**Episode 8 • Ask Alexandria: Tame Your Many 1,000s of Digital Photos. And How Do You Look Good on a Budget?**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:00] The KonMari Method is all about surrounding yourself with things you love. There's this concept of honing your sensitivity to joy.

**Intro** [00:00:08]

 Hello and welcome to ALSO in PINK. The podcast all about lifestyle design. How we live, the clothes we choose and how we organise our space. I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, a certified KonMari consultant and personal stylist. I'm here to guide you on your journey to live a happy, fulfilled life.

Every Tuesday, you'll get new insight on what it means to live well, plus actionable tips.

Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life. And now for something completely different. Today, we're shifting gears a bit. This episode is all about you. Each month I do a special Ask Alexandria episode where I answer your questions about life, KonMari and style. So, let's get started.

**About This Episode** [00:01:02]

Hello, and welcome to Ask Alexandria. This month's questions are wide ranging. There's a lot about the KonMari method and I explore how to tame your many, many thousands of digital photos. We discuss style, from capsule wardrobes to makeup tips. And you'll hear how Jane Austen helped me get my start in the world of fashion and style.

**Question 1** [00:01:28] The first question today comes from Theresa, a writer from London. She says: like many, I take lots of photos on my phone and never do anything with them. Then the phone storage runs out and I have to go through and delete. It's exhausting. Can you recommend a good app or a strategy to deal with them?

 Well, Theresa, I hear you. Somehow a Spiderman quote just wandered into my head. With great power comes great responsibility. And, hey, maybe that random thought is actually pretty relevant. In terms of technology and how we interact with one another, our world has changed so much in just over a decade. Can you believe it's only been 13 years since the first iPhone was released? We adapt so quickly. To the point where life before smartphones seems like a faint memory. So very long ago... Imagine then living somewhere for 13 years. Bringing new items into your home every week, sometimes every day. Collecting piles and piles of stuff, because it seemed like a good idea at the time. And then never really dealing with it, forgetting it even exists. Stuffing it in a small room only to open the door a decade later and think, oh boy, what have I done? Even if this scenario hasn't exactly happened in your home. It's likely that your phone has another story to tell. As you say, lots of photos taking up lots of space.

So getting back to that Spiderman quote. Our mobile phones do give us great power. We can great content and interact with content, whenever and wherever we like, we can take lots and lots of photos. But with that power comes great responsibility. We either have limitless storage to create content or limitless time to engage with content or we are more intentional in the way that we interact with technology.

So why do we take so many photos? Maybe we do this because we want to experience a special moment more fully. Maybe we want to make sure we remember. But does taking all these photos really help, especially if we never look at them. So maybe next time you're out experiencing something and are tempted to take a photo. Pause for a moment. Will taking that photo help you experience this moment more fully?

 I've tried to get better at this myself. To be more intentional. And I have to say that social media has actually helped. As I get more experienced with creating brand content with creating social media content, I've started to think a bit differently. I think more in terms of telling a story. And Teresa as a writer, storytelling is already a huge part of your life. See what it's like to translate those storytelling skills to your mobile photography. Our phones are capable of so much. And there are certainly lots of ways we can enhance our images. But sometimes our naked eye is just infinitely better at taking in a scene. A scene that our phones just won't do justice. So here's what works for me. I don't take many photos when I'm out and about, especially if I don't have a particular story I want to tell. I try to enjoy that moment without a camera. If however, I do have a story I want to tell, I'll experiment and take loads of photos until I get something I'm happy with. So whether or not you would describe yourself as a content creator, I'd say that being more intentional in your mobile photography enhances the quality of your images. And perhaps then you'll want to do something with them after all. And in the end being more intentional frees up your time. So you have fewer photos to actually sort it through. But however you approach taking photos with your phone. You need a system for weeding out the dodgy ones, because yes, there will always be dodgy ones. An app I find helpful for keeping all these photos under control and saving space on my phone is called Slidebox. It's a free app for iPhone and Android. It's nicely designed and syncs seamlessly with iCloud.

You can swipe up to quickly discard photos. You scroll to compare similar photos and then tap albums to sort photos you want to keep. And if you can't figure out what to do with the photo quite yet, just swipe left and it will stay unsorted until you're ready to file or bin it. So Slidebox helps you organize your photos with simple gestures and it's much quicker than using the native Photos app.

