

A Review of

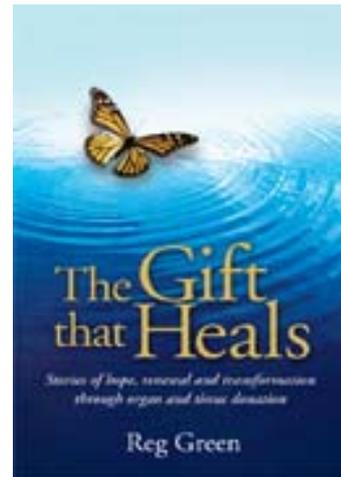
The Gift That Heals

Stories of hope, renewal and transformation through organ and tissue donation

Author: Reg Green

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

Approached by UNOS to write this book, “donor dad” Reg Green draws on his international network of donor and transplant resources to offer us a soft cover inexpensive book that covers the subject like no other I have ever read. From literally thousands of stories and interviews collected over the years since 1994 when his own son’s tragic death led to a revolution in the Italian organ donor attitude when as a visiting tourist the family donated their son’s organs for transplant there, Reg has selected 42 of the very best for this book. This “Chicken Soup for the Donor/Transplant Soul” type book offers 3 to 5 pages each easy to read chapters of personal stories that cover the donation and transplant experience from every possible view, or so at least it seems. Easy to read doesn’t mean just surface type narratives, so be prepared to feel the deep emotions of the families, patients and medical professionals who share from their hearts tragedy and celebration so often involved in life and death donation and transplant events. These are emotional, first-hand accounts involving a wide range of experiences from pilot to donor to patient and living donor to transplant coordinator to doctor patients, from the famous (liver recipient goes on to Olympic medal winning snowboarder, Chris Klug; basketball great, Sean Elliot) to the unknown, a pastor who received a heart from his parishioner, twins who overcome lives with CF (Cystic Fibrosis) with lung transplants; the inner thoughts of a surgeon facing daily close decisions about accepting organs and the family impact his decisions will make.



The variety of stories cover a full range of donation options (DCD, tissue, corneas, bone, all solid organs), donation process stories told from the perspective of the transplant coordinator and organ transport pilot, sharing feelings, dispelling myths, even the story of challenging organ flight transport in the immediate wake of 9/11 and the no flying ban. Many are stories we may have heard about, but never knew the full story or felt the emotions behind the events – like the bi-annual ski race for children with transplants. The stories cross racial and national barriers and include those who fought and died waiting, but the underlying thread is that they are all stories of hope and especially the donor stories attesting to the healing power of organ and tissue donation.

Repeated in these stories from recipients we read: ***“This was one of the best things that ever happened to me. It made me realize that everything in life is important. I don’t care whether it’s rain or sunshine. I enjoy every minute of the day.”***

And the theme from many donors is: ***“The act of giving helped us heal from the grief of loss, getting something positive out of tragedy...”*** which explains the book’s title.

Expect to connect to your own experience and to become emotionally involved in this reading. I found myself, a long time seasoned heart transplant recipient in tears, again and again, reading this beautiful variety of stories. Having been deeply involved in the donor and transplant environment for the same number of years as Reg and his family (1994), I was pleasantly surprised to read stories of so many I have personally encountered in my own life journey. My compliments to Reg Green (and all who shared their stories for this collection) for so successfully carrying out the challenge UNOS offered him in commissioning a book that may well help change the world view of organ donation much as he did back in Italy in 1994 upon his son's death, a mission expanded over these years to the entire world with his dedication and energy. This is a book to be left out in every transplant center, to be read and felt in one's heart, and to be shared with anyone you encounter in your own network, a gift that indeed may save a life in that sharing.

Note: **The Gift That Heals** for non-profits, AuthorHouse, the publisher, offers a discount. The book can also be bought online at www.authorhouse.com/bookstore/ or through online booksellers, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble. This book is available in hardback, paperback and as of Dec 2008, as an audio release (6 CD's). For more information on the audio book please contact Nolan Estes at 888 519 5121 ext 5571 (nestes@authorhouse.com). For the soft or hard cover print versions call 888 280 7715.

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.