**14. KonMari Deep Dive: Kitchen & Thanksgiving Special**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:00] Thanksgiving is also a time of gratitude. So take a moment right now to think, what are you grateful for in your life?

**Intro** [00:00:09]

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 introducing the first deep dive episode. This is an opportunity to go all-in on a particular topic. I'll highlight a specific aspect of the KonMari method or something to do with style. And I'm open to suggestions. If there's something you'd particularly like to learn more about drop me a line. So let's get started.

**About This Episode** [00:01:06]

Hello and welcome to a KonMari deep dive. Today, we're focusing on the kitchen. With Thanksgiving just a few days away and Christmas not so far behind, we are officially entering holiday season. So, how are you doing? Are you feeling the festive joy yet? I have lots of happy memories of Thanksgiving. As a child growing up in Los Angeles, Thanksgiving was always one of my favorite holidays. And I guess my Thanksgivings were maybe a little unconventional. Aside from my parents, all my relatives lived out of state. So we always had Thanksgiving with friends. Friendsgiving as it's now officially called. So, going back to my childhood Friendsgivings. There was a big potluck where everyone brought their signature dishes. My mom made her famous bread rolls and ham and pumpkin pie. There was also turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce, a veggie casserole and various other tasty side dishes. It was such a happy occasion, my childhood Thanksgivings. And I've kept up the Friendsgiving tradition in London. It's always hosted by good friends of ours, Marina and Miguel, and we are an international crowd. We are American and British, Spanish and Hungarian, Iranian and German, Italian and Dutch. Last year, a KonMari friend came over especially from Amsterdam to join us. I had just met her a couple of weeks before on the KonMari consultant training course I did in New York last November. So shout out to Marjolein. We always welcome Thanksgiving newbies to the table.

Anyway, all this simply goes to say... Thanksgiving is a holiday for everyone. You don't need to be American. All you need to do is enjoy food and good company. You don't even need to have a turkey. In fact, I'd say, unless you're very confident you won't end up with a giant, dry, rather unappealing beast of a bird, I'd go so far as to say, please don't have turkey. Otherwise, there are no rules or maybe there's just one rule. Pumpkin pie is a must. I really can't imagine Thanksgiving without pumpkin pie. And the beauty of pumpkin pie is that you can do it last minute, especially if you live outside the United States. As it's not an official holiday anywhere else, except for Canadian Thanksgiving in October, you're likely to get all the ingredients you need if you decide to make a last-minute pumpkin pie. I for one almost always use butternut squash instead of pumpkin. So you can substitute whatever flavourful member of the squash or gourd family you can get locally. Yes, it's all about that pumpkin pie.

So a lot of people I've met since I moved to London are suspicious of pumpkin pie. They say pumpkin is for soup. Pumpkin is for savory dishes. Pumpkin is not for sweet things. I'd say try it first. And if you've had a terrible pumpkin pie in the past, try making it yourself. It's all about good quality ingredients, a nice blend of spices and whipping cream. I'll even give you my pumpkin pie recipe. Have a look at the show notes for details. I've adapted my pumpkin pie recipe a bit over the years, and think it's pretty foolproof now. If you do try my recipe, let me know what you think. Say hello in the ALSO in PINK Facebook group, or DM me on your favorite social media platform. Hopefully I'm on it too.

 For those of you who've never experienced Thanksgiving before, it's one of those times when many of us eat to the point of discomfort and you go into a sort of happy, slightly uncomfortable food coma. But it's a no judgment holiday. If you're all about eating to the point of pain, now's your chance. Disclaimer though: out and out gluttony isn't an approach to food I'd recommend every day. But hey, it's Thanksgiving. A little food coma is part of the course.

So if you've never celebrated Thanksgiving before, wherever you are in the world, why not start now? Try pumpkin pie. And whether you're on your own or at home with your immediate family, reach out to someone you love and say, hello, this Thanksgiving. You can be virtual pumpkin pie buddies.

Getting back to your kitchen then. Tell me, on a scale of one to 10, how happy are you with your kitchen as it is now? How easy is it to find stuff? How easy is it to cook in? Does using your kitchen honestly bring you joy?

If your kitchen isn't exactly joyful right now. Here's some problems I'm guessing you might have. Nod your head if any of these ring true for you:

1. The spice drawer. Can you find the smoked paprika in less than 10 seconds? Sure, you might have a spice drawer, but your spices are frankly out of control.

2. Food waste. You don't mean to waste food, but that's just what happens. Food gets lost. Sometimes you can't find ingredients or leftovers until they've gone off and our inedible.

