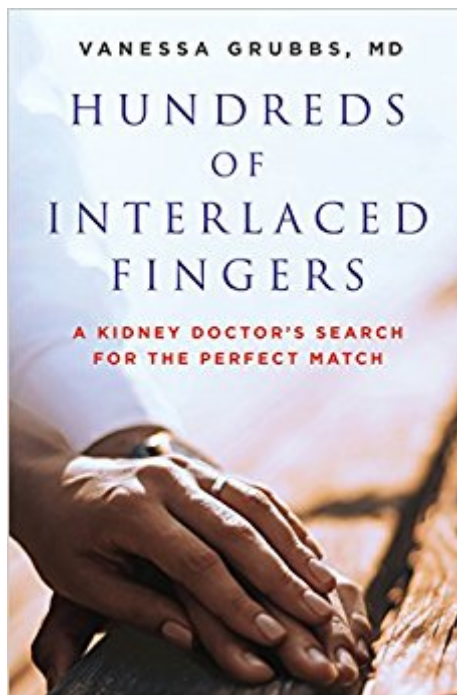




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# **Hundreds Of Interlaced Fingers: A Kidney Doctor's Search For The Perfect Match**



## Synopsis

A young, hopeful doctor's memoir – an unforgettable love story and an informative journey into the world of medicine and kidney transplantation that ultimately asks: What does it mean to let go of something that you love, even if it is life itself? When Vanessa fell in love with Robert, she had no idea that the relationship would thoroughly transform her life. Robert suffered from end-stage kidney disease, which required him to endure years of debilitating dialysis to stay alive, at least until his failed organ could be replaced by a kidney transplant. Although Vanessa was a primary care doctor, she developed a deeper understanding of the difficulties Robert faced with dialysis and in finding a donor. Despite their being early in their relationship, she volunteered one of her own kidneys – and discovered that she was a match. This life-affirming experience forged a bond that would become a pillar of Vanessa and Robert's marriage – and the beginning of her new career. Motivated by Robert's experience and her newfound knowledge, Vanessa became a nephrologist – a kidney doctor – and discovered far more about the realities of the specialty. Shaped by Vanessa's remarkable experiences as a doctor, a woman of color, a mother, and a kidney donor, *Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers* is a love story, an exposé, and a clarion call for us all to consider the dualities of both loving and letting go.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Dr. Grubbs's extraordinary story reminds us all of the Samaritan function of being a

physician. Not only did she train as a kidney specialist because of the man she loves, but also gave him one of her kidneys. This gripping, heartfelt memoir is a deeply insightful look at health care in America as experienced by doctor and patient. • (ABRAHAM VERGHESE, author of *Cutting for Stone*) • “Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers is a love story • love for a man, love for the profession of medicine, love for humanity, love for life. In the sure hands of Vanessa Grubbs, it is a story told beautifully, courageously, and honestly. You •ll never forget Vanessa and Robert, and you •ll never view medicine quite the same way again. • (ROBERT WACHTER, MD, author of New York Times bestseller *The Digital Doctor*) • “Part memoir, part medical guide, Dr. Vanessa Grubbs has written an unforgettable journey of the way love, health, and illness affect us all • doctors and patients. If you loved Jessica Zitter •s *Extreme Measures* or Atul Gawande •s *Being Mortal*, Dr. Grubbs •s beautifully written book will connect with your heart and soul. Her book is a wonderful guide for people facing kidney disease, complete with information on how to navigate the health care system. • (ANGELO VOLANDES, Harvard physician and author of *The Conversation*) • “Dr. Vanessa Grubbs, one of the few black female kidney doctors in the country, has written an intense, ambitious, and fascinating book. It •s a must-read for anyone who is or who knows anyone having kidney issues, on dialysis, or considering transplant. • (VICTORIA SWEET, MD, award-winning author of *God’s Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine*)

A hopeful young doctor •s memoir • an unforgettable love story and an informative journey into the world of medicine and kidney transplantation When Vanessa met Robert she had no idea that their relationship would thoroughly transform her life. Robert was suffering from end-stage kidney disease, which required him to endure years of debilitating dialysis in order to stay alive, at least until his failed organ could be replaced by a kidney transplant. Although Vanessa was a primary care doctor, she developed a deeper understanding of the difficulties Robert faced, including dialysis and finding a donor. So, in spite of the fact that they were still in the early stages of their relationship, she volunteered one of her own kidneys for testing and discovered that she was a match. This life-affirming donation forged a bond that would become a pillar of Vanessa and Robert •s marriage • and the beginning of her new career. • Motivated by Robert •s experience and her newfound knowledge, Vanessa became a nephrologist • a kidney doctor • and discovered far more about the realities of the specialty. Shaped by Vanessa •s remarkable expertise as a doctor, a woman of color, a mother, and a kidney donor, *Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers* is a love story as well as an informative

