

Review

There is one more general guiding principle of Design (and of Life):
Don't be a wimp.

Don't be afraid to create your Design (or your Life) with plenty of blank space—it's rest for the eyes (and the Soul).

Don't be afraid to be asymmetrical, to uncenter your format—it often makes the effect stronger. It's okay to do the unexpected.

Don't be afraid to make words very large or very small; don't be afraid to speak loudly or to speak in a whisper. Both can be effective in the right situation.

Don't be afraid to make your graphics very bold or very minimal, as long as the result complements or reinforces your design or your attitude.

Let's take the rather dull report cover you see below and apply each of the four design principles in turn.

Your Attitude is Your Life

Lessons from raising three children
as a single mom

Robin Williams

October 9

A rather typical but dull report cover: centered, evenly spaced to fill the page. If you didn't read English, you might think there are six separate topics on this page. Each line seems an element unto itself.

typefaces

Berthold Walbaum Book Bold
Hypatia Sans Pro Regular and Light

Proximity

If items are related to each other, group them into closer proximity. Separate items that are *not* directly related to each other. Vary the space between to indicate the closeness or the importance of the relationship. Besides creating a nicer look to the page, it also communicates more clearly.

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By putting the title and subtitle close to each other, we now have one well-defined unit rather than six apparently unrelated units. It is now clear that those two topics are closely related to each other.

When we move this by-line and date farther away, it becomes instantly clear that although this is related information and possibly important, it is not part of the title.

Alignment

Be conscious about every element you place on the page. To keep the entire page unified, align every object with an edge of some other object. If your alignments are strong, *then* you can *choose* to break an alignment occasionally and it won't look like a mistake.

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Even though the author's name is far from the title, there is a visual connection between the two elements because of the alignment to each other.

The example on the previous page is also aligned—a centered alignment. As you can see, though, a flush left or flush right alignment (as shown above) gives a stronger edge, a stronger line for your eye to follow.

A flush left or flush right alignment often tends to impart a more sophisticated look than does a centered alignment.

Repetition

Repetition is a stronger form of being consistent. Look at the elements you already repeat (bullets, typefaces, lines, colors, etc.); see if it might be appropriate to make one of these elements stronger and use it as a repetitive element. Repetition also helps strengthen the reader's sense of recognition of the entity represented by the design.

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The distinctive typeface in the **title** is repeated in the author's **name**, which strengthens their connection even though they are physically far apart on the page. The font for the other text is now in the light weight.

The small triangles were added specifically to create a repetition. Although they point in different directions, the triangular shape is distinct enough to be recognized each time.

The color of the triangles is also a repeated element. Repetition helps tie separate parts of a design together.

Contrast

Would you agree that the example on this page attracts your eye more than the example on the previous page? It's the contrast here, the strong black versus white, that does it. You can add contrast in many ways—rules (lines), typefaces, colors, spatial relationships, directions, etc. The second half of this book discusses the specific topic of contrasting type.

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Adding contrast to this was simply a matter of adding the black boxes.