3. Unused gadgets. Do you have a surplus of kitchen tools you don't want or need?

4. You don't know what ingredients you already have. You buy an ingredient and then discover you have another pack of it stuffed at the back of some cupboard.

5. The junk drawer. Yes, and it's full of all sorts of random stuff.

6. Cluttered surfaces. Your kitchen surfaces are rarely clear. There just doesn't seem to be enough storage space for all your kitchen items.

7. General chaos. You stuff things in drawers, higgledy piggledy, because you don't have proper homes for these items.

8. No place for backstock. If you decant flour and other things into containers, you struggle to know what to do with that leftover flour and those leftover other things that don't fit in your containers.

Okay, well, you get my point. The kitchen can be a challenge to get under control. If you nodded your head several times to that list of common kitchen problems, don't worry. You're not alone. And luckily help is on the way.

 The KonMari method really is a fantastic way to get control of your space. As tempting as it is to think of all the pretty storage solutions you could have in your home, I urge you to forget about the end result. Focus instead on the task at hand, which is bringing joy to your kitchen.

A word of warning. If you're keen to get the most out of the KonMari Method, I would firmly recommend that you don't start with the kitchen. If you KonMari your kitchen before you have a solid sense of what brings you joy, you're in for a rough ride. As I've said before, the beauty of proceeding category by category in the recommended order is that you gradually hone your sensitivity to joy. In other words, you begin your KonMari marathon with belongings that are likely easier to make decisions about - clothing, books, papers - before you enter the dizzying world of Komono or miscellaneous items, which includes everything kitchen related too. And then when you're a veritable master of joy, you tackle the remaining sentimental items. And there's a method to this method. If you start your KonMari tidying festival with the kitchen, it's like being plopped in the deep end of a pool before you really know how to swim. And there might be a few snapping turtles in there with you too. So here's some things to keep in mind.

Before you begin, you need a sense of how you want to live of who you want to be. Are you someone who cooks a lot? Or more importantly, do you want to be someone who cooks a lot? Just like an interior designer, think of how you'd ideally use your space. How do you want your kitchen to function? How do you live and how would you like to use this space?

Here's what we're trying to avoid. Don't keep things out of obligation. Don't keep things just because you've always had them in the past. Don't keep things if there are no longer in line with who you are or who you want to be. Do keep things because they make you happy, they bring you joy and are in line with how you want to live.

So how about that grapefruit knife you've had at the back of your cutlery drawer for years? Do you love eating grapefruit? Do you enjoy the design of this somewhat obscure kitchen implement? Remember, no judgment. It doesn't matter if people say you should have a grapefruit knife. Or maybe you worry that, well, you might need it someday. Instead, I encourage you to really focus on how you want to live. Have the courage to say yes, maybe it's a bit silly, but I really do love that grapefruit knife. Or, of course, say no - it's really not for me. Thank your grapefruit knife for its service or lack thereof, and say farewell. Pop it in a bag to take to your local charity shop and maybe your grapefruit knife will bring joy to someone else. This may seem like rather an intense process to go through for a bloomin' grapefruit knife. But imagine if you really took the time to go through each item you own, category by category. Imagine only keeping those things that make you happy and are in alignment with how you want to live. How lovely would that be? And how much time would you save, not searching for things? You'd be fully tuned into your surroundings. You'd know where everything is. On average, we spend two hours each week just looking for misplaced items in our homes. Think of all that time you'd save in the long run if you simply KonMari'd your home now.

And don't underestimate the joy of a well-organized spice drawer. Pre-pandemic whenever anyone came over and had to look at my spice drawer, they would literally gasp. I even got a few shrieks of delight. It's very simple, but somehow gets a lot of attention. Imagine then rows of glass jars, neatly labeled and all those colorful spices. For those of you who are more visually orientated, I've included a photo. Have a look at the extended show notes for this episode. Go to also in pink.com, episode 14 of the podcast. And you'll see what I mean. It doesn't take much effort to get your spices looking perfectly splendid, too. Start by throwing out all those super old spices that have lost their flavor and smell more musty than spice-like. Then what sort of cook do you want to be? Only keep the spices you enjoy the taste of and enjoy cooking with. If you ideally want to be a more adventurous cook or are in love with all things Ottolenghi, by all means keep those barberries and za’atar and that rose harissa. But keep these ingredients, not out of obligation or guilt, but out of excitement to create delicious meals.

