

Reality

# Told she'd never make it, Shark Tank host Sarah Harris is preparing to prove her naysayers wrong

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Sarah Harris reports live on SA bushfires

SHE'S one of television's rising stars, but not long ago Sarah Harris was told she didn't have what it took to be a presenter.

That crushing assessment threw the now 33-year-old newshound into a spiral of self doubt that threatened to derail her promising career.

These days, she's the popular co-host of Channel Ten's morning show *Studio 10*, and is about to step up as the face of new reality series *Shark Tank*, which puts inventors in front of potential investors.

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Popular pick ... Sarah Harris with the rest of the Studio 10 panel of Ita Buttrose, Jessica Rowe and Joe Hildebrand. Picture: Justin Lloyd

As she prepares for the biggest year of her career, Harris still remembers the rough patch where she wondered if TV was indeed where she belonged.

"A few years back, I was told I didn't have a future in presenting and that I should focus on something else," she revealed.

"My confidence really took a knock. In TV, you have to back yourself. After that, I didn't. That caused more people to lose faith in me and so the cycle went on and on."

Harris relocated from Brisbane to Sydney in 2008 as the *Today* show's national reporter. She would also later anchor Nine's midmorning news bulletin.

That crippling doubt came as Harris struggled with the death of her father, from whom she had been estranged most of her life and only reconnected with in his dying weeks.



Young gun ... Sarah Harris pictured when she moved to Sydney to be the national Today Show reporter. Picture: Supplied

"Moving cities is tough enough. I left my home and all of my friends and family. It was a big new job and a massive challenge. Then I lost my father, which really threw me.

"I was in this massive funk that lasted a couple of years. It knocked me around a lot. Worst of all, I no longer believed in myself.

"I don't know how I got out of that. I think it had something to do with turning 30 and knowing I had the runs on the board."

Others weren't as recognising of her promise. For years, Harris held on to her dream of being a foreign correspondent for Nine, reporting on major news events abroad.

"I had my heart absolutely set on it. I was always in the mix but got turned down again and again. Sometimes it takes not getting what you want to get what you need.



Newlywed ... Sarah Harris married the love of her life, Tom Ward, last year. Picture: James Horan

"All of a sudden, I realised there were all these other opportunities in front of me.

"Did I think my career would take this turn though? Absolutely not. I thought I'd be at Nine for the rest of my life."

When opportunity came knocking, Harris jumped ship to Ten to help launch a brand new morning show alongside Jessica Rowe, Ita Buttrose and Joe Hildebrand.

*Studio 10* has since found a loyal audience and Harris is seen by senior executives as a popular, reliable and promising talent.

So when those playmakers asked her to consider new opportunities, years of hard work and tenacity finally locked into place.

"I feel like everything I've done has been leading towards this. It's a big jump, but you work your way up and keep going, and when the time is right you leap.



Falling into place ... Sarah Harris said all her hard work has been leading to this. Picture: Channel Ten

"I feel lucky they've taken a chance with me on *Shark Tank*. I'm so excited."

As the wife of a small-business owner, Harris was drawn to the format's self-starter philosophy — giving ordinary, hardworking people with big ideas the chance to live out their dreams.

"The inventors who come on the show have worked so tirelessly to turn an idea into something big.

"Similarly, the Sharks made each come from nothing, chased their dreams, worked hard and made a success of themselves. I'm not rich and I'm certainly not an inventor, but I can sort of relate."

Harris grew up in housing commission, the child of a single mum who worked several jobs to make ends meet. She wanted a vastly different life for herself, so she went and got it.

"I was in grade 12 and wanted to do work experience at Channel Seven, but we lived an hour from the studio. I worked after school at McDonald's to give mum petrol money to drive me.

"That's what you do. You juggle, make sacrifices and put your head down. There are tough times and setbacks, but when you finally start to have a few wins, they're all the more sweeter."

**Shark Tank begins on Channel Ten tonight at 8pm.**


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