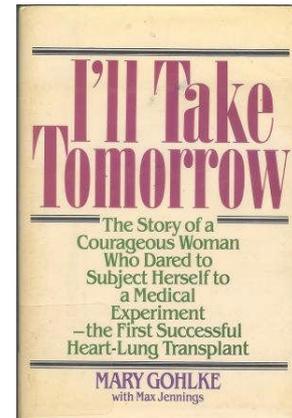


A Review of

I'll Take Tomorrow:

Story of the First Successful Heart-Lung Transplant

Author: Mary Gohlke (with Max Jennings)



Why write a review for an out of print book that was published way back in 1985? For several reasons, the least of which is to add it to a growing collection of such transplant book reviews now becoming a unique resource for transplant patients and families faced with caring for a transplant patient or the challenge of facing one in the future, sort of a collector's thing. More importantly, this book as an example, is a great inspiration for patients today who benefit from the courageous patients like Mary Gohlke who were the pioneers in this world of transplant back when the outcomes were not as successful as in today's world of not only survival but longevity of that transplant for years and even decades with a truly fulfilled life post transplant. But thirdly, I write this in memory of that wonderful spunky woman who took action to overcome the odds not only of being the first heart-lung transplant but when the government was preventing her from being transplanted as they took much too long to approve the use of Cyclosporine, a new drug at the time, for that particular type of patient, she stepped in and made that approval happen overnight as she was days away from dying if she didn't get transplanted. In being told that it may take even another 10 weeks before approval is given, her response is, "...I'm not going to be here that long. I'm dying. Can you get me the FDA guy's name?" Patients like me, a heart recipient now on 15+ years living a fulfilled life, owe Mary and so many others a debt of thanks for the risks they took that led to the success we enjoy today with transplants they helped pioneer not that many years ago when there were high risks, many deaths and little probability of success.

Mary's story is one of hope and courage, written in an easy to read style that mimics today's novels, except that in her book, it's all real-life drama. So often when a patient writes their story detailing so many extreme complications and long months of hospital stays, it comes across as almost whining and constant complaint. Then too a novice to transplant might come away feeling such a long list of complaints is the norm, when in fact, most patients today lead remarkably successful recoveries and long "normal" lives (despite all the meds which certainly doesn't qualify as "normal" for the average person). But those stories don't make for interesting books, and so are seldom written, with the other extreme being patients who go on to achieve remarkable feats in spite of the transplant. Mary has many such complications and challenges but she doesn't complain, even when in depression, her story comes across as one of human spirit and loving support that leads to triumph over that adversity. When seen in light of her experiences being in the earliest days of the technology of transplant, we come to expect her to have those challenges. Equally amazing, as much as there has been great progress in this field in so many ways, many of the surgical techniques are still the same as they were back thirty years ago! Today we take them as being routine and go in expecting the 90% and greater success rates seen in centers around the country (and world), whereas in her day, there was usually just one center even doing her type of transplant.

Her story is also one of very special dedicated transplant surgeons who often came to the phone personally when she called seeking the special attention her unique case presented.

The personalities of some very famous doctors (like DeBakey) come across in her telling and the reader can almost feel the personal friendship that develops with her transplant team at Stanford, for one example. Family and friends are extreme supporters as seems the whole nation when she comes through that history making transplant back in March of 1981. In that day when nobody survived, Mary went on to live five years, returning to her career and raising a family, a life extension that proved this surgery indeed was doable and today such transplant success and longevity is measured in decades, not days. So go out and find this treasure of a book in the used book market (for 19 cents) or at your local library, enjoy the reading and then find a patient to share it with so they too can get the enjoyment and positive reinforcement they need in facing their own transplant challenge these almost 30 years later.

Note: **I'll Take Tomorrow** is out of print (a 1985 book) but still available in hard cover on Amazon.com as a used book for as little as \$0.19 (+ s/h)

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.