Negative That Is a Positive  
By Nannette Dalton

I loved Linda Sattgast’s tutorial, “Double Duty Elements.” It really got me thinking outside the box when it comes to elements.

I have another idea for using your elements in a “non-traditional” way that I hope will spark your creativity. Let me show you how to use your elements in a “negative” way, so you can accentuate the positive... and the negative! Is that confusing and cryptic enough?

Let’s get started. Please Note: This will work best with elements that have a well-defined pattern. I am using the snowflake from the kit, Christmas Lights, by Julie Billingsley, originally included in the December 2011 Digital Scrapper Premier issue.

On this layout, I wanted to use every paper and element that had to do with snow. I didn’t have enough, in my opinion, so that is how this idea to create more was born.

**Step One: Prepare the Workspace**

- Open the layered scrapbook page (File > Open) with which you wish to work.
- In the Layers panel, activate the top layer.
- Open the element with which you wish to work. (From now on I will call the element a snowflake, since that is what I am using.)
- Get the Move tool.
- On the document, click on the snowflake and drag it onto your scrapbook page.

**Optional Step Two: Create a Shape**

Note: In this step, I am creating a shape that I can cut my element out of. Instead of creating a shape, you could use elements like journaling cards, tags, etc. that are already found in the kit you are using. In that case, you could skip this step. Make sure that whatever element you use is simplified (Photoshop: Rasterized), or this technique will not work.

- In the Layers panel, while holding down the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key), click on the Create a New Layer icon to get a new layer below the snowflake.
- Get the Rectangle tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the Create New Shape Layer icon and set the Style to None. (Photoshop: Set the Tool Mode to Pixels, the Mode to Normal, and the Opacity to 100%). Pick a color for your shape.
• On the document, click and drag to create a shape that is slightly bigger than the snowflake. Hold down the Space bar as you drag to position the rectangle as shown.

• **Photoshop Elements Only:** In the Tool Options, click Simplify.

**Step Three: Cut Out the Snowflake**

Note: If you skipped the previous step, make sure that the element you want to use (i.e., journaling card, tag, etc.) is on your scrapbook page on the layer below the snowflake and in the desired position.

• In the Layers panel, with your shape (or element) still active, Ctrl click (Mac: Cmd click) on the thumbnail of the snowflake layer to get a selection outline.

• In the Menu Bar, choose Select > Modify > Smooth.

• In the dialog box, enter 2 pixels and click OK. This will create a smoother selection outline.

• Press the Backspace key (Mac: Delete key) to delete the selection out of the shape layer.

• Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

• In the Layers panel, drag the snowflake layer to the trash.

**Step Four: Finish Up**

• Add a drop shadow to the shape layer. To make my shape look like I have used large pop dots to raise it off the page, I used these drop shadow settings: Opacity: 38%, Angle: 120°, Distance: 60 px, Spread: 0, Size: 35 px.

There you have it—a whole new way to look at the elements in a kit.
Here are a couple of other examples using this tutorial and the *Sweet Comforts* kit from Shabby Miss Jenn.

**Credits**

**Digi Scrap Tutorial:** Negative That Is a Positive by Nannette Dalton  
**Layout:** First Snow by Nannette Dalton  
**Kit:** Christmas Lights by Julie Billingsley  
**Tutorial:** A Stitch in Time by Susie Roberts  
**Tutorial:** Reinforcements Are On the Way by Nannette Dalton  
**Font:** LD Cotton Candy