Sewing Stories: Sewing My Way Back to Myself

Description

I started sewing when I was pretty young, long before I had any kind of idea of what body image meant to me, before I even knew things were being ingrained into my subconscious about what I thought about myself and my body. Even when I was pregnant with my first child and making crib sheets, I couldnâ??t have known how much I was about to learn about myself through sewing for a freshly postpartum body.

When I first started sewing garments for myself, (not just little baby items here and there), I did not have any kind of bravery whatsoever in what I was making. I think back to those first few projects and, oh boy were they boxy and baggy! No shame if thatâ??s your style whatsoever, but it isnâ??t mineâ?¦now. Through each project I gained confidence not only in my skills to make something for myself, but also I became more and more accepting and loving of the body I was sewing for. Sewing forces you to keenly notice yourself â?? your arms, your waist, your hips, and the way *you* actually fit into clothes. I used to assume I was the problem when ready-to-wear pieces didnâ??t fit me. But sewing flipped that narrative. Slowly, it wasnâ??t about squeezing into a size someone else defined. It was about shaping fabric to *my* body, in all its uniqueness.

The measurements I used to hate knowing about myself have since become a mere guide to me. I donâ??t dread picking up my measuring tape anymore because itâ??s literally numbers! They are just information â?? the data I need to make something fit me, not the other way around. The numbers I see on pattern sizing donâ??t sting like they once did. Theyâ??re just a guide for making something tailor made to me. Society had ingrained into me throughout my teenage and young adult years that *I* was the problem when clothes didnâ??t fit. â??Too tight in the thighs? My thighs must be too big. But gaping at the waistline? I must be shaped wrong.â?• Sewing has unraveled that thinking (no pun intended haha) and I realized it wasnâ??t my body that was â??offâ?• â?? it was the clothing. Store-bought garments are designed for imaginary averages, not real people. But when I sewed, I could adjust the fabric to my actual shape. I wasnâ??t squeezing myself into someone elseâ??s idea of a size; I was creating something on my own terms.

The biggest gift sewing has given me is this: permission to love and accept my body as it is, and not to feel the need to change it. When I wear something Iâ??ve made, Iâ??m wearing the hours of work, patience, and care that Iâ??ve invested in myself. Iâ??m wearing proof that my body, on any given day, is worth making beautiful clothes that honor it.

I still have moments of self-doubt, of course. Body image isnâ??t something you â??fixâ?• once and for all. But every time I finish a garment and slip it on, I feel a little stronger in my own skin. I know my body and size will fluctuate with time. Sewing has taught me that clothes should fit *me* â?? not the other way around. And that alone is worth learning how to sew for yourself!

Comment below if you would like me to share patterns shown above.

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1. COMMUNITY
2. SEWING STORIES

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