STYLES :

- Flowers, butterflies, nature, elegance, PLUS lace, pearls
- Vintage
- Shabby Chic
- Mixed media
- Collage / backgrounds
- Blended backgrounds
- Stencils
- Embossing folders

NOTES:

Instead of putting a sentiment on the front I can leave it blank and can add the sentiment to the inside. That way I'll always have a stash of cards to choose from when an occasion arises.

These tips can also be applied to embellishments, colours, and tools. Using the above three tips for choosing the supplies that are right for me, will ensure I will get the most from my crafting dollars.

Some styles of stamps may not be as easy for me to work with because the styles and techniques I usually use to design my cards may not work because it is not fit my style.

Disclaimer: I have picked up some of these from years of reading blogs and watching YouTube, but most is from years of experience buying things that I thought I would use, but didn't.