

John and Jen's Family Book



Introduction



Hello!

We are John, Jen and Lucetta. We love to spend time together, whether we are trying some new adventure or relaxing in our comfortable home. We hope this book gives you a glimpse of who we are individually and as a family.



Our Relationship

We met in the beautiful summer of 2006. Mutual friends invited Jen to see a park concert in which John was performing. A bunch of us went out afterward. Once we found seats near one another we talked as if no one else was there.

Our first date was at a fancy restaurant in Portland, and our second date was supposed to be a simple picnic, which soon turned into our version of the Hood to Coast. John, being the romantic, full-of-ideas man that he is, suggested a road trip to add to Jen's wonderful picnic. We spent the early afternoon canoeing and picnicking on Mt. Hood's Trillium Lake, followed by a trip to Cannon Beach. We were there by sunset and enjoyed our first kiss in full view of a party of football players. After their applause, and Jen's mortified looks, we moved further down the beach.



We married in August, 2008. It was a beautiful and fun outdoor wedding, despite the rain!



Our Relationship...



Some of our favorite shared activities include camping, hiking, dancing, performing and traveling. We enjoy visiting friends and family, especially over dinner and a bottle of wine. Being together is our favorite thing. Simple things like shopping, walking around the block, or talking over a great cup of coffee are enjoyable routines for us.



John about Jen

What I most appreciate about Jen is how she centers me everyday. She is gorgeous, thoughtful and her smile can brighten anyone's day. Jen's empathy is a model for us all. She is extremely considerate toward everyone she meets. People adore her from the very first time they meet her. I have been told by many that Jen is the best listener they know, and I fully agree. She has brought me abundant joy, endless love, and peace in my heart. I am intensely grateful everyday she chose me to be her husband.

Jen about John

What I most appreciate about John is his optimism. He is genuinely kind, thoughtful, and full of life. He has so many ideas that I can get overwhelmed! He opens his heart to anyone in need. People can count on him, and many people turn to him for his accepting heart and thoughtful insights. He has brought such light to my life. It is an honor to be his wife.



Meet Jennifer

I work as an elementary music teacher. I teach and create music with young children and it is as fun as it sounds! Outside of music, I love to read all kinds of books, though novels are my favorite. When we moved into our first home I started to garden, experimenting with square foot gardening. I enjoy cooking healthy meals and baking decadent desserts. I like to take long walks in our neighborhood parks and trails. My new interest is crocheting.



Fun Facts About Jen

- *I can dress like a super hero in under 2 minutes.
- *My birthday is on Christmas.
- *I love to swing.
- *I only make fun New Year's Resolutions, like learning how to bake the best chocolate chip cookies.
- *I read a book a week.



Reading was also a favorite past time. Every summer, my mom would take my brothers and I to the library. I loved taking home a stack of books to read! Our family enjoyed staying close to home, watching movies and shows and visiting with family. I spent a lot of time with my grandparents, too. Some of my favorite memories are of our trips to my grandparents' place out in the country. In the summer, we put blankets and pillows in the back of the truck and my brother and I would lay in the back watching the clouds, discovering animals and other creatures in their shapes. Sometimes we would ride on our parents' motorcycles. They would strap a belt around us so we wouldn't fall off! I'm amazed we survived, but the thrill of the wind on my face and seeing the countryside fly by was so exciting!



I grew up in a suburb of Portland, Oregon with my parents and two younger brothers. My parents still live in the house we moved into when I was 4 years old! My brothers and I were encouraged to be independent and we learned how to entertain ourselves. We often played at the park across the street from our house. We made up games together, argued, played with toys, argued some more, and made forts inside and out. I also loved to play dress up with my mom's clothes and make mud pies and cookies.



I loved school growing up. I enjoyed learning new things and I liked to please. I was always drawn to music as a child. My whole family sings (the birthday song is always sung in harmony in my family) and my dad made up a song for each of us kids - Lucetta has a song, too! I also love to sing and school brought me opportunities to perform in band and choir. I excelled in music, especially after I began flute lessons.

Jennifer's story...



School and music greatly influenced me growing up. Music helped me feel connected to others and provided an avenue to express myself. I also learned I could be successful with practice and perseverance. Being involved in music has had a profound impact on my life. Through music I have a career, life-long friends, and an interest that I can turn to for comfort, joy and fun. I believe that music has influenced who I am as a person, too. Musicianship requires a lot of critiquing and striving to do better. I'm an intropective, sensitive person, often looking at my day and my life wanting to find a way to be better and do better. I do have trouble letting go of things, but I strive to move forward in a positive way. I am thoughtful, observant and a good listener. I think those traits help me be an empathetic person. Though I like my alone time, I do enjoy going out and laughing! My husband is a big help with that.

Life is messy, complicated and nuanced but I believe that if we move forward with positive intentions, such as treating others and our world with respect, the universe understands and can be infinitely giving.

My greatest life lesson is that even though I can't control a situation, I can control my actions and reactions. This lesson has applied to so many things in life; my relationships, my career, my infertility.

What I wish I knew then what I know now is that making decisions should be based on values, not fear. I wish I didn't second guess myself so much and that I took more risks. I often played safe and it wasn't that much fun. I had goals and dreams that I took very seriously, but didn't push the envelope that often. But, because of that focus and intention as a younger person, I am in a great place in my life right now.

Meet John

Like Jennifer, I am a music teacher too. My dream job! I thank my lucky stars everyday for the gift of music, not only for bringing the two of us together, but for the way it can reach kids. I am also a military musician. I play for public and military events all around the area and some distant locales. As far as hobbies, I have many.

