

“I am not the hero of my cancer story.”

About five years ago Jon Kasdan, now a staff writer for the TV show “Dawson’s Creek,” learned he had Hodgkin’s disease. He was a 17-year-old junior in high school. UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center provided his treatment. Kasdan’s story below is excerpted from remarks he made at a Jonsson Cancer Center Foundation dinner about his experience.

O By Jon Kasdan

VER THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD in which I was in chemotherapy and then radiation, I kept coming across relative strangers who would tell me how bravely they felt I was handling my illness, how heroic an example I was. But I know I wasn’t particularly brave or heroic.

I am not the hero of my cancer story. The heroes of my story are my mother and my father.

It was the two of them who had to deal with the most acute of all agonies, watching their child in pain and not being able to stop it. And it was they who, instead of turning away or building walls around their fears, decided instead to envelop me with all their love and their souls. They simply refused to believe there was nothing they could do. And with every ounce of their energy, they created a womb of safety from which I was nursed back to health.

They made a decision to forgo everything else in favor of being the best parents, friends and guardians that they could possibly be. And that is heroic. And that is brave. Those acts are, without a doubt, the most powerful and poignant examples of love and compassion that I have ever known.

What is impossible to understand when you’re being treated for cancer is that the real battle is not waged in chemo or radiation, with needles or IVs, but instead, years down the road, in the colds, the flus and the headaches that everyone else dismisses, but you burden with all your fears and nightmares.

In the last couple of years I have been places more terrifying than any hospital room. Really dark places. And it has been in those places that my parents’ heroism has inspired me, has made me stronger, has given me light and has given me hope. How do you thank your parents for a lifetime of love? ☆

*Jon Kasdan
faced cancer
at the age
of 17.
He credits
the love
and support
of his
parents
for his
recovery.*

