

what's kickin'  male call

hold onto **YOUR MOJO**

Instead of getting your “groove” back after baby, this dad asks, why let it go in the first place?

BY  BOB GULLA

My buddy's wife, about eight months pregnant, has lost her groove. I know this because I dropped by their place recently and there she was...beached on the couch, one arm dropped dramatically to the floor, and one leg slung over the top. By the looks of it, she'd just killed a sleeve of Apple Newtons and a quart of chocolate milk and she wasn't feeling too good, or looking too good, for that matter, in her house tent—I mean dress. Without averting her gaze from the TV, she pointed to the backyard with a hitchhiker's thumb.

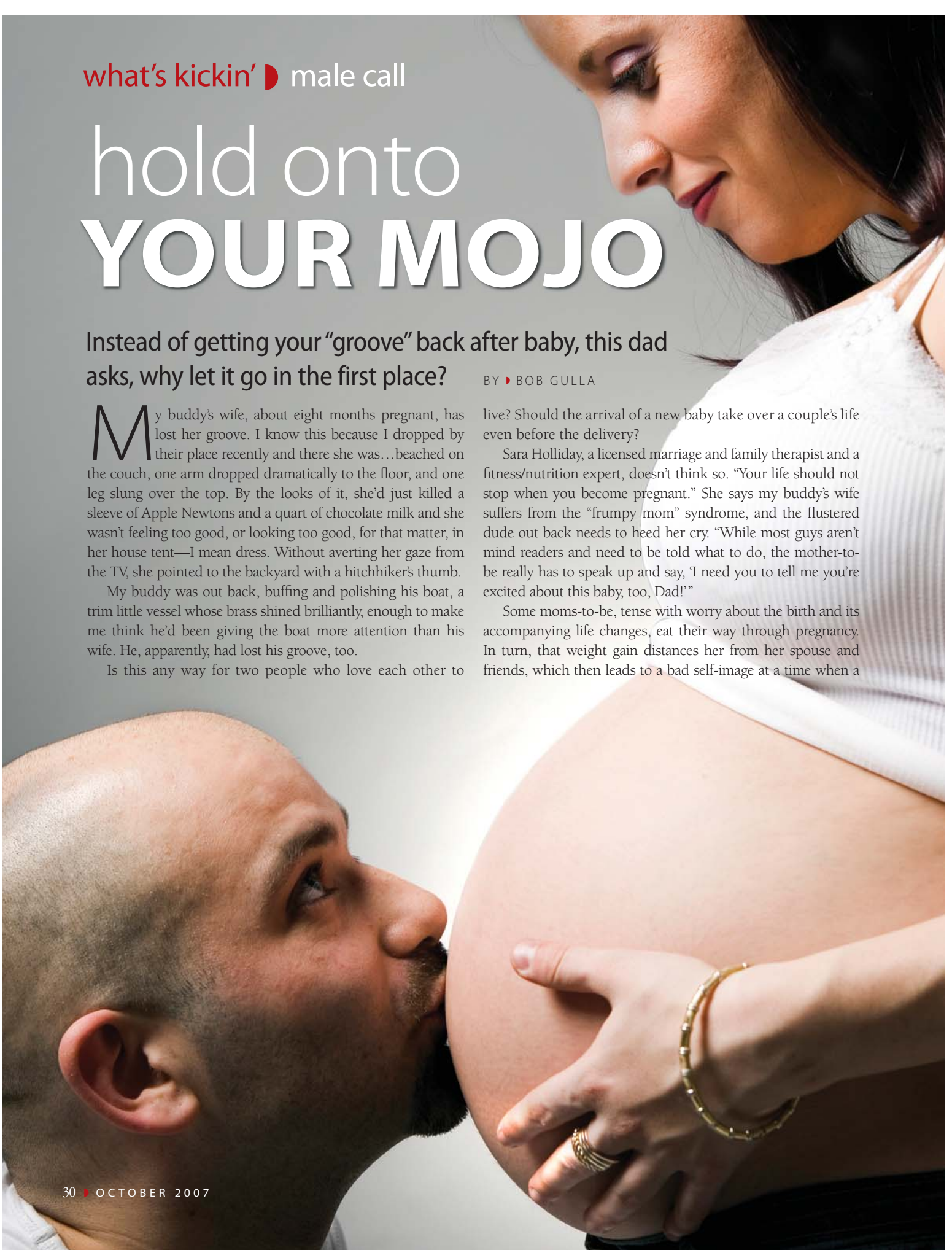
My buddy was out back, buffing and polishing his boat, a trim little vessel whose brass shined brilliantly, enough to make me think he'd been giving the boat more attention than his wife. He, apparently, had lost his groove, too.