So, with my KonMari consultant hat on, I would suggest scheduling in a couple hours to process your digital photos. Say you have 10,000 photos you need to sort through. First focus on discarding. Which images bring you joy? For those that don't, swipe up to bin them. See what you're left with. Do these images tell a story? Do they serve a purpose and capture a special memory? If they do feel free to organize them into albums. If they don't revise your collection until it captures those moments, tells a story, and makes you happy. Then it's just a matter of maintaining your beautifully organized photo library. Be more intentional with the photos you take and set aside a bit of time each week to process these new images. Then you'll have more space on your phone. And the photos you do have, will all bring you joy.

**Monthly Review Spotlight** [00:07:30]

And now for our monthly review spotlight.

This listener will get a free 20 minute session with me to pick my brain about life, KonMari or style. So.

Congratulations to AJ Optimist who left a review on Apple Podcasts USA on September 14th. AJ Optimist says: design and lifestyle without kitsch or snobbery. How refreshing. A design and lifestyle podcast that perfectly balances real art and design with everyday application, with warmth and ease. Looking forward to these each week.

Thank you, AJ Optimist. Such a lovely review. To redeem your virtual session just email me alexandria@alsoinpink.com. Let me know you left the review and I'll follow it up with a link to schedule a time for us.

 **Question 2** [00:08:25]

Now we have a question from a repeat listener. How lovely. Cherie from Los Angeles, who's retired, asks: If someone decides to embark on the complete KonMari course with you, where do you usually begin? And if one can only afford to do part of the course, what aspect of it would you suggest covering?

 Well, Cherie. The structure of the KonMari Method is very well thought through. It takes you on a journey. There are five categories and we tidy by category. So this process starts with clothing. Then we move on to books. Then papers. Then komono, which is just a Japanese term for miscellaneous items. And finally we have sentimental items. And this order is very deliberate. The beauty of the KonMari Method is that you start with easy wins and work up to potentially more challenging categories. The clothing category is a great place to start. These are items you wear close to your body. Items you have a physical connection with. The KonMari method is all about surrounding yourself with things you love. There's this concept of honing your sensitivity to joy. So your joy checking abilities and your confidence grow with each category you complete. And when it comes time to tackle something more challenging, like the kitchen. You'll be ready.

 There are, of course, exceptions. If for instance, you have serious anxiety about body image or struggle with body dysmorphia, the KonMari clothing category is not a good place to start. So if that's the case, maybe we would begin with something more neutral, like books. It would entirely depend on what the client is comfortable with.

I would say it's almost always good to save sentimental items for the very end of the process. You will then be fully in tune with what brings you joy and you'll be able to more quickly and easily make decisions. If you had tried to tackle sentimental items at the start of your KonMari journey, you very likely would never have finished.

By saving sentimental items until the end of this process, you develop a better understanding of how you want to live your life and what you want to bring with you into your future. As your KonMari consultant, I guide and support you throughout your KonMari journey. Here's some fun terminology. If you choose to complete all five KonMari categories, this is called a KonMari marathon or tidying festival. If you just have the budget to do one category with me as your KonMari consultant, I would say let's do clothing. This gives you a great foundation in the method. And if you don't have the budget to hire me for additional sessions, who knows, just doing that one category together might inspire you to complete the rest of your marathon on your own. And of course just KonMari-ing, your clothing can have a huge impact on your daily life.

Even if we just work on one category together, we'll still do all of that important vision work. So this is working with me to create a vision for how you want to live, a vision of your ideal lifestyle. And this lies at the heart of everything we do. This vision really can change your perspective. It completely changed the game for me when I did my own tidying festival. I was able to get rid of things I never imagined I'd part with. For me, it was honoring the importance these items had had in my past. And then realising they were no longer things I wanted to take with me into my future.

They are no longer relevant to who I am now and who I want to be. So first creating that vision of where you want to go really helps clarify your relationship with the objects around you. And really with everything in your life.

