



by PRIYA MULJI

THE digital age has allowed individuals to express themselves via blogs on subjects they feel passionate about. People also use blogs to heal themselves in difficult times, spread awareness and connect with like-minded people globally. Resident *Eastern Eye* columnist Priya Mulji started blogging 10 years ago. She set out to find fellow bloggers to see why they started and tips that they would give to those thinking about doing it. "My blog started off as a way to vent about bad dates, food and everyday life. It led to me being offered a column in *Eastern Eye* and multiple opportunities, including radio and TV appearances. I would encourage everyone to write and share their words. My blog changed my life. I connected with fellow bloggers to get them to share their experiences," said Mulji.

How to find your unique writing voice

NINE BLOGGERS SHARE TIPS AND THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY



Asha Modha: I began writing a couple of years ago while at the peak of my so-called 'quarter life crisis'. It was on a summer afternoon during the journey home after a hilarious incident at the beautician's. I felt an urge to pen it down, and it gave me an immediate release, so felt strangely cathartic. Ever since, I've found meaningful stories in fleeting moments, all through my lens as a young British Gujarati woman living in London. Advice I'd give to fellow bloggers is that your unique experience of the world is your superpower; you'll be amazed at how much it'll speak out, connect and inform others. Also, don't be afraid to laugh and poke fun at yourself, as it's what breaks down barriers and humanises us!
www.ashamodha.com



Renu Ravalia: Discovering a love for creative writing led me to a career in digital marketing, where I specialised in content and social media. I write like I speak, so when I set up my mentoring business I knew a blog would be the platform to help me share my expertise in an authentic and unique way. My blog focuses on social media, business and mind-set. You'll find posts from 'how to use Instagram hashtags' to 'positive affirmations for business growth'. I have seen first-hand the opportunities that having a blog could lead to (including this feature). If you are passionate about something, write it down and use your blog to express it because you never know where it may lead!
renuravalia.wordpress.com



Binny Shah-Patel: *Binny's Food and Travel Diaries* was launched as a creative outlet almost five years ago to share recipes and document my adventures in food and travel, both in London and internationally, be it reviews of restaurants, hotels or destinations. Over the last year, my focus has increasingly incorporated wildlife conservation, and I use my platform to educate people about unethical animal tourism, animal exploitation and the plight of animals in captivity. I am an ambassador for World Animal Protection and work closely with organisations such as The Born Free Foundation and Four Paws. My advice to other bloggers is be yourself and don't compare your blogging journey to others. If you can use your platform and voice for positive change, do it.
www.binmysfoodandtravel.com



Emma Kell: I started blogging because I was urged to be 10 per cent braver by women educators. I kept blogging because it reminded me that, in the highs and lows of our unique, wonderful and challenging profession that is education, you are never alone. My blog resulted directly in an approach from a publisher, and I published my first book, *How To Survive In Teaching*, two years ago. My blog morphed into speaking, writing, presenting and numerous exciting opportunities. I have made some of my most trusted friends and colleagues as a result. Advice? Beware confidentiality - change names, dates, places and do not refer to your place of work directly or share others' stories without permission. Go for it, the possibilities are limitless.
thosethatcan.net



Rishi Patel: I am an osteopath and pain specialist treating patients both in London and abroad. I help people by providing bespoke treatment plans and exercise programmes to help make them feel amazing. I am fairly new to blogging, but started on Instagram (@*medicalhomevisit*) as I was seeing so many patients ask for advice and tips on their pain and things that could help prevent it from coming back. I believe everyone should have the opportunity to feel great and not suffer. I passionately share top tips through my years of experience of how you can feel better and improve mobility. It's a lot easier than you think.
medicalhomevisit.com/blog



Sonal Flora: I am an interior designer and founder of House of Flora. I started my blog to engage with the online community and give people an insight into what I do, and my interior design studio. My blog is interior focussed, but also a lifestyle blog, aiming to inspire people to create a space that gives them a sense of solace from the outside world. Whether incorporating a high-end statement piece, vintage find, or upcycling something that you already have, you can create a space unique to you on any budget. My advice to people starting a blog is to not overthink and write about whatever they are passionate about. This way the writing will flow easily and feel more personal to you and the reader.
www.house-of-flora.com



Shilpa Bilimoria: I am the creative director and founder of design label House of Bilimoria. Born into a family of tailors, textiles and the craft of making clothes have come naturally to me. Being naturally inquisitive and loving the aspect of history and ancestry, I decided to weave this into my work with the blog, *Colour.Love.Light*. We aren't often in touch with deeper stories of those that make products we wear daily, so sharing this journey transparently is important to me. I have been working on an enquiry of self and identity. Last year, I explored my own connection to traditional garments, wearing a sari for seven days, no matter what I was doing and shared the experience. I discovered many individuals enjoy and discover something through my blogs and videos. Having a blog is fundamental to my craft and challenging the status quo within the fashion industry.
www.houseofbilimoria.com



Sharmeen Ziauddin: I started blogging in 2011 to help me achieve my dream of becoming a journalist. After realising

there's a space for a Muslim lifestyle blog, I started mine in 2015. *Britpakgirl* is all about the female British Muslim experience where food, holidays, leisure, beauty, politics all play a big part in our lives. I write about all this and more, so recently it's become a reflection of the inside of my brain. Although geared towards Muslim women, it's not a religious blog and most posts can be enjoyed by anyone. Blogging is a lot more than writing now; it's about social media and Google rankings, so only blog about something you are passionate about, otherwise it will be really difficult to sustain long-term.
www.britpakgirl.com



Sima Sthanakiya: A collision of a love for writing and an obsession with travel is how the *Curious Pixie* began. An online diary of travel memories for my two girls snowballed into a lifestyle and travel blog. Family travel is at the core of my writing, inspiring parents to pursue their travel dreams. I also advocate parent wellness through childfree travel or even without the other half! 'Me' time doesn't necessarily mean travelling, a visit to a coffee shop or gallery all count, so there is plenty of advice on the blog. Anything to help recharge the batteries and escape the everyday. There is never a perfect time to start blogging. Blogs evolve with you, so just do it. Write for yourself first, be authentic, hone your voice and start to understand your audience.
www.thecuriouspixie.co.uk