



10 Golden Rules of Networking When You, or Your Family Member or Friend Needs a Kidney Transplant

1. **Always have a business card** – It tells your story. The business card can also be given to friends and family members who want to help you spread the word so they could hand it out to the people they meet. The card could also include the name of the donor advocate at your transplant hospital so if someone is interested in learning more they could call her/him. You could put the card on a flyer you develop and display it on bulletin boards. Go to the home page of: www.LKDN.org to find templates of business cards and flyers.
2. **You have good networking opportunities every day** – This can be at work, events you go to & the grocery store. Someone is only able to help you if they know about your situation.
3. **Elevator Presentation** – Develop a 15-30 second presentation that describes your situation. Make it unique so the other person wants to hear more. Practice-practice-practice your elevator speech.
4. **Social Media** – Every day there's another story of how someone found their donor using social media. Facebook gets much of the attention but other sites will work too. Long lost schoolmates, (go to that reunion,) and friends are donating, so are friend of friends...and develop you own website. It can provide more information about you and living donation.
5. **Network in the right circles** – There aren't many wrong circles to meet new people.
6. **Follow-up** – If someone seems interested in learning more, ask if they would like you to provide more information about the donation process or give them the contact info for the donor advocate at your hospital.
7. **Project a positive attitude** – I.e. you are pursuing a living donor because the wait for a deceased donor is 5+ years...on average a kidney from a living donor lasts about twice as long as one from a deceased donor. Be positive of the things in life that you are no longer able to do but want to experience...children, grandchildren, travel, physical activities, etc. You don't want to be gloomy and negative.
8. **Participate actively in groups and organizations, volunteer** – This will allow you to meet more people and helping others often results in others wanting to help you. If you belong to a church then get involved in their programs.
9. **Use email. Send out an initial email or letter informing friends and family of your situation** – Then follow up at least once a month, updating them on your health and provide them with articles about the transplant community. The LKDN Facebook page posts many articles that you could use. www.facebook.com/livingkidneydonorsnetwork
10. **Be willing to go beyond your comfort zone** – If you have the urge to introduce yourself to someone, DO IT! You might hesitate, but these opportunities often have a short window and you may not be able to duplicate this situation again. Even if you're nervous, force yourself to move forward and make contact. You'll get more comfortable as time goes on.