



Nikki Stephens - (LearnWithSally student)



Jean: It's Jean from JeanShawInterviews.com

Today I have the pleasure of chatting to Nikki Stephens from Bristol in the UK.

Nikki has caught my attention because of the incredible amount of progress she's made with her internet presence over the past few weeks and I'd like to discover what's inspired her to surge forward when I know she's actually been online for a few years.

So without further introduction let's get to know Nikki a bit better.

Hello Nikki, are you there?

Nikki: I am indeed Jean, how are you?

Jean: I'm brilliant thank you, but it's a bit wild and windy. What's it like down in Bristol?

Nikki: The same. We've had lots of rain and lots of wind and it's been most unpleasant all day.

Jean: Really, so do you have far to go to work because I believe you work full time at the moment don't you?

Nikki: It's only about a ten minute drive so that's fine, and I tend to go slightly later in the day and then finish slightly later in the day so that I miss all of the traffic. So it's not too bad.

Jean: So these flexi hours are really quite good sometimes, aren't they?

Nikki: They are definitely. Otherwise it would take me about three quarters of an hour to get to work, which is just madness. I don't want to crawl in the car for that sort of time.

Jean: That's one of the advantages of being an online marketer isn't it? To go to work you just literally have to get out of bed and get in front of your computer don't you?

Nikki: Via the kitchen for a cup of tea first, of course.

Jean: Absolutely. You're quite a fan of tea I believe?

Nikki: Oh, I am.

Jean: Any particular brand, or just any tea?

Nikki: No just normal, plain, your bog standard tea. I don't like Earl Grey or any sort of weird fruity teas, or anything like that, just normal tea.

Jean: Typically English, very good.

Nikki: Yes.

Jean: So when you go abroad do you take your teabags with you? I know I do because you can never get them, especially if you go to America. They always seem to have Lipton's tea.

Nikki: Oh, they're terrible aren't they?

Jean: It's not very strong, is it?

Nikki: No, and when I went to Rome recently, I took my kettle as well, and teabags and mugs in fact in my suitcase.

Jean: Were you ever a girl guide, or something?

Nikki: Actually, I did do brownies when I was a lot younger.

Jean: Oh right - so you've learned to be prepared?

Nikki: Sometimes, when it comes to tea, yes.

Jean: Now, should I call you Minxy Witch, because that seems to be your nickname on everything? Where did that come from?

Nikki: Someone asked me about that the other day, and I had to go delving back, because I actually can't remember.

I know when I was at university I had to set up a personal email, separate to my university email, and I think I kept trying different combinations, and you know everything is always taken. So you do have to keep putting lots of different numbers or something after your name.

One of my nicknames is Minxy, and I was quite into witches and things when I was a teenager, so I thought, “oh I’ll just try Minxy Witch”.

So my Hotmail address is MinxyWitch@hotmail.com and I think it all just went from there, because I think Nikki Stephens is actually quite a common name, as much as I don’t like to think it is.

So if I was trying to put that as my Facebook name or something like that, someone will already have it, and I don’t want to just be Nikki Stephens 41573, because that’s not very personal.

Now, at least most of my things do have Minxy Witch, and then I’m quite easily identifiable.

That and all of the purple everywhere, and that’s why you have the Purple Minxy Witch.

Jean: Yes, and recently you revamped your blog by giving it quite a face lift haven’t you? You’ve now got a lovely friendly glamorous looking witch on a broomstick on it.

Nikki: Yes! I had my witch designed for me about a year ago now, I think, maybe even 18 months ago. I just wanted something because I didn’t really want to keep putting my picture everywhere, because I don’t like to have to look at myself all the time.

But having this little witch, I thought, she’s quite sweet and quite a cool little thing and you could put her on business cards or things like that, and it’s quite a sort of unique thing that people will remember me for one reason or another anyway.

Jean: Having said that you’ve also added a lovely image into the header of your new blog, haven’t you, with a beautiful picture of yourself?

Nikki: I have.

Jean: Did that feel strange then if you don’t like looking at yourself?