So when was the last time food went off in your home? Because it well got lost. You couldn't find those tasty leftovers until they turned into rather a sludgy smelly mess. Out of sight, out of mind, right? It's easy to waste food if you can't easily see it. And food waste is a global problem. As the chief executive of environmental charity hubbub says: if food waste was a country, it would be the world's third biggest contributor to climate change. So let's all be part of the solution. Think of your home. The best way not to waste food is to have a system where you can easily see it and where you know what you already have in stock. The good news is there is a solution in sight. The less good news is that there's no fairy godmother or godfather to wave their fingers and magically sort it out. You're going to have to do it. But that's all right. I know you're up for a challenge.

Okay. Let's be honest. How many times have you stuffed something in a cupboard or put something somewhere in a random drawer, a random place because you don't know what to do with it? You feel like you probably should have it in your home. It might be useful after all. So you stuff it somewhere with lots of other random bits and pieces.

But then, do you ever do anything with it? If you're experiencing junk drawer, chaos, you're certainly not alone. I'm guessing the main reason you stuff things in drawers, higgledy, piggledy is because you don't know what to do with these items. They don't have what you could call proper homes.

Ever heard of decision fatigue. It's something you might experience on some level every day. Decision fatigue partly explains why you have a junk drawer in the first place where you toss these random things. Decision fatigue is part of the reason your email inbox builds up into a small mountain of unanswered emails. Decision fatigue is why former president Barack Obama only wore gray or blue suits. As Obama told Vanity Fair in 2012: I'm trying to pare down decisions. I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing because I have too many other decisions to make. And that all makes perfect sense. Decision fatigue partly explains why I used to enjoy cooking, but now don't feel up to the mental effort of deciding what to eat. I still sometimes make pizza from scratch as that doesn't require much mental effort for me. It's relaxing and I could do it in my sleep. Luckily, my husband enjoys cooking and has aspirations to be a house husband. Yay Ben. So I'm doing my best to make that dream come true. Building and running a successful business is what I really want to do. So I'm making every effort to create a reality that is ideal for both of us. It's a team effort. If you don't have a Ben in your life and struggle to find the inspiration to figure out what to eat, I think planning ahead is your best option. Then you only need to make decisions about what to eat say once a week. Have all your food and ingredients ready to go. And then it's just a matter of preparing it. A bit like me happily making my pizza on autopilot. Perhaps when I'm a bit further along in my business and find a better work-life balance in my own life, which I certainly need to do, I'll enjoy cooking again. We'll see.

So, we all face decision fatigue in our daily lives. Take a moment to think how it manifests itself in your life. What untidy things in your life are the result of decision fatigue? In order to avoid feeling overwraught and burnt out, let's see how we can reduce the number of decisions we need to make each day. The KonMari method can help. With each KonMari category you complete, you have essentially made long-term decisions for each of those items in your life. Then it's just a matter of maintenance. That's why as Marie Kondo says, if you tidy bit by bit, you'll be tidying your piles of stuff forever. But if you go all in and thoroughly sort through a category. If you know how you want to live, if you know what brings you joy and what you want to take with you into your future, then you will truly transform your life. And that my friends is the life-changing magic of tidying.

 And we come to one of the fundamentals of the KonMari method. Store things by category and not location. You make all your decisions once as you go through each KonMari category. That way you never end up with something like a junk drawer. You no longer have any need for it. If you've KonMari'd all your belongings, you won't experience decision fatigue, at least not related to anything in your home.

So, what do you want to take with you into your future? When I work with clients, I delve deeply into their, into your vision, for how you want to live. Your vision of your ideal life.

**Promo** [00:18:49]

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.

 You wake up after a good night's sleep on the most comfortable mattress ever. With pillows that support your head just the way you like. You go to your organized closet and choose colorful, unique clothes that fit you and make you feel good. Then pad through a clean, warm, uncluttered home to the kitchen. Your refrigerator offers up the most delicious, healthy options for breakfast. And you have a day of unstructured time stretching ahead of you to do with as you like. 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.

**Episode Resumes** [00:20:33]

So, what can you do to make your kitchen more joyful for the upcoming holiday season? Well, it's helpful to divide your kitchen into three subcategories: the tools you use to cook and bake, pots and pans, mixing bowls, spatulas and the like. The tools you use to eat and drink, plates and bowls, glasses, cutlery et cetera. And food. If you don't have time to fully KonMari your kitchen in time for the holidays. Do one thing. Focus on food.

Take all the food out of your cupboards and drawers. All those spices, packages, tins any, and all food stuffs that are lurking in the darkest corners of your kitchen. But leave the fridge for now. We'll save that for last. As you check through all your foodstuffs, look for two things.

