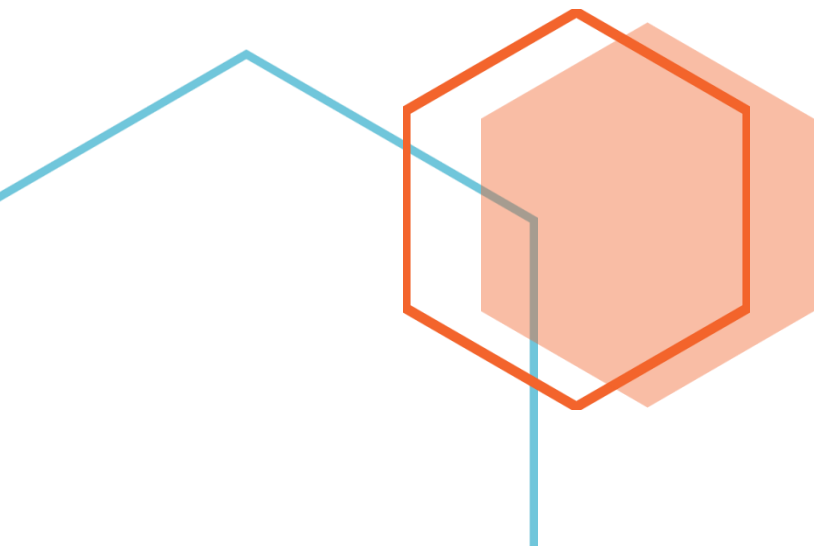




[Vivienne Westwood]

[United Kingdom]

"It is all about technique. The great mistake of this century is to put inspiration and creativity first."





Person's background

Born Vivienne Isabel Swire on April 8, 1941, in the English town of Glossop in Derbyshire, Westwood came from humble beginnings. Her father was a cobbler, while her mother helped the family keep ends meet by working at a local cotton mill.

At the age of 17, Vivienne's family moved to Harrow in the country of Middlesex, where the future fashion icon found work at a local factory and eventually enrolled at a teacher training school.

As Vivienne would later recall, her childhood years were far from London's high life. "I lived in a part of the country that had grown up in the Industrial Revolution," she once said. "I didn't know about art galleries...I'd never seen an art book, never been to the theatre."

In the late 60's, her first marriage dissolved and she met Malcolm McLaren, an art student and future manager of the Sex Pistols. In 1971 McLaren opened a boutique shop at 430 Kings Road in London and started filling it with Westwood's designs. While the name of the shop seemed to be in constant flux — it was changed five times — it proved to be an important fashion centre for the punk movement. When McLaren became manager of the Sex Pistols, it was Westwood's designs that dressed the band and help it carve out its identity.

But as the punk movement faded, Westwood was hardly content to rest on her laurels. She's constantly been ahead of the curve, not just influencing fashion, but often dictating it. After her run with the Sex Pistols, Westwood went an entirely new direction with her Pirate collection of frilly shirts and other attire. Her styles have also included the mini-criniskirt of the 1980s and the frayed tulle and tweed suit of the 1990s. She's even proved it's perfectly possible to make a subversive statement with underwear.

Brief Introduction

Vivienne Isabel Swire was born in Glossop, Derbyshire, England, on April 8, 1941. Considered one of the most unconventional and outspoken fashion designers in the world, Westwood rose to fame in the late 1970s when her early designs helped shape the look of the punk rock movement.

Westwood's net worth is an estimated \$55 million, according to Celebrity Net Worth. However, she herself says that being labeled by how much one is worth, is not something she likes to see.

"Vivienne's effect on other designers has been rather like a laxative," English designer Jasper Conran once explained. "Vivienne does, and others follow."

First steps in entrepreneurship and faced difficulties

Designing and making jewellery, as a single person business, and from there on starting clothing design and establishing her fashion enterprise.

It appears that self-confidence was the most important factor, having the impression that coming from a low class working family, she had no entitlement for running a business. It is believed that this idea carried on into her later work, which has always been political.

The greatest challenges were her divorces and the punk fashion showing decline in sales. She had thus to re-invent her brand a few times, after selling off parts, having a decrease in sales, high taxations, closing of shops.... Her focus is still political as at today, yet more in the area of sustainability and equal rights for workers in the fashion industry (thus workers in Asia)

How and why the person has succeeded, lessons learnt

What made Vivienne success was her believing in the greater picture, where she sees her work as politics towards the environment, feminism/ equal rights and life fulfilment.

She works to sustain herself, but always respecting her social and political picture. She does not work solely out of self-interest.

Lessons learned:

- A political view helps you adjusting fast when society is changing, it gives you awareness and tells you how to react fast
- A drive bigger than earning money gives direction in times of decline/ crisis.
- Having a brand name as a person, helps to overcome failures faster and start up renewed business ideas





Present situation and tips for success

Everyone agrees that Westwood's influence is hard to deny. She has been named "British designer of the year" twice and was awarded the O.B.E. (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 1992.

For more than 30 years, even after she had long made her fortune and fame, Westwood lived in the same small South London apartment, paying just \$400 a month for rent and riding her bike to her studio in Battersea.

Tips for success:

- Don't try to do something different, try doing the same thing but in a different way.
- You have a more interesting life if you wear impressive clothes.
- Intelligence is composed mostly of imagination, insight, things that have nothing to do with reason.
- It is all about technique. The great mistake of this century is to put inspiration and creativity first.

Conclusion

The drive to do something bigger than just earning money, regardless of the social and environmental impact, is what made the Vivienne Westwood 'brand' what it is today. She needs this passion and the passion is part of the product, which still helps her to skilfully innovate, even after so many years.