Nikki: It was, and even now when I look at my blog and particularly when I sneak a look at it at lunch time when I’m at work. It’s one of those things that you’ll go, “Oh quick, hide that”, because I don’t really want people thinking “oh she’s sitting there looking at herself”.

But actually it fits in really well with the whole header and everything, because I did re-design my blog completely from scratch, and I actually had the header commissioned for me as well.

So I thought this time people do actually like to see a face to the name and that sort of thing, so I thought I’ll deal with having a picture of me and then I’ll put my witch on it as well, and at least it all ties it together.

Jean: And it does beautifully, and I have to say it looks really eye- catching.

Nikki: I'm really, really pleased with it and every time I look at it despite having to see myself, the whole thing looks so much more professional now I think.

Jean: Now the reason you did that was because it was something suggested in the Learn With Sally course, wasn't it?

Nikki: Yes, that's right. She encouraged that and also to actually have the picture of you on there as well.

Because how many sites do you go to where you have no idea who you are talking to or reading about or anything like that?

One of Sally's main points is that you have to get people to Know, Like and Trust you.

Well obviously if they can't see you, they've got a much less opportunity of actually getting to know you, or like you or trust you, so I think that was her reasoning behind it, which I can completely see.

It does make such a difference I think.

Jean: Now you actually won a place on her course didn't you, so how did you get that place, how did you win?

Nikki: I think I won that one because I was the first person to reply on her blog.

I know the others were pulled out of a hat, but she said she was always keeping that first commenter spot open for someone, because it just proves they're taking action.

Luckily it was one of those where I was like oh I've just seen she's done another new post.

If you look at my comments on the previous posts of hers before she launched her coaching, I was forever threatening to pick her brains.

I could see she knew things that I had no idea about, and I thought, "Well, where have you found this information?" and "you're going to have to share this with me".

So if you do look back at her posts you'll see me on there going, "Oh I'm going to pick your brains".

Then she launched this, and I was straight on that saying that I think it would be brilliant, because I could see she had so much knowledge to share.

Then when I won a free place that was just incredible. It was amazing and I was so, so, pleased.

Jean: You've always been quite a good commenter on various blogs. You always leave long comments I've noticed, is that because you're so chatty?

Nikki: I think it's because I can talk the hind legs of a donkey, but also because if I've read something and I think it's of value, or if I've got something that I can add to that discussion then I want to share it.

I don't want to just put, "Hi, great blog post, thanks", because that doesn't really add anything, does it?

Where as, if I can say, "Oh, I like your point about x. I've tried doing that myself and this is what I've found....."

Then other people reading it might find something similar, or might completely disagree with me, and that's fine, because it's still opening the dialogue and sharing information with people.

Jean: And also it was something that was encouraged on the Alex Jeffrey's coaching course, wasn't it?

Nikki: Yes, it was, absolutely.

Jean: And I know you went to Las Vegas, didn't you?

Nikki: I did, yes.

That is where I first learned that you have to take a travel kettle with you everywhere, because I very naively assumed that hotels there would be like hotels here in England and they'd give you your kettle and your tea and that sort of thing.

I got there and found that there was no kettle in the room, so half of my time out there was spent looking for cups of tea, which is not really what you go to Las Vegas for, but then I suppose I'm not the most normal of people really.

Jean: It's strange that one of the most important ways to get on apparently in the internet marketing world is to network.

And a lot of the networking is done at the workshops in between the actual teaching, at the bars and things.

So how did you get on if you only drink tea?

Nikki: I do drink alcohol as well, but over there I was mostly drinking tea. I felt dreadful for the first couple of days out there.

Jean: Was it jet-lag?

Nikki: Well it might have been jet-lag; it was the first time I'd ever flown, and also because of all the air condition all the time.

They pump all this oxygen in to the casinos, obviously to keep you all awake and gambling so you don't realise it's five in the morning and you should really be in bed.

I just couldn't cope with it, so I felt really, really dizzy for the first couple of days, which may well be jet-lag as well, I don't know.

So because I was feeling rubbish, I didn't want to be drinking alcohol, so every time we went anywhere it was, "Hello, I'm the English girl. Please could I have some tea?"

