



GWEN STEFANI

# 'I'm the Happiest Ever I've Been!'



## NEW FOCUS

"There's a purpose for pain, and you have to use that pain for something good. That's what I tried to do, and I'm so grateful."

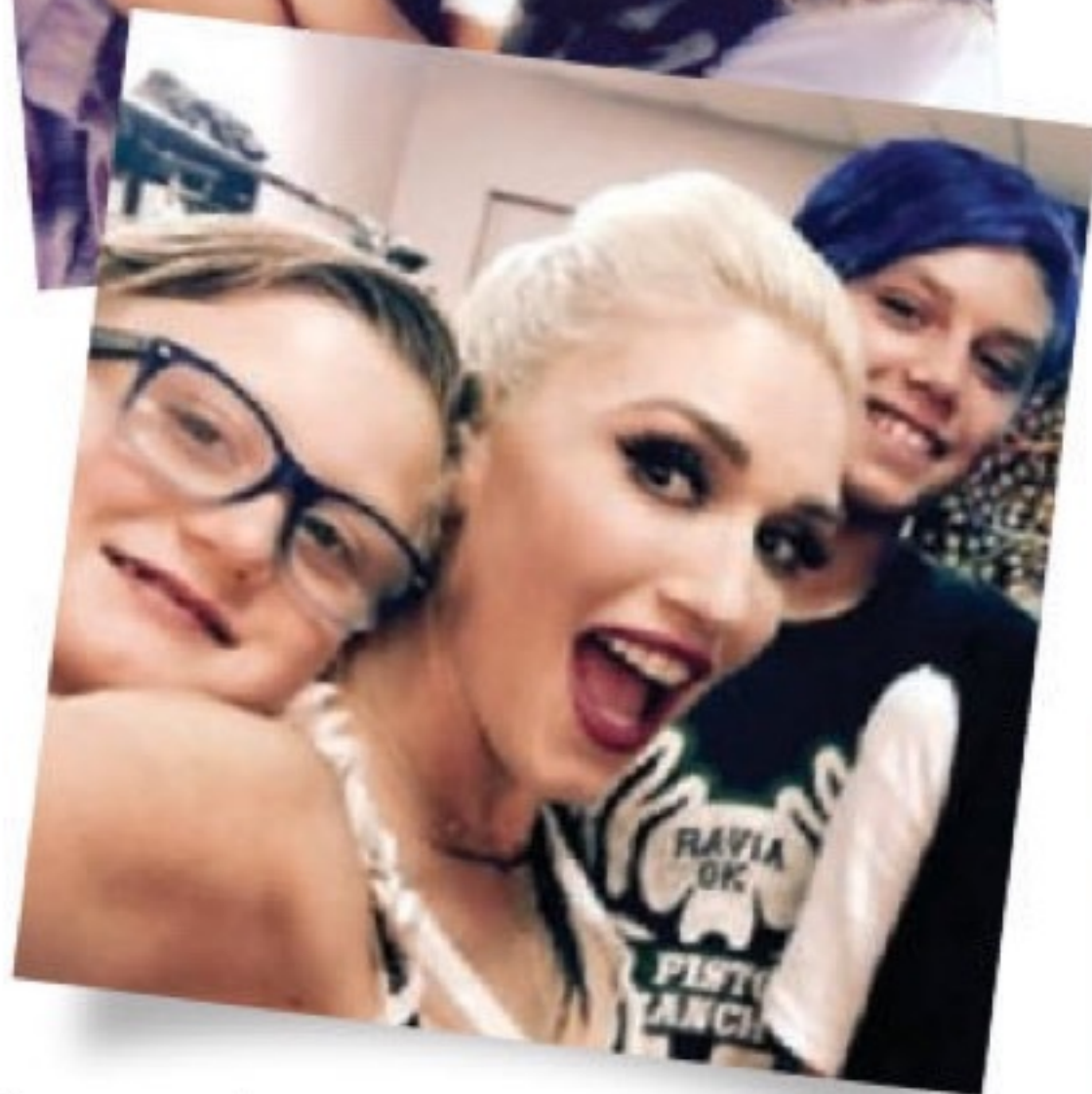


THE SINGER OPENS UP ABOUT FINDING JOY—AND LOVE!—AFTER GETTING THROUGH THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME IN HER LIFE

