**24. Ask Alexandria: How to Get Visibility in Your Niche & Explore New Career Paths**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:00] You know, the longer I'm alive, the more convinced I am that natural talent is overrated. If you really want to do something, you can do it. If you really believe you can do something, you can do it.

**Intro** [00:00:13]

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.

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. I'd love to hear from you, so please send in your question. 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. I look forward to hearing from you. So, let's get started with today's show.

**About This Episode** [00:01:24]

Welcome to Ask Alexandria. This month's questions have a lot to do with getting yourself out there. If you're self-employed, run your own business or want to work for yourself, this episode is for you. Hear how you can learn from past failures, explore new career paths and leverage the power of publicity.

 The first question today comes from Molly, an artist from Boston, Massachusetts. She says: I'm an artist. I sell beautiful prints, but mostly to family and friends. How can I get the word out there? How can I get better known?

Well, Molly, there are lots and lots and lots of creative people out there struggling with the very same thing. You're in excellent company. And yes, I've been there too. Let's take a moment and go back in time.

 Picture 2012. If you're from the UK, I'm guessing 2012 brings back all kinds of fond memories. Of gold and glory, sunshine and smiles, tears and triumph. I am of course, referring to the 2012 London Olympics. A time when the people of Britain cast aside any natural tendency to whinge and embraced a wave of happiness.

Okay. If you're not British, this may be a new word for you. Dictionary time: to whinge. Whinging is essentially complaining in a persistent and possibly irritating way. And here in Britain, whinging is a national sport. Nothing like a nice cup of tea and a whinge.

So that made it all the more impressive when the Olympics cast a positive, even joyful glow on London And the entire country in 2012.

Now, I'm not crazy into sports, but I go all in when it comes to the Olympics, sort of like elections. Especially US elections. I may not keep up with the daily ins and outs of politics, but I love elections. The drama, the suspense, the tears of joy if your chosen candidate prevails. The Olympics are similar. It's really quite thrilling and yes, it can be difficult to get stuff done during those intensely exciting 16 days of the Olympics.

 It was also around this time that I self-published an illustrated book. And no, I didn't have a clue about business. I had been so intensely focused on making my lovely thing that I didn't really consider what would happen next. What would happen when 5,000 hardback copies of my book arrived on pallets from Singapore? How would I store them? How would I sell them? And most importantly, would anyone want them? I figured there were probably 5,000 people in the world who would buy my book. But I had no clue how to find them. And. I didn't find them.

 This was my first attempt at running a business and I failed. But failure teaches you a lot. I learned that you can't and shouldn't rely on people you know to buy your creations. Sure, your friends and family love you, but it's unlikely that they're your target audience or those people most likely to want what you're offering.

I learned that if you're self-employed you are running a business. If you're a performer, a teacher, a creative person of any description. If you're working and you're not employed by someone else, you are running a business.

I learned that you can't expect an audience to come to you. You need to meet people where they already are. You need to lead with valuable content and draw people in.

 I learned that you need a community of like-minded people to support you. If you're trying to run a business, you need a community of entrepreneurs to lift you up. To inspire you. To have your back when you need it.

I learned that you need to be bold and put yourself out there.

I learned that if you don't already have a strong and engaged social media following, you're better off building visibility through publicity rather than social media. Of course, it's nice to have both, but if you don't have a lot of time, or money, publicity will get you out in the world much faster. But what is publicity? Publicity means getting featured in articles, making guest appearances on podcasts, that sort of thing.

I now know entrepreneurs who have multiple six and seven figure businesses and they often have surprisingly small social media followings. Instead they've leveraged their businesses through publicity, through building relationships and getting media coverage.

And most importantly, I learned that you absolutely need to learn from experts. Don't make the mistake I made and spend literally years doing a deep dive of the internet to learn all you can learn about business and marketing. There's a whole sea of information out there and it's easy to get lost. It's easy to learn from the wrong people.

 I heard Ramit Sethi give a talk not long ago. If you're not familiar with him, Ramit is a hugely successful personal finance advisor and entrepreneur. He says, be extremely selective who you learn from. And he's right.