They soon got to know me actually and it was a bit like "Oh hi, you're from England", with my terrible American accent I know, but it was most amusing.

Jean: I'm sure they loved your accent didn't they?

Nikki: Oh they did and they got to know me in some of the places, "Oh hi, pot a tea for you?" "Yes please, a pot of tea, thank you".

Jean: Now you've been referred to as "the posh girl".

Nikki: I know.

Jean: That's because of your voice, and you said you didn't really like to hear your voice, is that right?

Nikki: I'm starting to get used to it now. Now that I've started doing the videos, and obviously I've spoken on webinars and that sort of thing, so I'm slowly starting to kind of realize that I must sound like this, because that's the recorded version, and no one ever likes hearing themselves on an answer machine or something like that.

No one ever goes, "Wow I sound amazing there. Yeah that's great"! So I'm starting to get there, but I still don't really like listening to it.

Jean: Now in Sally's course you've actually overcome quite a few fears. You've spoken on a webinar haven't you, and you've created videos?

Nikki: Yes, which I'd always avoided before. In the other coaching courses I'd been on, those were the sort of modules that I'd go, "Oh yeah, that would be great", and I'd be over here somewhere else, drinking tea probably.

And it was just one of those things that I thought it just wasn't me, and I thought what am I going to talk about on a video, what am I going to share with anyone. I don't have anything to tell people about.

And then actually when doing this course and having it shown to us how easy it is to create decent professional videos, not just where I'm walking about in it, so shaky you can't see anything.

Even like tutorial videos where I'm showing people things on my computer at the time. Now that I know how to do it, because we've actually had proper instruction on how to do it, I realized how easy it is and I really enjoy it now.

Jean: You're very good at it as well; you're very thorough aren't you?

Nikki: Thank you.

Jean: Is that how you are in your offline life, are you very much that you like things just right?

Nikki: Well, I wouldn't say that quite so much, but it is funny at work I'm in a small team of four people and I'm known as the detailed person.

Because I'm the one that will pick people up on things and say, "Well hang on, I need this information, or this bit's not right or I need to do something else".

Oh yeah, I forgot about that, but then that's part of my job.

In my offline work I do our company finances, so obviously I do need to be quite accurate with that. I can't just say, "Yes, I'll make up some random payments that will be fine".

So I suppose maybe it's part of that, because that's how I've always had to work, but also if I'm going to create a video, I actually want people to be able to use it.

It's no good me doing a video saying, "This is how to change a default image, yes, just go to You Tube, click on that and it will be fine".

Well, no one can follow that really as it doesn't make any sense, so I like to go through and show it as that's how I like to learn myself.

I like to see steps that I can then follow, and if I go wrong then at least I know I can go back a bit, rather than, "Oh you've lost me, and there's no point in me trying to do this".

Jean: That's really good, and what I like about your videos apart from the fact that they are very thorough and easy for anybody to understand actually, is the fact you bring out your sense of humour in them.

Nikki: You mean my last one where I was moaning at Amazon and referring to things with stupid names?

Buckets and access keys, and secret keys, and "No, it's a folder, it's a username, it's a password. Talk in a normal language".

Jean: Well, it's just that anybody can do a click here and do that, but you injected your personality, which is really good.

I've also noticed as well that you've started to inject more of your personal life into your blog.

Did that seem kind of natural, or strange, because I read somewhere that you tend to compartmentalize your life? There's work, and there's friends, and there's family and there's online.

So how did merging the two feel, and how did your partner feel? Is he happy being in the limelight?

Nikki: Yes, he's fine.

He just thought it was sweet, and was, "Oh you've written nice things about me". "See, I am a good girlfriend".

It's fine.

You're right I normally I am very compartmentalized with my life, but I'm getting more open with it all, and it makes me sound like I'm really closed in, which I'm not, but in my head I suppose I've had separate bits.

This is this bit, and this is work, and then this is personal life, and this is family, and that sort of thing.

Now everything's sort of merging anyway, because I suppose in particular now I'm with Chris, he sort of met my family. That was a weird one for me, taking people home to meet my family. That weirded me out for quite a while.

And then they got on really well, so that was fine.

