



@fittolove_novel — Campaign 2016 An excerpt from the Twitter novel.

* (A tweet is limited to 140 characters. Yikes! That means letters, spaces, and punctuation.)

I was determined to live in the world I wanted to live in and not be dissuaded by a reality I would never understand. Was I that different from most people? It was the wanting and the trying, the safari of effort that was important. Not that I was on safari. I was a seeker, not a hunter. I had a vision, not an appetite.

James Brown had given me the confidence to push forward through the jumble of human relations and reach my goal. Or, keep dancing until my shoes wore out. I'd stop being such an introvert. I would become a man of the people. Hell, I'd run for office!

That's the ticket! so to speak. Involvement, participation, service to others, dedication to principles, and a bunch of other stuff. I'd stand up for the disenfranchised and unloved. I'd fight for the right of anyone to be loved and to fall in love. No matter what age.

I went out the door, with a wide smile on my face, and entered the nearest bar. I ordered a Budweiser and looked the bartender in the eye. I stuck my hand out to introduce myself. He looked at me, assessing an obviously new contender. "Dude, that's \$3.50." I hadn't yet declared my candidacy, so I wasn't hurt, but I did think \$3.50 was a little steep and said so.

“Times are tough all over. I’m just trying to make a living.” This was good info. A small business owner. The man in the street. Well, bar. I asked him how he felt about love. Eyes narrowed, he wished me good luck and walked away to confer with one of my future constituents.

As I said, I saw this as all good information. I pictured myself as the Love candidate. Although, in these times, maybe that wasn’t enough. I’d broaden my appeal. I could enlist the young. I still considered myself part of this gang. They/we were all optimists.

I’d speak to service organizations, at lunch meetings. Lunch was always a favorite time for me. The possibilities were endless. What a menu! Optimists. See? Elks, Rotarians, Rastafarians, Masons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Knute, Daughters of the Revolution, Kiwanis, Lions, Shriners. The Sons of the Desert. Foresters, Hibernians, The Native Sons of the Golden West, The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. I mean endless – Chambers of Commerce, Knights of Columbus, Mooses, Owls, Orioles, Lutherans. You get the picture? Yes, we see.

I’d rally the troops at Home Depot. “My fellow Suburbians, our list is long, our supplies plentiful, our tools innumerable. Let’s do this!” I’d avoid Wal-Mart, but I was aiming at Target. “My fellow Shoppers, Love is where you find it and I’ve found it everywhere!”

“In Home Furnishings, there is comfort, warmth, and a certain design je nais se quoi. I’ve recharged my batteries in Electronics. In Boys, I’ve gotten in touch with my inner child. We all know Automotive, so I won’t go there, but School Supplies is a real education. My platform of Love is an important one. Stop by Greeting Cards on your way out, and help me spread the word. We each have a flame of hope, a spark of desire, a dream of love within us. Join me at Checkout and vote with your wallets.”

I went out to meet the people and appealed directly to them to forward our Love agenda. This was a political revolution of Love. It might be an independent movement, but it took two to tango. It required all of us to get together and declare our intentions. We needed to pledge our love, plight our trough (what? That kind of self-serving is so old school), and shout our love to the electorate.

I made the rounds of the fast food parlors. What better way to a voter’s heart, than through his or her stomach? I told them... “It’s the special Love sauce that holds our party together. Bring a friend to the booth this November and satisfy that patriotic hunger.” I hit the grocery stores and set up a little table between organic vegetables and donuts, demonstrating our broad appeal and diversity.

I ventured out into the August heat and greeted voters on the street, at the swimming pools, and in the parks. While I was there, I fed the pigeons and the squirrels and tried out my new slogans. “Shake a tail feather and vote!” “Endorsed by Rocky. And, Bullwinkle!” “Nuts? Get to know me!” Even the geese were interested, though they were Canadians.

