

*for the LOVE...*

**Vol. 2**

*for the LOVE... Vol. 2*

By Jennifer N. Shannon

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*dedicated to you...*

*LOVE is a belief, an expression, a feeling, a spirit...it is everything. Honor it  
and be open to giving it and receiving it, withholding nothing.*

*– JNS*

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## introduction

*for the LOVE... Vol. 2* picks up where *Vol. 1* left off. It tells a story, teaches lessons, shares insights, symbolizes how precious love is, and as it should be, is a piece of me. This book contains material that may be familiar to some and unknown to others. The blog posts I chose, old and new, weave into a story of sorts. Intertwined lines or excerpts from poems I wrote magnify emotions coursing through the pages. The photographs are representations of things I have seen and for some reason or another thought worth capturing and sharing in this format.

Many of the blog posts emerged not only from constant examination of self but also the people positioned in my life. I would not have been able to articulate some of the messages submerged within these pages without people who opened my eyes to viewpoints other than my own and whose experiences shed light in my direction, with no real effort or knowledge that it was penetrating through and shining upon me.

So the purpose of this book, *for the LOVE... Vol. 2*, is to keep the movement going. If I can touch one person, the light continues to shine...

Thank you for your continued support. Be blessed, My Loves. And remain faithful.

Always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by 'NS' and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JNS

**love**

sense

visualize

search

find

embrace

give

receive

LOVE .

## want vs desire

Want vs desire is an example of how my thinking has been shaped, and the types of influences who have been a part of my growth. The biblical text — and definitions of want and desire — was shared with me during a conversation with a fellow writer. It resonated so much that I had to present an abbreviated version here [although admittedly not as eloquent as when I first heard it] along with my own twist based on my interpretation of the message.

Psalms 23: 1 — The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not *want*.

Want and desire are similar yet different. The etymology or origin of “want” is “to be lacking, to leave, abandon, give out.” And the etymology of “desire” is “wish, desire, long for, demand, expect, await what the stars will bring.”

Psalms 37:4 — Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the *desires* of thine heart.

The origins of the words *want* and *desire* are completely different yet we interchange them haphazardly. In reality, the things you *want* are the things you lack and your *desires* are those things you are willing to reach for.

In my opinion, we tend to settle when it comes to *wants*, but *desires* are those things that are part of your destiny, if you are willing to wait and align with God [or the universe] to get them.

How are you using the words want and desire? Are you reaching for the desires of your heart or are you pursuing the things that are missing from your life? Identify what you want versus what you truly desire. And then *reach for* and *wait on* those desires to come to fruition.

## **greeting**

When he opened the door, the foul scent of musk mixed with cologne fogged the room. He eased past her stare, careful to keep his head tilted in the opposite direction. She stood still, thinking back to when walking in meant kisses and hugs, long embraces, and endless conversations. But now “hello” is barely spoken and the welcome mat no longer fits its description. They stand moments away from one another saying nothing; awkwardly looking for the thing that will rekindle old romance. They are foreign to each other now. And the only thing they have in common is the loneliness they share.



## ***attitude is everything***

Say the following two sentences aloud to yourself: “Attitude is everything. My attitude determines whether I’ll be happy or miserable, today and every day.” Attitude is defined as 1) a settled way of thinking or feeling, typically reflected in a person’s behavior, or 2) a manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind.

*Could we change our attitude, we should not only see life differently, but life itself would come to be different.* –Katherine Mansfield

Within a person’s attitude lies the most important characteristic, pessimism or optimism. I have found that a pessimistic person not only has a negative outlook on virtually every aspect of life but also has a knack for encouraging those around them to follow in their dismal footsteps. An optimistic person, on the other hand, looks on the bright side of whatever is occurring and takes life as it comes. That does not mean they don’t get upset or have complaints, but they aren’t consumed with their troubles and find a way to have a positive attitude throughout. The mindset you choose — pessimism or optimism — determine whether you walk around with a frown plastered across your face or if you are happy, content, and at peace within your circumstances.

*To be wronged is nothing unless you continue to remember it.* –Confucius

Everything we do is based on the mind. Your legs don’t move, eyes don’t blink, tears don’t fall, without your mind ordering these things to happen. Same with attitude. If you think it, you become it. Want to be a bitter old woman or man? Keep an attitude of regret and cynicism toward things or people who hurt you. Believe it or not, everyone else can see when you are hurt because it is written on your face and in your actions. I am not suggesting that you don’t feel, or be cautious as a result of your past, but it is important to let the past go because it will end up consuming the good in your present.

*The greatest discovery of my generation is that man can alter his life simply by altering his attitude of mind.* –William James

When observing others, listening to their frustrations, and at times dealing with my own concerns and day-to-day challenges, I have noticed how attitude weighs heavily on perceptions, emotions, and overall views about life. People are miserable in their jobs, pretending to be happy with home lives, and have found a way to write themselves out of life because their attitude is focused on what is wrong. When you focus on being alone or not having the job you want or how much money you do not have, you will likely remain in that situation until you learn how to change your mindset, which in turn causes you to change your actions...

*The words “I am...” are potent words; be careful what you hitch them to. The thing you’re claiming has a way of reaching back and claiming you.* –A.L. Kitselman

Of all the quotes I have shared and dispersed throughout this essay, I would like to leave you with a scripture. *In ALL things give thanks: for this is the will of God concerning you.* – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

For me, that scripture sums up how you react to life and what your attitude should be regardless of the situation. Life has never promised that days would not be long, tiring, and cause pain. The older I get, the more I realize that it’s in those moments that I have to look for a mental place of peace because without finding that space, without finding an attitude conducive to joy and laughter, I’d be crying more often than smiling. If you want to be at a different point in your life, go for it, change your mindset on your job, in your home, and out in public. Complaining or making others miserable will not change anything. It will only force those few who can tolerate you farther away.

Attitude is *everything!* And having a positive attitude makes you not only look a hell of a lot better, but it more importantly makes you feel better as well!

**for.ever.**

there are parts of me that feel giddy and moist  
like when I was a kid.  
before heartbreak ever determined a course of action.  
when youth and innocence danced  
proudly with varying cadence.  
when I loved without fear.  
loved with only the hope that it would last.

**FOR.EVER.**



## **simplicity of happiness**

*Simplistic thinking occurs afterhours.  
Once a full understanding of living happens.  
After love has slapped you around,  
Lost has become real and failure is the only option.*

*Simplicity transpires when you remove possessions  
and false impersonations of self,  
and are left with the essentials: family, friends, health.  
Stable mind.*

*It is what happens in the midst of true peace. –JNS*

We take for granted that one day (God willing) we will get old. (Not old as in “40,” but old as in 80 and 90 years old, old) If we are lucky, we will find out what most people over the age of 60 already know: simplicity is the key to happiness.

The simplicity of happiness boils down to basics: good health, family, friends, companionship. And what I’ve learned is that as long as life is for some, it is certainly short for others. It is unfair and can be brutal. There will be times where turmoil will be all that’s around, but love is the key, living in the moment is essential, and family and friends matter more than possessions. The key to being happy is to understand that happiness is a state of mind because the feeling of being happy is an emotion that changes like the wind, if you let it.

Despite life’s circumstances, choose happiness and live in a spirit that welcomes its presence.