So I'm fine with it now, but it's just that initial thing of, "Oh I don't know if I like this" with the path's crossing kind of thing.

As for the personal post, I wasn't sure whether to put that on there or not. I wrote it, probably a week or two before it actually went live, because I was actually going to be on holiday and the last one I did was about me and my boyfriend, and it was a very personal post for me.

But I had a really, really, good reaction to it so it was worth me putting it up there, but I did have that whole, "Do I put this live or not? Does anyone actually want to know about my personal life?"

It's just one of those things. How much do you ever share of yourself? You don't want to go on there and go, "Here's a big post about me moaning about something. Here are the ins and outs of my day".

There are sort of limits obviously, but that one was perceived well, so I think for specific things like that.

I mean in this case it was about our first anniversary, which for me is quite a big deal. For normal people it would be like, "A year together really - that's it?"

But for me it is quite a big deal, because generally I stay away from that kind of thing. So I think it sort of helped because the occasional one off personal post, I think, does make a difference, because again it just helps with people knowing, liking and trusting you.

If I share a bit of me and show that actually there is a human behind this blog, it's not just some sort of random person somewhere, then you do get to know me a bit more, and I think that helps.

Jean: So you've been a bit commitment phobic then?

Does that apply not just personally, but has that happened in the courses that you've bought and things, or have you been the kind of person that's leapt from one thing to another because you got bored? Or has that not really affected you?

Nikki: Not as much as that, but I think if I don't feel engaged with a course or something, then I do lose interest, but then I suppose it's like that with most things in life.

Even when I was at university, by my final year I hated it, and thought "Why on earth am I here doing this?" But because you've put so much time and effort into it, I was going to stay there and finish it.

Yeah, maybe that's what it is with a couple of the others, because obviously I did Alex's course, and I did another one in between as well.

And I'd always get to the end but I'd never get fully involved with all of them. I was involved with going round blogging and chatting to the people, but not actually following the lessons.

Because, if I don't feel involved or engaged with the lessons, then I just won't take anything from it.

Jean: And also you have to do the things that are right for you.

Nikki: That's true.

Jean: Some people, they do courses and they give you all sorts of things that you could do, and if you don't have the gut feeling that it's right for you, then you don't do it.

And I think a lot of people get discouraged then, because they feel guilty because they think, "Oh I've got to do this because this course says so and I don't want to do it".

Talking of courses then, when you went to Las Vegas on Alex Jeffrey's course, you became very friendly with Gary Simpson and Garry Parkes, who've recently brought out their Internet Business CodeX, which came out I believe, at the same time as the Learn With Sally.

Were you tempted to go on that course as well as they are your friends?

Nikki: Not as well, it would have been one or the other, and you're right, I've known Gary and Garry ever since doing the Marketing With Alex course. I mean they were both so good to me out in Las Vegas as well, because I actually flew out with Garry Parkes, and I sort of had to confess to him that actually I've never flown before.

I've never even been to Gatwick and he was so good to me, and they were lovely, and they were perfect, perfect gentleman, both of them. So I think if Sally's course hadn't come along, then I would have been very tempted by theirs.

But I know there's no point in me trying to take two on. I work full time and I do have a small social life outside as well, so I knew I could only ever focus on one.

And then obviously I managed to win this place on Sally's course, so that sort of decided it for me then.

Jean: So you've created lots of videos and things, and would you say that you are very good technically, or do you get your brother to help you, because he's quite a whizz with the computer, isn't he?

Nikki: He is, but he and I don't live together anymore, so actually I'm doing it all myself now. Because before he redesigned my blog for me, not this time, but the previous time.

This is now the third reincarnation of my blog, and yes he's very, very, technical and very precise, when I'm not.

I'm like, "Oh yes, that's fine", and I'll sort of sit and attack things, where as I think he would take it on a lot more slowly and calmly and seriously, which I can't take things too seriously.

So no, all the videos and things are following Sally's tutorials. I've learnt how to use Camtasia and how to drag and drop different bits in and how to do all the different effects and that kind of thing and I actually really enjoy all of that.