I went to get my hair trimmed. "Politics is just as important as good grooming, it's about style, but it's what's inside that counts." I attended the Farmer's Market. "Fair Trade is a sign of a healthy relationship. Let's plant the seeds for a great harvest in November!" At the County Fair, there were voters who only ventured from the farm a couple of times a year, I felt honored to make their acquaintance. They might have stayed on the fence, but I knew a thing or two about critters and, eventually, won their trust.

I went to the dog park and made the rounds, shaking hands, patting backs, and growled my message to everyone I met. As I told them, "We form a tribe, a country, a people!" A few heads turned up at me. "A people with wonderful dogs!" Tails wagged. "Find your voice, shout your message, unleash your essence!" They howled. They were part of a movement. Moved by powerful emotions. As one, though somewhat undisciplined, they headed for the exits, determined to take the message back to their respective neighborhoods.

I stood there stunned. By what had just happened and by what had been happening. Was I the same guy? The lost introvert? The lonely boy? Holy cow! I could get used to this. I liked the new me. I felt, for the first time, that I might actually help someone. At last, I had a purpose besides the seemingly quixotic search for personal love. I wanted everyone to have an equal chance at it.

Not that theirs would be quixotic. Theirs might be aquatic, for all I knew. I just wanted to change the conversation. I wanted to adjust the focus from one of greed, illusion, and war to one of love, possibility, and hope. I'd give voice to everyone's dream.

That sounds ambitious, I know. But it seemed like a message people were ready to hear. To me, it seemed timely and essential. Sure, some have laughed and called me naïve, but others said, What the hell? I can't help but be encouraged. It is going to be an uphill battle, pardon the warlike metaphor, but I will never concede. I will stay true to my campaign of true love.

I'll never lose my idealism and vision, as others before me, and get carried away by ego and a big infusion of money. I probably don't have to worry about money. Where I come from love has always been something that was given away.

Sure, it would be great to win, but after these last few weeks on the road, I've become a realist... The kind of realist who doesn't care anymore about winning or losing. I've become the kind that just wants to stay real. I want to remain true to my beliefs, my principles, my desires (if I may say so), no matter what obstacles or temptations turn up. Win or lose, I am steadfast in my desire (that word again) for a better world, a better country, an America that knows its own heart.

It's lonely out there, on the campaign trail, but I've asked my key aides to alert me, if I ever use the word desire again.

Running for office should be a selfless act, even if, like everyone else, I yearn for love. Isn't that what it's all about? Each American has certain unalienable rights such as life, liberty,

love, and the pursuit of happiness. I want to protect these rights. I'll continue to speak out, no matter the opposition. The other candidates never get bogged down in details and neither will I.

I'm the only serious candidate without questionable incidents in his or her past. Perhaps, in comparison, mine just seem trivial. My position on the issues remains steady, though the others may waffle, distort, temporize, evade, and, sometimes, make false statements. I never lose my cool. I was never that cool to begin with. I'm slow and steady and I hope to win the race. Or at least, make a difference.

I'm having my own debate. Come on down to the West End Tavern. I'll ask myself the hard questions and I'll always tell you the truth. Even when that truth is inconvenient. Yes, at one time, I broke someone's heart. I didn't mean to, but, sometimes, you can't avoid it. Given the choice of right versus wrong, hard work versus expediency, love or hate, I know you are familiar with my record.

I'm concerned for our future. Heck, I'm concerned for my future. I want what so many of us want — love and a job. New revelations about the candidates occur everyday, but what you learn about me will never shock you, though you may scratch your head. We can talk about what's really important — understanding one another, tolerance for boneheads, and love for whoever suits you.

This election is more important than you know. Casting your vote will not only change the direction of things, but will make you feel good. You will feel part of the electorate; one of the people who care about this great country and it's complicated love life. Keep the faith, tell your friends and neighbors. Spread the word to complete strangers. Include them. On November 8th, turn up, turn on, and vote what your heart wants you to.