

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Nomali Cele

 By Leigh Andrews

6 Nov 2019

This week, we go behind the selfie with Nomali Cele, writer, blogger and critic who writes the life, culture and plus-size style blog, 'Nomali from Soweto'.



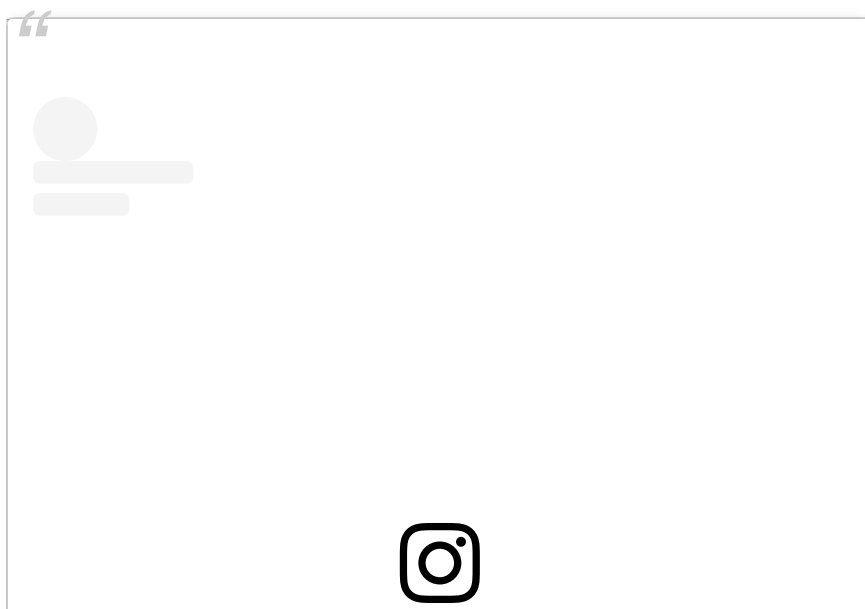
Cele captions this: "Almost three weeks with no cut gets me here, I guess."

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live and cast spells in Soweto. I work two taxis away. I don't get much play but if I made money, I'd play in Durban a lot.

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

Once, at work, Yvonne Chaka Chaka called me beautiful. But other than that, I write good and thoughtful sentences and put together banging outfits.



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The 'i recently watched too much antm' energy is still going strong.

#plussizestyle #fatshion #sdudlaootd #lovemychubclub #visiblyplussize  
#pluisamust #andigetdressed #southafricanwomen

A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger \(@nomalifromsoweto\)](#) on Aug 17, 2019 at 6:31am PDT

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my criticism and culture work has appeared on *M&G* and *Hunpo SA* (RIP); my fiction is out from Jalada Africa and I've shaped my blog, *Nomali from Soweto*, and its related channels, to be a platform that captures this present moment, well as much as one African feminist can.

I've written about [body positivity](#), [Sjava](#), [Beyoncé](#), [Zodwa Wabantu and expectations](#), [one bad reaction to the fire in Khayelitsha](#), and more.

As a publisher, it's interesting to me to see brands move their marketing exercises onto social when all these platforms are ephemeral.

### 3. Describe your career so far.

Eight years ago, I started my blog for the second time. I had attempted it two years previously, but this time around it stuck.

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For weeks, I have been thinking there are things i need to put at the back of my wardrobe for a while. This dress is not one of them. I got exactly three compliments at work today. Thank you to the wind, which showed up. 💎💎  
#sdudlaootd #psblogger #sdudlaootdss #fatshion #plussize #plussizestyle #plussizefashion #tcfstyle #effyourbeautystandards #andigetdressed #lovemychubclub #thighs #superbme #stylebynomali

A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger \(@nomalifromsoweto\)](#) on Nov 14, 2018 at 9:15am PST

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Since then, I've been writing about the cultural production I consume, body image, dating, being twentysomething, being a black feminist, staying alive and more.

#### 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

I play my songs on repeat, I thrift as much as I can, share jokes with my sister and listen to my friends' voice-note essays all the way through. I am obsessed with astrology memes, you should be following [@notallgeminis](#) on Instagram!

