8) Heat (thermal) embossing

Sources (among others):
http://inkstainswithroni.blogspot.com/2011/11/heat-thermal-embossing-basics-part-i.html
http://inkstainswithroni.blogspot.com/2011/11/heat-thermal-embossing-basics-part-ii.html

Must Have Supplies:

Paper or other Foundation Material
Stamps (or an embossing pen)
Embossing, Pigment or other slow drying ink (or an embossing pen)
Embossing Powder
Heat/Embossing Tool (or a toaster!)

Optional Recommended Supplies:

Anti-static bag ("embossing buddy")
Micro Paint Brush/cotton swab
Tidy Tray

Inks for Embossing

There are many different inks on the market specifically designed for embossing. The most common types are clear or have a slight tint to the ink or black. This ink is usually very thick and slow to dry (pigment ink!) which is the key to a great impression.

Embossing Powders

There are TONS of different colors and types of embossing powders on the market. There are the normal ep's in clear, black, white and colors plus several "specialty" types. Everything from puffy, glittery, fine, extra fine, UTEE, embossing powders with different finishes and even an embossing powder that turns into glue when the powder is melted.

Anti-static bag

The commercial versions of these small fabric bags contain something called Fullers Earth (a naturally occurring clay mostly found in Japan and Mexico) which helps remove static and neutralizes oils (from your skin) so the embossing powder sticks only to the ink not the paper. Another popular item to use is a sock filled with corn starch or talc. They don't work as well as the Embossing Buddy but both work pretty well.

Tiny paintbrush and/or cotton swabs

I always keep one of these micro brushes close at hand when I'm embossing... Even when you use some sort of anti-static item there is still the possibility of stray bits here and there sticking to your paper. I simply give those extra bits a flick with this tiny brush, blow the powder off and I'm set to go.

Tidy Tray (or a simple sheet of paper folded in the middle ☺)

This is a nifty little catch all that helps corral the extra embossing powder once you're image has been coated. You simply dump the powder into the tray and use the funnel end to pour the excess powder back into the jar for another day. Not a necessity but it sure makes embossing a much cleaner affair.

The Process

1 (optional - but in my book necessary) Swipe your paper with an anti-static bag. This will remove any static electricity and neutralize oils that may be on the cardstock from handling.

2. Ink your stamp with embossing, pigment, hybrid or other slow drying ink. VERY IMPORTANT...Make sure your entire image has been covered with ink. If it's not you will not get a good impression or finished embossed image.

3. Press your inked rubber stamp onto the prepared paper. DO NOT ROCK the stamp. You will get a double or blurry image making your embossed image look really funky.

4. Sprinkle an ample amount of embossing powder over the stamped image. Don't worry about wasting it...we're going to capture the excess to save it for another day.

5. Shake the embossing powder around and cover every bit of the image. If you don't cover it completely with the powder, you will end up with a partially embossed image.

6. Shake off the excess powder into your tidy tray or a second sheet of cardstock. Set it aside for now (you can put it back into the jar once you've finished embossing).

DO NOT TAP THE CARDSTOCK!!!!!

I know it's such a temptation to tap away any excess powders off at this time but DON"T...you will remove not only the stray bits but it will also dislodge powder that is stuck to the embossing ink. When you tap this powder off the image you won't have a sufficient amount of embossing powder for a clean image.

If there are extra bits of embossing powder anywhere on your cardstock now is the time to use a small paintbrush or a cotton swab Simply give each little bit a swipe with the brush and they will fall off immediately. I like to then gently blow away the bits I've knocked loose. By using the micro brush you can get into all of the nooks and crannies without messing up the image.

7. Heat your powders to melt and form the image. Hold the heating tool over the area to be embossed and gently move it around the image until all of the powders have been melted. HINT: If you don’t want to invest in a heating tool, you can also hold the sheet above a regular toaster!!

How can you tell all of the powders are melted? With most regular embossing powders you'll be able to see the powder go from a dull granular form to a molten shiny line. I say most because there are always exceptions to the rule. For example, puffy embossing powders go from a powder and grow as it is heated into a very dimensional image; Stamp n Bond embossing powder goes from a white powder to a clear line of glue and Distress Embossing powders have a slight color change but not much else.

Be sure to let your image cool before you mess with it. More than once I've gotten into a hurry and slid an freshly embossed image into my trimmer only to smear the still hot embossed lines. Trust me, while it doesn't seem like it waiting a few seconds for the image to cool is way better than having to redo the entire thing.

And now you have a beautiful embossed dimensional image!

And that's all there is to it!

Materials:

- Cardboard
- Heat tool
- Embossing powder
- Paper to shake the powder on
- Stamps and stamping blocks
- Versamark ink
- Antistatic bag