

Sewing Stories: Sewing a Jacket, Learning a Lesson

Description



I had recently been part of a pattern tester team for a beautiful barn jacket that a designer friend of mine put out. I live in Florida, and we only see truly cold temps every few years, so my opportunity for wearing more than a light jacket paired with a sweater doesnâ??t happen often. At first, I figured â??eh, she may not choose me to test anyway, Iâ??ll throw my name in the potâ?•. It had been a year since I made a fairly simple quilt jacket, and over two years since a more nuanced jacket that would be more technically similar to the barn jacket test. I notoriously donâ??t sew projects that take me more than one sitting to complete; this season of life with very busy toddlers doesnâ??t really allow for a long term distraction, and goodness knows I donâ??t have the attention span for something that will take several sessions over many days. Besides, small wins feel really big when youâ??ve got your hands full of little ones anyway! I was drowning in projects, commissioned pieces, creative pieces of my own, trying to get a sense of normalcy post holiday season with two toddlers on winter break, half marathon training, and all the usual responsibilities that come along with being a human. As so many of us moms do, I took too much on and was really struggling to juggle it all.



Of course, as it would happen, I *was* selected to be part of the tester team. I dragged my feet at first, unsure of what fabric I wanted to use or if I could source what I wanted in time. Time was ticking, and my anxiety about my fear of letting someone down who was counting on me was growing. I finally ended up settling on my fabric choices: a natural colored cotton canvas for the main, a linen cotton blend gingham for the lining, and a chocolate brown corduroy for the collar that I upcycled from a thrifted shirt.



I really was dreading making the jacket. Donâ??t get me wrong, I was *really* excited about having it completed â?? barn jackets were a huge fall trend and I love me a good trend. But I knew it would be a process over several sessions of workâ?¦ and a lot more perseverance than I had.

As a creative person, itâ??s easy to see what sewing provides for me. Itâ??s a tangible creative outlet that is done inside the house, making it a great hobby for mothers with little ones. When I outzoom on my life and see what sewing teaches and gives to me, the parallels of being a maker and being a mother show me how much deeper it is.



As a mother, you show up no matter what. You have the flu? You need a mental health day? Youâ??re in over your head with things that need your attention? Unfortunately, none of that matters when youâ??ve got a small person asking you to open the 4th snack in a row. Iâ??m the kind of person who takes my commitments really seriously , and if I say Iâ??m going to do something, I *will* be doing it, even if my capacity doesnâ??t allow for it. Thatâ??s what moms do!

When it was finally time to slow down and start sewing, almost instantly, I was sucked in to the process. I chose to quilt the lining with batting for extra warmth, which is an almost meditative process once you get going. It was a reminder to me that slowing down is in fact not just a helpful practice but often a *needed* practice. When my shoulder seams didnâ??t line up perfectly, it was a reminder that asking for help makes me stronger, not weaker. When I sat down on the second, third, and fourth day of sewing, it was a reminder that nothing comes easy, and consistency in showing up and working hard is what produces the lasting result. When I couldnâ??t find the exact corduroy I wanted for the collar and had to go thrifting high and low to find it, it was a reminder that sometimes you have to pivot and get creative in order to get the outcome you desire.



When I finally finished the jacket, I was giddy. It turns out, working hard on a project outside of your normal scope feels really good. Perhaps the need to make a jacket was less about completing a project and more about reminding myself that Iâ??m more resilient and capable than I remember.

CATEGORY

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