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About Alexandria Blaelock



What are you working on now?

I've been writing a lot of short stories lately, and they're great fun! But I think it might be time to make a start on the Great Australian Novel, which is a little scary.

I'm also partway through a book about what the Great Depression can teach us about gratitude.

What is the best part of writing for you?

I think it's just letting the words flow; channelling the muse, I suppose. I enjoy the sounds and the music the words make and the pictures they form. Then I get to go back and tinker with them to make them even better.

When do you write? Is it easier to write in the morning or at night?

I'm one of those people who has to do the essential things first, and while you might think that's writing, I have an interest in staying married, so it's usually keeping the housekeeping under control.

But, I'm always stringing words together in my head though I don't always remember them when I sit down mid-morning to write. I really should get some kind of recording device.

What does your desk look like?

I'm what they call petite, so it's really just a low table covered with books and papers. Unfortunately, the beautiful ones are not what they call ergonomically sound, but I would love an antique secretary desk with lots of little drawers and pigeon holes and what-not.

What are you reading at the moment?

DB recently bought me a Mary Poppins Omnibus, so I'm about to dive into that. And my friend Katy gave me the complete Famous Five adventures, so I'm working my way through those. Sometimes it's hard to read just for fun - it's very easy to slip into analysis or editing mode when I'm reading.

When you're not writing, how do you spend your time?

Aside from reading, cooking and taking photos, I recently discovered K-drama, and I confess to binge watching...

Where do your ideas come from?

In my post-transplant life, I spend a lot of time waiting for medical consultation, and now and again I overhear something that starts me thinking. Or I might see something strange and wonder what the story behind it is. If you're paying attention, inspiration is all around.

How much research do you do then?

When I am working on a "proper" book, I like to do a lot, like when I wrote essays at Uni. I'll map out a basic outline, set a timeframe and keep researching until it's time to stop. Then I start consolidating and rewriting, sometimes changing direction, sometimes getting a bit more detailed. As my friend Katy likes to keep reminding me, it is vital to set a date to stop.

Who's your favourite author?

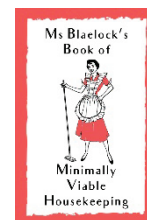
Just off the top of my head, I'd have to say, Terry Pratchett or Anne McCaffrey because I've been rereading them recently. I found Anne while I was at school and Terry at University, so they've been with me for a while - I miss them both. I recently discovered Dayle A. Dermatis, and I'm planning to read some more of hers.

But aside from them, I love reading old books for my research. One 98-year-old book was so fresh it could have been written yesterday. Another oldie recommends careful scrutiny of your boyfriend's family for signs of genetic weakness before you have to break up with them and break their hearts!

Do you prefer electronic or print books?

I like e-books when I have to carry them, but at home, I prefer the sensual pleasure of print books. Their weight, the feel of the paper and especially the smell of them. I can't help feeling that print books are more authoritative, they're things to treasure.

About *Ms Blaelock's Book of Minimally Viable Housekeeping*



We're continually looking for productivity tips for the workplace, but did you know you can use them at home? *Ms Blaelock's Book of Minimally Viable Housekeeping* helps you focus on getting the right stuff done with the minimum of effort, frees up time you can spend on the things that make life worth living.

Why did you write *Minimally Viable Housekeeping*?

I was doing a quick grocery shop one day, and I kept passing the same couple having that argument about who's not doing enough housework. It's an argument that most of us can relate to. Especially those of us who work from home and live with people who don't.

And I am tired of having that argument, so I wanted to know, what's the least amount of housework you could get away with while working, and how do you get the most done in the least amount of time. And have time left over for the things that make life worthwhile.

In the book, you say that cleanliness has "moral overtones of goodness and purity... but it just means the absence/removal of dirt." Why do you feel that way?

Clean is one of those words that once had two distinct meanings - morally good or free from dirt. But over time it's become one, so if you don't clean to some kind of objectively verifiable clean, you're automatically bad. Except that clean is subjective, not objective and you're never going to be able to clean well enough for everyone, so you should just clean good enough to meet the needs of your household.

What's the most important thing readers will learn from *Minimally Viable Housekeeping*?

That they're in control of the housework, not the other way around. They get to choose what's most important for themselves and their household, along with when and how to do it. They get to please themselves, not others.