guide on kidney disease.Â Â

This is truly a wonderful book that's personal, funny and educational all at the same time. Dr. Grubbs doesn't shy away from describing the most painful and intimate experiences of her life. She also highlights the racial disparities in the dialysis and kidney transplant world that I never knew existed. It's an eye opening for those of us who don't have the slightest idea of what it means to have a chronic kidney disease and have to live with the limited choices. I loved reading about the anatomy of kidneys (SHE- so suiting!), and I learned a lot about the history of dialysis, and everyday struggles of those who have to endure it. I, most of all, enjoyed reading about the evolution of her career, giving her more tools and resources to advice her patients about the best course given their condition. I do hope that this books becomes a require reading material for residents and fellows who aspire to get into Nephrology. We need more doctors like Dr. Grubbs who care about their patients rather than the statistics.

Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers had me hooked from the first chapter. This is a love story with a plot twist. Boy meets girl, boy falls for girl, girl falls for boy, girl gives boy a kidney.

There's true love and sacrifice, and that's just the beginning. Vanessa Grubbs's story is both romantic and illuminating. I felt compelled to keep reading and learn about kidneys, a subject I wouldn't ordinarily care about, because I wanted to know what happened to Vanessa and Robert. Grubbs reveals her personal story as a kidney donor to her now-husband to educate us about everything kidney, an organ that often goes unappreciated until it's too late. Her straightforward non-medical language demystifies this complicated subject and makes it easy for the non-medical person, like me, to comprehend. She's the same reliable and plainspoken narrator whether she's describing her relationship with Robert or she's explaining the differences between hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. Grubbs doesn't hesitate to address critical issues surrounding racial biases in kidney transplant allocation and treatment. I can't help but think about the many biases against anyone outside the "norm" (people of color, people with disabilities, people who don't speak English, the poor) that pervade our current medical system, often with devastating outcomes. Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers is not just for people who have kidney disease. This book is for anyone who is or who cares about someone at risk for kidney problems. Questions about risk? Grubbs answers our frequently asked questions and provides resources if

you need more information. Of course, this book is also for those of us who want to read a true story about love and devotion. You don't have to be on the receiving end of medicine to appreciate *Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers*. This is a book for health care professionals, too. Grubbs is a physician who engages with her patients, their families, their lifestyles, not just their kidneys. In some cases, she knows more about her patients than their own families. This is how medicine should be practiced.

It's important to see physicians and other healthcare providers as human beings. It's important to understand how incredibly nuanced and complicated chronic kidney disease treatment is (or treatment for any illness), and how important it is for each of us to take ownership for our healthcare decisions. Where we come from informs the individuals and professionals we become and we are foolish if we don't actively look to connect with those that are taking care of us or who we are taking care of (MDs, RNs, RDs, SWs). Dr. Grubbs shares her story in a way that brings these different facets into sharp focus at different times throughout the telling. It is absolutely a love story but it's also a cautionary tale. I'm still thinking about it days after I finished reading. Thank you Dr. Grubbs and Robert Phillips.

This book is extraordinary! I love Dr. Grubb's courage and the intimacy she uses to tell her story. It is so honest and real, the lessons within are both personal and deeply relatable.

*Hundred of Interlaced Fingers* captivated me immediately. The author is a courageous and sincere storyteller. I appreciated Dr. Grubbs' ability to share her very personal story while delving into some of our healthcare's flaws, limitations but also successes. The book blends a love story, a sociology lesson and medicine into a pleasant and unforgettable read.

### Eye opening

Dr. Vanessa Grubbs tells a gripping and important story about her transformation from primary care physician to nephrologist (kidney doctor) and her experience of donating one of her kidneys to her then boyfriend, now husband. Through vivid writing, she manages to write a memoir that is part love story, part illness narrative, part story of being a physician navigating the world as a woman of color (and one of the only black women kidney doctors in the country). It is part medical text (with clear descriptions of how the kidney works (and fails) and how dialysis and kidney transplant happen),

and part investigation into the ways that racism imbues decisions about who does and doesn't get a renal transplant. Her writing is both clear, moving and (despite the difficulty of the topic) funny. It is a call to action regarding implicit bias in healthcare and a story of facing down a life limiting disease. I hope that every medical school assigns it to every medical student--but I also hope that everyone looking for a gripping read picks it up. There is something in it for everyone. You will learn a lot and feel like you know the main characters. I started it on a plane, thinking I would read a bit before getting some work done, but found that I could not put it down. Strongly recommend for anyone interested in how racism works in this country, how the healthcare system (and training system) operate, and how to embrace life in the face of a terrible diagnosis. You will never forget Vanessa, nor her husband, Robert. Strongly recommend!

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