Jean: Do you think that's going to be one of your major strengths and that's probably what you will focus on in the future?

Nikki: Quite likely.

I mean I really like writing, but actually now I've got into the videos and things, I'm really enjoying that as well, because I get to be slightly more creative with that in a way.

But something's are better explained in video, where other things are better explained written down in an eBook or something like that. So I think it's going to be a combination of both.

Jean: And you did a really good report about Easy Video Player. You obviously asked lots of why questions.

Nikki: I'm one of those really annoying people that say, "So what is it then and what does it do?" and "What does it do this for?" and "How can I do this?" and "Oh it does that as well, oh okay, and how can I use that?"

And I thought actually, quite a lot of other people might have these same questions and rather than us all going out separately and trying to find them, I thought, well I've got them and I'm going out to find the answers to these so then I'll pop them into a report for people, because if I've learnt something that might be useful to other people then I like to share it.

Jean: Well I have to say that I'm really glad you did because I found your report really useful.

Do you know Josh Bartlett, who is from Easy Video Player, because he comes from Bristol originally, doesn't he?

Nikki: He does, yes.

Jean: Have you ever met him?

Nikki: I met him as part of Alex's course as well. I think Josh was on the second intake, where we were on the first intake. So I've got to know him through that.

Jean: He's a very nice guy, full of integrity, and I really like him.

Nikki: Absolutely, definitely. He's got a very good reputation online.

Jean: Absolutely. So your blog is NikkiStephens.com

Nikki: It is, yes.

Jean: Search For Freedom is it. Is that what it's called?

Nikki: It is, my search for freedom, yes.

Jean: So do you have a time scale for when you want your freedom to materialize?

Nikki: Well, let's see where am I now? I'm thirty now so I'll give myself two years I think. So say when I'm thirty-two, actually that's a year and a half, say that sort of time anyway.

By then I want to be making definitely a very respectable income online.

Obviously to start with I'll be quite happy with just supplementing my current income, but obviously the ultimate aim is to completely replace it and to take it over, and not even triple it but do a lot more than that.

Because wouldn't we all like to have enough money to never have to worry about things and be able to treat our friends and that sort of thing?

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hat's the dream lifestyle, but yeah, I actually think I'm going to make some good progress.

Jean: And will you continue in the internet marketing field, or do you see yourself doing, or applying the skills that you've learned, in a different niche?

Nikki: I would like to do both, but I haven't quite established what the other niche would be, because I know there's a lot of competition in the internet marketing niche.

Obviously, there are some things that I now know that are useful for that, but then there are also a lot of things that I know could be applied in different areas.

So I'm just going to do some more research, I think, tread water a bit and see what else is coming up, and see what else takes my fancy, and just look for opportunities, I think.

Jean: The thing is all the tips and tricks and techniques that Sally has taught in her Learn With Sally course, they're all evergreen type methods, which can be applied to any niche at all really, can't they?

Nikki: Yes, definitely.

Jean: Which is really, really, good.

So when you were in Las Vegas going back there again, you met Marshall Sylver. How did that go?

Nikki: Oh yes.

We went to the hypnotists show, which was Marshall Sylvers' show and I was hiding at the back, because I had the fear that all of a sudden I'd be hypnotized, and before I knew it I'd be up on stage dancing around or doing something really stupid.

So I was hiding at the back, and somewhere I don't know where it is, because it was on my old laptop, but I've got a video of Alex Jeffrey's riding around on a hobby horse, and it was thoroughly amusing and I really need to find it.

Because now I actually know how to make videos I could make it and edit it out and then pop it up onto You Tube, and then go and tell Alex it's there.

Jean: So you didn't have to walk on fire or anything like that?

Nikki: No, he had a group of people on stage and got them to do different things, and then gave them all associated words and if he'd come out with a sentence or something, and if it had that particular word in it, then different people had different actions to do depending on what the word was.

Alex's, I can't remember what his word was, but whatever it was he had to get up and ride this hobby horse around the room, which he did a number of times, much to everyone's amusement!

Jean: That's the thing with Marshall Sylver, one of the things he does is get people to face up to their fears, and a lot of people who think they couldn't possibly walk on fire, they do don't they?