By **MELODY CHIU**

**G**earing up to celebrate turning 47 earlier this month, Gwen Stefani couldn't help but reflect on how much her life has changed since her last birthday. "I look back at it and go, 'That was such a rich, full year,'" muses the star. "It's just crazy how much happened. I feel like I've had an awakening and I don't want it to stop."

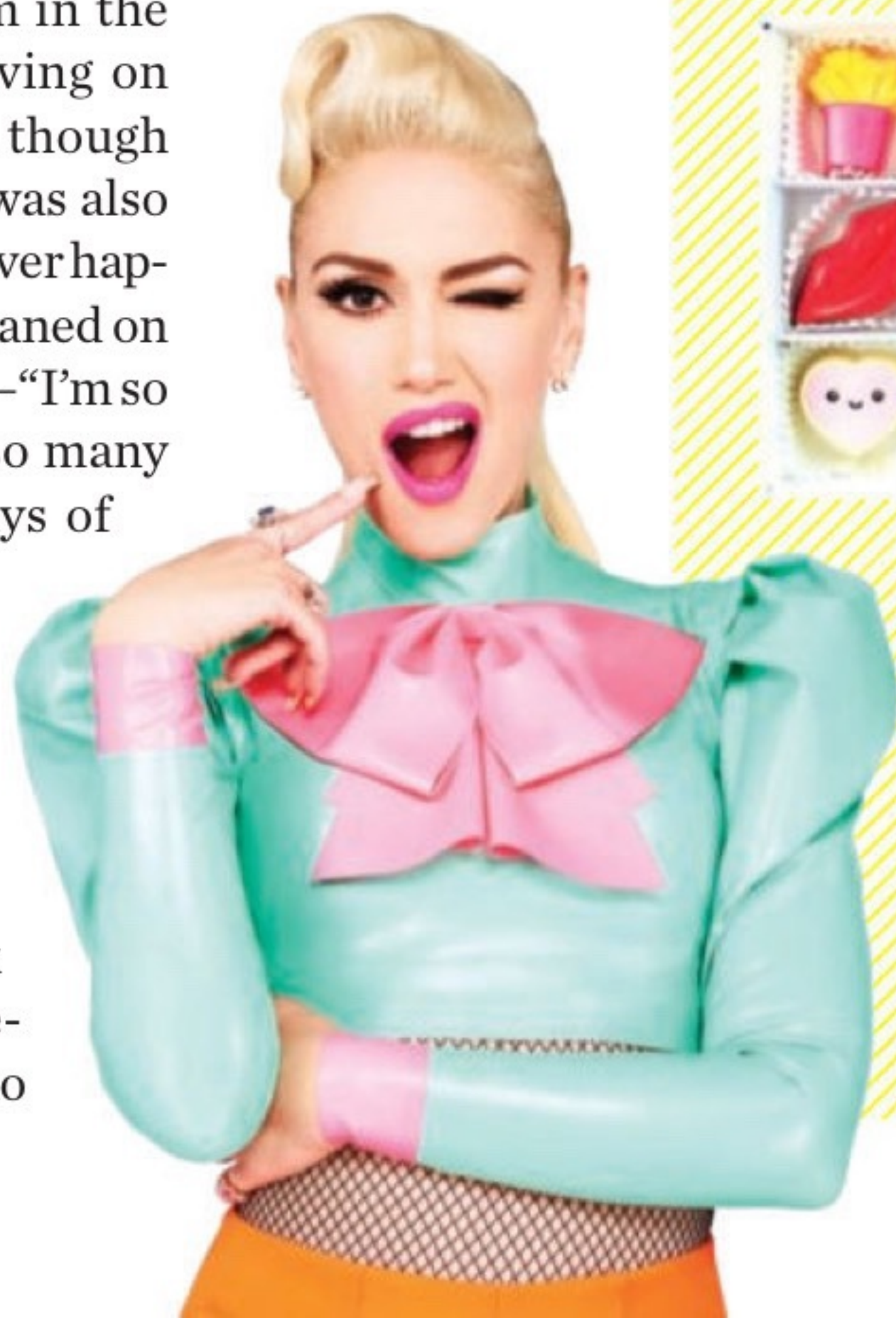
The last 12 months have indeed been transformative for Stefani, who bounced back after ending her 19-year



