

A Coffee with Makers - Episode 20 | Alexis of The Real Alexis Bailey

Kimberly

Do you have a coffee? Are you ready for another maker story will join me for today's episode of coffee with makers.

Kimberly

So today's guest is Alexis from the real Alexis Bailey. Alexis is a sewing blogger. She has amazing tutorials and tips on her blog and she has the most amazing style. I make clothes but I never know how to actually wear them. And Alexis does. So I highly recommend you go check out her blog because I was just flipping through the pictures, wishing that I styled my handmaids like she does. So I'm going to throw it over to Alexis and she can tell you a little bit more about her. Wow. Um, so a lot of amazing. I think you're amazing. Thank you. I didn't know.

Alexis

Well, my name is Alexis Bailey. I am a sewing blogger and contributor. Um, I do contribute on other people's blogs and websites. I have a couple tutorials. Um, I like making he guides and I am in the works of becoming an influencer. So I guess I can, I guess add that to my list.

Kimberly

Definitely add that to your list. I think you take a brand. I consider you an influencer, an influencer. So how long have you been doing this whole sewing blogging thing?

Alexis

I started sewing a while ago. Um, but in spurts. I started blogging about it a year ago. Actually just recently celebrated my one year blogging anniversary. I didn't even realize it actually until I, I looked at, I was like looking at my payments for wordpress and it was like, it's been a year since you and I was like, oh, okay, do something to celebrate myself. So it's been about a year since I started blogging. Um, I guess seriously blogging, it's only been about like six or seven months though.

Kimberly:

Wow. Well, you've done a lot in six and seven months.

Alexis:

I've done a lot in six or seven months. My, my website's changed like five times. Um, I've gone from documenting everything to kind of starting over and I blame that on tablet. The sower, I think we can blame a lot of stuff on tap. Push us to be better than,

she's like, you're not ready. I'm like, I am ready. She's like, no, you're not. You're doing this, this and this. Wrong. And I'm like, no, I'm going to prove her wrong and I'm just going to be everything right.

It's like, oh, this is great. And I'm like, see, she is the most annoying big sister on Instagram that I've ever had.

Kimberly:

It's only been about a year. And you've made these changes. Why? What was the push for that?

Alexis:

I knew there was, I don't know. I, I knew that I wanted to make a business out of this, but like when I first started a year ago documenting stuff and sewing and everything, I didn't really, I took it seriously, but not too much. I was just kind of making clothes and as time went on, I realized that, you know, my body was kind of changing and I wanted to make more garments for myself just to, to fit my body. So then, you know, I learned that I'm very, I don't know what the word is. Um, I guess boogy is the word. I like quality. Um, it's not, I used to be, you know, oh, this is cheap. I'm just going to make it. This is cheap quality fabric, you know, I can afford it now. I'm not like that anymore. So with quality fabric came quality sewing.

And so then I started documenting it more and then I started giving pattern reviews on my blog and then I started, you know, taking better Pikeville Matt, my husband started taking better pictures and so you can kind of see it on my Instagram. The progression of things like I kept some pictures from before. They look a little different than how they do now. There are a little darker, they're not edited. The quality's a little though. There's still good pictures, but they're not how they, how they are now. And I just felt just everywhere. I just felt like I didn't know what I wanted to do. I know when make it a business, but I didn't really know where to start. So one day I just DM Tabitha and I was like, she, she had put a story or something of that made me ask for this, but I just got fed up and I told my husband, I was like, I don't know what I'm doing and I don't know what's next for me. So I DM Tabitha and I was like, I was like, do you think that there's some things I could change on my Instagram and on my blog? And she responded, well, personally, I can see a lot of areas, smiley face. She didn't make it on the same for me. So I sent her something and I was like, what do you think?

Kimberly:

And I love that she was totally honest and he doesn't want to be mean.

Alexis:

She's not being mean. She's just like, the Smiley face sells it.

Kimberly:

But I, I love that you, you reached out to her because it can be very, to reach out to somebody else and say, what do you see that needs to change?

Alexis:

Yeah. And I was ready. You know, I was ready to be told what I'm doing wrong because I'd rather have constructive criticism than do it on my own and look dumb. So I DM her and she's like, there's lots of things I could change. And I'm like, okay, well that's not really an answer. What could I change? So I asked her, I was like, so like what? And she pretty much was like, um, I don't give that for free. Yeah. So that's when, and, and she's, she's mentioned it before, but she does have a consultation package. So I took that consultation package and I was a little worried at first because there are a lot of, you know, oh, build your brand businesses out there. I, it's social media, so you can't necessarily trust everybody. So I didn't know. I'm like, is this gonna be worth it or is this just something that she does, you know?

Alexis:

So once, but once, once we got started, like within the first 20 minutes of our consultation, I knew I was like, this was a good investment. And I like right after I went and deleted, well, I didn't delete. I archive at the time I archive like half of my feed for now. There's like a third of the stuff that used to be on there on there and I just did exactly well she told me to and it, it worked like automatically. It was a lot of stuff my husband had to change too with his photo making. She made me learn my style. I didn't know what my style was. I wear a lot of black, but you know, I was like, oh, I love color, but I only, I didn't put that many colors so I realized I was like, Oh, you know, do like florals I do like neutrals. I do like, like it was like this thing in me that wasn't released and she was just like, what do you want? Do It, who are you? Figure it out, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah. And then it came in. Then I just started expressing it more. Really.

Kimberly:

It's almost like you need permission from somebody to say go yourself and what do you want? And then you, you feel this like weight off of your shoulders. Like you can be, you just do you really well and people will respond to.

