

➤ Reinventions

Investment Banker Turned Baker Turning Your Childhood Passion into Your Life's Work

Rachel Thebault loved playing with her Easy-Bake Oven as a child, lining up stuffed animals to buy her baked goods.

She continued baking as a hobby in her free time, even making chocolate truffles for friends' dinner parties and weddings. But as a vice president for Bank of America at 27, she didn't have a lot of free time.

"I couldn't see myself as an investment banker for the rest of my life and couldn't imagine starting a family in that line of work," Rachel says. Working with high-growth retail, she had enviously watched her small-business clients flourish. She wanted a change.

Giving up a lucrative salary and a secure corporate position was scary, but she needed to follow her inner voice. In 2004, Rachel left the bank and enrolled in culinary arts school. She also got an unpaid position working with a great pastry chef at the famed Chanterelle Restaurant in New York.

In 2007 she opened her own shop, Tribeca Treats, in Manhattan. "In the first year of business, we did several hundred thousand dollars in sales," Rachel says.

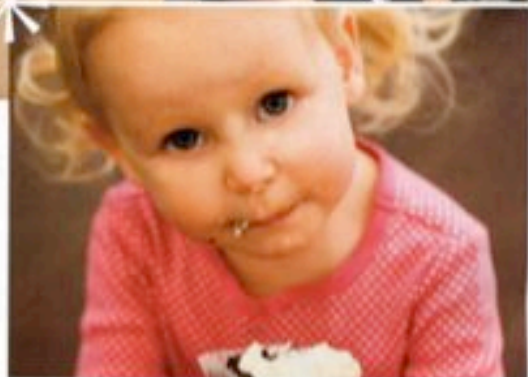
As business grew, so did her family; she and her husband have a daughter, now 3.

Rachel, now 33, admits the work can be demanding, including some 80-hour workweeks, but "ultimately, I answer to myself." She can take her daughter to work, plan for the future of her business or get her hands dirty and decorate some cakes. "Now my time is my own," she says.



Photos courtesy of Rachel Thebault

Sweet Success
Marin Thebault, 3, is the beneficiary of mom Rachel's new career.



Starting Over From Scratch

➤ Food for Thought

Rachel Thebault advises other people starting their own business to think about it carefully first: "You have to have a passion for what it is you are building. When that passion becomes a full-time job, you might not like it anymore. There's a lot of soul searching that needs to be done. You have to sit down and be honest with the kind of person you are. You have to consider if you have the personality traits that lend themselves well to running your own business, like multi-tasking and being able to handle surprises and emergencies well."