



By Silver Rose

Passionate Self Care VI – Feed Your Mind Only What You Want More Of

This is sixth in my series on Passionate Self Care. Go to <http://silverspeaks.com/blogs/> for related articles.

I've made no secret of the fact that I am in recovery from 30 years of clinical depression. Much of what I learned about keeping depression at bay is what I bring to my teaching whether the topic is *Passionate Self-Care* or *Dancing With Change*.

A few years back I learned something new that has helped me immeasurably in my quest to stay balanced. It happened one day when I was in a foul mood. If you've ever been in this type of mood, you know it's very different from a regular old bad mood—it's like a bad mood on steroids—angry and ugly. I couldn't figure out what was causing it. Nothing was going particularly wrong in my life. In fact, things were quite good. And then it dawned on me. For *entertainment* I had been listening to the latest James Patterson book on tape.

James Patterson is an incredible writer. He's so good, in fact that all of the violent ugliness that took place in this book was all too real. It felt as if I were a part of it and my brain reacted by releasing all the appropriate stress hormones that hit your system when you're involved in or witness to violence. I was in fight or flight mode and it was awful.

This was the day I realized that a good deal of my depression was self-inflicted. The Law of Attraction says that you get more of what you focus on. Choosing where to place your focus is essential to *Passionate Self-Care*. We all know that, don't we? And yet most of us don't practice it. Take the news, for example. We think that following it keeps us well informed when in fact the news is simply someone else's opinion about what happened. It's not "the truth" and it's designed to whip us into an emotional frenzy. In fact, most of the news is *none of our business*.

We think violent movies, TV shows or games don't hurt us but they do. If they're any good, they make you feel as if you are right there. That's great if you're part of the dance sequence in *Footloose* but if you're watching a movie where someone is being subjected to a horrific act it affects you mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically. And once you get those images into your brain, they are there forever. Ask anyone who suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as I have and we will tell you—forever as in those images never go away.

If you are truly serious about taking better care of yourself then being careful about what you feed your mind is a key component. Watch movies and read books with happy endings or ones that are at least neutral. Look for the good in others instead of the bad (including yourself). Listen to happy music. If the paper's lying around, read the comics or the Opinion Page but throw the front page into the garbage where it belongs.

When we do this are we denying the reality of how the world really is? I say no. What we are rejecting is the idea that life is mostly awful. We are saying to those who present it as such, "I'm no longer willing to listen to you." When I was in the midst of my worst depression my world was awful and most of it was self-created. I watched maudlin movies, I read horrific books, I engaged in constant complaints disguised as intellectual discussions. My focus was on the travails of life and that's precisely what I attracted.

Life is no different today but I am. Do I still have challenges? You bet I do. My life partner Bill has pancreatic cancer and it is terrifying. What's different is that I'm not making it worse by feeding my mind a load of self-pity or engaging in conversations about how unfair life is. Do I talk about my fears to Bill and to dear friends? Yes, I do. But mostly I choose to focus on the incredible love we share and the fact that he's here with me now.

The only real control any of us have has to do with what we feed our minds. Use this gift wisely and watch how wonderful life can be.