And to much of a lesser degree, it's something that you've been doing recently, when you faced your fears and you've just gone on and done them.

Nikki: Yes, it's been really strange because for me previously I hadn't spoken on a webinar, and I've not been on any sort of video just speaking on it, let alone been in front of a video as well or any of these things.

And yet all of a sudden I'm like, "Oh, that's my homework for the week. Okay I shall go off and do that then", and I've just got on with it.

I only got half way through it and gone, "Oh, this is quite easy isn't it, and it's quite straight forward, well why didn't I do this before?"

So I think it's all down to Sally's teaching and her style and her manner with you, because she's so genuine and the way she really cares about your progress as well.

And she knows who you are.

It's not like she's just taken on 500 students, and your number 499. She knows who we all are, and to me that makes a real difference.

Jean: So do you think that perhaps you've tried just a bit harder because you won the place on the course, or is it all the gold stars you keep getting?

Nikki: I love the gold stars. I have to say I've had more gold stars on this training than I think I ever had throughout any school.

I did want to work hard because I won the free place, because I wanted to prove that I was worthy of it, because there was so many people that had left comments on the blog, because that's what you had to do to be in the running to win one of the free places.

And there were so many people on there that left such nice comments. I didn't realize at all that I was going to win a place until Sally said, and I'd thought "Oh that person's bound to win" or, "what a lovely comment".

I could have picked another twenty people from there and I would have had a huge amount of trouble picking who to choose from that sort of twenty odd to get down to the three.

So I think because I did win it, I felt not obliged at all, but I felt like I had to go that extra mile really to prove that actually it wasn't wasted on me.

Jean: Did you know any of your fellow students? I know Sally has set up a Facebook group, but did you know any of the people prior to the course?

Nikki: I knew of Jacinta through John Thornhill.

Obviously I knew Sally from Alex's course, and obviously I knew of you from Alex's course.

I know Barry was new to me. Ian was new to me; Dawn was new to me as well. No, most of the people were new to me I think.

A couple I knew, or maybe just sort of knew of. You know when you know the name, but you don't really know what they do or anything like that. So yeah, a lot of new friends have been made.

Jean: And have you found the Facebook group useful?

Nikki: I have. Yes, very useful.

It's always been funny every time we finish a webinar, we all rush in there to comment about it.

Yes it has been, because now if I've got an issue that's sort of related to something we've been learning or something like that, I know I can just pop in there, ask a question and I know that the people in there will try to help me.

Or if I just post it on my Facebook wall, there are only so many people that are on there that will see it, because obviously on newsfeed it gets so full with everything.

So it's quite nice to just have that little dedicated area where I know I can just go and say, "Oh help, I'm stuck with this", or just go in there and be completely silly, as I quite often do as well.

Jean: That's one of the nice things of having a small group isn't it?

Nikki: It is.

Jean: Because if you go to forums and things you can get lost can't you, in the chatter as it were?

Nikki: Yes, and they become so big you don't even know where to look for things. You can't remember where you last posted your question.

Just sort of things like that, and then they get taken over by somebody having a big argument about something.

It is nice having that smaller more intimate group, because we all get to know each other that bit more, which means we can all help each other that bit more.

Rather than trying to help five hundred people, there's a much smaller group of us, so we can all spend a bit more time with each other, which I really like.

Jean: So are you keeping a journal of your progress?

Nikki: It was something that Alex recommended in our course at the beginning wasn't it?

I think I started for about the first week or two, and when I started Alex's course I didn't have the internet at home because I'd recently moved into a flat at the time.

So I think that was one of the reasons that I couldn't see it through properly to the end, because it was making learning difficult for me.

With this one with Sally's, every time we've had a webinar I've sat here and taken notes in a specific note book, and then after that when we get all of the tutorials, I also write all those things down in that same notebook.

So now I've got this sort of big reference file if you like, with all of the information that we've covered. So it's not so much a journal, but in a way it does document some of my progress.

Because if I look back to the very start and looking at all the different plugins to-do, changing a blog theme, and all that sort of stuff, well I've put comments in there about that when I've done things, and about the colours I've used, well purple, obviously!

