

ELOÏSE VAN DER WESTHUIZEN –PANORAMA, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE

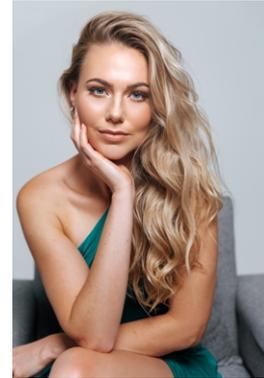
Name: Eloise van der Westhuizen

Region: Panorama, Cape Town, Western Cape

Age: 26 (October 28, 1994)

Occupation:

In 2016, I completed my three-year BCom Management Science degree at the University of Stellenbosch. In 2017, I completed my Honours degree in logistics/supply chain management. Through hard work and dedication, I completed both degrees Cum Laude. Today I am a Business Intelligence (BI) Analyst and part-time model at Twenty Model Management.



Previous beauty competitions or pageants you have entered:

Miss Varsity Cup (University of Stellenbosch) 2013 Top 3; Miss South Africa 2019 Top 5

Why did you decide to enter Miss South Africa 2021 and why do you deserve to win this title?

It was during my journey as Miss South Africa 2019 finalist where my passion for kindness flourished. I realised that there are so many children in need and decided to do something about it. I started a non-profit organisation, *You Matter Foundation*, where we improve the well-being of young South African children in need. We provide self-defence training, CV training, puberty awareness, dance classes, fitness programmes, self-worth awareness etc. This is only the beginning and there are many more lives to be reached and impacted for the greater good. Being Miss South Africa will give me a bigger footprint and a greater influence across South Africa. This a call much greater than myself and my heart is bursting with service. I am ready to serve and be an ambassador to our diverse country.

Tell us about your biggest disappointment and how you bounced back from it.

Not winning the title of Miss South Africa 2019. Being able to represent my country on a national platform has been my dream since an early age. I've learned to trust God's plan for my life and to believe all things come together for the greater good. I've decided to try again. A dream delayed, is not a dream denied.

What do you think is the biggest problem facing young people today?

Instant gratification is something the younger generation are facing every day. We want everything and we want it now. With a mere click of a button it should happen, right? Unfortunately, we all know that it is not as simple as that. Only persistence and hard work will get you there. To quote Usain Bolt: "I trained for four years to run nine seconds and people give up when they don't see results in two months." We also compare our lives on social media. We see others' success stories on social platforms, but we do not see the hard work, dedication, rejection, hurt, sacrifices that were made to get to that point. We compare our lives with someone's false reality.

Who are your role models?

My young at heart grandfather (Oupa Ben) of 95 years, always armed with his stylish hat and comb in his back pocket, taught me several life lessons. He showed me the true meaning of unconditional love when my grandmother got sick and was wheelchair-bound for 13 years. He has a great sense of humour, always sees the positive side of life and is still eager to learn even at his age. Also, Basetsana (Bassie) Khumalo, a successful

philanthropist, businesswoman, entrepreneur, wife, mom and role model to so many young women. She is currently using her various platforms to impact communities in need.

Tell us a bit more about your family?

My father, Albert, is a mechanical engineer. My mother, Yvonne, is an event and incentives manager for one of South Africa's leading cellular networks. My sister is in her final year of her second BSC Human Life Science degree and is currently doing her work-integrated learning as a cardiac clinical technologist.

What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy living an active lifestyle – morning runs and outdoor activities. I also love to cook, read non-fiction and improve my photography skills.

What is your single biggest achievement?

In 2017, I was awarded the Stellenbosch University Rector's Award for Excellent Academic Achievement.

In what way do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today? What would you say to someone that says pageantry degrades women?

Beauty is part of what gets considered but many other values are looked at as well. Pageants provide a platform for empowerment, where women can be seen and heard. These platforms teach women the impact they can have in this world. It creates opportunities for young women who aspire to make a difference in our community. It is not only your outer appearance that matter, but your inner disposition as well. It's about empowering women to fulfil their potential.

What is your message to young girls and young women in South Africa?

Be authentic and stay true to yourself. Do not compare, do not let people label or have a preconceived notion of you. Use your failures and struggles to learn fast and grow through them, and if you succeed, take someone's hand and take them with you on your journey.

What do you love about South Africa?

We have one of the world's most colourful countries. The diversity of her people and the most beautiful natural landscapes, unique mountains, weather and wildlife in the world.

What is one thing you would like to change about South Africa?

We need a country where every child gets an equal opportunity to survive and thrive but yet many of them are left behind because of who they are and where they live. The system is failing them. Without inclusive education, they will not fulfil their potential and their gifts to the world will be lost. We cannot afford to lose these children.

2020 and 2021 have been extraordinary years and difficult for people around the globe. Do you see any positives in what has happened in the past 18 months?

I've learned a valuable lesson during this Covid-19 pandemic. I've been reminded of what truly matters in life; not taking anything for granted and that we as South Africans are stronger and more resilient than what we think.

If you won the Miss South Africa crown and was able to meet one person, who would it be and why?

Malala Yousafzai - a Pakistani activist and the youngest Noble Peace Prize laureate. She fights for safe, free and quality education for women and children. At a young age, she decided to speak out on behalf of women to have the right to receive an education. She is

also the founder of the "Malala Fund" to allow every girl to learn and lead. She did not allow her circumstances to determine her destiny. She stayed true to herself and stood up for what she believed in despite her age or gender.

What is the one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I have a passion for music. I started playing the piano at the age of six and have enjoyed it ever since.

What is the No 1 piece of advice that you would give to your younger self?

Don't be afraid to reach for your dreams. Write down the vision for your life and work extremely hard to achieve those goals. There will be times when you will get knocked down, but get up even stronger.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

Describe yourself in three words:

Resilient, diligent, empathetic

What's the best advice you can give in exactly four words?

Comparison is not inspiration

Who's your favourite designer and why?

Anel Botha. Not only is she a talented designer but an incredibly hard-working woman. I was fortunate to walk the Miss South Africa 2019 stage in one of her beautiful designs.

You have to give up one of these? Handbags or shoes?

Handbags, a girl can never have too many shoes.

What is one thing that we would not know about you just by looking at you?

I'm a pianist.

What would be your dream holiday?

Eating New York cheesecake in Times Square, New York.

If you could have any superhuman power, what would it be?

Invisible and to be able to read people's mind

What are you reading?

Good to Great by Jim Collins and *Atomic Habits* by James Clear

What music are you listening to?

Indie/Folk/Pop

What are your favourite TV shows?

MasterChef Australia, *The Bold Type*.

What is your favourite meal?

Any creamy pasta dish.

Who is your local and international celeb crush?

Local: Leandie du Randt. International: Ryan Reynolds

What's your guilty pleasure?

Jason Bakery's doughsants

Social media tags:

- Facebook: Eloïse van der Westhuizen
- Instagram: Eloise.vdw
- Twitter: @EloisevanderWes