“



[View this post on Instagram](#)



ON WEDNESDAYS WE POST MEMES! This week's theme: idolization :/👀👀  
Take this as mother Courtney's reminder that absolutely no one is infallible and the concept of celebrity is meaningless in the modern era where anyone can gain thousands of followers on the internet so bottom line, celebs really ARE just like us and you should never think anyone is above you because they're just not!! 👀👀 Also just to be clear, I only made the first meme in this post! The rest of the creators are tagged! Smash that mfking follow for these guys- their art

rules! @thementallytrillest @memesturbationation @dyingbutfine @hotmessbian

A post shared by [not all geminis](#) (@notallgeminis) on Oct 16, 2019 at 11:35am PDT

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And Beyonce, of course. I love black girls with all my heart so much of my art writing and criticism stems from that place.

## 5. What do you love about your industry?

“ The thing I love the most about blogging is that it gives a voice to people. It's helped me create community and find other people who like the obscure or very mainstream things I like. ”

Blogging has also helped me hone my criticism and perspectives, I trust my voice even more.

## 6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

I head to my day job, check-in on my own online communities when I can throughout the day (mostly Twitter and Instagram).

“



[View this post on Instagram](#)



Izolo "HAE DU" - @bonang\_m (2018) . #sdudlaotd  
#leggingsaspants #fatshion #psblogger #discovereasterncape #myec  
#discoverunder1k #itsmysouthafrica #haedu #nomaliiselsewhere

A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger](#) (@nomalifromsoweto) on Aug 15, 2018 at 11:26pm PDT

