

A Review of

Mr. Right and My Left Kidney

Author: Joan Saltzman

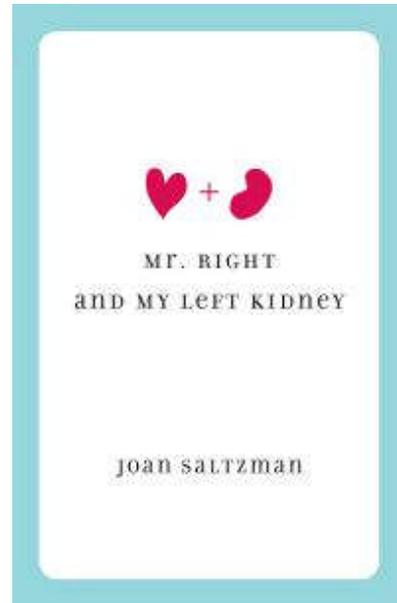
Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

For anyone nervous in facing a decision of being a living kidney donor, this is a candid and insightful book that shares similar honest feelings about a personal living donor experience. At the age of 46, Joan discovers first love late in life but has to overcome many relationship obstacles in finally gaining mutual commitment and eventual marriage, but that is only the beginning of their love story.

Their road is paved with many poignant and romantic moments but also many challenges, not the least of which is John's kidney disease, a fact known early on in their courtship. Later on they face the option of a transplant which would avoid, for them, a dreaded dialysis alternative. That is where the real story of conflict develops in Joan's heart as she deals with the human fears and emotions revolving around voluntarily undergoing surgery to give one's kidney to the man she loves, now her husband. As a medical malpractice lawyer herself and torn between the two directions of self-preservation and deeply loving another, we are given an inside view of the conflict in her day to day living through doubt and final decision.

They say "love overcomes all" and in this story, it is the gifting of her healthy kidney that finally wins out. As living organ donation becomes the more common source of healthy organs for transplant, an insightful sharing such as that offered in this book can be a good resource for anyone facing such a decision in their own lives, but also for families and medical professionals who are called upon to support patients dealing with weighty issues like this. With such insight, professionals can serve with deeper empathy and improved understanding their ever growing community of transplant donor and recipient patients.

I confess to enjoying this book even more because of its setting in Philadelphia, PA, not only in the same city as where I received my heart transplant, but even set in the same hospital. Detailed descriptions of the medical staff "hit home" in that I knew some of them personally. When Joan described their attending a living donor recognition luncheon in the final pages of her story, you can imagine my surprise as I smiled in knowing that I had attended that exact same luncheon, serving with the team who had put it together. We really do live in a world that is ever growing smaller as publishing and the web continually bring us all closer together like this, and sharing their life through this book makes it an even smaller world community.



Humor is found even amid Joan's deep concerns all through her writing. After the transplant we see that again in her doubt and reaffirmation as she writes: ***"I no longer wondered if a Nobel Prize winner would have been the appropriate recipient for my kidney. I had given my kidney to just the right person. My kidney had gone to the man I love."***

Thank you Joan and John for capturing such insights, but also for sharing your lives so openly, a gift that will help many others make what for them will be a "right" decision even if it isn't the same as your own. Truly you have "left" your kidney in the "right" man! May you enjoy many healthy years of loving life together.

Note: For further information about **Mr. Right and My Left Kidney** and purchase options, click on Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble

Reviewer Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, received his heart transplant Oct. '94. Jim volunteers with NKF, UNOS and the Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia as well as being a nationally recognized speaker and author. His book, [A Gift from the Heart](#), is offered both for downloading or on a CD free as thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by clicking of the title here or contacting him via e-mail at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.

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