

A (Wonky) Donor's Perspective

Virginia Postrel
www.dynamist.com

What People Say

- “You know, you can change your mind.”
- “Why does it have to be now?”
- “That’s very noble of you.”

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- “You know, you can change your mind.”
- “Why does it have to be now?”
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- In other words: **YOU’RE NUTS!**

The Wrong Kind of Sympathy

“We sometimes feel for another, a passion of which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality.”

—Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Operating Assumptions

- Normal people won't give up an organ except under coercion.
- Anything that encourages a decision to donate is by definition coercion.
- To avoid coercion, living donors should be discouraged.

Some Perspective

- Relatively low-risk surgery, fast recovery.
- Compatibility not difficult, usually just blood type.
- Few regrets: ~3% regret donation

Accept Diversity

- Markets tolerate—even reward — differences. So should the transplant system.
- One person's craziness is another person's profession, hobby, or quest for self-improvement.

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"A tree as big around as you can reach starts with a small seed; a thousand-mile journey starts with one step."

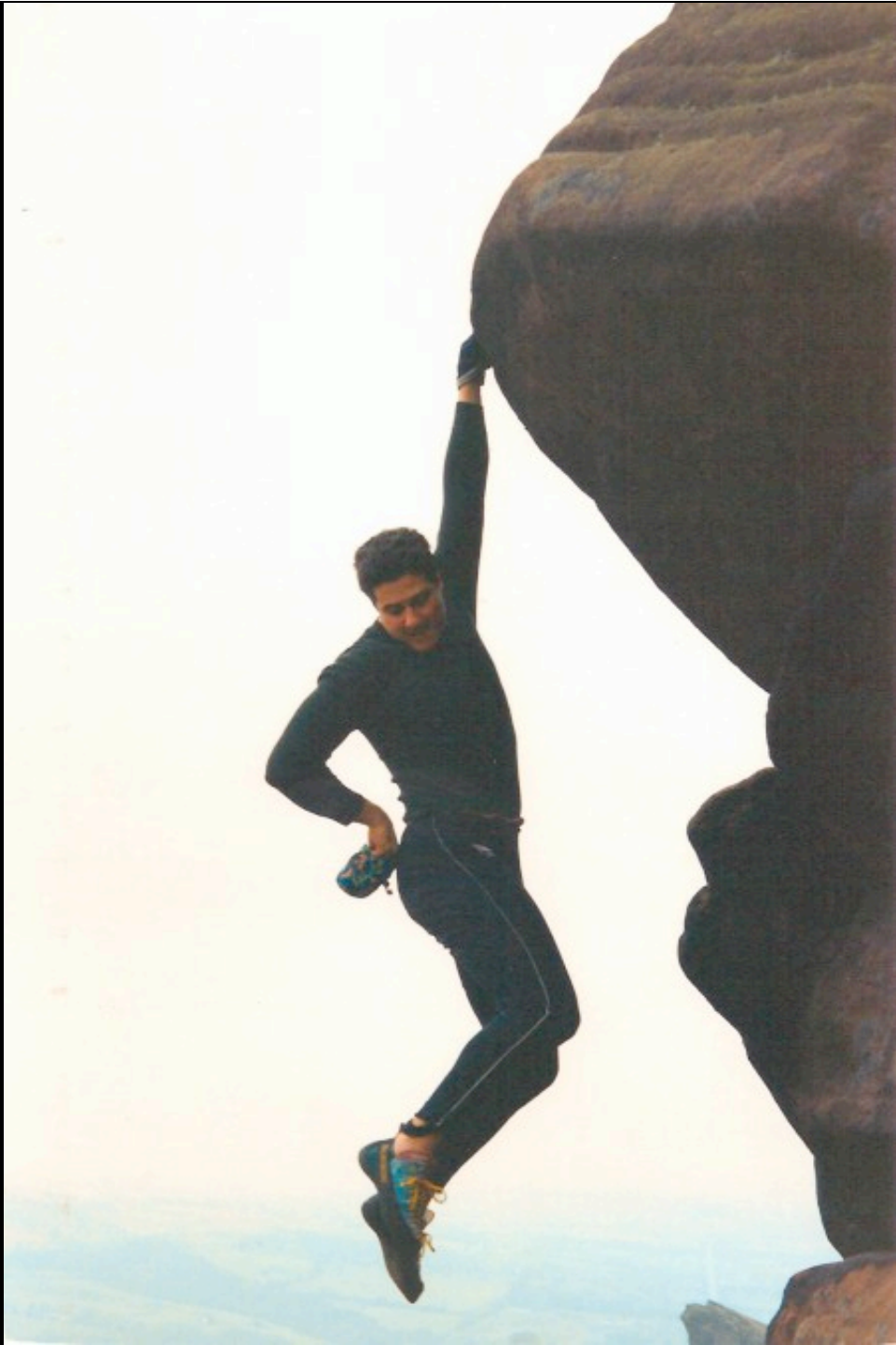
Fire fighters have a pretty hot job

More info about firefighting jobs:

- [Smokejumping](#) - by Patrick Withen
- The [three main types](#) of firefighting employment
- [News from Bala Cynwyll: forest firefighting instructor](#)



Lunch Atop a Skyscraper, 1932





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Pilot Survives

Never Trust a Stranger

“That person could come back 10 years from now and want you to pay for his kid’s education.”

—Hospital officials to kidney patient
Sandra Grijalva

Donors Deserve Respect

- Respectful rather than suspicious interviews.
- Respect for donors' time.
- Respect for personal preferences and sympathies.
- Donors should not be forced to lie.
- Donors are not tools to serve bioethicists' ideological agendas.

Better Treatment for Donors

- Premium care: expedited tests, private hospital rooms
