

blog therapy.

These four CLEO girls talk about life, love and everything in between through their 'personal networking havens' – their electronic journals.

By day I run the social media department in a large digital agency in Jo'burg. **I blog about** my new life in Jo'burg (I was a Durban girl), the awesome relationship I have with my boyfriend Jon, my crazy family, funny friends and the insane things that happen to me, usually by accident. **I make money off my blogs through** advertising banners on the side, and I do product exposure for a few PR companies that pay me per blog post. **My favourite hangout in Jozi** Kitchen Bar at the Design Quarter. It's very funky and relaxed. And their food is divine! **What makes my blog unique** is that it's a running documentary of how my life has changed over the past seven years. I've gone from an unemployed teenage single mother, living in a small town on the South Coast of

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KZN, to a twentysomething work-addicted Jo'burg local, living in the rat race. **Blogging helped me through traumatic times.** I've gone through so much since starting my blog, and writing about my feelings seems to be the only way I can heal. In the early days my blog was filled with raw emotion. When I occasionally read those posts, I'm impressed at how far I've come emotionally.

I started blogging because in 2004 my daughter Kiera passed away at eight months old, due to a lung disease she'd been born with. I started blogging as a way to deal with the anger and sadness I lived with every day. Blogging helped me more than therapy ever did. **Random things I've blogged about** range from my period, bad dates, to accidentally hijacking my own car. You name it; I've blogged it – with the exception of sex, because that's private. Mostly. **The hardest part about blogging** is finding the time to write as openly as I have in the past. I tried for a long time to be unaffected by the negative comments and wannabe stalkers, but eventually I got sick of defending myself, so I've learnt what to write about and what not to. **To promote my blog** I send a link out to my Twitter followers, but that's about it. I'm lucky to have loyal readers who visit my blog from time to time. **The biggest mistake any blogger can make** is airing their dirty laundry online. It's not cool, it's not dignified, and no one actually cares. **The ultimate goal for bloggers** is to gain a large readership who indulge in your every word. **My advice for new bloggers is:** Practise makes perfect!



"i blog about the places i go, the people i meet, and the things i do."

By day I'm a digital journalist. Part of my job is to be on Facebook and twitter all day – it's a tough life, but someone's got to do it. **My blog is about** my recent move to Cape Town and finding my feet in my new city. I also blog about the places I go, the people I meet and the things I do. I love finding humour or beauty in everyday things.

I moved down to Cape Town because I was awarded a scholarship to do my honours in journalism. Part of the agreement was that I'd work for the company and I'm so grateful for the opportunity. **The most interesting part of Cape Town** is being a part of the thousands of people dancing on Long Street during the Cape Town Carnival. **The hardest part about blogging** is wondering if anyone is interested in the trivialities of my life. But my fears are usually put aside by kind comments and feedback from readers. **I don't make money off my blogs.** Heck, now that I think about it – no one's even given me any

lipstick! **I blog when** I have something interesting to say. I don't want to be one of those "today I ate a tuna sandwich and it was awesome" bloggers. **I promote my blog by** linking posts on Facebook and twitter. **The biggest blogging mistake** is thinking that you *have* to churn out a blog post daily. If you have nothing to say, don't say it. **My favourite blog of all time** is blog.cjanerun.com. Courtney Jane Kendrick is a Mormon blogger in Utah. We're nothing alike, but I find such joy in her writing. **My advice for new bloggers** is to go for it! It's your blog, so post away! Just don't post anything you don't want your dad seeing.



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“not everyone is going to care about the issues you’re most passionate about.”

By day I’m the research and advocacy coordinator at a Rape Crisis Centre in Cape Town. **My blog focuses on** women’s rights, feminism and issues pertaining to women’s bodies and freedom. I also have a website called My First Time, where women can submit stories about their

significant first-time experiences – like the first time they went for a bikini wax, to their first encounter with cancer. The aim is to get women talking about issues that are taboo or scary. **My blog is unique because** it brings issues of feminism back into discussion. In SA there’s very little blogging about women’s political freedoms, largely because society seems to think that feminism is out-dated. I hope to make more people realise that these issues aren’t finished. **I started blogging** after I couldn’t find a career that allowed me to use my brain as much as I wanted to. I started writing, and after a while I sent in a few pieces to

the *Mail and Guardian* Thoughtleader. They invited me to have a permanent blog space on their page. **I don’t make money off my blogs;** they’re all done in my free time. **Being a feminist means** looking at the world and asking – is this the best place it could be for women, and if not, what needs to change, and what can I do to make that change a reality? It’s a political decision that influences the actions I take, the way I write and the conversations I have. It means speaking up when you’re expected to be silent, and allowing other women the space to speak and define themselves as well. **I believe**

that my blogs have the potential to help women. My Thoughtleader blog is a space that’s aimed at interrogating the world around me, and unless men become part of the solution for women, they’ll remain part of the problem. **The hardest part about blogging** was learning that not everyone’s going to care about the issues that you’re most passionate about. **Some of my favourite blogs are** Ms Magazine, an American feminist blogging platform that’s also part of a magazine. I also like Indieberries.blogspot.com, which is a multimedia-style blog started by Che Kershaw, a South African living in Korea.

“Roots Restaurant has created such memorable meals for me because they’re all allergy free!”

By day I’m a payroll manager and head office manager. **My blog is dedicated to** my journey of self-discovery and the rebirth of my passion for food. In October 2009 I was diagnosed with type-three food allergies to garlic, yeast, dairy, gluten and eggs, so most of my recipes avoid these ingredients. The main focus is on flavour – just because I have to eliminate certain ingredients from my diet doesn’t mean I have to eliminate the taste! I love to review cookbooks and edit recipes to make them allergy free. I also enjoy blogging about new places and restaurants I’ve visited, and unusual ingredients that make eating with food allergies a whole lot yummier. **I discovered I have food allergies** when I experienced extreme dizzy spells in late 2009; I went to a doctor, but he couldn’t cure my problem. I decided to try a homeopath, who introduced me to the food-allergy blood test. Type three is a delayed allergic reaction to food and can occur two to 72 hours after eating. **Most of my recipes** come out of my head, but I



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follow other bloggers for some inspiration. I also read magazines and browse the Internet. Nature inspires me, too – I try to use only natural ingredients. I’ve also learnt to listen to my body; having limitations makes me want to try harder. **I don’t make money from my blogs,** but I’d love a career that involved writing and food. **When planning my blogs** I try

focus on the recipe and describe how I feel while eating it, or what reactions I get from others. Other times I focus on one ingredient and research it thoroughly. **My favourite place to eat out is** Roots Restaurant. They’ve created such memorable meals for me because they’re all allergy free! **A good blogger** must take risks and have broad

shoulders. Short, punchy sentences are key to get your readers hooked! **The goal for food bloggers is** to share our enthusiasm with people who love food and to inspire them to get into the kitchen. **I have many favourite blogs:** Gluten-Free Goddess; Gluten-Free Girl and the Chef; Cook sister; My Easy Cooking; The Creative Pot; Janice Tripepi; and Bits of Carey. □

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