 It took me a few years before I found Selena Soo. I've talked about her on this podcast before. Like in episode seven, my interview with entrepreneur Relinde Moors. So who is Selena Soo? She is a publicity strategist and the most connected person I know. She's helped me so much these past couple years. She inspired me to completely rethink my business goals. And as a result, I retrained, went in an entirely new direction. And finally, I feel like I'm doing what I was meant to do. So I can't recommend Selena enough. If you're looking for more visibility this year, she is where it's at. And Selena recently released her brand new publicity calendar. It has everything you need to get started.

Like. More than 40 pages of story ideas you can pitch to the media and exactly when to pitch them.

There are strategies for tackling sensitive and timely issues from COVID-19 to Black Lives Matter.

And you get Selena's top three insider secrets for scoring major media coverage and building an audience of raving fans along the way.

So grab your free 2021 publicity calendar now. There's a link in the show notes. Or you can write to me: alexandria@alsoinpink.com if you have any questions. By the way. I have a big publicity win on the horizon. And it's all thanks to Selena Soo. I'll tell you all about it when it's officially official. So stay tuned.

 Until then, check out Selena's publicity calendar. It's the perfect place to start getting your name and your business out there. Get out there in the world.

**Monthly Review Spotlight** [00:09:16]

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 summerstory who left a review on Podchaser on January 14th. They say. ALSO in PINK is my favorite podcast. Alexandria is an amazing host who can bring magic into my world. I love all her episodes. Thank you, summerstory. You've made me blush. But then again, I blush easily. Seriously though. I'm delighted to hear you're enjoying the show. Thank you so much for listening.

 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.

By the way, if you're not familiar with Podchaser, it's like the IMDB of the podcasting world. It's the definitive podcasts database, where you can find and follow podcasts. Go check it out. And it's another great place to leave a review.

**Question 2** [00:10:28]

Kate an architect from London says: if I want to learn more about fashion or styling, is there a particular book I can read? Ooh. Well, you're spoiled for choice. I would start with something like Dress with Sense: The Practical Guide to a Conscious Closet. It's written by Redress and Redress is a Hong Kong based environmental NGO. Their mission is to promote sustainability and reduce waste in the fashion industry.

If you like practical tips, Dress with Sense is the resource for you. It's chock-full of practical tips, from eco-friendly ways to remove stains, to how to get creative and rescue hidden treasures from the depths of your wardrobe.

Also did you know this? Don't iron and run. So, if you've just ironed your clothes, wait until the garment has completely cooled down, a good five minutes or so, before putting it on and dashing off. Why is that? Well, if you put on is still-hot garment, you'll just create more wrinkles. So your practical style tip for the day.

There are some great style autobiographies too. Tan France has a delightful memoir called Naturally Tan. You'll probably know Tan from the hit Netflix series Queer Eye. Yes, the British guy with the great hair. As Tan says his book is meant to spread joy, personal acceptance, and most of all understanding. Each of us is living our own private journey, and the more we know about each other, the healthier and happier the world will be.

How true is that? His book also has some fashion do's and don'ts and he tells his story with his signature biting humor. I laughed out loud several times. And I remember saying to my hubby on more than one occasion. Ooh, I have to read this bit out loud to you.

And yes, someday Tan France will be a guest on this podcast. He doesn't know it yet, but I'm putting it out there. It will happen. Eventually.

 And ever since learning more about sleep from sleep scientist Matthew Walker part of my wind down routine is reading before bed. I haven't done that for years and it really is lovely. I'm currently reading Alexandra Shulman's new book. It's called Clothes and other things that matter.

Alexandra Shulman edited British Vogue for 25 years. Here's what she says about her book. Clothes and other things that matter is a book, not only about clothes, but the way we live our lives. From childhood onwards, the way we dress is a result of our personal history. And a mix of memoir, fashion history, and social observation, I'm writing about the person our clothes allows us to be. And sometimes the person they turn us into.

It's a good read and Alexandra Shulman comes across as a very down to earth relatable sort of person. Not the Devil Wears Prada fashion editor we might expect to be at the heart of a magazine like British Vogue.

