

TSI Videos Transcriptions

Gary Carbonello - Ask the Live Transplant Donor

“Actually the process goes like this: You don’t really decide to donate initially. You decide to have your blood tested to see if you’re a potential donor. This is very simple. The process is I let the family know that I was interested, and they let the transplant coordinator get in touch with me. And from then on they set up an appointment with me to go have my blood tested. After that it’s a relatively short time from when you hear you’re preliminarily compatible. So this amazing organ transplant process starts with just a simple blood test.”

Gary Carbonello - Ask the Live Transplant Donor

“Once I got the phone call that I was a potential donor, I was contacted by the transplant coordinator, who’s your eyes and ears to the process going forward. The transplant coordinator interviewed me and asked me a lot of questions, both medical and non-medical. In my particular case, my recipient was going to need both a kidney and pancreas. So, she was going to get the kidney from me but she was going to get the pancreas from a non-living donor. So there was a waiting time-period. We were on hold. So for about a week and a half I was wearing a beeper and I was on call. Naturally, this doesn’t happen in every instance.”

Cathy Lee Gibson – Ask the Live Transplant Donor

“In 1999 we had a health scare with my younger daughter, Leah. We didn’t know what was wrong, but we knew something was amiss. After a lot of medical testing, we found out that Leah actually had a problem, sleep apnea, that could be easily solved by relatively simple surgery. What could have been a life-threatening situation turned out to be very easily resolved. I was so grateful. I was so appreciative. And I wanted to find a way to express my gratitude and to say thank you. After considering a number of options, I decided upon donating a kidney. The fact that I didn’t know anyone who needed a kidney really didn’t matter, because ultimately I view all of us as one family. Some people, including myself, would say God’s family. And the idea is to be able to help each other. No one is more or less special because that person happens to know me or doesn’t happen to know me. The fact that I could donate a kidney, in and of itself, was enough.”

Cathy Lee Gibson – Ask the Live Transplant Donor

“One of the things that I had to recognize about myself is that I’m not a particularly courageous person. However, I also realized that whatever level of fear I was experiencing had to be far less than the level of fear and anxiety experienced by people who are waiting for a kidney; people who walk around for days and months with a beeper on their waist, hoping that it’s going to beep; hoping that there’s going to be a match for them. And then once I found out who my recipient would be, I thought about her; a young girl, twenty years younger than I was; a young girl who didn’t know whether or

not she'd be able to graduate high-school, get married, raise a child. And clearly my own fear abated in the face of the fear that I knew she must experience. And then I also thought about the fact that ultimately, I only had to be courageous between the time I woke up the morning of the surgery until I was knocked unconscious by the drug. Calculating that to be a few hours, I knew that even I would be able to do that."

Cathy Lee Gibson – Ask the Live Transplant Donor

"It's a very difficult question because it's a very personal decision. For me this has been a life-enriching and life-altering decision. Having the chance to donate a kidney, as a living unacquainted donor has let me be a part of something that is so much bigger than myself. This helped me to be able to make a difference and I feel very privileged to have done that. It's also given me the opportunity to demonstrate to my children that you can make a difference in this life; that it is important to try to make a difference in this world, which is a lesson my parents taught me many years ago far more eloquently. In terms of a practical piece of advice, I would suggest the people who are considering doing this research and search. Do practical research. Find about the procedure. Find out about the risks associated with it, and find out about the critical need for kidneys to be donated. And in terms of searching, search your heart, search your mind, search your soul, and make a decision, but make an informed decision."

Cathy Lee Gibson and Family – Ask the Live Transplant Donor

"I felt glad and nervous. I felt glad because she was helping somebody else, and nervous because she was going into surgery. But she helped somebody, so I was very happy."