



Jennifer Rzasas

We are SO thrilled to have the co-founder of Altenew, [Jennifer Rzasas](#)! We wanted you to get to know her better this year, so we invited her to spend some time with us. Please enjoy!

1. We want to get to know you better! How did you get started with crafting?

I have always enjoyed creating things, and have many fond memories of crafting throughout childhood. However, I didn't start doing paper crafts until 2006. I was planning my wedding and decided to make the table cards/place cards. I got a block of pink rubber from the craft store and used an X-acto knife to carve a monogram stamp with the year on it. I was also intrigued by heat embossing so I bought VersaMark ink and some silver powder to use. The only problem was that I didn't have a heat tool! I ended up melting the powder for every guest's card (more than 100!) by holding them one at a time closely above a light bulb. It worked, but I burned my hand more than once and my eyes were going crazy from looking directly into the light. I have come a long way since then!

2. Altenew started with you and Tasnim - what made you guys to start a company? Any fun behind stories you would like to share?

Tasnim and I both noticed a void in the stamp industry. A few years ago it seemed like many companies were releasing similar products, and we were both on the lookout for unique, edgy or elegant designs that we just couldn't find anywhere. Tasnim and I also have different cultural backgrounds, and we felt as though a multicultural approach to design was

needed in the industry. When we realized we shared a similar desire, the next step was to team up and create a company together!

3. Your designs are amazing and we love using them as stamps! How do you come up with fresh and unique ideas each time? What do you do when you feel like you are stuck during the process?

Here at Altenew, we strive to interpret classical inspirations in contemporary form. Tasnim and I are both inspired by artwork, sculpture, and architecture from around the world, and frequently turn to other countries and time periods when searching for inspiration. When I design, I first do research to see if my idea is already "out there." Of course it's impossible to check every company, but I do my best to ensure that I have a fresh and unique concept. Then, I start sketching! It took me quite a while to get used to using a tablet and design software, since I had only previously done drawings with pen/paper. Although I have gotten more comfortable with the process, it still takes hours and hours of drawing, re-drawing, and refining each set until it is ready for production.

I love that you asked, "What do you do when you feel like you are stuck during the process" - this makes me laugh because I think I have gotten stuck at some point on almost every stamp set I have ever designed! I never realized how challenging it is to design a stamp set until I started to do it. When I get stuck I will put my design away for a bit so I can come back and look at it with fresh eyes. I do the same thing when I'm making cards!

4. Let's talk about some crafting styles! Are there any styles you like to stick to when creating cards? Do you ever venture outside of cardmaking?

I am definitely a clean and simple crafter! I love an uncluttered look to my designs, and very rarely try other styles. I like my comfort zone :)

In addition to card making, I love to sew and make jewelry! It's so rewarding to wear something that you have made yourself. I also enjoy watercolor painting.

5. We know this is like asking parents to choose their favorite child, but just out of a curiosity, do you have any stamp set that you are particularly fond of? And why?

You're right...that's a tough question! I will give you a few favorites in different categories. My favorite floral set I designed is Tulip, because you can mix and match the flowers and stems and it is such a simple set to use (plus it was one of Jennifer McGuire's favorite sets of the year!). My favorite holiday set is Modern Deer, because it is perfect in winter but can also be used year-round. My favorite sentiment set is not really a sentiment set - Calligraphy Alpha can be used to stamp names, sentiments, scrapbook titles, and more. Lastly, my favorite unique set is To the Moon. I love this one because the results are SO realistic!

6. Can you share with us one of your favorite projects you made using the stamps you designed?

Just like picking a favorite stamp set, it's impossible to pick a favorite project! I love creating quirky cards, so here is an unexpected pairing of two different sets - To the Moon and Layered Lily.

It's a little strange, but I think those two images look so cool together!



7. Okay, this is just for fun! If you can choose only 3 crafting items to use for the rest of your life, what would those be?

Altenew Stamps
Altenew Ink
White Cardstock

Those are my basic supplies and it's all I need to get crafty!