Alexis:

Yeah. And, and she said that like, she was like, so what are you wanting from this? And I was like, oh, I want, I want to show people that I can do this. And then she was like, do you want to make money? And I was like, well, yeah. And she's like, okay, so you want to make money? I was like, but that sounds so superficial. She's like, no, if that's the goal, then that's the Google. And then I realized down the line that, you know, it's

about the passion first. If you have a goal, that goal comes with, with the way you make your paths. So if you have a plan to do something or if you have a passion, then the end is your goal and you'll reach that by accomplishing it in a certain way. It was really just, it's guidance really. She just gave me some really great guidance that I, I don't think I can ever repay.

Kimberly:

Well, it's nice to feel like you have somebody's rooting you on and pushing you at the same time. And so how have you sort of made her advice into your own? Like what are some of the things you changed? You said you had your husband changed the way he was taking pictures and you've infused more color and print into it, but are there other things that you recognized as well that needed to change within your brand to get this goal of making money?

Alexis:

So when you think of editing and when I thought of editing and even when I talked to my husband about editing, you think of, Oh, it's Photoshop and we're going to, you know, add some model or take off five inches from her waist or something of that nature. Editing doesn't mean that you completely changing the nature of the picture. It means that you're enhancing it. And I never thought about that. So I figured out I needed to enhance some of the photos I had to show. It helps show more of the, the nature of them, the flow of them, how they were able to relate to, you know, the, the pictures I was taking. So that definitely helped. Um, it also helps with brightening, but that's really it. It was just a lot of, a lot of editing. And with Matt, with the pictures he was taking, it was just all about angles. I wasn't really highlighting anything. It was just a full frontal shot. Sometimes my head was cut off from it.

Kimberly:

So it's funny that he takes your pictures. Has He always taken your pictures?

Alexis:

I used to take photos of like my, my clothes and terrible lighting. I was using Instagram filters. It was just, it was terrible. All started there at some hall started. Yeah, with Instagram filters and then it was like, okay, let's evolve. But when I wanted to put pictures on my blog, that's, that's when he first started. You can see how the, the differences very much my whole mood is a little different. My outfits or different just ish. I've come a long way. Sometimes I want to take it down, but I'm like, no, I need to see where I've come. But he's, he's pretty much always taken them. Actually, now that I think about it, he always has, he's very much into photography.

Kimberly:

Oh, well that's nice that that's something he's into. I have taken my own pictures for

the whole, I guess five years that I've been doing this with a tripod and a remote. I talked to another guest, Melissa, about this and yeah, I mean listening, I'm a little too controlling to have somebody else. Like I'd be like, do this, do this, try this. And that wouldn't go well with my husband. So I just have always done on myself. But it's fun to see people who have their spouse or their partner be the person who photographs them.

Alexis:

There are definitely moments we have where like the, there was, there were a couple of times where we got, I got like so frustrated because I would be ready to go and he wasn't ever, he'd be tired and, and stuff like that. So I actually went and bought a tripod and I was like, I'm just going to start doing this myself. I don't have time for you anymore.

But my, my friend, she's a fashion blogger and she actually has a post about um, uh, how to deal with your husband taking your photo. And she had, it's like five tips, reading it like really changed everything. Her name is busy being Shasha. Um, but she has five tips on and that all of it, it was like half patients, um, be specific, all of it. And sometimes I am bossy but it's my blog and I'm making money from it

Kimberly:

Yeah, yeah. And it sounds like he, he knows that going in that he knows the dynamics that you're in charge and you want it to look a certain way. And um, so it's fun though that you guys can work on it together.

Alexis:

Yeah, he knows that how I am in this, you know, 30 minutes to an hour we'll not be how I am defined. That's good. So, okay, here is something I have to ask because I feel like as a sewing pattern designer, my job is creating the patterns and actually photographing and posing that part is so not me. So yeah. How do you get comfortable behind the camera? Like how do you make it feel natural because it really does come across in your pictures, like hanging out and you just happen to get this like amazing picture in this outfit that you made. And so how do you, how do you portray that through your pictures? It's Matt. It is it, and this was actually, this was actually like experimented on. So I was trying to take a photo of myself in front of my sewing station one day and he was out working on the car or something and, and I had the tripod and I was trying to take the picture and everything and I just felt stupid like I, and I'm in my house and I just felt dumb. Like my smile was like, like it just, he comes in and just makes me laugh and he just takes the shot and it'll look great. And I was like, oh.

Alexis:

So I, I found it interesting when you were talking to Melissa, um, from A Happy Stitch and you were saying how like you both were saying how you kind of like have to think of something that makes you laugh or whatever. That's pretty much it. He just, he just says something dumb that that's in our, our engagement photos or like that like there was like, I need you to smile. And I was like, I don't feel like smiling. And Matt would be like, you would say something dumb and then I would smile in the photos came out great. It's shit. It's really just mad.

Kimberly

So your secret weapon is Matt and I don't have a mat, so I guess I just need to figure it out.

Alexis:

I mean, I think if you think of something happy, because that's really it. If you think of something very, very happy, it sounds really cliché and really dumb, but having this whole thing, you know, when you have somebody supporting you, that's for me what makes me happy. So when you think of something happy, are you thinking, I mean even even, I know you were saying like people pass you on the street and they'll be looking at you crazy. To me. That's funny. That's hilarious. And that's where the smile comes from. I mean you just have to, you kind of have to make it happen because honestly the stuff that Matt says isn't really that funny. It's really not. But I know what he's trying to do, so I just kind of go with it. So you kind of have to use it for the, for the purpose that it is, it's 50% Matt, but it's also 50% I need to like laugh because if I don't like we're going to be here forever because I don't like smiling. Like I'm, I'm not really a smile with my teeth kind of person. I'm a smoker. I like just smirking. I like giving a cute Sassy smirk and then just going about my day. But I, I can't have the same face in every photo. So look like I'm enjoying it.