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I do the bulk of my writing on the weekends or on my Gmail email drafts while I commute – I've just passed 400 drafts.

## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

Smartphone! When my first employer gave me a Blackberry at the age of 19, she changed how I was online – no more waiting for the internet cafe to open.

“



[View this post on Instagram](#)



A snapshot from my voting station this morning. Even tho the legacy of apartheid ensured that my generation, and maybe even the one after us, doesn't get much in the way of quality education (we were and continue to be quite under-resourced) moving to Soweto put me in schools that did something quite special for the little black children in those yards: we were in immaculate and beautiful surroundings and we belonged there. Ofc, this was maintained partly through making latecomers (which i was for most of my later years because depression) pick up litter and beautify the grounds. Anyway!!! I voted at a local primary school and this was the message and words of affirmation their young learners read daily!!! #saelection2019 #sadeicides #wordsofaffirmation #wordsofwisdom #chattycaptioncommunity #southafrican #africanblogger #southafricadecides #southafricanelections #blackchildrenmatter #siyabloga

*A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger](#) (@nomalifromsoweto) on May 8, 2019 at 6:54am PDT*

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For me, a perspective is also something that's so important, it makes it so much harder to get swept up in trends.

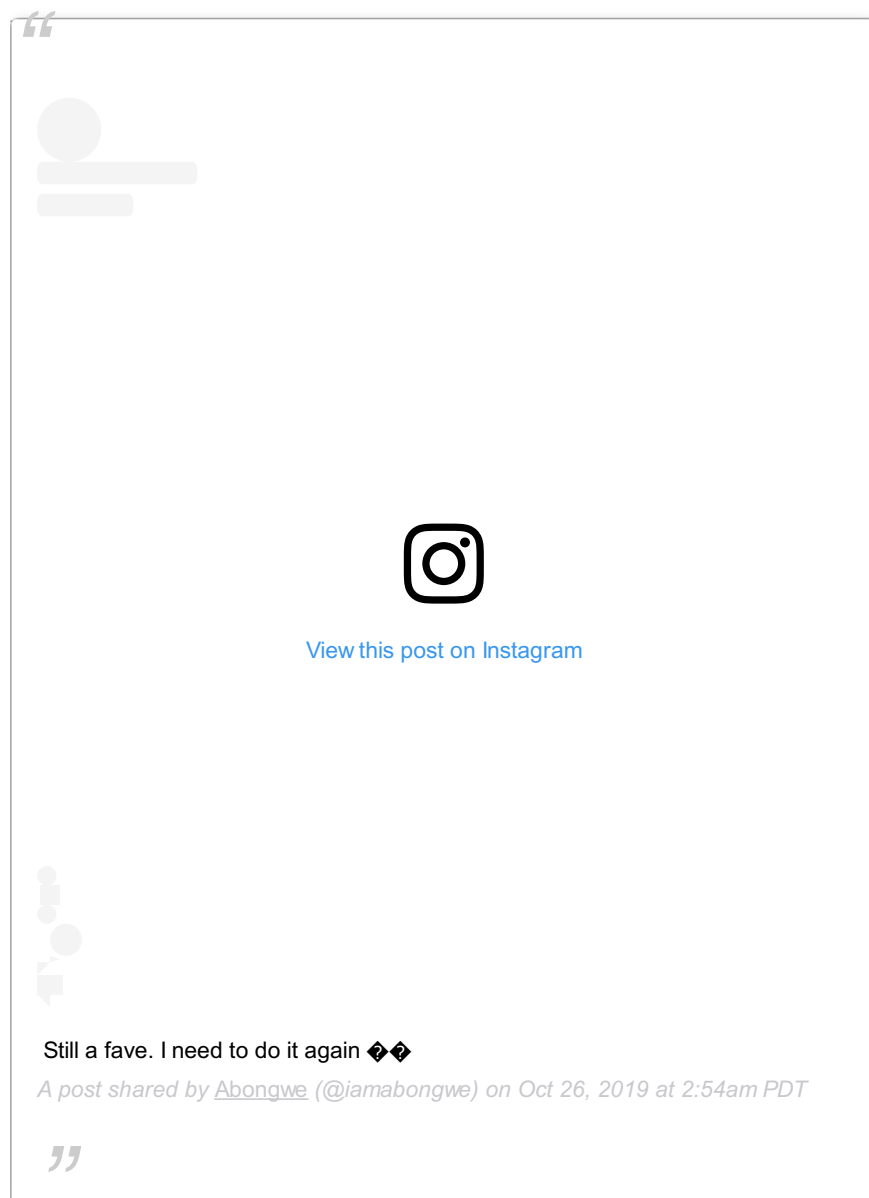
## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Honestly, all the first 10 bloggers I would name stopped publishing two, three years ago. But luckily for me, most of them have left their blogs open: #Archiving.