To name a few...
woodworking, drawing,
running, dancing, eating, you
name it as long as it is fun,
creative, or both.



Fun Facts About John

- *I performed throughout Europe.
- *I can speed clap.
- *I speak Spanish.
- *I can draw.
- *I've run two marathons.

John's Story...



I was born and grew up in Denver, Colorado with six brothers and sisters. Growing up with a large family was extremely fun and sometimes crazy. Even so, I never felt as if I got lost in the shuffle. I was a talkative child and made others laugh. My parents encouraged me to try many things to which I gravitated towards dance, art, singing and music. I played a lot of soccer too. My brothers and sisters got on each other's nerves at times, but all in all we grew up loving each other very much and are very close. Friends were also an extension of our family, making our house very busy.

One of my favorite memories is after a very large snowstorm my entire family broke out an old 8mm camera and filmed a stop action movie. There was no plot, just short clips such as man-eating snow, a stop action car chase that used no cars, and other winter related mayhem. We cannot find the movie, but that memory of us all making this silly movie is one I will carry with me the rest of my life.

Moving away from home to Oregon was one of the hardest and best decisions I ever made in my life. After losing my mother to cancer, a fiancée to a best friend, and feeling powerless because of it all, I decided to make my own way. If I hadn't, I would not have grown. I made some challenging life decisions after that, but in the end I met Jennifer, pursued my dreams, and found out just how capable I really am.



I am a very fun loving person who takes joy in the simple things in life. I can talk to a almost anyone and make sure everyone is having a good time. I always help out if asked and have a hard time saying no. I am a spiritual person who believes in the power of forgiveness and treating others with compassion. I

think most problems in this world today stem from misunderstanding and the unwillingness to change one's perspective. My greatest lesson would be that, "You get more flies with honey!" meaning that being kind to others will endear them to you, thus making your life richer and less painful when you fall. When I was younger I wish I knew just how precious moments were. Time is very short. I would have actively listened more, said less, and lingered longer with friends and especially my family.



Our Home and Neighborhood



Bridge over the Creek near our home!



Our home in the final stages of being built!



View upstairs in our new house.

We live in a new neighborhood in Southwest Washington. There are lots of large trees, trails, and a school park nearby. We moved into our house in the Winter of 2018. We fell in love with the open kitchen and living room. There are spaces for gardening, woodworking, and play.



So enjoyable to read a good book by the fire.



Our backyard, so far!



Our kitchen!

We've done lots of projects on our home since we moved in. It's been an education! We've learned how to tile, put up a fence, and paint, among other things. It's also taught us a lot about how we work together! As hard and painstaking as some of the work is, it's been very gratifying to make our home a place we are proud of.



Mmm. Making pancakes!



Midway to finished!



This old truck is evidence of the farms that were once in this area.

Favorite Traditions



Fall is one of our favorite times of year. The farmer's market is full of delicious fresh produce that Jen loves to cook with. We love to go pumpkin "hunting" with friends and go trick-or-treating. Thanksgiving and Christmas are special times with both Jen and John's family. We alternate spending time with each other's family for the major holidays. John's family lives throughout the west, so we try to travel every few years to see everyone. Family reunions and special trips are organized so we can see each other as often as possible. Birthdays are made special with friends and family, a favorite meal and dessert.

Favorite Traditions...



John and Jen's friends and family.



Dreams for Your Child

We love being parents. Bringing another child into our lives means we can nurture a dream of a large family. Each child is a blessing and brings fresh energy and interests to our family. We dream of simple moments as well as adventures with our kids, all while rediscovering the world through our children's eyes. We want to provide experiences like going to the beach and playing in the sand and chasing waves. We have family traditions to create and pass on, like carving pumpkins, making the best chocolate chip cookies ever, and decorating the house for Christmas. Family means a lot to us. We look forward to our nephews, nieces and our friends' children having play dates and sleep overs for special occasions or just for fun! Our family is busy and full of experiences, like trips to the library, going to the zoo, playing in the park and attending local performances. We feel these experiences broaden a child's perspective and helps them become curious, creative and empathetic people. That being said, home is our sanctuary. It is at home that we relax, read, sing, and play a lot. Home is where we guide our children as they discover skills and interests such as cooking, gardening, sports, art, or building, all while taking care of our home and each other. We feel these experiences will deepen a child's confidence and their personal value of hard work, cooperation and commitment. But above all, we value finding the joy and fun in the simple things, and we intend to model that everyday as parents. It makes life a lot more fun!

Open Adoption Aspirations

We see this relationship as a continuation of family. As a family, we will support each other as we celebrate all the milestones of your child. We want to create a space where you feel empowered to be engaged in your child's life. Your presence is a positive influence. We are confident that time, patience, and understanding will help guide the way. We want our child to embrace their birth and adoptive families fully. We will encourage them to explore and communicate their feelings about their open adoption. Our child will know their whole life story and in turn develop self-confidence in who they are. Above all, they will feel uniquely special and abundantly loved by everyone in their life. As a family, we want to embrace our rich and dynamic family story and grow through our open adoption experience. We will have no secrets and aspire to answer our child's questions through humble, consistent and honest communication. Furthermore, we feel empowered to discuss and advocate for open adoption and plan to be an exemplary model of what and who family is.

We believe in open adoption and we honor the opportunity to be apart of your child's life and yours.