Kimberly:

Yeah, I hadn't really thought of that. You know, I feel like I've got my smile, my thing that I do, you know, like I tend to like crunch up my nose a little. I mean, honestly I don't take my pictures as seriously as I probably should. And I think some of it is just like, this is me.

Alexis:

It's interesting to look at it, to hear it from you, take them as seriously. And I think that's, that's exactly the point. And that's really why it works between us is because before it used to take us like three hours to do a photo shoot. Like it took us forever to do a photo shoot because we, I just felt like everything was wrong. Now we'll find a spot. And it, it's just, it's just fun. It's not even about like, oh, this is for the blog and this is for Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah. It's like, okay, I know I'm here for a purpose and we have

to accomplish the purpose, but hey, let's just do whatever we want. And it Kinda just happens. It really is just the natural element. I think if anybody's ever tried to take a genuine photo, just be completely natural and work with your surroundings. If people are looking at you crazy, just laugh. If people are staring at you like just, I just use it, just use it all. There's like a dog or a baby crying laugh at it.

Kimberly:

Well like I said before, I think it really comes through in your pictures because thank you. You look at them and you really are like, wow, she looks really happy on this street corner or you know, like in this grounded by trees and fit whatever you and Matt are doing is working incredibly well because I see these pictures and they make me happy too. And I think, Ooh, what is she wearing and is, I want to so and so. I think that the changes you've made, although I didn't see it before, but I do see what you're, you're blog is now and I think the changes you've been making are incredible because I think it is really you personality is coming through and yeah, you should be proud of those changes because I really do think that everything about your brand is amazing.

Alexis:

I definitely feel like more myself in what I'm doing. I have a relationship with what I'm doing now and I think before I didn't, I think before I was just scrolling just to sew or sometimes I'd even, so for a compliment like oh I want to make this for this event so people can be like, where'd you get it? So I can be like, oh I made it.

Kimberly:

Well I can think of many times I've done the exact same thing. Like, oh well if I make this dress people will ask and I get people.

Alexis:

Exactly. And, and now like it's not like that. I think ever since I rebranded my business is for me like it's for nobody else. It's literally the one thing I have that is just for me and I have a relationship with it. And I think that's what I think. That's what I try to make come across is that this is, this is a persona of who I am. Sometimes in social media we can lose ourselves in, you know, the, the thing that we're doing and we become, you know, whatever the audience wants or whatever. But I will never do that. I mean, I'm not, I don't know the future, but my, my hope and goal is to never allow that to be the catalyst because then I've lost the entire point of what I'm doing. I want this to always be my thing. My baby, this is, this is just me. Not, not a definition of me, but an extension of who I am.

Kimberly:

I think that's, that's great. Yeah. The clothes that you, so are also an extension of you and all of that. So what in the process of figuring what your style was and working

with better fabrics and you know, really like honing in on what you want to share, what did you sort of arrive at? Do you, you know, have a style? Do you think you have a style?

Alexis:

I'm going to make something. It needs to be, I'm going to wear it when I'm out as well. It can't just be for one purpose. So I had an idea of what my style was, but my personality is kind of like your personalities kind of reflected by what you wear. I was wearing all these dark colors and then I started buying stuff that I normally wouldn't buy. Like I'm buying fabrics that like have, you know, a little ditzy flowers on them or you know, something green and pink. I don't even like pink. Pink is my favorite colors, but I would get something pink and I'd make it and it would look great on me. And I was like, Oh, I think as my color, it may not necessarily be my favorite color, but it looks great on me. So I started noticing things that were catching my eye.

And sometimes I think we see something and we're like, oh, I like that, but I don't normally wear it, so I'm not going to get it. But thing out of my comfort zone, I was like, well, obviously I was drawn to it, so I like it. So I'll probably wear it. So that's it. So then now I just kind of go with it. So with the, with the process, if I see a really pretty fabric, I just buy it. I haven't bought a dark fabric and forever, lately I've been buying all these reds and Greens and Blues and paints and I just make whatever I think it should be because I'm, I'm really all about showing off the fabric. It's not, to me the pattern needs to go with the fabric, but the fabric, you know, if we're spending all this money on fabric that needs to look really, it needs to shine. And I want to make the fabric shine because that's what sticks out. So I tried to gear towards pretty light colored fabrics are really like, flowy stuff. Like this goes, Oh yeah, ray ions and those are like some of my favorite, but it's really just a mixture of a lot of flowers and plaids and stripes. That's really what I geared towards a lot.

Kimberly:

I like that. You said you sort of find a fabric that you like and then figure out a pattern that's going to like show case. The fabric. Yeah. Obviously you want to sow a pattern that's going to look good on your body, but a pattern can be completely different depending on the fabric that you do it with. So if you're really focusing on the fabric, then you're going to make maybe a different decision than you would if you picked the pattern first and searched for the fabric we wanted.

Alexis:

Very True, because sometimes to the, the pattern will be like, oh, suggested fabric, you know, linen and then you go off and you buy like Chiffon and sometimes it may look better. I mean maybe, I mean for instance, I recently made my Cali shirt or a nd and it's normally Cali's are made with a more structured fabric. I use this, like I didn't

realize what the texture is going to be when he's gone, but it was like still difficult to so with, and you can see the texture on it is, is it's not structured whatsoever. It just kinda does what it wants to do. But honestly I wouldn't have it any other way. I didn't want a structured garment. I got the fabric because I knew it was some type of flowy, but I didn't know it was going to be type of fluid had had I just been like, oh well this is the [inaudible] fabric. I should choose a flowy, you know, pattern or whatever, then you know, I would have worked. But I think the garment that came out of it is very unique and stands out on its own the way that I want. I like when fabrics kind of, you know, do their own thing naturally. I don't like forcing anything. So that's what happened.

