

Sacrificing a Kidney

Californian Randy Curlee won Victoria Ingram's heart and – against all odds – one of her kidneys, too.

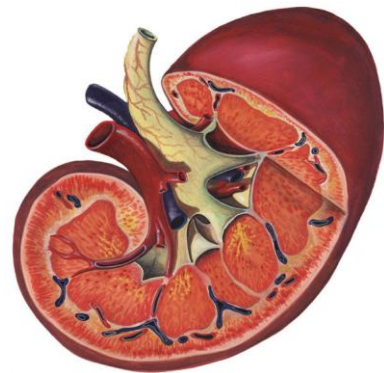
The two became engaged in February 1994. A short time later, Randy received some bad news from his doctor. Randy had suffered from diabetes since he was 12 years old. He was now 46, and the doctor said the diabetes had ruined his kidneys. He would need a transplant to save his life.

A story in the *Chicago Tribune* tells what happened.

Randy brought his fiancée, Victoria, to hear what the doctor was saying so she would understand how his diabetes would affect their future. The doctor said that each year only 4,000 kidneys become available to the 36,000 people who need a transplant. Usually, family members provide the best match for a transplant, but none of Randy's family matched his profile well.

Victoria spoke up: "Why don't you test me?" The doctor gave her the tests, and the couple went home and forgot about it.

Then the phone rang. Randy's doctor reported that their immune systems were an identical match.



So the couple made plans to be married on Oct. 11, 1994, and the next day to have the transplant surgery. At the last minute, the surgery had to be delayed because Victoria's kidney was nicked by a catheter during testing. But one month after becoming husband and wife, in a 5½-hour operation at Sharp Memorial Hospital in San Diego, Victoria gave her husband, Randy, her left kidney.

It was believed to be the first organ swap between husband and wife in the United States.

Randy and Victoria's marriage literally depended on her sacrifice for its survival. In a sense, so does every marriage. Marriages survive and thrive when spouses focus on what they can give to their partner more than on what they can get.

(Jesus is speaking) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34).

– Beecher Hunter