

How to Feed the Silver Lining: A Bridge to a Better Tomorrow

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COVID 19 is forcing transplant centers to cancel live kidney donor transplants and put "donor testing" on hold. Hopeful recipients are emotionally struggling with this disruptive and unpredictable standstill. Their thought bubbles sound like: "Will my donor change their mind? Will my GFR hold? Will I be forced on dialysis or be taken off the list as I get sicker?"

While these concerns are realistic deal-breakers, an intentional shift in perspective could reveal a brighter blessing in disguise. Why do I say this? Because putting life's plans on hold presents an expanded window of opportunity to refine and strengthen your goals.

It's simply a matter of choice. You can choose to sit frozen in fear or you can shift perceptions of what's beyond your control to work to your advantage.

While you might find the process a bit difficult at first, the more you see this *pause* as a *good cause* to "plan forward," the easier it will become. For example, you can use this *pause* to attract back-up donors, fine tune logistics, and ensure surgical success (and recovery) for both the donor and the recipient.

You can also use this *pause* to encourage friends and family to spread your story in social media and invite potential donors to video conference with other donors to gain insight on their experience. They can also use this *pause* to chat with their doctors, request their ABO blood type, and recommit to health goals through patient portals or tele-medicine platforms. This *pause* can also be used to proactively explore "paired exchange" options should a workaround be needed.

Above all, potential donors can use this *pause* to educate their loved ones, minimize concerns and offer additional "soaking time," to gain a respectful understanding of their compassionate desire to save a life.

And, it doesn't end there. Most kidney patients can benefit from a shelter at home *pause*. For example, CKD patients can use this *pause* to slow the progression of their disease by choosing healthier home prepared meals, ramping up their exercise routines, and by minimizing stressors that exacerbate blood pressure spikes.

Likewise, dialysis patients can use this *pause* to slip into a "less rushed" lifestyle, as they insist on infection control protocols and explore home treatment options. Transplant recipients can use this *pause* to be extra diligent about protecting their "adopted kidneys" through immunosuppressive compliance and by keeping themselves out of harm's way. At this time living kidney donors can also become more mindful of their own safety. They need this reminder because their instinctive nature is to be a "giver." Their recipients ask that they mindfully *pause* to ensure they put their "oxygen mask" on first—so they can stay safe and protected.

It is at times like this, when we feel incredibly vulnerable and powerless, that we are called upon to "lean in" and virtually unite to inject positivity and hope back into the world.

Never lose sight of the fact that you are always in control of *good intentions*. The *good news* about good intentions, is that they are limitless—and spread exponentially from 6-plus feet away. That said, use social distancing to your benefit. Visualize, meditate and fill your gratitude journals with "seeds of gratitude."

Embrace those seeds of gratitude—and send their nutrients up to feed the silver lining inside COVID's cloud. By doing so, a bridge to a better tomorrow will be yours for the taking.

Your thoughts and intentions matter. Use them wisely♥