In April 2003, I was about to begin a new chapter in my life as publisher and owner of *Attraction* Magazine. I was excited about the opportunity to have new and challenging experiences in the publishing world. Little did I know how mentally and physically exhausting the next year would be.

After a routine physical exam, I received the phone call no man wants to get. An elevated PSA reading (Prostate Specific Antigen) and a biopsy confirmed the urologists’ suspicions. I had prostate cancer, and I was otherwise a healthy and fit man at the relatively young age of 53! There was no family history of any kind of cancer and, therefore, the news was a major shock, not only to me but to my doctors as well. Prostate cancer—that phone call began a year of challenges that were not the ones I had been excited about.

The shock, anger and fright that came along with the unfortunate news are impossible to describe. I felt as if someone had hit me hard with a fist to the stomach. Then the questions of “Why me? Why now?” began going through my head. Those feelings were soon replaced by a determination to move forward, do extensive research and make a treatment plan.

My partner in this challenge would be the person who entered my life 20 years ago and has now become my life, my wife Harriett. This was going to become a very intense and stressful experience for both of us, especially for my wife since she had traveled this cancer road before with a negative outcome.

We talked to many doctors both locally and across the Bay Bridge. We read books and researched the Internet until our heads were spinning with information. The amount of data we had to sort through, analyze and try to make sense of was overwhelming. It was amazing how exhausting a one-hour consultation with a doctor could be.

After more than three weeks of research, Harriett and I made the decision about how we were going to aggressively attack this cancer. We would leave no stone unturned. The next year of cancer treatment would begin with hormone therapy, followed by daily radiation five days a week for five weeks. After a month of recuperation, I would have surgery to receive radioactive seed implants in the prostate. There would be two more months of rest and recovery before nine sessions of chemotherapy over a three-month period.

The decision was also made to have all this treatment supervised and administered locally. My local team of doctors utilized a protocol from the University of Maryland Greenebaum Cancer Center. There was no reason to drive several hours a day across the Bay Bridge to receive the same treatment that could be given here at the Shore Health System Regional Cancer Center. And, I have to say, the service and care given to me here by very competent doctors, nurses, technicians and volunteers has been second to none. I am a big proponent of the Regional Cancer Center which provides excellent care in a very healing atmosphere.

For most of the past ten years, we have been able to keep my cancer and PSA in check. However, recently I hit a bump in the road as my PSA began to rise. After changing medication and getting things back in check we found the new medication was causing liver issues. Therefore, I stopped taking that medication and began the search for new treatment.

At the time of writing this article in January 2013, I am in the middle of a clinical trial supervised by my local doctors and Johns Hopkins Hospital. New drugs and advanced research are having great results in treating prostate cancer and many other forms of cancer. I am confident that my team of doctors, nurses and volunteers will help me through this latest challenge. Time will tell, but a positive attitude and support from family and friends are all so very important.

As a publisher, but more importantly as a man, I feel it is my responsibility to tell you this story. Men – regardless of family history, age or general health, prostate cancer can enter your life. Have a regular check-up, including the PSA test. One simple blood test can make a huge difference in your life. If you are 35 years old, consider establishing a “baseline PSA value.” Women – encourage your loved ones to be vigilant. If my experience can save just one life, what a gift that would be!

Richard M. Slaughter

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Prior to joining *Attraction* in 1997, Richard was General Manager of WCEI radio in Easton. From 1985 to 1995 he worked for the late Mr. Abe Pollin and Washington Sports as Vice President of Sports Marketing.