



## A Change of Heart: A Memoir

*Claire Sylvia , William Novak*

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## **A Change of Heart: A Memoir** Claire Sylvia , William Novak

After a heart and lung transplant operation, dancer Claire Sylvia discovered that new organs were not the only thing she inherited. Never having liked such foods as beer and chicken nuggets, she suddenly started craving them. After an extraordinary dream, she seeks out the family of her donor -- a teenaged boy who died in a motorcycle accident -- and learns that it is indeed possible for two souls to merge in one body.

"This is a story that must be told and heard...a fascinating example of how cellular memory can outlive physical death". -- Deepak Chopra, M.D.

## **A Change of Heart: A Memoir Details**

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# **From Reader Review A Change of Heart: A Memoir for online ebook**

## **Sharon says**

Claire Sylvia had heart trouble her entire life. One of her loves was dancing. Eventually she became too weak to dance. She became an invalid who was dying. Her name was placed on the transplant list. She received the heart and lungs of an 18 year old young man who was killed in a motorcycle accident. She soon began to notice subtle changes within herself. It was almost as if another person was present. She noticed changes in her attitudes, food preferences, habits and behaviors. She had a dream in which she met a young man named Tim L. Claire was convinced that Tim was her donor. She proceeded to determine if the new personality within her came from Tim L.

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## **Diana Sandberg says**

Really interesting, and well-written; a page-turner. Sylvia had a heart-lung transplant in 1988, wrote this book about 10 years later. The story of her life and illness up to the transplant was quite interesting and worth reading, the story of the transplant itself very absorbing; the story of afterwards even more so. She had strange changes to her tastes and personality, as well as dream experiences, that are most intriguing and difficult to explain, and, it turns out, she's not the only one. She eventually contacted the donor's family and that, too, is an interesting story. A fascinating read.

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## **Ashley Kimler says**

I first picked this book up about 18 years ago (wow... is that right? yep -- it is). It was sitting on my mom's bookshelf and it sort of spoke to me, so I picked it up and started thumbing through the pages. In less than 24 hours, I was had finished. I can see how some of Claire Sylvia's experience might be seen as mere coincidences to people who think in black and white terms. But, this is the book that really opened my eyes to what might be; this story made me fall in love with reading. While the memoir is very unique, it could be a book that opens your mind to many of life's mysteries.

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## **Vanessa says**

Important work, if only to document the the holographic relationship between our spirit/soul/consciousness and this most important of organs, the heart. How Claire experienced this through the transplant of a young man's heart, replacing her. Recent advances in this subject validates her personal experience.  
<http://www.amazon.com/The-Hearts-Code...>

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## **Laura says**

What an amazing book! An incredible story of a woman who has a heart/lung transplant and the shifts that happen to her mind, body and soul. It's so interesting the psychological aspect of living with someone else's organs in your body when you were dying.

What do those new organs do to a person? How do they effect you and show up in your life? Is your life really your own anymore? The questions have been asked and of course science doesn't have the answers to these questions because science can't physically touch, feel and see this aspect of transplants.

There are many questions and this is one woman's story that delve's into all the aspects of transplant surgery and the recovery time both physical and psychological. The questions and research that she is persuing will hopefully open the minds of people and expand the science of transplants in the future so that people who are having strange experiences won't feel ridiculed or alone as they go through their post transplant journey.

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### **Carol says**

A Change of Heart is the story of Claire Sylvia who received a heart-lung transplant. She talks about her experiences leading up to the transplant and after the transplant. The most interesting concept which she discusses is that of cellular memory. This is memory transferred by organs to the recipients in organ transplants and certainly seemed to be the case in Claire's transplant. When she met her donor's family she was amazed to learn that he loved green peppers which she had developed a new attraction to, and that he also loved chicken nuggets which she had also become enamored of after her transplant although she had never cared for either of these foods before. She also discusses various dreams which she had and characteristics of her donor which matched new emotions and feelings which she developed after she had received the new heart.

I noticed this book on my shelf after I read Jodi Picoult's book Change of Heart and decided truth would be an interesting contrast to the fiction. The take home for all of us is BE AN ORGAN DONOR!!!

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### **Cassandra Javier says**

Something I read more than a decade ago, back when I was 11? :)

It's a memoir about Claire Sylvia's heart transplant--how it affected and changed her life, and how it changed the lives of people around her. Having been transplanted a heart of a man, and being a woman herself, how do you think it went?

It's an emotional, gripping account of a reality that many of us know nothing about. Beautiful book, great read.

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### **peg says**

Claire Sylvia provides a vivid personal account of what she experienced as a heart-lung transplant recipient. Many of her experiences are common among heart transplant recipients but what sets Sylvia apart is her belief that the spirit and personality of her donor somehow resides within her body after transplantation and is responsible for changes within her own psyche and personal tastes. Frankly, I don't buy it. Although I have heard other heart transplant patients make similiar claims, it just doesn't make sense. I believe that high doses

of steroids and anti-rejection medications coupled with the psychological aftermath of coming to terms with one's own mortality have a powerful effect on patients' states of mind and these effects far outweigh any possibility of the spirit of the deceased inhabiting a patient's body.

