



Gwyneth 2.0

As an actress she enjoyed enormous success, but it's as founder of lifestyle site Goop that GWYNETH PALTROW truly feels fulfilled. She tells SANJIV BHATTACHARYA about the mistakes she's made and why consciously uncoupling is worthwhile

Photographs by CHRIS COLLS Styling by TRACY TAYLOR

Why does Gwyneth get so much flak? That's the question we're chewing over this morning, Ms. Paltrow and I, in a gorgeous beach house in Malibu, 20ft from the hissing tide.

"It's got a few layers to it," she offers. "People were fine with me as an actress, but with Goop it was like, 'Stay in your lane.' Women in general get a lot of pushback, especially if you're successful and attractive." She catches herself immediately. "I'm not saying I'm attractive. I mean when you're *considered* attractive." And she laughs. This is how it happens; she says things and, well, sometimes they just don't come out right.

You've heard the sort of thing – quotes like, "I'd rather smoke crack than eat cheese from a can," or "We can't live without Vegemite" – off-the-cuff comments that, without context and the tongue-in-cheek nuance you get from her in person, sound out of touch. She once described the vicious articles about her as "dehumanizing... It's almost like how, in war, you go through this bloody, dehumanizing thing..." She wasn't comparing

herself to victims of war, of course, but that's how it was picked up.

"You get inured," Paltrow shrugs. "It's literally not about me, but what I represent. There's a lot of projection. And it only hurts your feelings if you already think that about yourself. So, when criticisms stung, I used it to think, 'What judgment am I holding against myself?' I tried to learn from it."

The criticism really started when Paltrow, 44, launched Goop.com in 2008. At the time, she was just sending a newsletter of lifestyle recommendations to her friends from her kitchen: where to eat, shop, get a wax. "I made this tiny database so my friends would stop f***** calling me," she laughs.

Today, she has 75 employees and offices in Santa Monica and New

"People were FINE with me as an actress, but with GOOP it was, 'Stay in your lane.' Women get a lot of PUSHBACK"

Previous page: Playsuit by Madewell; earrings by Jennifer Fisher; bracelet by Jemma Wynne
This page: Shirt by The Great; bikini top by Fella; bracelet by Jemma Wynne; ring by Chloé





Sweater by Equipment;
earrings by Jennifer
Fisher

York. Beyond recipes and city guides, it's a shopping site and a label: there's Goop fashion, beauty and wellness. Certainly, there's no time for acting now, not beyond a few commitments she has to see through. Not even a return of Pepper Pots for *The Avengers*? "Oh, I can't talk about that," she smiles. "You never know."

Turning her back on acting was easy. "I was burned out! Doing back-to-back films in my twenties took it out of me." So when she was pregnant with her daughter, Apple, (with her ex-husband, Coldplay frontman Chris Martin; they also have son Moses, 11), she took a long break and the creative juices started to bubble. Slowly her newsletter grew – and so did Paltrow. It was a baptism of fire, with the vitriol of critics and her own humbling learning curve. She had never run a company before.

"Acting was my identity," she says. "Who am I, if I'm not that? And there was a weird period when I wasn't starring in films or running a successful business, so I was kind of nowhere. I thought, what if this just isn't going to be successful?"

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It was a shocking possibility for Paltrow. As one of Hollywood's true one percenters, she's led a life of astonishing success. She got her break from her godfather, Steven Spielberg; won an Academy Award at 26; an Emmy at 39; dated Brad Pitt and Ben Affleck; and counts Jay Z and Beyoncé as close friends. So she assembled a dream team of business mentors – not a problem for the woman who once hosted a fundraiser for President Obama at her house.

But there were challenges on the home front. During Goop's early years, she was married to Martin and living in north-west London's Belsize Park. But the marriage began to fray and LA beckoned.

"When Chris and I were talking about separating, he said, 'You probably want to go home,' and I

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Pajama shirt (part of set) by Goop; shorts by Madewell; bracelet by Jemma Wynne

think he wanted a change, too. We were ready for some sunshine.”

She misses London dearly for “that beautiful mix of urban and bucolic”. But LA is treating her well, living in Brentwood, by the sea. “Twenty years ago it was so showbiz-centric, so empty. Now there’s tech, art, finance, food – it’s having a renaissance.”

Paltrow lives the life of a working mom: disciplined, punctual, routined. And it’s calmer in many ways; less travel, less hoopla. Certainly, the glare of fame is less bright now that she’s away from show business. As the face of Goop, she appears on the brand’s Instagram, blog posts and fashion shoots, but even those will diminish. “For Goop to scale up, it

*“I’m happy because I’ve milked the f*** out of EVERY opportunity. I turn MISTAKES into STEPPING stones”*

needs to not be dependent on my name,” she says. Already, she can move freely without the paparazzi bothering her: “They passed laws a couple of years ago about not harassing children. So I take them everywhere with me like a shield – they’re good for something!”

Paltrow likes talking about her kids. Apple is now 13, a number that makes her whimper: “It went so fast!” But she has no maternal trepidation over her girl becoming a teenager, much less a famous one. “My kids can handle it,” she says. “They know their lives are extraordinary. And girls today are allowed to be anything; they’re self-possessed, confident, they like themselves. In Apple’s peer group, I don’t see the insecurity I saw at that age. They’re like, ‘We got this.’”

As for her own obstacles, Paltrow wouldn’t change a thing:

“Everything I went through brought me to now, and now is awesome.” Though her life may seem seamless on the surface, she’s had difficulties, too – this is what she wants me to understand. The death of her father, director and producer Bruce Paltrow, was

devastating; she calls him “the true love of my life”. And her divorce, of course, was “incredibly difficult and painful and sad”. She comes from a family of long and stable marriages; she never imagined hers might fail in this way.

“I’ve had an extraordinary life, where things have happened in a huge way – huge success, huge joy, huge pain, huge loss,” she explains. “And the reason I feel happy today is because I’ve milked the f*** out of every opportunity. I haven’t made one mistake that I haven’t used as a stepping stone to get somewhere else. I’m ruthless when it comes to using the hard things.”

The hardest thing of all was to “consciously uncouple” (a phrase the pair used in the official announcement) from Chris Martin – for which she caught no end of flak. “I wanted to turn my divorce into a positive,” says Paltrow. “What if I didn’t blame the other person for anything, and held myself 100% accountable? What if I checked my own s*** at the door and put my children first? And reminded myself about the

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things about my ex-husband that I love, and fostered the friendship? What I put myself through to get there was the most difficult thing I’ve ever done in my life.”

Now she’s in a relationship with director/producer boyfriend Brad Falchuk, and she and Martin are successfully co-parenting. Maybe consciously uncoupling works? “People are coming around,” she says brightly. “I know it’s a dorky term, but it’s very worthwhile. I’m always the person who gets s*** at first, but then later people say, ‘Hey, maybe that’s a good idea.’ I don’t mind.” She stands up and smiles. “Once you get over the idea that you need external reinforcement to feel good, life opens up in an incredible way.”

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