A Review of
*Shift your Fate: Life-Changing Wisdom for Proactive Kidney Patients (2012)*
Author: Risa Simon

More than just a book of the author’s life story dealing with chronic kidney disease (CKD), this is an inspiring message of challenge and hope for patients dealing with this deadly disease by a motivational speaker who has walked her own talk and shares her life-saving empowering message of success, driven by proactive exploration, determination and advocacy.

I found this book inspiring from the very first chapter, with her very positive message of taking action early on in one’s disease continuum. “Empowering” is the right word to describe this author’s message, encouraging everyone to take control of their life even as they initially face this medical challenge. Risa recommends a mantra of saying out loud “I’m all in!” upon awakening each morning, a way of engaging the full body in living each day to the fullest, one of being totally in charge. She makes it easy to review the action based messages with a list of “life changing wisdom tips” at the end of each chapter, offering a reaffirmation for that reading.

Throughout the book we get clear explanations of all the foundational elements of understanding kidney function, stages of CKD, dialysis and transplant (with the comparison of the pros and cons for each)—and her strongest recommendation, opting for a preemptive transplant (a transplant that’s performed before the need for dialysis) with a living donor kidney. Building off facts about the dire side effects of long-term dialysis treatment, she makes the case for ignoring the often heard advice of “you’re not sick enough yet” by many a doctor. Instead she encourages readers to take early alternative action by getting fully educated about the disease and the unparalleled value in live-donor kidney transplants. To that end a significant element of this book offers a proven process of finding that living donor, by becoming what she calls a “Donor Magnet” and by embracing the concept of “PEBO,” a system she designed to help patients Proactively Empower their Best Outcome through education, determination and action.

This book also offers facts and data, goal setting and practical action planning with a focus on being “proactive” before the disease progresses. To support this concept the book includes forms, charts and even scripts as an addendum to the many chapters, followed by a full index. Along with her personal life story which is integrated throughout, there is a dedicated section of both recipient and donor stories that add to this inspirational reading, each sharing their own personal success and passion for life through living organ donation and transplant.

While the author’s focus is on CKD, the message of this book would be of great value to others in its broader recommendations to become fully engaged and proactively committed to a brighter future. It addresses overcoming procrastination with education that is fact based, and emphasizes the importance of finding a doctor that you can “respect, trust and connect with”. Her words: “Proactive Diligence” offers a great summary phrase for the overall message. To put it in other words, a summary of this excellent book would be “To avoid dialysis and live your best life by
proactively optimizing your choices *long before you get that sick*—and while you still have time to uncover untold truths and develop a super-charged patient-directed action plan that can direct your desired destiny!” Moved in reading her book, I found myself wanting to hear this author in person as the motivational speaker described in her bio.

See [www.ShiftYourFate.com](http://www.ShiftYourFate.com) for purchase details.

**Reviewer bio:** Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. ’94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer leader with TRIO, UNOS and the Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia, as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, *A Gift from the Heart*, is offered in thanks to his donor family and can be viewed on-line from his blog at [http://gleasonjim.wordpress.com](http://gleasonjim.wordpress.com) or obtained (without cost) on a CD in PC readable format by contacting him at GleasonJim@aol.com