Kimberly:

Yeah. Well, I love that you said that though because I think that a lot of times people see a pattern and they see the suggested fabric and you know, as a designer we have to put yes suggestions but doesn't work. But sometimes you get to be creative and try out something we didn't list because you know, in some cases it's that I can't list every type of fabric that would work with that pattern. I'm going to give you a general idea, but I think that it is fun to use an unexpected fabric for a pattern and to see what happens. Because honestly, worst case, it doesn't work. It's not like it's the end of the world.

Alexis:

Exactly. And hopefully you have enough leftover to maybe restructure it into something if it didn't work or something like that. And if not, well now we know that that didn't.

Kimberly

Yeah, now we know that's not why it was listed as a fact. No, I do the same. Like I do the same when I'm sewing. If I'm like, well, I'm just gonna guess this'll work. And it doesn't always. But sometimes I end up with really cool garments because I decided to not listen and do what I wanted to do.

Alexis:

Yeah, that's very, and yeah, that's pretty much what happened. It's very true. Sometimes that's a great thing. And you end up with this like really cool unique garment that doesn't even look like the, the pattern design.

Kimberly:

Yeah. Well, and you know, we're creatives. There is something to be said for, you know, as a maker to be able to take something and make it our own. And you know, as a pattern designer, I love when people do their own thing and use my pattern as an inspiration. So I think that it's one thing to grab fabric so it up and there's your

garment. It's another to say I'm creative, I want to like I've got a vision for this garment and I'm going to make it work and see what happens. Yeah,

Alexis:
very true. I agree.

Kimberly:
Yeah. So you said you are a contributor for Indiesew, and that is really cool. I have known Allie for years and years and she is pretty amazing. Have you enjoyed being a part of, um, the collaborations with her?

Alexis:
Yeah. First of all, Allie is, so Ali and Angie, this is so sweet. They're like very, very sweet. I love, I love them. They're a great, a great team with what they're doing over there. And I think what, what they've done with getting us together for, for the blog contributor situation has been like really, really cool. I didn't really know what I was doing when I signed up for it. Nor did I, I think I was going to get chosen because this was before the rebrand. So I was, yeah, I was like, why did they pick me? Cause then she was like, Oh, you know, we chose, you know, I think it was like seven people out of 270 and I was like, why am I one of them? And I was like, Oh surely, you know, everybody else must be, you know, maybe, maybe beginning, you're starting. And I looked at everybody's pages and they're all nice and curated with lovely filters. And this was again before the rebrand. So I was like, why on Earth did they pick me? I only have like 500 followers. Like it was just terrible. But I realize that they chose different people at different growth rates. Like where we've all, we all have different situations going on and I think that's really cool because some of us have like more followers, some of us have less followers. Like I think me and him do have less followers than everybody and it doesn't matter. It's just, it's just about are making potential. And I've seen it because we all make some great different perspective garments. Like we all have different points of view and, and I, I love that. It's just really, it's just a really great team. I think our whole team is pretty awesome.

Kimberly:
Yeah, it's fun to see that. They did a good job of like getting a mix of people and like you said, a mix of, you know, bloggers in very different places in their business. And so it's, it's fun as somebody following along to be able to be exposed to a bunch of different makers and not just, you have a lot of followers. So you're going to be a part of this team.

Alexis:
And that's what I expected. I was like, well, surely everybody else. Oh, it doesn't matter. That's great. I'm on board. Let's do it.

Kimberly:

Yeah, exactly. So I talked about this a bit with Melissa because she's also a contributor with Indiesew, but do you, you get to sort of dictate what you make for the month or for the quarter.

Alexis:

Yes. You get, do you use your whatever they give you to choose whatever you want from their shop. You just, whatever you choose from their shop, it has to, he made for that post. So if I get two patterns than I'm making those two patterns for my photos because that's what I chose. I didn't really, I wasn't, so here's what happened with my first, he's so close. I, I chose the Masha top and this really, really pretty fabric now. That's a much top was like, you know, the next best thing. It's a great pattern. It's awesome. But for the fabric I chose, I didn't realize that like this fabric was like really, really like elegant and Nice. And one of the girls on the team made this really, really nice dress. And I was like, I really want something different. So I found this really great fabric from my macho stop and then I found this really, really great pattern. MMM. For my dress I found the Meridian dress and then I ended up making two garments. I won't do that again cause that's, it's just a lot of work. But now I understand it a little bit better because I'd never done anything like this before. But understanding it better, I really like it because even this past on this, you know, we had our second time doing it this time around and you just really get to really be creative with what you choose. So many different types of fabric. There's like a whole bunch of tests from knit and I think Melissa mentioned it. She has every pattern there. Every single time. I'm like in love with so liberated and they just recently got the hinterland Dra and that is on my list of things to make the, sometimes I get overwhelmed because there's so many patterns she has. Like I didn't even know when I went to check out the shop I was like, oh I want this, I want this phone with this. No I can't choose three cause I have to make them all, I need to choose one. So she just has so many people I've never heard of patterns I'd never heard of. Just so many, so much variety. It really is. I think they they, their motto is like stuff for the modern sewing woman. Like it really is like you're fully equipped when you go to their shop.