**Review Ad Spot** [00:13:53]

Well, hello. Can I just say, thank you. Thank you for listening. And if you're enjoying the show, it would mean the world to me if you'd rate and review ALSO in PINK. I'll make it super easy for you and you can even win a prize.

Submit your review on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts, for a chance to win a 20 minute one-to-one virtual coaching session with me. Pick my brain about life, KonMari or style. I'll announce the monthly winner on each Ask Alexandria episode. So be sure to listen out to see if your review gets picked. All you need to do is: go to ratethispodcast.com/alsoinpink. And rate and review the show. Want tips on how to win? Write something genuine. Be thoughtful and let your personality shine through. Bonus points for a dash of charm.

And for your weekly dose of podcast joy, subscribe to ALSO in PINK, so you never miss a show. Thank you so much. You really are a star.

**Question 3** [00:15:05]

And finally, Ed from Seattle asks:

Do you have any advice for someone in their forties or 50s without any particular skills who lost their job during the pandemic?

Well Ed, the pandemic has been and continues to be a huge challenge to us all. It has disrupted the lives of each of us in different ways in every country in the world. If you were someone who's lost your job as a result of the pandemic, I can only imagine how challenging that must be.

I get that sometimes in life, we just need to find a job. Any job. Something to bring in some money so we can pay the rent and feed ourselves and provide for our family. And that's totally fine and understandable. Do what you need to do to get by. I also think you can probably get by on less money than you think.

My husband and I worked as freelance musicians for many years before exploring other career options. As musicians, we had a joint annual income of about £20,000 pounds. More than half of that we paid into rent for our one bedroom flat in South West London. And most of the rest of our income went towards food and other household expenses. For years and years, we had less than a thousand pounds in our bank account at any given time and no savings at all.

I remember going to an orchestra rehearsal once and not even having enough money to buy a cup of tea during the break. I don't recommend you do the same. I'm just saying that it's possible to get by and even enjoy life on a small income. But what comes next? Let's say you can get by. Let's say that you have a little cushion of savings and can give yourself some time, maybe a few months or longer, to figure things out. To figure out what you actually want to do.

My first career change came in 2013. I had read about these developer, these coder, bootcamps that seemed to be all the rage in America. I already had a slight interest in coding, as I was determined to build my first website from scratch, with the help of a professional developer friend. Shout out to Mehrdad for his patience and kindness in helping me out. Knowing what I know now, if I were in his place at the time, I would've said: what are you thinking? Use some kind of template or at least create your website on WordPress. But there you go. I did it the hard way. I wanted to build it from scratch.

So in 2013, I borrowed 8,000 pounds to retrain, did a three month intensive coding course and immediately got a job as a junior front end developer.

My starting salary was 27,000 pounds a year. This was close to three times what I'd ever earned as a musician, for which I had trained. A lot longer. There are quite a few more twists and turns that take me to where I am now, but that's a story for another time.

So I think it's important to remind yourself that it's never too late to learn new skills. Especially in this digital age, there is so many possibilities to start a new career. Often the most difficult thing is figuring out what you want to do. How many more years do you want to work? What kind of lifestyle do you really want? How much income are you looking to bring in? As always, start with your goal and work backwards to where you are now. So what's the next step you need to take now that will bring you closer to your goal?

 If you're looking to acquire new skills, you have a whole virtual world as your playground. How about general assembly? This is where my husband retrained a few years back. He did a three month course in user experience UX design. And he got a full-time job almost immediately after this. He's still working as a user interface, UI UX designer for Curry's. If you don't have the budget or can't borrow the money for a full-time course, General Assembly offers part-time courses as well as one-off classes and workshops. For training in tech, data, design and business General Assembly is a fantastic place to study.

They also adapt their courses to the needs of the job market. So you can be sure you're learning skills that are in demand now. Go on and see what's on offer.

