

John Kaplan to present documentary of his unexpected cancer journey

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It's a glimpse into a very personal journey.

Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist John Kaplan will offer a free showing of his documentary film which captures his unexpected cancer journey at 3 p.m. Saturday, July 21, at The Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs' Café Theater at the Promenade at Bonita Bay. A panel discussion will follow the screening.

Not As I Pictured is an autobiographical 54-minute film following Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Kaplan's unexpected cancer journey.

Kaplan was at the top of his world.

Never before ill, he was accustomed to documenting the life ordeals of others. But when suddenly diagnosed with a rare case of potentially deadly Lymphoma, it was a blind side.

Turning the lens on himself, Kaplan's remarkable imagery takes us beyond his despair and through his powerful belief that he can, and must, beat it. Through his visual journal, with help from his family, doctors, and even Mother Theresa and a rock star, Kaplan shares the same boundless determination that helped him become a famous photojournalist.

Kaplan has judged the Pulitzers, too, and says that cancer stories are the biggest cliché.

But when you get cancer, you don't feel like a cliché, you just pray you can beat it.

Follow Kaplan's journey as he lives it through his own lens. The dreaded news of cancer is certainly no fun, but you can make it through to the other side, back to health and the joy of every day. Today, you can beat most cancers. Kaplan's story helps show us the way.

The film will be followed with a discussion with John Kaplan, Mayor Ben Nelson, CFABS President Susan Bridges, the event organizer Victoria Terre and others. Small group meetings will be available with groups supporting the event including the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, Hope Hospice, Cancer support groups and the Ft. Myers Photography club.

One in three women get cancer. For men, it's one in two. That means virtually every family is touched by it.

We are confident that the film can truly help cancer patients face their treatment with new courage, and the belief that one can make it through difficult treatment back to health, with the knowledge that many cancers today can be treated like chronic illnesses and no longer as instant death sentences. Family scenes with Kaplan's wife and children are included to help viewers value their own families, friendships, faith, and courage to fight.