People listening to this often struggle with the expectations of others. What's your best advice on how they can deal with that?

You're so right! I ran a small survey, and I found that people were more concerned about what other people thought of them than were worried about rodents, bugs and germs.

I think it's important to remember that there is only one of you, and you probably have a larger contribution to make to the universe than a clean house.

Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: Ms Blaelock's Book of Minimally Viable Housekeeping

Author: Alexandria Blaelock

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- hardback ISBN: 978-1-925749-02-1 (MSRP US\$25.95)
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at: Amazon, iBooks, Kobo, and all good bookstores

For bulk orders, contact orders@bluemerebooks.com

Book Webpage: <https://www.alexandriablaelock.com/book/minimally-viable-housekeeping/>

Publisher Website: <https://www.bluemerebooks.com/>

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About *Holistic Personal Finance*



Today more than ever, people are struggling to put a little money by and get ahead. It seems that just when you save up a couple of hundred dollars breathing space, your car or fridge breaks down and it's gone in an instant along with a bit more you don't really have. A new book *Holistic Personal Finance: How to pay for the life you want* provides a fresh, whole of life way to think about managing money.

Why did you write *Holistic Personal Finance*?

I got tired of hearing the same old financial advice about not spending money on the things that make life worthwhile. Brown bagging your lunch and not buying takeout coffee to save money are just simplistic off the cuff answers that don't take the complexities of life into account. I mean, no one ever tells you not to buy those killer heels or upgrade your smartphone, do they? I wanted to let people know that they can manage their money based on their goals and aspirations - they don't have to give up things they love, just cut back on those they don't.

What's the most important thing readers will learn from *Holistic Personal Finance*?

That they don't have to be controlled by their money or the expectations of others - they *can* control their money. They can choose if something is worth the time and money required to buy it, whether that's lattes, a game of golf, or replacing the furnace.

People listening to this often struggle to control their spending. What's your best advice on how to deal with that?

I'm a big believer in mono-tasking, focusing on one thing at a time. When you try to do too many things at once, you don't do any of them well. I think the same thing goes for managing your finances - indulge in your favourites and ignore the others. If you love chocolate, buy expensive, high-quality Belgian chocolate and savour every mouthful but cut back other areas of expenditure to allow it.

In the book, you talk about spending money as a choice, but sometimes people really don't have a choice. Why do you feel that way?

There's always a choice, though sometimes between bad and worse. Luckily every day is a new day, and just because yesterday didn't go according to plan doesn't mean today won't either. There could be a lot of days between bad and better, and that's why I recommend creating a strong vision of the future you want to help you get through the bad times.

Where can we buy the book?

All the major online retailers; Amazon, iBooks, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and the book depository. Or you could order it at your local bookstore.

Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: *Holistic Personal Finance: How to pay for the life you want*

Author: Alexandria Blaelock

Publisher: BlueMere Books Pty Ltd

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- Hardback ISBN: 978-0-9944415-6-0 (MSRP US\$29.95)
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For bulk orders, contact orders@bluemerebooks.com

Book Webpage: <https://www.alexandriablaelock.com/book/holistic-personal-finance/>

Publisher Website: <https://www.bluemerebooks.com/>

Author Website: <https://alexandriablaelock.com/>

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About *Build Your Signature Wardrobe*



It seems like building a wardrobe is a simple thing to do - just go out and buy clothes. But finding clothes you'll wear, that suit your body, personality, and each other is much more difficult. A new book *Build Your Signature Wardrobe: How to look and feel confident in four steps* offers a plan for building a functional wardrobe of clothes you'll wear while minimising the cost.

Why did you write *Build Your Signature Wardrobe*?

It all starts with my kidney transplant and the need to replace all my clothes. I did my first wardrobe review, and I was horrified by all the unworn clothes I'd bought while I was on dialysis. And when I looked at the sea of black my soul cried out for colour. So, I went shopping, but I didn't know what to buy, or how much I should spend and I ended up with a load of poorly constructed clothes in the wrong shapes and colours for me.

Clearly it wasn't working out, so I started looking for advice, but even I could tell it would benefit the fashion industry, not me. I knew I needed a plan. I started doing "proper" research on how people managed in the early twentieth century when they couldn't just go to the shops with their credit cards, and when I told people what I was finding they said, "You should write a book"...