**Question 3** [00:12:35]

Jenny from San Diego, California asks: How does one make the most of their wardrobe on a very tight budget? With that in mind, what single article of clothing would best serve to enhance one's perhaps rather skimpy wardrobe?

Jenny, I'd say KonMari-ing your clothing is a great way to start. Literally put all of your clothes on your bed. And start sorting through them. What speaks to you? What do you love that's already in your wardrobe? Once you've really pared down your current wardrobe to items you genuinely like that bring you joy. And, of course, this is clothes that fit you and suit the person you want to be. In many ways, KonMari'ing your clothes is the hardest part. But it's essential that you do this before investing in any new articles of clothing. You may even discover some items you've forgotten about that you actually really love. You're that much closer to developing a wardrobe that works for you. Now try to piece together some outfits from what remains of your current wardrobe.

A capsule wardrobe is a great way to make the most of your clothing on a tight budget. But what is that exactly? Well, I disagree with anyone who says a capsule wardrobe has to have such and such number of items. You have to have a classic blazer, white t-shirt, cashmere jumper, little black dress, white trainers... or whatever the wardrobe essentials of the moment are deemed to be. It's far more important to have a 100% working wardrobe of however many items that suit you and your lifestyle.

So, if you're thinking of finding a single article of clothing to enhance your wardrobe First. What does your life look like at the moment? And then. What do you want your life to look like? How do you want to live? If you're spending most of your time at home right now, do you need something like a statement top to help you feel more dressed up on Zoom meetings? Or perhaps an amazing necklace like I mentioned in my previous Ask Alexandria episode. Have a look at your current wardrobe, try piecing together a few outfits and see if there's one item of clothing or accessory that you feel would really unify what you already have. That would really elevate several outfits. So I'm guessing a pair of shoes is not your best choice in the current climate.

 And if you want more personalized help with any of this, I'd highly recommend taking a look at my capsule wardrobe package. This is a chance to work with me one-to-one. And it's all virtual, so you can access my London style studio from anywhere in the world. We'll work on your vision for your ideal lifestyle, we'll KonMari your clothing and accessories. We'll put together outfits and I'll offer guidance on how you can elevate your style and take your wardrobe to the next level.

You'll even get to test out the virtual wardrobe with me, which is a fun, modern way to interact with your closet. I'll pop a link in the show notes for my capsule wardrobe package. And you're always welcome to book a discovery call to find out more about this and see if it's right for you.

**Promo** [00:16:00]

Imagine... if you lived the life you really want. You know, your dream life.

Have you ever taken time to picture what it would look like? I mean, what it would really look like?

We're not talking about the life you feel you should have, but, deep down, the life you secretly want. Your ideal life. Maybe you already have a vision.

 Picture an iconic VW Camper Van... pootling down the coastal path. Maybe you're in Cornwall, the Amalfi Coast or alongside a fjord in Norway. Yes, the scenery is stunning and you're getting ready to stop for a picnic. There's a perfectly ripe, oozy cheese waiting for you, a selection of your favorite treats, and there may, or may not, be vintage vinyl and a portable gramophone to complete the picture. But. That's never going to happen, right? Wouldn't it be nice to take a step back, sweep aside all your worries... and imagine...

That's where I come in.

 I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, and I've developed an exclusive questionnaire for the ALSO in PINK community to help you create a vision of your ideal life.

Simply join the ALSO in PINK email list and you'll get instant access to our Ideal Lifestyle Vision Questionnaire. Go on then, make a cup of your favorite tea, or whatever floats your boat... Go to alsoinpink.com and click Start Now. Redefine what's possible & Create your ideal life.

 **Question 4** [00:17:37]

Lynn from Portland, Oregon says. When I was 15 to 19, I wore heavy makeup. At 20, I stopped wearing it all together. Then at 32, after being asked by my manager to jazz it up a bit, I started wearing a little mascara and lipstick. At 43 I was back to no makeup at all. Now a couple decades later, I'm interested in finding a modest accent to make me look a bit less washed out. What would you suggest for an older woman?

