

MARIA EUGENIA GIRON: ENJOY THE JOURNEY!

There is so much business success related to the name of this incredible woman. Having once built Carrera y Carrera into the brand we know now **Maria Eugenia**, an undoubtable expert in luxury, is leading a number of important initiatives such as Luxury Observatory IE/Mastercard, the Rising Tide Europe Investment Fund encouraging women to grow in that field. In our conversation we spoke about budding fashion brands, how to succeed in the luxury industry, the role of education as well as about education, style and the role of family.



Sometimes to make a leap you need as much as a touch of encouragement sparked by a woman like you. Unfortunately, quite often the glossy pages build the mist of distance creating the wall of "it's not for me". While the truth is it is! There are many women around us who are a unique source of inspiration with their dreams, their worries, and joys like ours, who juggle between career, family, and own personal aspirations and whales of wisdom. The White Shirt Talks from around the world is about them and for them, women who follow their dreams and who are there for creating an impact – big or small and for going beyond.



ABOUT SUCCESS

What keeps me moving is the conviction that we are here to **create an impact**.

We make the living of what we get. We make a life by what we give. This expression is very close to me and reflects my way of thinking.

I was exploring guided by **ambition** of creating an impact. And education also had a big role.

I was always thinking how can I get to the next step. As what gets you here won't get you to the next place.

Business success, first of all, depends on teamwork. It is key to have people who share your goals. Those who **share your values**. And also who have those strength that you do not have. Just like the African Proverb says "if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go as a team".

It is key to define where you want to get setting ambitious goals and planning ahead. This ability evolves with experience.

I value diversity. I saw how diverse teams are stronger than the homogeneous ones. It takes more time to build but it is much stronger and innovative.

It is very difficult for me to work with someone who is not true to my core values. **Honesty and Commitment** in my case is the minimum.

For young people today it is key to spend their time on something they believe in, something that is aligned with their values. And I believe this is great! As they will be working with **passion**. Passion brings **dedication**. Companies need to make sure they are good enough to attract young people.

As a young person when deciding which job to take it is key to think with whom you would be able to learn and thrive. Learn not only about business but also about life.

The first job out of school is important and the **first boss**. I had a very good boss who was my mentor when I joined Loewe. Not only in business, he taught me a lot about business but most important about life. With time I came to realize I was lucky to meet him at the beginning of my career, have him there to support me and help me out. He contributed to shaping what I have done later in life.

Sometimes I was too focused on destination. If I could go back I would advise myself to enjoy more the **journey**.

THE LUXURY INDUSTRY IS ABOUT BUILDING A DREAM

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT LUXURY AND BRANDS IN BOOKS BY M. E. GIRON



TIPS FOR THE FASHION CEO

To be successful as a CEO of a fashion brand there are three key things that need to be done well.

1. **Define the strategy - core competence, market and identify the blue ocean for that brand.**
2. **Attract, and motivate the right team.**
3. **Building the culture build the company according to the values. It is both difficult and key.**

To be successful as a CEO of a fashion brand it is important to be respectful about the **brand identity**. Especially when you come to the crossroads and when you are told that something that has been selling well needs to be changed.

Creativity anticipates trends and you, CEO, have to be prepared to change. The two roles have to reinforce one another.

ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Fashion is one the second most contaminating industries in the world after fossil fuel energy. Normally we would think about supply chain. However, there is much more to that: dies, how the raw material is grown, all of the washing that it involves. And of course, waste.

Fast fashion encourages overconsumption.

Sometimes people throw away clothes even

without wearing them, with a price label on top. In our world of limited resources waste is key to address either by producing less or by reusing resources. It represents an interesting opportunity of getting into the **circular economy**.

REFLECTION FOR A DESIGNER

It is key that management of the company has all of the respect for the creativity. As it is creativity what continuously updates the DNA of the brand.

Each brand has to define its DNA and normally it reflects the values or identity or dreams connected to the designer.

The luxury industry is about building a dream. Tangible side of the product we all understand. However, it is the intangible part that makes us dream. And this happens when there is a **creativity and innovation** and a specific moment of time when the society is dreaming of better times.

When Dior presented his new collection during the World War II the full skirts were symbolizing the new era of prosperity. Armani presented the clothes for women who started going to work. Both of them were reflecting the dreams and **aspirations of a generation**.

