

## Dressed Up or Dressed Down Always by Stephanie K. Murphy, 2022 SIZED DOWN

In the inimitable words of J.K. Rowling's characters Professor Severus Snape and barkeep Aberforth Dumbledore, ALWAYS sums up a world of love whether for a mother, a child, a significant other, or a lost love.

This is simple design that you can dress up or dress down. I have included 3 sizes to fit into 8x10, 5x7, 4x6 or tiny 1.5 x 3 frame or box. You are permitted to copy the design up or down to fit into your planned finished item. And, change the font if you want! I wanted a font that was very simple to stitch. It can be stitched or "stitched" in just a few hours, so make a plan and get it done.

Let's be creative!

I stitched one with classic stitches & bead, the second with classic stitches, ribbon, and silk flowers, and "stitched" a third with found objects. As I said, dress it up or dress it down!

NOTE: I used plain white cotton for some of the ground fabric (lined if the fabric was thin) and used an old stained linen table topper for the other two samples. Reuse that good linen when you have it. Read thru the document quickly just so you understand how I approached and executed each piece. Oh, and if you want to **add a little heart in the circle** where the swirls meet, MAKE SURE you leave the round space big enough for your heart!

### **DRESS IT UP ALWAYS #1**

Very small "Always". I stitched the "A" with 2 strands of floss using whipped chain, then switched to one strand of floss and stem stitch to do the rest for a thinner look. I then added beaded flowers—five lighter beads surrounding the center dark bead. Remember that flowers have an odd number of petals, so use 5 or use 7. I used Delica beads because I could easily find them. They are size 11°. Be sure to use a tiny needle (a sewing needle works). I added a few simple lazy daisy leaves here and there. I am going to put it in a little oval frame. Do you see all those basting threads? Those are to hold the 2 layers of ground cotton together so they don't shift while stitching. Once "finished", you will clip those out!



## DRESS IT UP ALWAYS #2

Flower Always. I stitched this with 2 ply of silk floss in whipped chain for all the letters. I couched down a 7mm silk ribbon along the arch, put in a couple of twists in the silk ribbon, tacked it down, then added three pearls. One of the pearls is hidden in the flowers. I slipped the silk ribbon under one of the A (top) arms. However, I decided to add a bow. I then slipped a 2<sup>nd</sup> piece of silk ribbon under the A and made a bow, just because. I decided to use silk flowers instead of stitching the flower (I told you this could be done in only a few hours). So I found some really small silk flowers. This is stitched on a piece of a repurposed stained linen tablecloth. Here's the process for what I did.



### Process and tools used for silk flower attachment:

#### Tools

- Scissors: Wise W10TM Titanium Coated Scissors, get a pair. They cut mat board, wire, all kinds of stuff!
- #13 Tapestry Needle (or a stitching Awl or equivalent) – this is a dull-pointed needle that can fit a really big thread to the back of your work. It's handy to have in your arsenal of needles.

#### Process Involved

1. Cut each flower stem to no longer than an inch using your trusty scissors.
2. Place your flowers down on the design and figure out where you want them to be.
3. Using your #13 Tapestry Needle or Awl, poke a hole in the fabric and place the flower stem thru the hole all the way. Do nothing else right now!
4. Repeat step 3 for all your flowers. **NOTE:** My flowers are clustered together. If you make a different design and put flowers in all the corners, then do each corner (steps 3 – 7) individually. We are working on a cluster of flowers for this design.

5. You should now have all your flowers poking thru to the back of your piece. Uncomfortable, but manageable.
6. Thread up a sharp needle with a thread. I used a white thread to match the fabric. Knot it or secure it to the back. Now coming up from the back, start putting tacking stitches here and there thru your flowers holding them down. Take about 3 stitches per flower; some stitches could be attaching 2 flowers together. You want the flowers to look life-like and not smashed down. Continue doing this until you feel like the flowers are secure. Turn the piece over. Anything fall off? No? O.k. you're done with stitching. Secure your thread to the back.
7. Turn the piece over and clip the stems (using your trusty scissors) that are still poking out on the back to a manageable amount. NOTE: You should NOT cut them flat to the back of the piece. Many silk flowers have a plastic center that is only attached via the plastic. However, if your plastic center falls out, just use some similar colored beads and threads and fill the flower center with these.

I am finishing this Always in a branch frame that I found.



### **DRESS IT DOWN ALWAYS #3**

Techie Always. My third design is for the techie person in my life, although you can easily change it to steampunk or other hobbyist. I was going to do the smaller design and realized THAT wasn't going to work. I have used electrical wire for the letters. I couched down the wire with Sulky Petite #12 thread, but you could easily swap out 2 ply DMC #310 black. I really wanted to use that wonderful 2-color telephone wire, but couldn't find any (well, I found some but it was "in use"...). I asked my hubby for some wire and he offered me a spool of black, or red, or green. I took the black. This was also stitched on a piece of that stained linen tablecloth—it's substantial. Heavy objects have to have support behind them, so a heavy linen works well. Here's the way it turned out.



### Process involved.

#### Working the Letters (NOT STITCHING YET)

Working with thick wire (you could substitute 32-gauge or larger jewelry wire, of course), you need to think about how to approach each letter. This is why I kept the font very simple. I did the entire A as one continuous piece of wire (except for the little cross bar). When working with wire, you should go slow and bend the wire a bit in advance. The wire is spooled and it likes to coil in a certain direction. Don't fight it, or you could get kinks (especially with fine wire like the 32-gauge). Once I was getting close to the top of the A, I needed to decide if I was going to cut the wire and start anew for the downsweep or fold it. I folded it and it worked well. Once on the downsweep, I stopped, spooled out the wire and carefully laid it on top of the A letter all the way to the swirls. I cut the end with my trusty Wise scissors (piece of cake!), put the spool aside and kept stitching the A all the way down including the loops. The L was a snap. The W was the hardest letter. I did one piece of wire for the left hand downsweep up to the middle, a second piece of wire for the U shape to the right of the middle, and then a third piece of wire that was just the righthand side of the W with a little swoop at the bottom. The lower case A-I found I could shape the wire to exactly fit over the pattern with one continuous piece. Then I did the S—I placed it on the pattern, cut it a little bigger, then curved it all so it fit over the pattern just like the lower case A & stitched it down. Easy peasy. Then I went back to the Y. I did the Y in two pieces—the really long piece (right hand side and all the swirls at the bottom) and the short left hand piece. I stitched the really long piece first. Then I went back and tacked in the little left side.

#### Stitching the Letters (o.k. you can STITCH now)

Thread up your needle and use couching stitches to hold down your letters. Think of this as practice for when you do Goldwork. Lots and lots of couching. You need a strong thread to keep the wire in place. You cannot stitch through the wire. You are simply holding it in place. I put extra stitches at the start and the end of each wire piece and anywhere there's a curve, you will need to add extra couching stitches to make it stay there. Again, if you fingerpress the wire into shape, you will have a much easier time. The W was the worst. I think the whole couching process took about 2 to 2 ½ hours, so this is a really quick project to work up!

Enhancements

Think gears, old watch parts, buttons. How about tacking down twigs if you have a woodworker in your life? Check out the scrapbooking section of your craft store for “embellishments”, it is amazing the number of tiny hammers, wrenches, and screwdrivers you can find. Just tack them down.

### FINALLY

I hope you enjoy making an ALWAYS for your favorite person or organization. And Share it on the EGA Stitch-a-long facebook group!

**PATTERNS ARE ON THE NEXT FEW PAGES**