1. Is this item edible or has it well and truly expired? Musty spices, unappealing expired tins of food.

2. Do you want to eat this item and would cooking with it bring you joy?

 If the food item in question doesn't tick both of those boxes, I urge you to banish it from your kitchen and your home. But if the unwanted item is still within its best before date, pop it in a bag and take it to a food bank. Who knows, by the time you finish KonMari-ing your food, you might have a nice pile of items to donate to a food bank. You may not want these items, but they could make someone else very happy this holiday season. and we can all do better in our lives to not waste food. So getting back to your food. For those items that do tick your, is it edible? And does it bring me joy boxes? Pop them in a keep area. You can further subdivide your keeps into spices, tins, and jars, packages, whatever feels appropriate for the items you have. But don't put anything back in your cupboards or drawers just yet. Wait until you finish going through all your foodstuffs before putting anything away. Once you're confident that you've gone through everything except the fridge, you can do that separately, look at your empty cupboards and drawers. How could you better organize your food items within the space you have? And are these the best cupboards and drawers to use for food in your kitchen? Once you've determined where you'll store your food, focus on how. How can you store your food so that you can see where everything is? Do you already have temporary boxes, shoe boxes, packaging, that can help subdivide your food items. How can you put everything away and instantly know where it is? Here's some things to keep in mind.

1. Keep your food sub-categorized. Store similar items in the same area so you always know where to find them. Small boxes or containers you find around the house can make great temporary storage for food. Then when you've fully KonMari'd your kitchen and are ready for more permanent solutions, consider something like clear containers. You can make fancy labels if you like. However you organize your kitchen cupboards, make sure you can see what you have in a glance.

2. Keep backstock in a clearly designated area. Backstock is any extras or multiples you have of a particular item. Those extra bags of rice or pasta. If you only have one place to store backstock, then you always know where to go when it comes time to refill containers or replenish your supply. So just between us, how many times have you thought you didn't have something only to find it lurking at the back of another cupboard?

 3. It's a team effort. Make sure everyone living with you understands why your food is organized the way it is. And make sure everyone has space for the food items they love. Unless you live alone. It's a collaborative effort to keep the joy levels high in your kitchen and in your home.

So why not schedule in time this holiday season to sort out the food in your kitchen once and for all? Imagine how much nicer it would be to prepare meals if you know you want to eat all the food in your kitchen and it's well organized too. Set yourself up for a great start to 2021. There's nothing like a solid win at the end of the year to make your new year extra sparkly.

Thanksgiving is also a time of gratitude. So take a moment right now to think. What are you grateful for in your life? I'm grateful to be here right now. To look out the window and see the rusty autumn leaves, to see squirrels clamoring about in their mad squirrely way. To hear birds, twittering and watch the occasional airplane float by. It's a great privilege to be alive. Even if it doesn't always feel like it, there is potential to experience all manner of good things in this life.

I'm grateful for my husband, my family and friends. And you. I'm so grateful that you're here with me now, sharing your time with me. I'll be toasting you this holiday season. By the way, I have now passed 1000 downloads, which is an exciting first step on this podcasting adventure. Thank you so much for your support. Wherever you are in the world, I toast you now. Wishing you a very happy Thanksgiving.

**Key Takeaways** [00:26:33]

Well, hope you enjoyed this deep dive episode. Is there a particular topic you'd like to learn more about? Email me alexandria@alsoinpink.com. Or join the ALSO in PINK Facebook group and post about it in the community. I look forward to hearing from you. So here's some key takeaways from the show today.

If you feel overwhelmed by the general chaos in your kitchen, see what one thing you can do to bring cheer to your kitchen over the holidays. Why not start with KonMari-ing your food? And remember, as you KonMari your belongings, don't keep things out of guilt or just by default, because you've always had those things in your life. Don't keep things if they don't feel right for who you are now or who you want to be. Do keep things because they make you happy, bring you joy and are in line with how you want to live.

Is decision fatigue something you struggle with in your daily life? What untidy aspects of your life are the result of decision fatigue? How can you reduce the number of decisions you need to make each day? The KonMari method can help. With each KonMari category you complete, you've made long-term decisions for each of those items in your life. Then it's just a matter of maintenance. And most importantly, this gives you more time and headspace to do all those things you'd rather do instead of tidying.

And Thanksgiving is for everyone. You don't need to be American to enjoy this foodie celebration. It's all about comforting food and good company. Whether you live on your own or with others, be sure to treat yourself this holiday season. And remember pumpkin pie is a must.

**Outro** [00:28:36]

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.