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TOXICITY OF MEDIA

Is the media toxic to your spirit? Or is it a wellspring of knowledge and enlightenment?

The media we consume every day - TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, even the Internet, Blackberry and videogames - feeds our minds and can have a powerful influence on our lives.

Yet what we feed our minds affects us in so many ways. It can influence what we say and how we project ourselves - externally and internally. From celebrity-marriage scandals to senseless courtroom dramas of the rich and famous, to even the snapshots on the murder, violence and mayhem that humans are so wont to perpetrate upon other humans, our antenna receives it all.

Many of us willingly hand over our otherwise valuable time and capacity to think for ourselves. In turn, our minds become reflections of the media itself. If the brain is a hard drive awaiting installation of a central operating system to guide how it performs, we often select an operating system of someone else's choosing.

Like some drug, the toxic energy offered up by today's media is always there as a willing partner. It can steer our minds in directions we might not otherwise go. We behave in alignment with what we see. The negative influences can pervade our souls and fill our minds with toxic waste.

Sadly, most of us are ignorant to what we're doing. We're numb to it, not conscious about what we are feeding our minds.

And for those who have kids, think of what impact the negative media messages are having on forming their values and beliefs about themselves and the world they live in.

To be sure, the media is not inherently bad. Some content is amazing and enlightening and thought-provoking. It can feed your mind and enrich your soul. The key is to consciously choose that content that engages you in a healthy way. Just as your body needs feeding, exercise and rest to perform at its peak capacity, so, too, does your mind need to be fueled, purified and cared for.

Up for a challenge? Try this: Avoid the media for 10 days. Turn it off. Pull the plug. No TV. No newspaper or magazines. No surfing the net. Doubtless, a "void" will emerge in your life. Will boredom set in? Will you 'go crazy'? Or will you find you've discovered more time for yourself and for those who truly are important to you?

In 2002 I did this challenge and it changed my life. I gave up the daily news. No TV. No newspapers. No "general interest" media, for I realized it was a waste of precious time and it did very little to fuel me.

With all that new time on my hands what I found was more fulfilling than I could ever have imagined. I set forth on my personal journey of discovery. I turned to art. I wrote a book. I had more time to focus my attention on the people I care for and I had time to do the things that were important to me. And today I feed my mind with media that is healthy and supports my life.

Today's the day to turn off the media that can be toxic to your mind and to your soul. Be deliberate about what you feed your mind.

Today's the day to live your life more fully alive.