 Lynn, that's lovely to hear a bit about your history with makeup. It sounds like you've experimented with quite a few looks. As for your manager back in the day, asking you to jazz it up a bit. Well, I think and hope that would all go down very differently now. So for the minimal makeup look you're going for, I would recommend products by Kjaer Weis. I know I've mentioned Kirstin's brand before. Kjaer Weis is a sustainable luxury makeup brand. They are beautiful natural products that work extremely well. And especially for mature skin, Kirsten talks about the importance of using the right hydrating products to keep your skin looking healthy and radiant. Her beautiful oil is a lovely base, which I can personally vouch for. I use this product and it always makes my rather dry and dehydrated skin feel good. It's suitable for any age and skin type and for mature skin, you want to keep foundation to a minimum, blending it in, to act more like a tinted moisturizer. Kjaer Weis cream foundation is extremely versatile. It's buildable and can be used for light coverage and as a concealer. A simple smudged pencil line at the lash line of your top lid can give your eyes a lovely bit of definition. And Kirsten Kjaer Weis mentions how, as she ages, she feels using an eyelash curler really helps to make the eyes pop. And then you'd follow this with a light coat of mascara on your upper lashes. And touches of cream blush or lip tint can also help to bring you that healthy glow. There's an excellent video for ageless beauty on the Kjaer Weis YouTube channel, which I'd recommend watching for application techniques. I'll pop a link for that in the show notes.

And Lynn, if you're keen to look less washed out, as you say. Being mindful of the colors you wear could have just as much, if not more impact than your makeup. If you haven't already, I recommend listening to episodes four and six of this podcast, which go into seasonal color analysis in greater detail. And if you're keen to learn more, but aren't ready to book a one-to-one styling session with me yet. I'd highly recommend reading any books by Jules Standish, who also happens to be my color analysis mentor. The Essential Guide to Mindful Dressing is a great book to start with. It will teach you loads about color and might even make you want to book a color analysis and styling session.

**Question 5** [00:20:56]

And finally, Georgia an accountant from London asks: How did you get interested in personal styling? Well, it's a long story, really. This journey indirectly started when I was a kid. One of my favorite childhood memories is my mom reading aloud to me in the evenings. She read Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and lots of classic female writers like Louisa May Alcott, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. And I started drawing what I like to call my fancy ladies. These pen and ink characters had flouncy outfits with all kinds of elaborate detail. I madly doodled these on every scrap of paper I could get my hands on. And from the first moment I saw the costumes in the 1964 film version of My Fair Lady, I was entranced. At this point, I had already developed my own style of illustration. These fancy ladies. But I felt a real connection with Cecil Beaton's aesthetic. And yes, some day, it's my dream to do the costumes for a modern production of My Fair Lady, but we're getting a bit off topic. So my fancy ladies evolved. I drew them off and on over the years and published an illustrated book featuring them about nine years ago. But that's another story. So... fast forward to spring 2018, just over two years ago.

I had started a publicity course and was in the process of figuring out what my next step was. I knew I wanted to start my own business, but wasn't sure what it would be or what it would look like. I'd been experimenting with laser cut jewelry, So thought it would be something to do with that. But the more I thought about it, the more I wanted to do something more. Something big.

Anyway. I remember sitting on the fuzzy bean bag we have in the living room and thinking. My husband and I had recently taken our first step on the property ladder and moved into a shared ownership flat. It's in a modern block of flats with floor to ceiling windows and mixer taps, which is very exciting when you're not originally from the UK, but have lived here many years, all the while wondering why the hot and cold taps are usually separate. So they scald your hands with boiling water or freeze them with cold. Anyway, it was all very exciting, living in this airy, new flat with lovely tree-lined views of Southwest London.

So here I was on this fuzzy bean bag living somewhere I genuinely love for the first time ever really. Thinking about optimizing the space around me. Thinking about how I really wanted to live. And an email popped into my inbox about interior design. Suddenly it all came together. A business concept that helps people create a vision for how they want to live and helps them take action on it. A blend of interior design, de-cluttering and style. Funnily enough, this was before I ever saw an episode of Queer Eye. I'd recently watched Marie Kondo's Netflix series and wondered if the KonMari Method would be the right fit for this business idea.