So in a way it's documenting my progress, but then again, so does my blog. If you look at some of my blog posts that's also showing even what I've learned, or how far I've come or something I've had trouble with, all that sort of thing.

Jean: You recently have taken part in the 7 link challenge on your blog haven't you? Was it difficult to choose the blog posts that you've made to fit the different criteria?

What was it - you had to have one that was beautiful, one that was popular, and there was a controversial one, a helpful one and one where the success surprised you, and one that didn't get the ...?

Nikki: Detention, I mean attention - what am I thinking about detention?

Jean: Yeah, attention, and another one that you're most proud of.

Nikki: Yes that's right.

Some of them I found really easy. The sort of things like, oh you know let's pick the ones that I'm most proud of.

Okay, well that was me sharing something really personal, because I wasn't sure whether to do it or not. I trusted my instincts and went out there with it and had such good feedback from it that actually, I am really proud of that. I stepped outside my comfort zone and did something and yes that's brilliant.

Other ones, a couple of them I had two or three different posts that I thought, well that would fit or this would fit, well technically, this isn't the one that's got the most comments, but that's only because on the one that does have a lot of comments it's just a lot of rubbish.

We are talking backwards and forwards to each other, so it's not sort of valuable comments.

So it was one of those that I had to go through them a bit and dig a bit and go, what's this all about and what's this?

I mean my blog's been live for gosh, nearly three years now, I think, so there's actually quite a bit to go back and look at.

Jean: So when you revamped your blog, how nervous were you about changing the theme, because there's always a danger when you do that you'll lose your blog posts, and the plugins won't work and one thing and another?

Nikki: Hmm, very. I put it off for about a week or so. I was like, "I'll do it and I'll be fine. I need to back it all up first and then am I sure it'll work? Am I sure it will transfer everything over?", and in the end I just got cross with myself, and thought if I'm going to progress at all then I need to get on and just do it.

So I backed it up, and I did as much as I could to prepare, and I made a list of the plugins it had, just in case it removed all of those for some reason.

And then I hit that install the new theme button, and it was disgusting, because obviously it comes up as a default theme, and it wasn't purple and nothing was formatted properly.

It looked horrible, and I thought, "Oh my god, what the hell have I done?"

But I was like, "Right, get on with it", and as soon as I started changing things around in the settings, and because it was the flexibility theme it's so easy to use.

So it was quite literally going, "Right, well I don't like that because it's the wrong colour, so let's change this. Oh okay, that looks okay"

So it was just going through all the different options and then I managed to get it looking as it does now, and then of course I commissioned my header and that just pulled it all together completely then.

Jean: Well you certainly did a very good job and you documented it didn't you. You did a report or something?

Nikki: I did.

I think because I was so terrified of it, and actually it wasn't that bad. Yes it looked awful at the very beginning, but you could turn that around in ten minutes.

So I thought there would be a lot of other people that may well have the same fears as I do that have already got existing blogs rather than starting from scratch.

So I thought, oh I'll pop it into a report and I got some screenshots, that sort of thing, and that was before I got into my videos. And yes that's been really popular as well and I think that's been downloaded about 200 times or something.

Jean: I must admit I'm sort of in the same position. I feel that I ought to update my blog, but it's kind of like an old pair of slippers and it's comfortable.

Nikki: And it's familiarity as well isn't it?

Jean: Yes, and also I've been told for ages that the name of my blog, which is JeansMenapausalMoment.com/blog doesn't do me any favours as far as Google and Yahoo and searches are concerned.

But then that's how I got online really, and it was a "menopausal moment", and it's got nothing to do with the menopause or anything like that. It's just my thoughts on whatever.

Nikki: But that's part of it, isn't it? If that's how it all came about, then that's the story of it.

You could have a page on there somewhere to say why is it called this, and you could explain on there where you were in your life at that time, or things happening, or all these sort of different bits.

When there's a story it all helps, I guess, again it helps with the know, like and trust thing.

It's like people asking me, why have I got a witch on my blog? This random purple witch, and again it sort of all helps to be more memorable I think, and stand out.

