

Should Kidney Transplant Candidates Deny Their Son *or* Daughter's Offer to Donate?



A good number of individuals in need of a kidney transplant are often reluctant—if not strongly opposed, to allowing their children to donate. While adult children are of age to make independent decisions, protective parents might not see it that way, particularly when it comes to putting their child at risk.

Parents are hardwired to protect their children.

That said, accepting a kidney from a child often appears incongruent to their oath to keep their children out of harm's way. Yet, if the parent was able to put themselves into their children's shoes, they might be able to see their desire to donate through a different lens.

To no fault of their own, parents may not realize that refusing a child's offer to save their life, robs them from the perpetual joy (and psychological gain) they'd experience from this remarkable, once in a lifetime endeavor. Likewise, a parent's inclination to deny a child's kidney donation can lead to lingering resentment and suffering. Think about it. No one wants to watch their parent's health decline—or lead to their demise, particularly if they could have done something about it.

Imagine the impermeable sadness, hurt and resentment that would come from knowing a child could have given their mother or father a better or longer life, given the chance.

To re-balance perceptions, encourage those resistant to accepting offers to ponder “a reverse scenario” by asking them these questions:

1. “Would you ever **consider donating** a kidney to a mother or father?”
2. “How would you feel if your mother or father **prohibited** you from saving or improving their life?”
3. “How would you feel if your mother or father died while they were waiting on the list—**knowing that you could have saved/improved/extended their life, given the chance?**”

Putting the shoe on the other foot often allows parents new perspective on the harm they potentially cause by dishonoring a child's desire to help. *Children are compelled to help a parent because they often feel their parent's pain (and suffering) more than the patient is willing to admit to herself.*

Enhancing a parent (or family member's) "quality of life" can also be one of the most loving ways to enhance the entire family's "quality of life."

It goes without saying that parents will always want to protect their children. It is, however, equally important to consider the psychological impact a child will endure when they are prohibited from helping a parent in need. A child's desire to donate is intrinsically triggered as a reflection of their parent's love and years of parenting.

When a child offers to donate, they are not asking for approval. They are seeking an opportunity to wholeheartedly demonstrate their immense gratitude for all the selfless acts their parents bestowed upon them throughout the years.

Transplant candidates can leave a child's offer to donate in the hands of their transplant center; for they have the medical expertise to decide if their child is healthy enough to donate. Knowing that all surgical procedures pose potential risks, this procedure would be no different. Nonetheless, families can rest assured that the transplant center will minimize "donor risks" by positioning "donor safety" first (and foremost) at all times.

So, the next time a parent (or spouse, sibling or friend) emphatically refuses to allow their loved ones to donate on their behalf, have them read this article. Better yet, give them a copy to get them thinking about the consequences of denying someone the opportunity to carry on their life.

About the Author:

Risa Simon is a 2010 preemptive (live-donor) kidney transplant recipient, motivational speaker, published author, patient advocate and coach, patient engagement consultant, and the creator for the mobile app: **Donor-Seeker**. As the founder of Simon Says Seminars.inc., [TransplantFirst Academy](#), and [TransplantStrong.com](#), she is passionately dedicated to helping her fellow kidney patients live their best life possible. The life she now lives.

