

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 thru 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 restrict 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 rebalance parental perceptions, the *TransplantFirst Academy* encourages parents to ponder a reverse scenario through a series of questions. The question involves asking the parent if they would ever consider donating a kidney to a mother *or* father in need.

When the answer is yes, (regardless if it follows “but this is different”) proceed to the next three qualifying questions:

1. “How would you feel if your mother or father disallowed you from saving or improving their life?”
2. “Would your heart be haunted by the memory that you were prohibited from providing your mother or father a better and longer life?”

3. “How would you feel if your parent died while waiting, knowing that you could have saved 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 wishes. More often than not, the entire family feels a parent’s struggles more than the patient themselves.

Enhancing a parent’s quality of life can be one of the most loving solutions for enhancing the entire family unit’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 true desire to donate is intrinsically triggered. It is the purest reflection of their parent’s love and parenting skills.

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.

We must all be reminded that the joy *in* giving is *not* in receiving. The joy of giving *comes* from the desire to give. Giver’s deserve a right to passage—along with the blessings that come to a giving heart.

Transplant candidates should leave a child’s offer to donate in the hands of their transplant center, for they have the medical skills to decide if their child is healthy enough to donate. Knowing that any surgical procedures holds risk, candidates should ask their center to discuss donor risks to gain peace of mind. Either way, parents can rest assured that the transplant center will minimize risks by positioning “donor safety” first and foremost at all times.

So, the next time a parent emphatically states that they refuse to allow a child to donate on their behalf, read them this article. Better yet, give them a copy, for these insightful perspectives are sure to get them thinking long and hard about the consequences of what might happen if they denied this incredibly loving offer.

About the Author: Risa Simon, is a 2010 (live-donor) preemptive kidney transplant recipient, motivational speaker, inspirational author, patient coach and advocate—and the founder of the TransplantFirst Academy and The Proactive Path. For more information visit: www.TransplantFirst.org