Kimberly:

Yeah. It's been interesting to see her growth over the years because Allie started so right around the time I started my business. So she and I have been working together. Like from the start she was the first person that said, hey, can I carry your Ravenna top? Which my very first pattern and I was like, I have made, it's like very exciting. And so for me it's been really fun to watch that progression. And like you said, she has like every pattern possible, you know, on her website. And so I think as a contributor it would be hard to even begin to decide what to. So

Alexis:

it is, it really is. And some of us were like, you know, I try to light just to some stuff I haven't heard of or wants to kind of experiment with, which I shouldn't do because I did that this, this last time. I never saw an a Kalle shirt before anything and I decided to get it and I, it was a printed pattern. I don't, I don't really do printed Indy patterns, but I was like, okay, I'll get most usually a pdf print it. But so I did that because usually I trace them because I have to grave to my side. So it was like I didn't correct to be tracing so many things, pieces and then I'd never done a placket before. Then after I cut everything, I realized I didn't cut the color and I had no more fabric for this color. So then I had to email them and be like, I need you to send me a collar. Like in 4 days. But like I need to stop doing that because it's gets me in trouble. But like everybody else, it just, I don't know if everybody else has the same situation, but everybody else just seems like they know exactly what they do and they come up with this stuff that's just like, man, that fabric was like made for the pattern that she chose and she just did a great job and they just, they just wow me every single time I see somebody post something for their, for their posting time for Andy. So I'm just like, words can't describe how great of a team we are.

Kimberly:

Yeah, no, I think that they did a great job of taking everybody and they give me, you know, the whole group gives me a lot of inspiration too. And I think sewing bloggers in general. It is so amazing to be following all of you, all of you bloggers because I feel like it's easy to get sort of like tunnel vision. I'm focused on whatever I'm working on and I'm aware of these other patterns, but sometimes I need to see other people sewing them up and then be like, oh that does actually look amazing or see it on a different body type or a body shape and then realize that it actually is something that might work for me.

Alexis:

Yeah I appreciate that as well cause I think we do have different sizes like in a certain range and I see that as well. You do get to see different silhouettes, different, different bus sizes, different everything. I think we all have that going for us as well.

Kimberly:

So what has been the progression for you in sewing your own clothes? Because, you know, you started sewing with cheaper fabric and I imagine like the rest of us really unsure of how to make clothes actually fit our bodies. And then, you know, then now you're making these garments that fit your body and obviously there's been a progression, even if it's just been over the last year or so.

Alexis:

I used to, so like I said, just just so it was actually the sustainability episode on love to, so that made me be like, Ooh, I need to get myself together a little bit. I know, I know. They don't need it, you know, to be like, hey, you're doing this wrong. But you know, I kind of felt it too. I think there was a, a fashion revolution week that I had kind of gotten really into and I'd actually done some research on some retail shops that didn't really have like sustainable clothing out of, out of all the ones I looked at, there was one, and I still shop there to this day. Um, but out of all the, all the shops I looked at, there's just one. And I was like, no, what? I really want to start making my own clothes. It has to, stuff I was wearing didn't fit me anyway.

I would, I would go to the store and, and I would really need clothes cause my, my body was different, you know, I just got married a little bit before I started back filling again after a little bit of a hiatus, but my body was changing a little bit, you know, I was getting older or whatever and so I would go to the store, buy clothes, they'd shrink or they'd rip or I was just giving stuff away to goodwill like all the time or sometimes even throwing it away because it was just so terrible as quality. And that's when I started sewing, but I didn't know what I was doing. So I watched a lot of tutorials, things like that. Then eventually it just, it just got better. I learned I needed to measure myself more. I thought I was a certain size. I wasn't that size anymore. I'm 25 now. I thought I was so the size I was at at 23 that I was at 19, like I just looked at it measuring myself. So at 23 I was like, oh I'm, I'm still like a 24 ways that no honey, you're at 26

or a 40 and you need to calm down and sit down. And then I was like, oh that's pear shaped. What is pear shape? Cause I'm like oh if I get a small small chested. So I'm like if I get a small, let's just say why does it fit? Oh cause down there isn't the same size anymore cause you're not 19 anymore.

right. Different, different things. I had to just keep measuring and then I realized that I had to grade. I made from the named closing books. Um, I made the Cas Dress, I think it's cast taste test and made the cash stress and I upgraded it. That was my first time ever grading something and it fit my body perfectly. And after that I was like, I'm just going to have to start reading everything. And after I started grading everything, I kept stuff longer in my closet. I was more appreciative of how it felt on me. I've wore it more, which made me want to get more quality fabric. I don't like, I've been over, you know, getting closed and then throwing them away and then giving them to goodwill, getting closed. So I wanted to keep stuff in my closet because I don't like recycling stuff, especially if I've gone through all this work of trying to make it so it started getting more quality fabric and started grading more and paying attention to my measurements as they progressed and everything and be more patient when I was telling. And then it, I think now I have a flow, like I know automatically like to look at the Finnish measurements when I, so I don't even look at those regular measurements anymore. I don't even pay attention to it. I just look at the finished measurements.

Kimberly:

Yeah. You know, it's funny. Grading between sizes is one of the things that I find when I teach people to, so to be the most like mind blowing, people have no idea that a simple like adjusting the line, the line is going to make it fit your body. And the whole reason we do it for ourselves so that our clothes fit our body and everyone should be grading. There's very few times when people don't need to grade in summer.