How many blogs do we see all the time and some will remain with you in your head and others at the minute you've clicked x and you won't think about it again, because it doesn't engage you at all.

So I do like to have a little sort of hook, or something there, just to make it that little bit more memorable and keep people coming back.

Jean: Well I'm sure a lot of people will keep coming back to your blog Nikki, and I'm sure you've inspired a lot of people to actually take action and see if they can search for their freedom as well.

Because it is a big thing isn't it, especially if you don't have the support of friends and family?

Nikki: Absolutely.

Jean: Especially if they don't understand what you are trying to achieve, or how having an online journal, which in fact is what a blog really is isn't it...

Nikki: Absolutely, yes.

Jean: ...can actually earn people money? It's beyond most people's comprehension I think.

Nikki: No, I agree with you. A lot of people think you are messing around on the computer again, oh what are you doing?

If you don't understand the online world really and only have a vague knowledge about it as a partner or anything like that, then it could just seem that you're just on the internet playing around, on Facebook or something.

"No actually, I'm recording a video, explaining this" or "I'm creating a product" or "I'm doing something", but I think people that don't see that side of it, just don't get that actually you can create a business from it, and a very successful one at that.

Jean: You can help others, and that is the thing isn't it? It's referred to as being a MAD marketer, (Make A Difference marketer), and that is what anybody who puts out the kind of useful information that you're currently producing is, I believe.

Nikki: I've been called mad before but not in a making a difference way. I like that.

Jean: Yes, it does help to know that people appreciate you I think.

Nikki: Oh absolutely and it gives you a reason to carry on doing it. At times when things aren't working, or things aren't going right and you're sort of thinking, "Why am I doing this?"

When you get someone that says, “Thanks, that video was really helpful”, or a blog comment that says, “That’s been really useful you shared that with me, and thank you so much. I’ve been looking for this information or I’ve been struggling with this for ages”.

I used to read things like that, and think “actually I am making a difference” and you just don’t get that sort of praise or feedback from anywhere else.

Jean: The thing is people are very quick to criticize people but they’re very slow to actually thank people and praise people, and that’s not just online but offline too isn’t it.

Nikki: It is, absolutely, which is sad really isn’t it? The world will be a much nicer place if we all said “thank you” a lot more often.

Jean: Absolutely, so now you are:

- Minxy Witch
- A posh girl
- A mad marketer

And also you’ve been referred to as a “fabulous fear fighter”.

Nikki: Yes, that was Barry’s name for me. I was also a “purple princess” as well from Barry, so you can add that one to the list as well.

Jean: There you go.

Well, before you get to big headed then, I’d better let you go, because I know it’s quite late and you probably need to unwind after a long day and have another cup of tea.

Nikki: I shall definitely be having more tea, always having more tea.

Jean: Well, it’s been lovely to chat to you and I really hope you continue on your search for freedom. Well, not just search for it, but actually find it. So if other people want to find you, where can they go?

Nikki: They can go to NikkiStephens.com

Jean: And is that your real name, or is that short for Nicola or something?

Nikki: Argh.

Jean: Oh, sorry.

Nikki: It’s short for Nicola, and I absolutely hate being called Nicola. I don’t even realize that it’s me.

If someone happens to call it across the street, it doesn't register as being my name at all, because I've just been Nikki or Nick to my friends since I was seven, which is quite a long time ago now.

So it just doesn't register as being my name at all, until I do have to put it on formal things.

Jean: Was it a case of when you were younger, and if someone was annoyed with you, they called you Nicola.

Nikki: Yes, and it was like being told off.

Jean: That sounds familiar.

Nikki: I think everyone has that don't they? The full name is always used when you're naughty, and it's, "Oh no, I've been told off".

Jean: Okay, so I will close this chat now so if anybody wants to find Nikki Stephens that's N.i.k.k.i.S.t.e.p.h.e.n.s.com

Nikki: Lovely, and thank you very much for chatting to me Jean. It's been lovely.

Jean: Likewise, I really appreciate it. Anyway you take care.

Nikki: And you.

Jean: Bye.

Nikki: Bye bye.



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