



# The Gift of Life: The Reality Behind Donor Organ Retrieval

*Traci Graf*

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"Organ transplants are a very controversial and unique area of medicine. Those of us who work as Transplant Coordinators were frequently referred to by hospital staff as 'organ vultures' behind our backs, but also many times within earshot. I felt this reference to extremely ugly birds was unfair and short sighted. I did say once in a while to a difficult staff person, 'if your kid needed a transplant wouldn't you hope that someone was out there being as ethically aggressive about finding an organ as they can?' That usually shut them up quickly."  
-- from the Foreword

One of the miracles of modern medicine is the ability of surgeons to transplant organs. Often, it's the only way to save the life of a person whose own kidneys, lungs, liver or heart are failing. But with barely 2 percent of critically ill patients suitable for organ donation, the demand far exceeds the number of organs that become available.

*The Gift of Life* is about the remarkable world of organ transplant coordinators, profiles of the men and women who locate and arrange for the donation of organs from those who are dying and wish to live on in others' bodies through this selfless gift. Traci Graf tells the riveting story of this unique and demanding branch of medicine.

Transplant coordinators review the medical files and charts on all patients whose condition is so severe that they are not expected to live. Their task is to convince the patient (or the patient's family) to allow organs to be donated immediately upon death. The transplant coordinator works to save lives by finding and obtaining consent for as many organ donations as possible.

In *The Gift of Life*, transplant coordinator Traci Graf recounts the stress, drama and joy of working long hours dealing with emotionally distraught family members and overworked medical staff, and the emotional toll of a job that means the difference between life and death for the recipients.

Packed with riveting first person narrative, *The Gift of Life* will appeal to anyone interested in modern medical practice and the lives and challenges faced by nurses and doctors who work to offer critically ill patients the gift of life thanks to donors' foresight and generosity.

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