**SWEET SERENADE**

“I want to do it as many times as we can,” says Stefani (with Apollo, right, and below, Zuma and Kingston) of surprising Shelton’s fans onstage with their hit duet “Go Ahead and Break My Heart.” “I’m in a completely different world, and these aren’t my people, yet they’re so warm.”

relationship with rocker Gavin Rossdale by releasing a No. 1 album, *This Is What the Truth Feels Like*, embarking on a sold-out tour and finding love again with her costar on *The Voice*, Blake Shelton. “I feel like I’m in the next phase,” she says of moving on from her heartbreak. “Even though that year was challenging, it was also one of my favorite things that ever happened to me.” While Stefani leaned on loved ones, including Shelton—“I’m so blessed. This year has been so many beautiful memories,” she says of their upcoming one-year anniversary—after her divorce, she also found solace in her faith. “I’ve been really working hard on my spiritual exercising, and when you do that, I think you find suddenly you’re seeing in color,” says Stefani, who



is executive producing Nickelodeon’s new kids’ show *Kuu Kuu Harajuku* (airing Saturdays at 9 a.m.). “Everything has more meaning and more feeling and more purpose. I’m the happiest I’ve ever been.”

While much of her life has changed, one aspect has remained constant: her dedication to her sons (with Rossdale) Kingston, 10, Zuma, 8, and Apollo, 2, who accompanied her on tour this summer. “Kingston was protective and Zuma had a headset on and a little flashlight and wanted to be part of the crew,” says Stefani. “He walked me on and off the stage every single night. It was adorable.” Shelton also often visited Stefani on tour, and the duo spent some downtime between stops at the country singer’s ranch in Tishomingo, Okla. “One day off on tour, we were in Texas and all decided to just drive our buses to the ranch. We just had a really fun day off being in the country,” she says. “Growing up in Anaheim, my version of the country was the beach or the local park. There wasn’t a lot of that kind of experience, so it’s been really fun.”

Though her personal life thrust her more into the spotlight than ever before the last two years, “I don’t really feel like I live in the Hollywood craziness,” says Stefani, whose “regular” life includes “school runs and family time.” Since getting back into a “good place” after emotional upheaval, the star is embracing her future. “It’s hard to move forward and not know what I’ll be doing next,” she says. “But there’s always amazing things to come. I love when you don’t know what’s going to happen next and something great happens.” ●

**Gwen’s Exclusive Collection for People Shop!**

Stefani teamed up with *People* for a limited-edition collection to benefit the American Red Cross Home Fire safety prevention program. To purchase, visit [peopleshop.com/redhot](http://peopleshop.com/redhot)



Maggie Louise Confections x Harajuku Lovers Chocolate Box \$38

Baggu x Harajuku Lovers Graphic Bag \$32



Harajuku Lovers Pop Electric 5-Piece Fragrance Set \$125 (or \$40 each)

TOP: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES; (PEOPLE SHOP) CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JAMIE NELSON/NICKELODEON/VIA.COM, INTERNATIONAL; COURTESY MAGGIE LOUISE CONFECTIONS; COURTESY BAGGU; COURTESY HARAJUKU LOVERS