

# Falling in Love

## in the Digital Age

### Katy couples who met online, fell in love, and are living happily ever after

Written by Ella Hearrean | Select photography by Sara Isola

During a time when social media is taking over communication and online gaming has hit an all-time high, couples are finding more and more often that online matchmaking isn't such a far-fetched idea. What was once considered taboo, is now becoming the norm - and quite a successful one.

#### Aaron and Sarah Hamlett

Aaron Hamlett was about to cancel his membership to Yahoo Personals when he was contacted by Sarah in 2007. They discovered several surprising commonalities: Both grew up in Katy and attended Taylor High School in different graduating classes. "I remember looking up his picture in my yearbook with my sister," says Sarah. Both were also career-oriented and had turned to online dating because they were past the social scene.

Although the website rated their compatibility as mediocre, the pair agreed to meet in person at Stars Sports Bar & Grill. Sarah, who had dated online off and on for two years, instantly felt a spark with Aaron. In fact, they hit it off so well that their conversation stretched to dinner at Swampy's. Two months

later, Aaron and Sarah decided to meet each other's family and friends. "It didn't take long to know he was 'the one,'" she says.



Sarah and Aaron Hamlett on their wedding day in 2009

Their relationship continued to develop. On Thanksgiving Day the following year, their families toasted the newly engaged couple. In 2009, their wedding day went as planned without a hitch, and two years later, Sarah and Aaron welcomed their baby girl, Peyton.

Today, the couple of four years spends time together watching sports and laughing at their 2-year-old's witty quips. Aaron, who is part owner of Iconic Construction, and Sarah, an instructional coach for Katy ISD, attribute their solid marriage to the way they manage their time. "We find a balance between romantic couple time, family time, individual time, and time with friends," she says.

Sarah encourages others to consider online dating. "If they are in the same boat as I was - living a hectic life and surrounded by friends

who are already married - they can sit in pajamas without makeup and chat with someone. Why not?"



When the Hamletts met online in 2007, they were surprised to discover that they both grew up in Katy and attended Taylor High School



## Digital Love Stories

**"We met 2<sup>1/2</sup> years ago and are going to marry in Vancouver in July!"**

- K. Jensen

**"We met nearly nine years ago on Myspace and got married almost seven years ago."**

- M. McKissick

**"We met online about seven years ago and have been married five years. We are so happy, and I feel like we are still newlyweds."**

- C. Gates

**"We met five years ago and been married almost three years."**

- L. Sharp

**"We met online and have been married two years."**

- T. Kerbow

**"We met on eHarmony in 2010 and have been married three years."**

- K. Buckner

**"I met my hubby in July 2002, and we were married in June 2004. We met on match.com."**

- C. Price

**"People who live hectic lives can sit in pajamas without makeup and chat with someone online. Why not?"**

- Sarah Hamlett, who met her husband Aaron on Yahoo Personals





The Sanchezes have three children: Iris, Rosalynn, and Zoe

“I have no regrets. I couldn't have married a better man.”

- Melissa Sanchez, who met her husband Raul on [migente.com](http://migente.com)

### Raul and Melissa Sanchez

Melissa Sanchez tells her daughters about her initial attraction to their father. “It was daddy’s smile. That’s what got me about daddy.” The stay-at-home mother of Iris, 8, Rosalynn, 5, and Zoe, 2, had only been on the Latin dating site [migente.com](http://migente.com) for a few weeks in March 2002 when she spotted Raul Sanchez’s profile. “I was recovering from surgery, had just lost my job of seven years, and wanted to do something with my time,” she says.

Raul had been on the site a couple of months when they began chatting online. They talked on the phone for months before they agreed to meet. Melissa says, “We moved slowly. I hadn’t done anything like this before, and Raul was leery because many people didn’t match their profile photos.” They enjoyed easy conversation on their first date and grew to be inseparable. A month later, Melissa says, “I could see myself falling in love with him.”

When Raul popped the question a year later outside church, Melissa tearfully accepted. However, their summer wedding was no fairytale. Electrical outages, heavy traffic, and no air conditioning complicated their big day. Melissa says with a laugh, “If it could’ve gone wrong, it did.”

Since then, the couple has endured ups and downs, including various health issues. Melissa sometimes jokes with Raul, “I hope you kept your receipt because you



This year Melissa and Raul Sanchez will celebrate 10 years of marriage

married a lemon,” to which he always responds, “It’s a good thing I like lemonade.”

This year, the couple celebrates 10 years of marriage. To maintain a strong union, Melissa says, “Don’t sweat the small stuff. Make time as a couple.” The pair says they often curl up on the couch with a movie and popcorn. “I have no regrets,” she says. “I couldn’t have married a better man.”





When Bryan and Alizia introduced their daughters to each other, they became best friends and easily blended into a cohesive family

“If I texted her the code word, my best friend was supposed to call with an excuse for me to leave.”

- Alizia Jones, who met her husband Bryan on match.com

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Bryan and Alizia Jones were married on a cruise and have been married for six years

### Bryan and Alizia Jones

It's hard to keep up with these Joneses. The parents of five girls began their adventure on match.com in 2006. Alizia, a single mom of two young girls at the time, was intrigued by Bryan's profile. He shared her faith, was raised in a family-oriented culture similar to hers, and also had two girls.

After several emails, Alizia prepared for her first online date by agreeing on a code word with her best friend. "If I texted her the code word, she was supposed to call with an

excuse for me to leave," remembers Alizia. Luckily, she and Bryan enjoyed easy conversation and soon began spending weekends together.

After some time, Alizia introduced her girls, Christa, 5, and Mia, 9 months, to Bryan's girls, Sarah, 7, and Emily, 4, at church. The older girls instantly became best friends. Alizia wasn't surprised when Bryan asked her to marry him on Christmas Day two years later. "It wasn't a question of 'if,' but of 'when' we'd get married."

After a cruise wedding, the blended family of six was surprised to discover there would be a new addition. In 2008, Alizia gave birth to Sophia. "She's the glue that brought her sisters together. The girls were excited to change diapers," adds Alizia.

She knows that this season of child-rearing is temporary. "If the kids don't get along, we present a united front," says Alizia. "We don't let them get between us because one day they'll grow up, and it'll just be us."

This year, the couple celebrates six years of fun, laughter, and a whole lot of structure. "We mesh really well," says Alizia. "I'm blessed to have them all." **KM**

*ELLA HEARREAN is a freelance editor, writer, and proofreader who has also had luck with online dating.*

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