What's the most important thing readers will learn from *Build Your Signature Wardrobe*?

I hope it's to please themselves, not other people! We buy clothes for places we don't go and wear colours and styles that don't suit us because other people tell us to. It just makes us miserable. We hear your "skirts are too short", or "lipstick too red", and so on. My book is about *intentionally* building a wardrobe in colours and styles you love, to create a look that reflects who you are, and makes you comfortable wherever you are.

A lot of people listening to this hate shopping. What's your best advice on how they can deal with that?

Shopping is hell, isn't it? There are so many clothes to choose from, and if you only have the vaguest idea of what you want you can't ask for help.

My best advice is to write a very specific shopping list, something like; lined navy blue linen sheath dress for Katy's party that I can also wear for casual lunches. Needs to go with my silver bird necklace, black stilettos and red merino cardigan. \$150 maximum.

Then you can skip past every other colour and style, and if you can't find something exactly right in navy blue, you can look for something similar in another colour or fabric to match those accessories. Or if you see the right dress for \$175, you can *choose* whether (or not) to get it.

In the book, you say "too much fat is ugly and unhealthy," and that "fat people are generally not strong". Why do you feel that way?

I think there will be a lot of people who are offended by those comments. However, I go on to say that you need a good balance of muscle *and* fat for a nicely curved feminine figure. Too much muscle and you're all angles, too much fat and you're not only curvy in places that aren't supposed to be curvy, but the efficiency of your muscles is impeded. Regardless of that, the reason I've included these comments comes in two parts.

1. If you choose to build a wardrobe to a long-term plan, you need to be confident that your clothes will fit for the duration. Just as you decide what to buy and how much to spend, you have to decide how you are going to make that happen.
2. The strong language is intended to make you sit up and get cross with me. I know it's *really* easy to add a teeny bit of weight every month until you have gone up a dress size. I want you to prove to me wrong.

What was the hardest part about writing the book?

I was researching a way of life that most of us can't imagine now, the life that our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents lived. No computers, no credit cards, no cars. I was getting really interested in the details of daily life (like what they were eating) and losing sight of what I was supposed to be researching.

Where can we buy the book?

All the major online retailers; Amazon, iBooks, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and the book depository. Or you could order it at your local bookstore.

Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: Build Your Signature Wardrobe: How to look and feel confident in four steps

By: Alexandria Blaelock

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Book Webpage: <http://alexandriablaelock.com/book/build-your-signature-wardrobe/>

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About *Stress Free Dinner Parties*



Inviting a few friends for dinner seems very complicated, especially when you're thinking of a Titanic 14 courses, dozens of different glasses and who knows how many knives... A new book *Stress Free Dinner Parties: How to plan, host and enjoy your party* offers a step by step Dinner Party plan where every decision narrows your focus and reduces your stress. All that's left is whether a meteor will fall on your house, and that's very unlikely.

Why did you write *Stress Free Dinner Parties*?

I was on the train one day, and I overheard part of a conversation between two young women discussing how to do a Dinner Party. It sounded complicated, and it occurred to me that with so many working mothers there was probably a gap in the communication of that kind of knowledge. And as I had it, it seemed a good idea to write it down.

In the book, you list people to avoid inviting, why do you think that's important?

At the end of the night, what people ate is overshadowed by whether they had a good time. And good times are most often based on good company, so it makes sense to exclude people who aren't fun to be around. If you have no choice but to invite them, hold the party at a restaurant so you can leave when you've had enough.

People listening to this often struggle with getting people to turn up on time. What's your best advice on how they can deal with that?

I'm sorry to say that people are often too busy these days. And some of them don't use calendars, so they don't remember their engagements. It's a good idea to remind them your Dinner Party is coming up and offer incentives like details of the food you're preparing or the other guests you've invited as well as that the date is coming up.

What's the most important thing readers will learn from (*Stress Free Dinner Parties*)?

I hope it's that Dinner Parties don't have to be stressful. A Dinner Party is just preparing a meal for your friends, even if that's just opening the take-out containers.

Where can we buy the book?

All the major online retailers; Amazon, iBooks, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and the book depository. Or you could order it at your local bookstore.

Book Details and Purchase Information

Book Title: *Stress Free Dinner Parties: How to plan, host and enjoy your party*

By: Alexandria Blaelock

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