If you're in the mood to explore, Skillshare and Udemy could be a good fit for you too. They both offer thousands of online courses. So you can dip your toe in and explore some new areas of interest. And as you probably know, my personal favorite learning platform is MasterClass, where you can learn from the world's best. From voice acting to scientific thinking, advertising, makeup, and magic. There's so much to learn.

You know, the longer I'm alive, the more convinced I am that natural talent is overrated. If you really want to do something, you can do it. If you really believe you can do something, you can do it. If you don't believe you can do something, you're probably not going to do it. In other words, if you think you can, or you think you can't, you're probably right. So with your think your can hat on what do you want to do? What kind of career or job or business do you want to have? Create your big goal and keep stepping your way towards it. Believe in yourself and you'll get there. Off you go then. One step at a time. And keep on going.

**Finale: Quick-Fire Questions** [00:21:15]

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:** [00:21:36] Is there a must-have, clothing item everyone should own?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:21:40] Yes. Something that makes you feel fabulous. People, like to say that you should have a white tee and the statement blazer or biker jacket and jeans in a couple of different colors, but I'm not convinced. The most important thing is to find a style that works for you and clothes that make you feel good.

**Gus:** [00:22:00] Diamonds or pearls?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:22:03] I didn't appreciate the beauty of pearls until I experimented with jewelry making a number of years ago. I learned about Akoya, South Sea Tahitian pearls, all these beautiful, beautiful things. And around that time, there was a stunning exhibition about the history of pearls at the V&A, the Victoria and Albert museum in London.

So as much as I like the simple elegance of diamonds, there's something magical about pearls. So I choose pearls.

**Gus:** [00:22:33] If you made a documentary, what would it be about?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:22:36] Oh maybe something to do with modern Nordic design. I'd travel all around Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland. And interview people in their homes, have nature, walks eat lots of brunost. That caramel-like brown goat's cheese. It may be an acquired taste, but I think it's lovely.

**Gus:** [00:22:59] What's your favorite place to view art?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:23:02] You know, my favorite museum in the world would have to be the Norwegian mountain center in Lom. It's cozy and inviting, beautifully designed and surprisingly cutting edge i its use of technology. For something more opulent. I love the Borghese gallery in Rome. It's home to my favorite marble statue. Bernini's Apollo and Daphne. Just stunning.

**Gus:** [00:23:29] Stairs or elevator?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:23:31] Stairs. I live on the sixth floor of my block of flats and try to take the stairs whenever I can. Sometimes after a run though, all go for the lift. It depends how wobbly my legs feel. Just finishing week three of the couch to 5k, by the way. And yes, I wear a mask in the lift and I wear a mask going up the stairs of my block of flats, too. Especially with these virus variants going round, I think it's best to be on the cautious side.

**Gus:** [00:24:02] What’s your go to bed ritual?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:24:06] I finally have a bedtime ritual. And really it's thanks to Matthew Walker. Yes, the sleep scientist guy I'm always talking about. So my ideal bedtime is about 10:00 PM or 10 30. So screens are all off by 9:00 PM and I'll either have a bath and listen to a podcast or I'll read before going to bed. Either way. I make sure I have a proper wind down routine. And if I have a work deadline I need to meet, I really try not to work past 9:00 PM.

If you don't have a wind down routine yet, I highly recommend coming up with something that works for you. It's a wonderful way to finish the day and it sets you up well for tomorrow. Nighty night then.

**Key Takeaways** [00:24:52]

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.

If you remember one thing, let it be this. Be extremely selective who you learn from. Learn from people who are experts in their field. My favorite expert is publicity strategist, Selena Soo. And publicity helps you show up as an expert, boost your credibility, open up doors to other opportunities and it's more impactful than social media posts. If you're self-employed, run your own business or want to work for yourself, I guarantee Selena can help you too. And there's a link to download your free 2021 publicity calendar in the show notes.

It's important to remind yourself that it's never too late to learn new skills. Especially in this digital age of ours, there are all sorts of opportunities to learn and grow. And remember failure is an opportunity to learn. Learn from your own failures. Learn from my failures. Learn from other people's failures. It's not too late to make 2021 your best year yet.

So get out there and get visible.

**Outro** [00:26:58]

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.