- Child care, transportation, lodging for family if needed
- Replacing lost wages
- Follow-up care and information

Fair to Whom?

“I was offered \$50,000 and a ‘car of my choice’ for my kidney. An answer to my prayers. As long as those prayers included 5 years in federal prison. I could have saved someone months ago with no harm done to anyone. But that’s illegal. Every single medical person involved with this will be making money. They get to make a profit from my kidney, but I can’t.”

“Truly Altruistic” Donors



“I have done something to help someone. And that is the message of love basically, from my understanding, what Jesus was trying to teach us.”

—Barry Mendez

They're Crazy Too!

“I think their leader’s coercive of the followers. I think there needs to be an investigation into what centers are doing those surgeries.”

—Donna Luebke, nurse and UNOS board member, on Jesus Christians like Mendez

A Mitzvah Is Not a Pathology

“Concerning religious beliefs, it has been noted that evaluators must take care not to inappropriately ‘pathologize’ desires to donate on the basis of religious altruism.”

—M.A. Dew, G.E. Switzer, et al.,

“Psychosocial Aspects of Living Organ Donation”



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Where to Find Donors?

- 38,000
- 37,000
- 33,000
- 15,300

- 123,000

Where to Find Donors?

- 38,000 Southern Baptist congregations
- 37,000 United Methodist
- 33,000 National Baptist
- 15,300 Church of God in Christ

- 123,000 congregations

Data compiled by Adherents.com



Altruism vs. Sympathy

“If you said that you have a church of 3,000 people and someone stands up in the front of the church and says, ‘I need a kidney. Would someone give me a kidney?’ and somebody in the back pew that this person had never met and didn’t know says, ‘I’ll do it,’ I would not find that acceptable. I would find that to be solicitation, just as any other solicitation.”

—Douglas Hanto, M.D., former ethics chair,
American Society of Transplant Surgeons



Died
June 7, 1937

Age 26

Cause of death
“uremic poisoning
brought on by
acute nephritis”



Kidney transplant
December 19, 2003

Age: 33 (now 36)

Donor:
Jason Cooper
A cousin he had not
seen in 25 years