“ I look for personal perspectives, honesty and voice. ”

I've always had a creative crush on Phendu Kuta who owns Unlabelled, which is a culture website. I am proud of Moyin Olorunoba by proxy, and I've only recently gotten into her work. She's spent years building her YouTube channel, which functions as a pop-culture hub.

Abongwe Qokela, a model , creator and influencer, is ahead of the Instagram fashion pack by leaps.



There are people whom I am constantly thinking about, who are not necessarily bloggers, "content" people or even writers:



#BehindtheSelfie with... Bongiwe Tshiqi

Leigh Andrews 10 Jul 2019



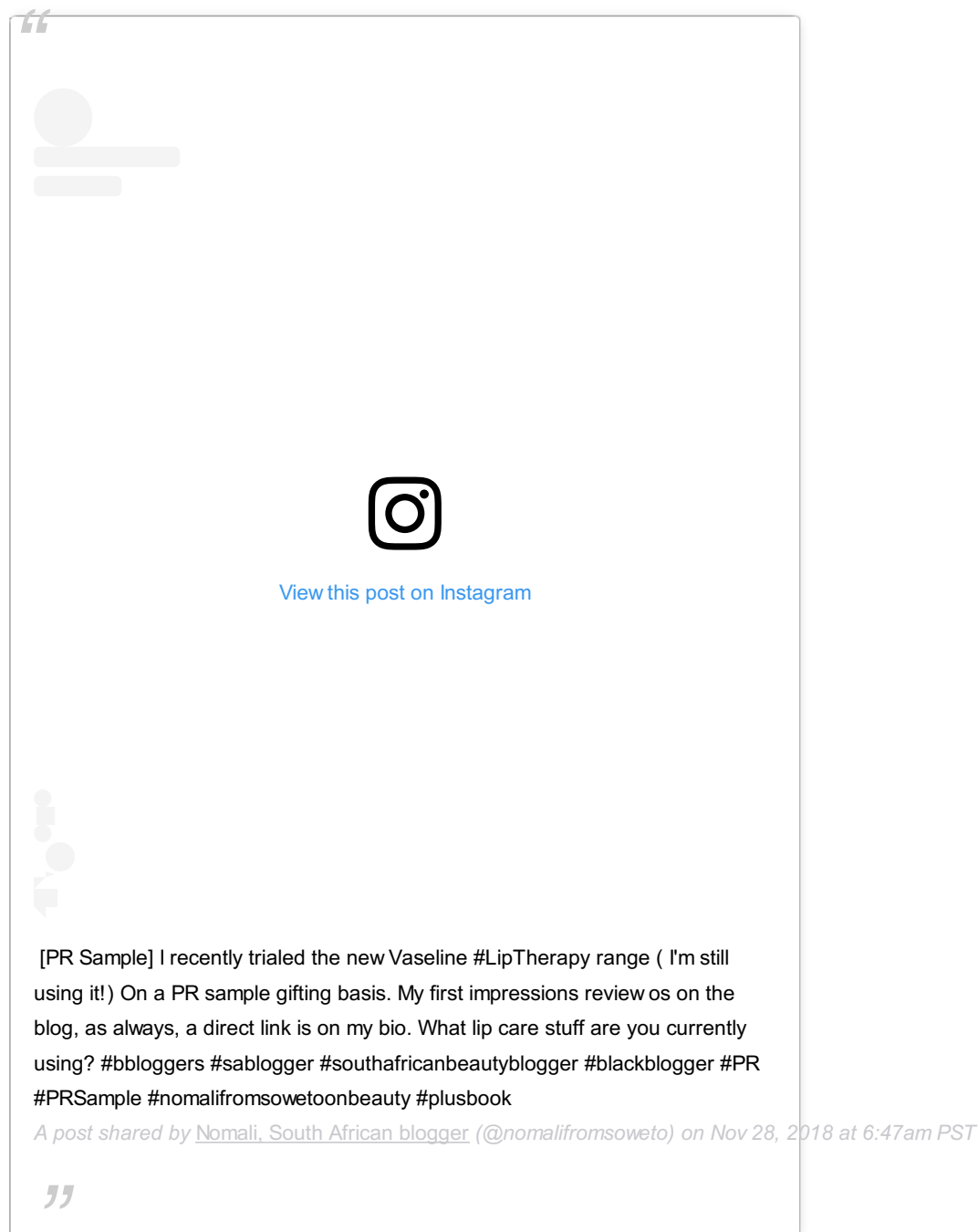
Photographer Jody Brand, author Mohale Mashigo, artists Tony Gum and Natalie Paneng, critic and author Yomi Adegoke, editor Bongiwe Tshiqi, photographers Lebogang Tlhako and Kgomotso Neto, multi-disciplinary artists X and Lindokuhle

Nkosi, MOOD Bee Diamondhead, genius Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah!

## 9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

I think because "influencer" is the in thing, agencies and creators alike think that's what everyone is trying to do.

“ I am a writer, I am a blogger and that's my playing field. I work on my photos and videos and other content pieces that make me stay on the radar on social media, but I'm not trying to be an influencer. I wish local blogging still had its sauce. ”