Alexis:

That's what tailors do all the time. They measure and then they make custom clothing. We are everyday making custom clothing. And it took me a minute to get used to that because it's more work. I mean I I admire so much you and every other pattern designer cause I wanted to do patterns design. But once I realized the drafting process of it, oh my gosh, it's so much work now when it comes to, you know, printing off a pattern or tracing it. Cause I always have to trace. I'm just used to it. It's just uh, uh, it's just an instinct. It's cause if I don't, then I'm meeting turned out with the uh, negative project and I'm going to be mad at myself and my body. So let's just create it and get on

Kimberly

making clothes to fit our body. We're going to look better. We're going to feel better, we're going to be more confident. And nobody is going to look at you and say, Oh, it looks like you sewed a size 16 pair of pants.

Alexis:

Nobody does. And really the point, the clothes look good. I mean, if you're something you know from beyond you and it doesn't fit right, that's what people are gonna care about. Any size you can be really, really tiny or, or larger, as long as your clothes look good, people will think you look amazing. I mean, it really doesn't, they just need to fit you right and you have to complete control over that. It's just all about embracing the body you have.

Kimberly:

But you know, it's interesting too because I think a lot of people turn to sewing their own clothes because they can never buy clothes that actually fit their body. And I know that was a big turning point for me was when I realized close could fit my body and I understood the shape of my body. Then it was like, well, that's why they don't ever fit. Like there's a reason the clothes don't fit me, so why go through that every time I go shopping, why not take the time to make clothes that actually fit me

Alexis:

or the fabric? And that's another reason why I have to be like really, really expensive and my tastes with fabric because to get cotton or linen is of course going to cost extra. Getting that stuff isn't cheap. It's kind of, you know, it can, it can get up there.

So I have to be really choosy, but I'd rather be choosy and no, that what I had to spend a little bit of change on, you know, I'll be careful with and make something that's great. Then just going out and buying it for \$5 and it doesn't fit or you know, mix well with my body correctly because it's polyester.

Kimberly:

Yeah. I think it's difficult with fabric because for years and years used really, really inexpensive fabric because I mean for a few reasons, one, I didn't know any better, but also I was learning so I was sort of like, oh wow, I can make this tee shirt out of, you know, \$3 a yard knit and it doesn't really matter. But then as I started to get more confident in my sewing, I started to feel like I want to be making pieces that are gonna last me a lot longer that aren't gonna pill. The second time I wear them that you know you can look at and they look amazing. There is a difference in the quality of fabric when you are looking at a finished garment. And usually that's the quality of the fabric. I mean a lot of it's how you saw it and how you wear it, but I really do think that you can see a difference. So for me over the last few years, I have also been taking the time to decide on good quality fabrics so that my garments last me a lot longer and I feel better when I wear them.

Alexis:

I agree as well. Cheap fabrics can look really, really pretty.

Kimberly:

Yes.

Alexis:

It's still cheap.

Kimberly:

Yeah. Yeah. Well and it's hard to, you know, not everybody has the disposable income to be purchasing expensive fabric. And so I don't ever want anybody to feel bad because they are able to buy good fabric. But I think that for a lot of people there is that progression with fabric where they start to understand it more and they start to realize that there is going to be a difference in the quality of fabric. And maybe it means finding the fabric you like and maybe they will have a sale from that fabric store. You know, it's, or you buy less fabric, you just buy better quality fabric. So I think there

Alexis:

that exact thing, I have to buy it cause I have my own budget. I mean we're not rich. We live in a one bedroom apartment. You know, Dallas and fabric is expensive. I mean it just, it just is. I mean it's hard. People think sewing is cheaper. It's not. It's just about

I have a quality garment that's going to last me longer than if I went to this department store. It's not about the quantity, it's about quality. Very much so. And I agree with knowing fabric. I didn't know anything about fabric either. Like you said, you have to find the fabric that's good for you and then just kind of go with it.

Kimberly:

Yeah. You know, I mean I think a lot of that is like we said it, you learn that over time what's going to work for you and similar with your style, you're going to find that you really like flowy ray on types of fabrics, so you're going to be drawn to that. You're going to experiment with dip, different types of fabric, which I have to tell you if you can find viscous Battista, it is like my new obsession. I'm obsessed

Alexis:

Viscose is great for me.

Kimberly:

Yes, it's so those a little bit more like a cotton, but it's got the drape of a viscous I, I'm obsessed. This is totally a side note because I'm obsessed with that. I believe Jess of La Mayor Surrey is going to be carrying some, so I will make sure to tell you when she does because it's on, I'm obsessed. I literally have, I had like 10 yards that I am like courting and so I'll just tell you that's an amazing, oh, she has a fantastic shop and it's funny, I actually, she lives in the Seattle area and every time I go to her house I like go shopping in her fabric room and then I come home with too much fabric. But I'm always like, it's such good quality.

Alexis:

She's the only one. When I get a newsletter from her website, I just automatically click and I always end up buying something.

Kimberly:

You get swim suit fabric. Have you made a swimsuit?

Alexis

I have not. I have not. I have not. You know what's really been catching my eye as the Cottisloe? Is that how you say it from Megan Nelson?

Kimberly:

Oh, me too. Yeah,

Alexis:

I really like, there's one that has a scoop back view and I've been really wanting to make that. I just, I just recently went on like a victory patterns Benj and I'm done. Like

I can't buy patterns and that puts me on a hiatus. He's like, okay, you're getting packages delivered every week. Downloading and printing stuff. We're out of ink. Like as just need you to give it a break for just a little bit. And I'm like, yeah, you're right. You know my bank account that you know, zero. Anyway,

Kimberly:

My husband has just resigned to the fact that there are going to be packages arrive and I'm always like, well, you know, it is my job. Yeah. You know, it's my job.

Alexis:

You think you know? I mean the Instagram feed doesn't give of itself.

