Hello! I am so excited that you are about to get a new, beautiful blog!

First, I'm going to give you a quick crash course in how blogs work, and then we can have a little chat about your blog's new face!

Blogger (Blogspot) and Wordpress are the two most popular blog platforms. Blogspot's primary strength is that it's free, but it's weakness is that it's more limited than Wordpress. If you are completely content with Blogspot and don't plan on growing much or have high organizational needs, stay there. If you've been thinking about moving to Wordpress, this is your chance, and it's well worth it. I can create a new Wordpress blog for you and import all your old posts and comments over. Should you choose to switch to Wordpress, below is more information on how it all works behind the scenes.

Wordpress, like Blogger, is a free, limited service. People who start out on Wordpress sign up for a free blog, but must either purchase an annual $30 Custom Design upgrade in order to customize their templates/design, **or** move to a self-hosted Wordpress account.

Self-hosting means you purchase a hosting plan from a hosting company, and your blog resides on **your** hosting space – not Wordpress.com. The Wordpress "software" is installed onto your hosting space, and from there, it's all super easy. I personally recommend HostGator.com (The Hatchling plan), as they have the best rates*, and have an option to pay monthly instead of the entire year up front. *You will not need to upgrade your Wordpress account or purchase the Custom Design upgrade if you choose to self-host.* From there, your old blog will need to be exported and imported to your new Wordpress, and your domain name set up to point to your new hosting space. If you use HostGator, I will handle all of this for you for free.*

I personally recommend self-hosting, particularly if in the future you need "website space" to host additional files, webpages, or secondary blogs. You will have access to all plugins and widgets, and will be able to monetize and/or advertise on your blog. Your page rank in web search engines will not be absorbed by the Wordpress network, and your blog will be easily searchable. Domains are easier to set up and control, and I strongly recommend self-hosting for photographers, designers, organizations and small business owners.

I am happy to help answer any additional questions about either option you may have.

Now that you've made your decision, please let me know if you'd like to stay with Blogger, or if you will be moving to Wordpress!

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*If using HostGator.com, please use my affiliate link: http://secure.hostgator.com/~affiliat/cgi-bin/affiliates/clickthru.cgi?id=laurendubinsky and **use this code**: LAUREN25PERCENTOFF

I charge $50 to install Wordpress, export your old blog/import your new blog, and set up domain name re-direction. If you purchase hosting from HostGator using my affiliate link, I'll do it for **free**! You will also save 25% with my coupon. If you prefer to save $10, use LAUREN10DOLLARSOFF

Understanding Domains, Hosting, and the Internet.

Imagine your blog as an apartment in an apartment complex. You get your own apartment number, but you still share a primary address with everyone else in the complex. You also can't do much with your yard, and you don't get your own parking spot. And you aren't allowed to paint the walls. You don't own, you just rent. **This is your blog if you're at yourblogname.wordpress.com.**

Now imagine you outgrow the space. You really need your own parking spot, yard, and basement. You don't have enough organizational space, and having an option to add on a bedroom later would be really nice. So, you buy a house. **This is why you'd buy a hosting plan. To own your property, and to have unlimited space. And to have the option of having your own street address!**

So, you've found an awesome house and bought it, but then you realize none of your friends can come visit unless you have an address, so you go buy a mailbox. **This is what happens when you purchase your own domain name.**

Order of business:

1) **Purchase a domain name.** I recommend godaddy.com.
2) **Purchase hosting space**. I recommend hostgator.com*
3) **Send me logins** for both accounts.
4) I will set up your domain with your hosting account.
5) I will install Wordpress on your new hosting space.
6) I will import your old blog into your new Wordpress blog.
7) Time to design!

Notes and Tips:

 Make sure you purchase your domain name **before** purchasing a hosting plan. If you already have a domain, awesome! Email me the login for your account & tell me which company you purchased it from. When you purchase your hosting plan, it will ask you to register your domain name. *Follow the instructions, and stop and ask for help if you need it.* Better safe than sorry.

You will not lose any content in moving from one blog to another. I will handle all importing/exporting carefully and completely.

To help you more with the "lingo," a **server** is the physical location of the hosting space you've purchased. It's like a harddrive, but online, and owned by a company. Every server has a **nameserver**, which is the server's personal addresses. It usually looks something like "ns1.hostgator.com." When I set up your **domain**, I tell the domain company what your nameservers are, in order to point your new domain to your hosting space.

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