So fast forward two years and here we are. I retrained, am now a certified KonMari consultant and personal stylist, and I'm even working towards an interior design qualification too. So. I've always loved design and fashion or rather style. But it took me until the age of 37 before I started to do anything about it, to use it in a way that would literally transform my life. And I hope enhance the lives of my clients and you, my lovely podcast listeners. Thank you so much for supporting me on this exciting journey. There's nowhere else I would rather be.

**Finale: Quick-Fire Questions** [00:25:10]

To end the show, there's a quick fire round of questions for me. This month's questions are inspired by Vogue's famous 73 questions, but don't worry, we don't have nearly that many. And they are asked by my friendly assistant Gus, who may or may not be real. So take it away, Gus.

**Gus:** [00:25:30] What’s your favorite time of day?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:33] I love the early morning, especially in the spring and summer. It's fantastic to get up by 6:00 AM. And an early morning walk is a wonderful thing. Experiencing the day when no one is up and about, except those early morning runners or dog walkers. I enjoy walking by the river and visiting the local park. My husband and I often do this together, and there's always a nice collection of dog walkers. We particularly enjoy seeing those scruffy teddy dogs. So walking and dog watching is a great sport to start the day.

**Gus:** [00:26:08] You are stuck on an island, you can pick one food to eat forever without getting tired of it, what would you eat?

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:26:15] Ooh. How about Thai food? Is that too broad? Okay. How about a really flavourful or flavoursome spicy green curry with rice. I'm weirdly obsessed with rice.

 **Gus:** [00:26:29] Describe yourself in a hashtag?

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:26:31] Hashtag long-term investment. At least that's what I tell my husband.

 **Gus:** [00:26:40] What's your secret talent?

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:26:42] Swing dancing. I haven't done it seriously for a while, but I was completely obsessed with it in my early twenties. And someday when the pandemic is behind us, I'd love to get back into it. After all, there's not much in life that's better than a good swing out.

**Gus:** [00:26:59] A dessert you don’t like?

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:27:02] This is maybe a bit weird, but I'm not a big fan of cooked fruit. Don't get me wrong, I love fresh fruit. But I would never choose to have something like apple pie. Or. Christmas pudding.

 **Gus:** [00:27:18] What’s your spirit animal?

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:27:20] A cat or sometimes the kitten. I'm sociable, but also like going off on my own and curling up in a fuzzy bean bag in the sunshine. I had a cat growing up who I'd refer to as my brother. So I guess I must be at least part feline. But don't worry. Nothing like what you see in Cat People, that classic horror film from the forties. As I told Relinda in the last episode, I have definite cat goals for 2021. So watch this space.

 **Key Takeaways** [00:27:52]

Well, hope you enjoyed this Ask Alexandria episode. Is there something you'd like to ask me? Simply go to alsoinpink.com/askalexandria for a chance to have your question featured on the podcast. You have the option to submit a written question or record your message. And if you'd like to come up with your own quick-fire questions to ask me, please submit five or six questions for next month's Q&A. I look forward to hearing from you. So here are some key takeaways from the show today.

To be master of your digital photos, it's all about shifting your mindset. Let's be honest... on a scale of one to 10, how intentional are you when taking photos on your phone? If you'd describe yourself as snap happy, are you willing to invest the time it takes to sort through all those images? If not, try being more intentional with your photography. Go for quality rather than quantity. And use an app like Slidebox to quickly sort through, discard and organize your photos. Then set aside a bit of time each week to go through new photos, so that unmanageable digital mountain never builds up again. If you just have the budget to do one category with me as your KonMari consultant. Let's do clothing. This gives you a great foundation in the method and just KonMari-ing your clothing can have a huge impact on your daily life.

How would it feel to have a 100% working wardrobe that you also happen to love? And like me, it's possible to return to your first passion in life. For me, it was design and style. Maybe, I didn't know it at the time, but those fancy lady illustrations were destined to shape my life.

**Outro** [00:30:02]

That's our show then. Thank you so much for listening. I'm Alexandria, and this is ALSO in PINK. The podcast, all about lifestyle design. If you enjoyed the show, please subscribe to ALSO in PINK, wherever you get your podcasts. And the absolute best way to show your support is to write a review on Apple Podcasts or iTunes. This really helps more than anything to promote the show. And, of course, tell all your friends. Thank you so much for your support. Until next time, have a wonderful week. Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.