Kimberly:

Yeah,

Alexis:

come on now.

Kimberly:

Usually though it comes in at a faster rate than it goes back out into the virtual world.

Alexis:

Sometimes it doesn't go back to the outside.

Kimberly:

Yeah. I mean we don't need to talk about the fabrics. Yes. I'm like staring at the overflow of my fabric stash right now. So you don't have to explain anything to me. I totally get it. So do you have any sewing projects that you're really excited about that you can tell us about? I mean, I know it's your job so you can't spill all the beans.

Alexis:

We're taking a trip, we're going to, or different countries. And what I was planning on doing was making this capsule thing that encompasses culture of each country.

Kimberly:

I think. Gosh, one piece. Yeah.

Alexis:

But I'm pretty much making my entire like trips, wardrobe. It's gotta be stuff I can wear like every day, but that's going to be tailored for at a certain cultural dynamic. Those the countries we're going to, I can't say where they are yet, but they're in Europe.

Kimberly:

We will make sure to follow along when you can tell us. I love that idea. You know, every time I see somebody who is like going on a trip and they create this like wardrobe, it's like everything I want to do every time I go on a trip. But it's usually like two days before and I'm like, oh, I think I need to sew myself 10 new garments before I leave on my trip. And so then I never do it. But I love watching everybody else to it

Alexis:

Sew liberated. She always like post a picture of like a stack of her clothes, like and she's like, you know, going somewhere. She was like, this is my travel and DIY, you know, wardrobe or whatever. And I'm like, oh that's so cool. It looks so organized. See if I did that stuff, would it be no, that'd be something striped over here. Something Green. Like it wouldn't look coordinate.

Kimberly:

Okay. I've got five minutes to put together my plan for the vacation. I'm just like pulling things out of the closet and nothing is coordinated. Not, no, it's, it's, I feel like it's my big girl dream to one day actually put together a wardrobe. Not just in general for my everyday but like go on a trip and make like a travel capsule wardrobe.

Alexis:

Yeah. I'm trying to do, I just don't know how I want to do it.

Kimberly:

Yeah.

Alexis:

But since we make stuff all the time, I'm like, you know, by the time the trip actually gets here, it's like I could just be picking random stuff from my closet that I like and it could have nothing to do with what the actual plan is. But I mean that's the plan. Hopefully.

Kimberly:

I guess as much as you can tell us, it sounds really cool. So I'm excited to follow along for sure.

Alexis:

Yeah, I'm hoping that they come out okay. I'm not really an over the top kind of person, but I'm trying to be, because if you're going to sew your own clothes, you might as well make them look cool and like,

Kimberly
yeah, different.

Alexis:
Okay.

Kimberly:
Yeah. And like express yourself and whether you're expressing yourself through the pattern or the fabric or the styling or whatever it may be, this is the time to really do it. If you're going to do,

Alexis:
it's double duty, everything. Everything for me, if I, everything's interchangeable.

Kimberly
It's nice for you as a sewing blogger and an influencer to be showing people that your entire wardrobe does not have to be handmade. You can, you know, integrate these pieces that you really love and you know, these other pieces you purchased at a store and they can work really well together. So I think it can be overwhelming as a soloist to feel like to belong, you have to sew everything. But that is so not the case. There are very few people that actually, so everything that they were

Alexis:
very true

Kimberly:
when you're trying to have a life and run a business. And in your case you have a job outside of your blogging business. Correct. So yes. So like balancing all of that, how do you find time for, you know, spending time with your husband while also working and sewing and blogging and

Alexis:
we are very, very much movie people. When we come home, you know, we'll watch a movie or a TV show, but sometimes his, we live in a one bedroom, so our living room, it's like an 800 square foot apartment. So our living room is like the TV room mine, I guess quote Unquote Studio in his office. So his office is like, like a like diagonal from mine. So if I'm sewing and he's like on the computer, that's kind of US spending time together, we'll have music playing or you know, sometimes like I like to play stuff that I don't have to look at.

Kimberly:
Yeah.

Alexis:

So at the same time, um, I, I tried one time to do, to listen to just podcasts. I found I can only kind of do that by myself. Like if I'm in a really restful state when sewing, I'll play a podcast, you know, while I'm sewing. But for the most part I like having noise in the background. So, you know, I'll play a show that I can like listen to without looking at it and then he'll be like playing some video game or you know, doing whatever. And I mean we're talking like we're, you know, I guess that counts spending time together. Yeah.

Kimberly:

If you both have something you're working on, then it is kind of like spending time together and you're making it work. Yeah. It's a hard balance. It's a hard balance. These are the things I want to do and he has things he wants to do as well. But you also want to do talk to each other. So you've Kinda just got to find a way to make it all work. And it's not like this is what you do all the time. I'm sure there are times when you actually look at each other while you're talking,

Alexis:

you know, in their relationships. Sometimes you have to do double duty. Like you know what if I'm cooking, you know, sometimes I'll be like, hey can you, he's really good at making rice. Like he makes the greatest rice. I just cannot make rice.

Kimberly:

no, I can't make rice,

Alexis:

I cannot make rice his so fluffy and perfect. I'll be like, hey, can you help me cook or can you make the rice or whatever. And we're spending time in the kitchen and that's the whole duty. We're cooking and spending time together or it can, cause it's, it's just hard to come home from work and then cooks. That's 30 minutes to an hour and then clean. And then that's an hour. I mean we both cleaned, but it's like, you know, that's an hour. And then if I'm doing my thing separately and he's doing his thing separately, then that's another hour. So you have to put it together because if there's not enough time in the day,

Kimberly

yeah

Alexis:

thing we just don't. And when the weekend comes, most people are hanging out with friends, stuff like that. So it's, you know, and you have other stuff you didn't get to do

during the week. There's just not enough time in the day. So you have to find the quality time and put it can be, you have to make it happen because if you don't, I mean you're just, you're not going to look at each other old really quick.