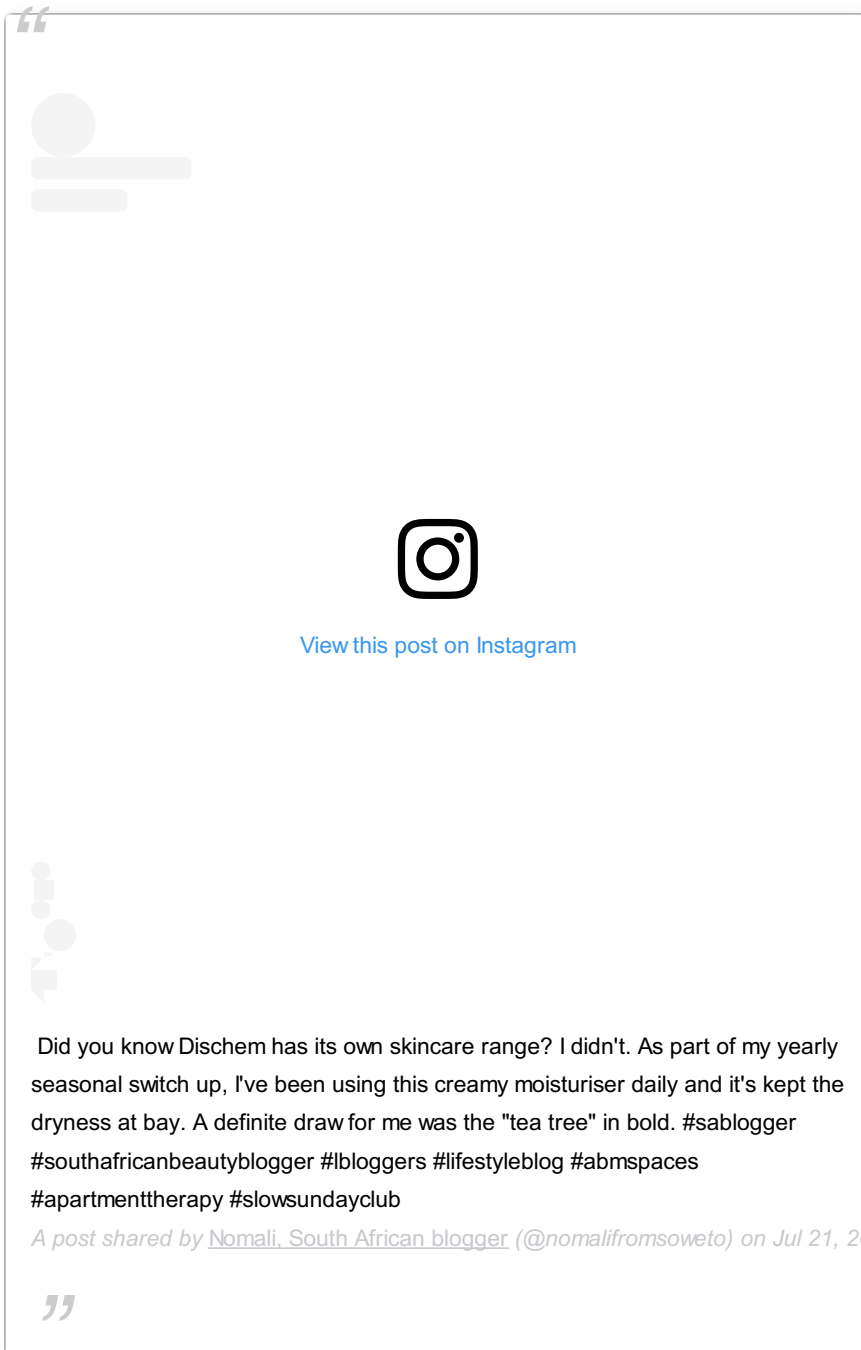


Also, agencies need to pay people, not just that one Instagram girl with 23% real followers. Pay people.

## 10. What are you working on right now?

Constantly making my way through all those email drafts I keep leaving. I'm writing blog posts, writing short stories and always soliciting submissions for my 'zine.

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Did you know Dischem has its own skincare range? I didn't. As part of my yearly seasonal switch up, I've been using this creamy moisturiser daily and it's kept the dryness at bay. A definite draw for me was the "tea tree" in bold. #sablogger #southafricanbeautyblogger #bloggers #lifestyleblog #abmspaces #apartmenttherapy #slowsundayclub

A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger \(@nomalifromsoweto\)](#) on Jul 21, 2018 at 1:44am PDT

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Every few months, I goad myself into pitching yet another publication my plus-size column – no takers yet.

## 11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

Diversity! Storytelling! Influencer! Microblogging!



Give the people what they want: How influencer marketing is changing

Babalwa Nyembezi 29 Aug 2019



My buzzword is, sadly, influenza.

