

We took a chance... *and it worked*

Sometimes it's worth taking a risk in life, whether it's to achieve a **personal dream** or to **forge ahead** professionally. We talk to five women who threw **caution to the wind** with remarkable results

PHOTOGRAPHS COLIN BELL
INTERVIEWS LAURA MANNERING

'I never thought
I'd have a
career like this'
Sarah, 62

'I turned my back on
a steady income'
Caroline, 35



'I put my heart
on the line'
Sarah, 46

'I quit my
high-paying job'
Karen, 44

'I risked all
my savings'
Jacqui, 30

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'My internet date clicked'

Sarah Rayner, 46, is an author and lives with her partner, Tom, in Brighton. Her new book, *One Moment, One Morning* (Picador), is out now

'I had one marriage and a two-year relationship behind me when I signed up for internet dating. I had never approved of going from one relationship to another without enough of a gap, so I wondered if I was doing the right thing - it had only been two months since my most recent break-up. But I thought: "I could hide myself away, or I could try to have some fun."

I wrote my profile off the top of my head and it was a good mirror of my mood, which was: "I've just fallen off a rather nasty horse and, rather than mope, I'm going to jump straight back on again!" I knew that my knight was also likely to be slightly tarnished.

When Tom responded, he seemed nice but not amazing. He looked a bit washed out in his photo (I learned later that was because it was taken when he was recovering from a broken ankle!) and his spelling was dreadful, but I decided to meet him, just for an hour.

It's a cliché, but when I saw him my heart flipped - he was gorgeous! Over coffee, I learned he was far funnier and more articulate in real life than he had been online. He had me in tears of laughter. More dates followed and, three years on, we're still together. We are both 46 and divorced, but I think we would like to get married eventually. Having never had children of my own, I've enjoyed getting to know Tom's son, Sebastian, too.

People worry they won't meet someone nice in their 40s and that they'll have to compromise, but I know that doesn't have to be the case. I gave dating a chance and Tom turned out to be more than I could have hoped for.' [CONTINUED OVER PAGE]



She decided to give her date an hour - but Sarah and Tom are still together