Kimberly:

You know, it's interesting. My husband works from home as well, so we both work from home and he's in the back bedroom off the kitchen and I've got multiple spaces in the house. We've talked about getting a studio for me, just because I do my office is the dining room, the bedroom, the upstairs hallway, like I'm spread out and we always come back to the same thing that we enjoy. The fact that we are both here, even if it means that he's doing his thing and I'm doing my thing, sometimes it's we're chatting while I make a coffee, I may, we're having lunch and we're in the same space and we're eating and sort of chatting or I can go ask him a business question while he's working. And so I think that even if the space isn't ideal, I still find that we have the ability to have work and life and marriage sort of all intertwined with each other in the same space.

Alexis:

Yeah. You make it work. And I like what you said, how you may ask him a question because even if I'm sewing or something, I'll be like, does this, and he'll be like, no, let's fix that. Like you know, or I'll ask his opinion on something or whatever. Cause it's like we're both aware of each other's existence

Kimberly:

and like you said, you've got to make it work. Like this is, you've only got a certain amount of time to do your job outside the home, your business that you're building and your marriage. And so I think that for everybody it's a little bit different, but I like that you and Matt have found a way to sort of make all of these things work at the same time.

Alexis:

Yeah. He's really liking an extension of me. Like we just have a an odd connection. We're complete opposites, but it works.

Kimberly:

Oh, my husband and I are complete opposites. As a creative, you need somebody who is not like you because otherwise you're like, this is my big idea. And if they're also like amazing, no, my husband's like, you're crazy. And like, let's talk about it. And I'm like, oh, but I don't need to talk about it because it's

Alexis

okay. Yeah.

Kimberly:

He's like, no, let's make a spreadsheet.

Alexis:

That is crazy. That was exactly how mad is. I'm like, Hey, let's go take this trip. And he's like, well, we're going make a plan. That's what we're going to do. The tickets are cheap. No. Were going to plan it, but then they won't. It's not spontaneous anymore.

Alexis:

This is lame.

Kimberly:

Yeah. You're like, that's not very fun. Can't, you know, with my crazy idea, you know, like we're just very, very different people, but I think that creatives need that. It's like you need some grounds you um, because you're creative ideas don't have to the reality like I live in a creative world. That means that a lot of my ideas are not realistic and I need somebody to not like squash my dreams, but to really remind me, yes, I need to find a way to make creative and reality into an idea.

Alexis:

Yeah. Like I, I recently I started doing a contributor thing and she sends me the contract and you know, I, I'm glad I looked over it like it looked at the important part, but, but then I, I printed it so I could resend it and Matt was so over it. He's like really looking over it and he's like, oh, did you know this, this, this now I was like, nope, why would I know that? I just know that I'm making this, this and this for this person. He like this important to know Lexi is, it's really important stuff here. I was like, wow. I'm sure that if it's a problem you'll find it. And that's all that right. Cause I'm going to sign it then did that in my brain because it was, why does, it doesn't say if you don't do this you'll die.

Kimberly:

So funny. And it seems like everybody I talk to who's a creative is usually either married or has a partner who is the opposite of them. Yeah. That's how we make it work. We're, we're, we're a team.

Alexis

No, we're creative. We don't need to read contracts.

Yeah.

Kimberly:

Yes. We should probably have contracts

Alexis:
probably should.

Kimberly:
So we've talked about you sewing, this is your business. How did you actually get started sewing?

Alexis:
Um, so when I was like eight or nine, my aunt was a men's suit tailor. So she worked for a company, it's not in business anymore, but we lived in Kansas and she had a suit company. I used to, you get tennis balls and I used to the thread and needles and I used to like, so initials, I dunno why I used the letters in the tennis ball and so my aunt noticed it and she was like, do you want to start sewing? And I was like, whatever. Cool. I thought it was cool. I don't, I was a Dork.

Alexis:
One of our, one of our family friends actually gave me this, this giant sewing machine. I still have it to this day. It's an old heal white brand sewing machine. It's from like the 1950s or sixties it's still works, it's so straight. But that was my first sewing machine. My aunt just taught me how to sew on it, like cleaning. He made a pair of Pajama pants and a little small stuff. I told myself I was going to be a fashion designer that did not have. So then I just kinda stopped sewing. And then when we moved to Texas and eighth grade they had home ec and they didn't have home ec in Kansas. So they had home-ec here and I took a class and they had, it was half cooking, half sewing and I had, I had known a lot already. Like I shoot, my aunt taught me well so I use a lot of those skills and then I kinda just honed them. I figured out how to do them, like the professional way in that class. And then I stopped sewing again a couple of years after that and went off and on with doing people's, you know, I would so my parents pants or you know him them and stuff like that. And then it wasn't until I got married that I, that's when I just got fed up with everything in the stores. And then that's pretty much as the catalyst for what led to me being here.

Kimberly
This has been so much fun. Thank you so much for joining me on the podcast. I have really had a good time talking to you. So before we go though, can you tell everybody where they can find you?

Alexis:
I am on Instagram at @therealalexisbailey. My blog is the real Alexis bailey.com and I'm also on Pinterest at the real Alexis B.

Kimberly:

I will put all of that in the show notes so that people can find you. Thank you again. This was so good and I, I have really enjoyed hearing your maker story and I am looking forward to sharing your maker story with everyone

Alexis:

Thanks Kimberly. It's been great.