## 12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

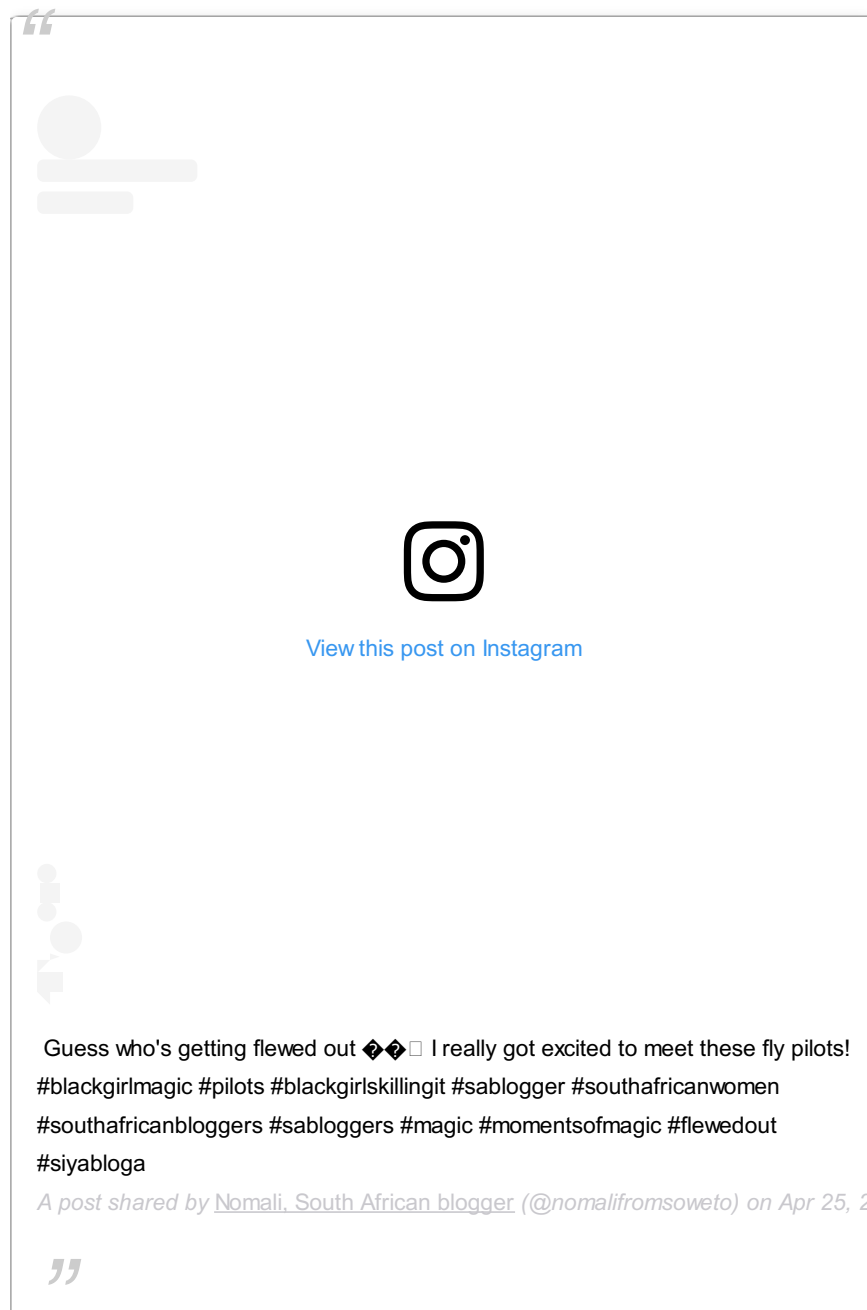
Probably on my commute in the evening. It's when I unwind and have the day rush back to me. I've written quite a few short



stories in that environment, and it remains unbeaten.

### 13. What's your secret talent/party trick?

I am a repository of obscure South African pop-culture facts from the 2000s. It's me. That thing Brenda Fassie said in a *Selimathunzi* interview? Yup.



### 14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I think I am a techophile however, I am a creature of habit so it takes me forever to try the \*in\* apps. I am always thinking about accessible technology, which is something I try to blog about, and how it can change lives and the continent!

### 15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

A lot of email drafts, astrology memes screenshot from Instagram, too many images and apps, of which at least one is a dating app. I know!

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[View this post on Instagram](#)



A selfie from a better skin day. Really enjoyed this entire look. The full thing is a few posts over. □ #sdudlaootd #fatshion #psblogger #whatfatgirlsactuallywear #stylebynomali #sablogger #southafricanbeautyblogger #fatandthriving #fatacceptance #bodylove #lovemyhubclub #size22style #size24style #tcfstyle #effyourbeautystandards #goldenconfidence #psootd #ootd

*A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger](#) (@nomalifromsoweto) on Feb 11, 2019 at 10:10pm PST*

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## 16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

Be honest with yourself, decide what you want to get out of blogging and, by extension, writing as a whole.

“





[View this post on Instagram](#)



💎💎💎💎💎 It's Saturday and, while I've some washing, I've mostly been procrastinating. #sdudlaootd #lovemyclubclub #goldenconfidence #plussize #selfie #discoverunder1k

A post shared by [Nomali, South African blogger \(@nomalifromsoweto\)](#) on Aug 11, 2018 at 3:28am PDT

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Don't be sad that everyone seems to have found their (internet) tribe by the looks of Instagram Stories, chances are it's for clout. Stand your ground, write as much as you can and make it true.

Simple as that. Follow Cele's [blog](#) as well as her [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates.

*\*Interviewed by Leigh Andrews.*

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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