We are not isolated. Artists are normally those who notice and reflect on social and societal changes. They need to be connected to the world.

ON FASHION AND BRANDS

To succeed in luxury it is key to have a combination of right and left brain. It is about two different ways of thinking about work: while one is more **intuitive**, the other is more **deductive**. Most probably that's two people - one driving creativity and the other driving the business. That's what is required by this festinating industry.

Creativity needs to be working all the time. Innovation is one of the key drivers of growth.

Commercial part of the business is not only about the commerce itself. It is not about having a Commercial director "who will sell everything". It is about markets. Resources, how are we going to pursue supply chain. Control systems? It is much more than business development.

Many start managing alone and remaining alone is not the answer.

We need to turn it (creativity) into profitability. And it's working together what is turning great brands. If we look at successful brands they all have two people: **Yves Saint Laurent** and **Pierre Bergé**, **Miucci Prada** and **Patrizio Bertelli**. It is a combination of the two sides if the brain.



Shirt: Simplifi IFEMME
Pants: Maje
Jewelry: Carrera y Carrera
Watch: Suarez
Shoes: Pedro Garcia

ON STYLE AND LIFESTYLE

The way we style and dress evolves with time as that is how we feel and see ourselves.

Today for me dress code needs to be simple. It is the word that comes to mind. With **simplicity** comes another word – **comfort**. And it means many things... good textile, good pattern.

I have lots of black jackets and blazers. A lot of white shirts, t-shirts and jeans.

Comfort and beauty have to work for you. And style evolves with time and you want to project the new you. With our dress code we are telling others who we are.

When I look at my closet I see how different eras were connected with certain brands. It was part of discovery of myself. **Loewe, Carrera y Carrera**. I was very lucky to work with beautiful brands. And many of them I still use.

My family and nature give me energy.

I succeed not in spite of my family but because of my family. I do spend a lot of time with them.

The way I enjoy nature evolved with time. Now I do a lot of hiking and rediscovering nature around Madrid. And rediscovering nature that is so close to Madrid. **Nature** gives me a lot of energy.

The city that gives me lots of good memories is **Boston**. I did my MBA, my husband studied there. My son, who is a musician has also been studying there. It brings up in my memory lots of good family moments. Good things and the moments of my life, in which I was thriving, learning and improving.

What always makes me **smile**? My children! They are the promise of the future. They always make me smile.

My eldest son is the music composer working in LA. My middle son - in business, based in Toronto working for GoBeyond, a global platform for angel investing. And the youngest son is in Boarding school in England. Having kids is challenging but life is about **legacy** and family is part of that. This is what life is about.

Education is always opening something new

REGARDING WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Education is always opening something new.

There is a certain imbalance in the world. Women represent only 20% of all entrepreneurs in the world, and in terms of investment it is even less - about 7%.

Together with my friend from Switzerland we wanted to make an impact and decided to create a small fund with small contributions for women to take an opportunity of being an angel investor and about it through practice. That was the start of Rising Tide.

The **Rising Tide 1** united 100 women co-investors in Europe. Rising Tide 2 had 120 women from different countries investing together. Now we are about to launch Rising Tide 3.

We feel there are more and more women who learn and learning is fun. Some of us (participating women) will be Deal Leaders deciding on the investments. What is important for us is that it is changing things around.

We have paradigms of what we want to do and what we believe is possible. Having never seeing something happening might be a mental stopper to achieve.

There is actually an interesting story of a Norwegian boy who was growing up thinking that he can not become a Prime Minister as in his country it has been always a woman.

Change does not happen on its own. You have to **do something to foster the desired change**.

How to join Rising Tide 3?

If you wish to learn by about angel investing or dedicate a small percentage of your savings to this. If you are interested in networking with other European women investors and learning from each other. If you wish to invest a minimum ticket of 10K, then write me mgiron@megadvice.com and I will provide information about next steps.

How to become the project that is invested by Rising Tide 3?

Rising Tide invests in a diverse group of early stage companies with proven track record of various industries. We value diversity and governance and social environmental responsibility. The investment strategy of each fund is defined by the investment committee or deal leaders and approved by all LP or investors.

Read more about Rising Tide at <http://test.risingtide.eu/#main-slider>