Is this any way for two people who love each other to

live? Should the arrival of a new baby take over a couple's life even before the delivery?

Sara Holliday, a licensed marriage and family therapist and a fitness/nutrition expert, doesn't think so. “Your life should not stop when you become pregnant.” She says my buddy's wife suffers from the “frumpy mom” syndrome, and the flustered dude out back needs to heed her cry: “While most guys aren't mind readers and need to be told what to do, the mother-to-be really has to speak up and say, ‘I need you to tell me you're excited about this baby, too, Dad!’”

Some moms-to-be, tense with worry about the birth and its accompanying life changes, eat their way through pregnancy. In turn, that weight gain distances her from her spouse and friends, which then leads to a bad self-image at a time when a



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woman should feel more beautiful than ever. "In order to keep your regular vibe during your pregnancy," Holliday says, "you should do all the things you normally do in life and maybe even more of it. Get your hair done, buy some new clothes, and try to stay fit."

Staying fit—one of Holliday's specialties is pre- and neo-natal fitness—also helps take your mind off the pounds. "There's too much focus on the scale. Why not just ask the doctor, 'Is my weight OK?' or 'Is my weight where it needs to be?'" It takes a lot of stress off you when you forget about your weight."

Andrea Spaziante of Boston recently welcomed her first baby, Luca Michael. She says she kept her groove throughout her pregnancy, thanks in part to her attentive husband, James. "If I was having a bad day, he'd pull me out of it," she says. "Every day he told me how beautiful I was and that helped me through the crankiness."

Of course, when Andrea didn't feel beautiful regardless of James' sweet nothings, she remedied her mood with a new outfit. "Have you seen the new maternity clothes?" I hadn't. "They're just like regular clothes," she says. "The rule of thumb is, 'Don't buy a maternity outfit if you wouldn't wear the same look when you're not pregnant.'"


Patty Brisben, owner and president of Pure Romance, an adult sex-toy party sponsor, believes most husbands don't realize the value of a few loving words. She's right. Most of us speak eloquently on many topics, but love isn't one of them. "Tell her that everything is going to be fine with your new addition," Brisben says, "and whisper that you'll get through it together. That goes a long way."

I grunted in agreement, wondering about the times I could have said something nice like that to my wife and didn't.

Another way Brisben thought women could feel more like themselves during pregnancy was through touching. "Don't let your belly be a barrier between you and your husband," she says. "Use touch and massage and you'll fall right back into the groove." To that end, Brisben suggests looking into something Pure Romance calls a "Super Deluxe Love Mitten." Don't forget the lubricant, sold separately.

And while you're at it, or after you've done it, try cooking a romantic dinner for two or reading a good book together. "Sometimes, 'together time' is all you need to get out of the doldrums."

And finally, Brisben adds, many pregnant women can't seem to think or talk about anything other than their inflated condition. "Do yourself a favor and change the subject once in a while. There's a whole world out there that doesn't stop turning just because you're pregnant. Live in it!"

Words of wisdom, indeed. I wonder what my buddy would say if I bought him and his wife one of those love mittens? 

Rhode Island-based freelance writer Bob Gulla has been published in Rolling Stone, Entertainment Weekly, and People. His wife, Kathleen, never lost her groove—and they have four kids!



YOU'VE LOST YOUR GROOVE IF

...your favorite outfit is a pink muu-muu and Birkenstocks, accessorized by a bag of Smartfood.

...the only thing coming out of your mouth for three months has been "Oooh! There's a kick!"

...you've made a deep impression on one thing since becoming pregnant: the sofa.

...your idea of a "workout" is lugging the groceries in from the car.

...you wish the bathroom was closer to the couch.

YOU'VE KEPT YOUR GROOVE IF

...your cell phone keeps ringing with social calls even though your friends know you're about to deliver.

...when you hit the sack you still feel a little, uh, playful.

...you're energetic enough after working out at the gym to buy some flowers on the way home.

...instead of changing into sweats after work, you suggest dinner and a movie.

...your husband loves throwing his arms around you, all the way around you.