

Fighting Mental Illness and Starting a Business Aged 17

Monday 10 June, 2019

At fifteen, Lauren was lying in a hospital bed after social difficulties at school lead to her attempting to take her own life. Now, three years on, she is running an international business aimed at helping other young people experiencing similar problems.

I'm today's society, issues at school don't stop when the bell rings at the end of the day. They carry on into the night via social media, which is what happened for Lauren. It felt like life was inescapable, and social media was to blame. Fast-forward a few years and Lauren is now using social media for the best, sharing uplifting messages to her followers. Her brand: Øbsydian. Named after the volcanic glass obsidian- which is said to have protective and healing qualities- Øbsydian has already made sales all over the world. Just ten months in, Lauren already feels like she is reaching out to people and hopes her positive messages are helping.

"It's the unfortunate truth that so many people feel the way I've felt. What we need is a community around us that understands- and that's what I'm trying to do with Øbsydian."

Lauren sells branded clothing items which she encourages people to customise with the patches, pins and badges she also sells. Her slogan 'Own Who You Are' is the message she hopes resonates most with her customers- she encourages everyone to accept themselves the way they are. Growing up today there is so much pressure to conform, and Lauren's reaching out to remind people that it's okay to just be themselves.

Her favourite items that she sells are her slogan T-shirts which she designs and prints herself. Each one has a message on it that is personal to her and that she wants to share with the world. "Struggling does not equal failure" and "To do: be me" are among her favourites.

Lauren hopes to continue helping people with her work, and in doing so she knows she is helping herself.

"It's so uplifting and fulfilling- I love what I do".

One message she would like to share with the world is this: "With every new day, we get another chance at life. The sun will always rise, even after the darkest nights- sometimes you might be waiting longer than other times, but the light will always come back to you eventually."

Lauren is still on her journey of recovery. She suffers with anxiety and depression, as well as PTSD from her experiences at school. Some days are harder than others, but there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

Lauren also makes regular donations to a mental health charity, YoungMinds.

For more information, visit www.obsydian.net or search @obsydianofficial on Facebook and Instagram.

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