



Crafting and me ...

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I tried so hard to come up with a suitable title for this article and there were so many I thought of – 'Crafting, my therapy', 'Crafting, my 'me' time', 'Crafting keeps me going', 'Crafting, my independence', you get the idea, then I realised that all these things were relevant to me, so keeping it simple I went for 'Crafting and me'.

What about 'Me' you may be wondering....? Well, it's certainly not the most original story, as I have met, online, so many 'crafters', who have found crafting as an outlet, an escapism if you like, from the challenges that life has thrown them, in this case illness, but it is my story. I make handmade cards, gifts and wedding stationery, as well as card/mixed media kits. I particularly enjoy experimenting with die cuts, colours and inks and am a huge fan of liquid pearls, loving pearls in all forms, especially my jewellery!!



My journey into paper-craft began as an aside to my passion for jewellery making and writing verses. I originally designed cards around earrings I made, selling them on a little market stall some years ago, just to make the gift a little more special, and found I absolutely loved the card making just as much, if not more. So when I was at a loss in 2012, following ill health retirement from work due to a number of conditions, including Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a rare connective tissue disorder, I began card making. There are some limits mind, as my joints dislocate very easily, so pressing on stamps or using a manual die cutting/ embossing machine dislocates my shoulders and wrists and effects my heart. I even have to be careful with the weights of the plates for the powered machines. Anyway, enough of that!



I love it, I confess I am a craftaholic! I find it so relaxing and, being the one thing I can do on my own without my carer helping, it gives me a purpose and some independence and there is rarely a craft free day, not even Christmas! I think one of the main things for me is not knowing what I am going to make. Yes, if it's a commission someone will ask for a birthday card or anniversary card, but other than that it is an unknown. I just sit down and see what happens and, to be honest, it surprises me that they work too, but people seem to like them. Phew! Thankfully one of my main principles is never making 2 of anything, except when there is a wedding, in which case their design is the 'one off', so I don't have to remember a certain design or technique as my memory is shocking!!



I have also become a part of a whole new and welcoming community of crafters and met some amazing friends. Prior to card making I never used any form of social media, my work colleagues were my friends and now, almost 3 years later, I am on Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and have my own blog, in fact I wonder how I fit any crafting in...!! Seriously though, not only have I met some amazing people, I have also learnt so much. I certainly wouldn't change a thing of my journey to this point, it is what has made me the crafter that I am today, that said, looking back on the cards I made when I first tried card making, I can see how much I had to learn. That's not to say I have learnt it all, no way, I don't think anyone can ever know it all, that's a dangerous thing to claim, but I have learnt a great deal, so many new techniques, and I look forward to what I am going to learn in the future. There is so much yet to try and much much more to master and I wonder what I will feel about 'now' looking back in another 3 years! Who knows! One thing I am sure of, crafting will always be my salvation, my way to express myself, my little bit of independence.

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