

girl wonder

No doubt about it: Gwen Stefani is a leading lady of rock

BY DENISE HENRY & PAUL COCO

Gwen Stefani has blazed a fiery trail for female rock stars. Instead of letting men dominate rock 'n' roll, she's stepped up to the mike and shared her unique musical style with the world.

More than 15 years ago, Stefani helped form the rock band No Doubt. The band members have had many ups and downs together, but have always managed to come out on top. Today they're closer than ever, Stefani says, and enjoying some of their happiest times. They've received numerous awards and their latest CD, *Rock Steady*, is destined for success.

Here, the flashy singer and songwriter tells *Scope* about her rock 'n' roll beginnings, and gives advice you'll no doubt want to hear!

SCOPE: Starting out, was it difficult being one of few female singers in a male rock 'n' roll world?

Gwen: It wasn't like that because [our band was] never trying to be successful. We were just doing it because we were passionate and couldn't help ourselves. We all went to school and went to college, and we all had back-up plans. No one was ever **intending** for this to be our careers.

SCOPE: Do you think you ever received less airplay because you are a female rock artist?

Gwen: It's weird to be a woman [in a male rock world]. Women are not popular in rock right now at all. Certain radio stations just won't play women at all and it's awful to think that's how it is. In the early days, there were times when I felt like I had to prove myself.

SCOPE: What was the most difficult time you had growing up?

Gwen: I had a really hard time learning in school. I couldn't spell. I know I have a lot of dyslexic tendencies. In high school, I didn't know that and it was really challenging for me. I had horrible fights with my mom because I was frustrated that I couldn't learn.

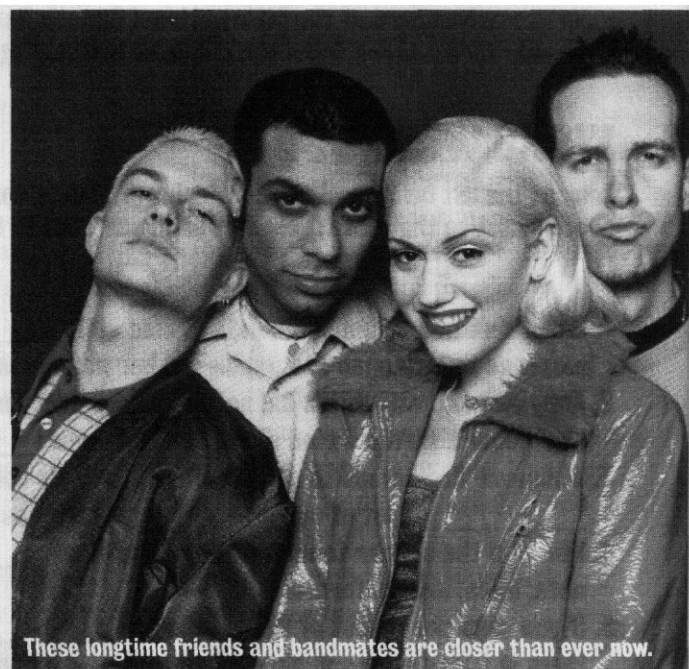
SCOPE: What finally made you become a better learner?

Gwen: I wanted to be educated. I wanted to be a strong member of society and know what I was talking

about. When I went to college, I said that I'm just going to try my hardest. Going to college saved me.

SCOPE: What advice would you give students about showing respect to someone who isn't in the "cool" group?

Gwen: When I look back at some of the horrible things people did to others in high school, it breaks my heart. Think about the fact that you don't know everything about another person. You don't know where they're coming from, you don't know the **circumstances** in their family. For instance, one of my best friends and bandmates



These longtime friends and bandmates are closer than ever now.



Gwen rocks the crowd with her hit songs and cool costumes!

shot himself at age 18. We didn't even know the pain he was going through. He was the guy who everyone loved. He was the guy on stage with all of the energy. I didn't know he had so much pain inside of him.

When you judge people and say things that may hurt someone else, it may go deeper than you'd think. So, try to be as open-minded as you can. At this age, you're still trying to find yourself.

SCOPE: What advice can you give teens about making a difference, or coping with new national and

international issues, such as the war against terrorism?

Gwen: I'm a human being and frightened like everyone else. There's nothing I can do to help this war, but I do know how to write songs. People have told me that when they hear them, it makes them feel good, so I write the best stuff I can and share it. Hopefully, I can create a diversion during these hard times. I know that music is such a healer and an amazing gift. If you can find your talent and your gift, you should focus on that because that's what you have to offer. ■

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