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### **Shelly says**

I read this book after my 1995 kidney transplant. I was very skeptical about the "cellular memory" in organ transplantation. The author did make a good case and by the end of the book I was actually following along with the concept. You have to remember that after any kind of transplant you are on several types of medication, including steroids, which will change your taste buds and emotions. I think we still have a lot to learn, but I am not fully convinced that cellular memory exists. This is a book I will have to go back and re-read. I would recommend this book to anyone, not just people with transplantation in their life.

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### **John says**

The first part of the book - the author's life prior to surgery - didn't make for particularly compelling reading, but she's an interesting enough person in her own right that it was readable. The cellular memory aspects are worth waiting for - several recipients' stories of taking on attributes of the donor were impossible for me to discount, although I place more of a scientific emphasis on that myself, than the donor's spirit staying behind. Claire's dreams feature in the story, a new agey angle that has never really interested me, but perhaps she's more "in tune" (psychic, if you will) than the average person.

I was left, however, with the lingering impression that she's a somewhat "unreliable" narrator, or at least not all that self-aware. As one example, the sisters of her donor eventually end their communication with her claiming "You're just interested in us as sources of details about Tim!" Though I doubt Claire lead them on deliberately, I'd come to that conclusion about that relationship myself. She has a falling out with her transplant caseworker; I suspect that woman likely thinks of Claire as "pushy", "self-important", etc. Still, I'm glad I read the book, and would encourage others to to do as well - it's a valuable part of the cellular memory discussion.

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### **Karyl says**

Claire Sylvia is a woman who's always had to be careful with her health, having had a heart murmur for much of her life. When she is finally diagnosed with primary pulmonary hypertension, she realizes that eventually the only way to stay alive will be to receive a heart and lung transplant. Finally she receives the new organs, but now she's craving beer and chicken nuggets, foods she had never really enjoyed before, and she feels some changes in her personality. It's also wonderful to see how strong she became after the operation, with so much energy and vitality.

It's true that Sylvia does devolve into some New Age mysticism, with her focus on dreams and feeling as though the donor is now a part of her personality. I don't discount her experience at all, but it's not something I hold much credence with. I do believe there are some things out there that science can't explain, however.

She does posit the theory that because she's a dancer, very much in tune with herself and her body, she was more receptive than most people to these feelings of having to integrate another person/soul/personality with

her own once she received her donor's lungs and heart, and because she was able to do this emotional work of integration, she has had a very easy time of it since the transplant. She never experienced rejection symptoms and instead felt at her healthiest.

I just Googled her and found she passed away in August of 2009. But I'm so glad she had 21 healthy years after her transplant.

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### **Deborah says**

This was an interesting book portraying the psychological, emotional, and physical difficulties and changes that author, Clair Sylvia, lived through after going through a heart and lung transplant. I found her story to be compelling and interesting. I like how she addresses multiple possible explanations for what happened to her and how she reaches out to others who have gone through similar experiences, giving them comfort and support in letting them know that they are not alone. I highly recommend this book to anyone contemplating receiving an organ transplant along with their family and friends.

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### **Barb says**

About a lady who gets a heart and lung transplant and starts to like some of things her donar likes that she can't explain. It makes you think about whether or not this kind of thing could really happen. And, the importance of donating your organs for others who may need them.

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### **Kelly says**

This is the memoir of a woman who received a heart-lung transplant. It relates changes that occurred in her that she believed to be attributes of the person whose organs she received. She later met the donor's family and found many of her impressions of the donor to be true. Also includes anecdotes relating to other transplant recipients that are of a similar vein.

There is a lot New Agey-ness to the author and her book. I am interested in learning more about the effect of transplants on the whole being sans the New Age stuff. It's hard to get a feel from this book whether what's communicate are simply the author's New Age projections and beliefs or more objectively what happens to transplant recipients from the mind-body-soul perspective.

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### **Donna LaValley says**

I don't want to discourage anyone from reading this book because I gave it only 3 stars. The story about the changes Claire Silvia noticed after her heart-lung transplant interested me immediately after reading the story in magazines years ago. Since then I'd looked forward to reading the book. However, the writing style disappointed me. You know that style where the last half of the paragraph is a series of questions? And those questions have been asked before? Maybe the words will be slightly different, but you know those same questions will be asked again? Doesn't that annoy you? If they needed to pad for the book's length, couldn't

they have found a better way?

A movie was made of Claire's story, but I didn't see it. Comments, anyone?

The central issue is that the donor's organs changed her life in scientifically unexplainable ways. She craved foods she hadn't liked before; walked differently, etc. Her new traits and preferences were discovered to have been those of the donor. She had dreams which explained the phenomena. She lived bravely and did important work for others, including helping with research on this and related topics. I especially liked the last chapter, which includes possible explanations from experts in several fields.

People who are interested in dream analysis, life beyond death, and the importance of organ donation would especially like this book. Newer information on the heart's unique cells and functions, cellular memory, etc., have been published since this book became popular.

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