

The Sanity Update

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Plus More Cool
Stuff →

February 1, 2016



TV STUFF:

- X-Files
- Pretty Little Liars
- Football - Playoff season
- And More!

Book Stuff:

- *Odd Thomas Series* by Dean Koontz
- *Become a Giver: 30 Ways to Change your World* by Alicia-Joy Pierre
- Memoirs!

Hey All!

I hope you had a peaceful holiday season, and are faring well enough in (at least in the Northern Hemisphere) in this wintertime.

In this issue of *The Sanity Update*, we will take a look at what ideas and resources can be helpful for that ever-elusive thing called "sanity." Plus a round-up of what TV, Books, and other assorted goodies that I'm into right now.

Winter can be tough for so many. Personally for me, the cold bothers my joints, dries my skin to a nasty state, and of course, I deal with good old "SAD" - Seasonal Affective Disorder. Which, as you probably know, means a lack of sunlight can cause some depression.

But at the same time, I don't hate winter altogether. I do like a good snowstorm now and then, it's a mix of peaceful and exciting. Good books, like the ones I highlight inside, plus some fun TV helps. And there's crackling fireplaces, some comfort food cooking, you get the idea. Let's check out what else can help us make through.

Shanti and Shalom,

Mary K.

What's The News

PEOPLE, EVENTS, AND OTHER COOL THINGS THAT HELP IN THE SANITY SEARCH

I'd like to give a shout-out to my friend Lisa Panagopoulos and highlight her new venture called [Grab the Fun](#). The mission of GTF is about MAKING the time to actually do something fun, either alone or with friends. As a frazzled society, we tend to dream of these things, but rarely take the time to put dreams to action. Go check out her ideas and cool logoed apparel. I'm proud of her for doing this!



Hey Friends: Why don't you come hang out with me at: [The Sanity Search](#)

If you'd like to keep receiving my newsletters, please [go here to subscribe](#).

So, you may know that I'm a big supporter of the [American Liver Foundation](#). When my son Tom was diagnosed with Liver disease—at AGE 12—our world was made unrecognizable. But there were always bright spots during that time, and one of the



brightest has been our involvement with the ALF. One of the best parts has been having someone on the ALF's Run for Research marathon team "run" for Tom. For five years there were several runners matched up with Tom, and we are still close with them.

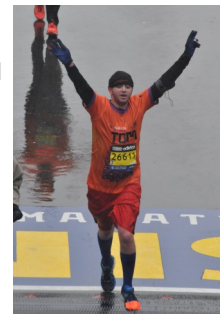
The even better part is that Tom himself became part of the team last year, he raised over \$8,000 for the cause of Research, Education, and Advocating for those suffering from liver disease, and he ran the whole 26.2 miles. Fantastic!

This year, Tom's dad Dave also joined the team, He's working hard at the training, but the fundraising has been tough for both him and Tom. So I'm sending out a plea to all of you, to see if you can please

consider donating.

[Dave's Page](#)

[Tom's Page](#)



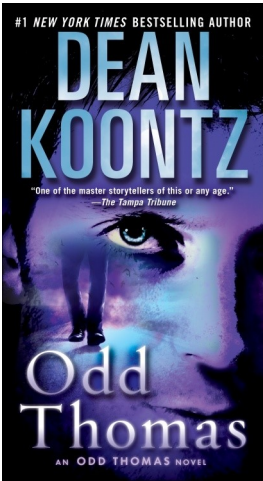
FAITH: This should just about be self-apparent, and most people I know do align themselves with some kind of organized religion. Mostly Christians, although I know a few Jews, a couple of Hindus, and maybe some Muslims. It's all good. I also know some very sweet and cool atheists, and I don't judge, because, think faith is hard, damn it. Personal and world events would seem to point to a Godless arena, there's been ever-present crap to deal with. But for me, personal and world events also show me a *place filled with the grace of God*, and that's what I rely on. Consider delving deeper into what your faith.

MOVEMENT: I've done Kenpo Karate, Yoga, Tai Chi, Weight Training, Cycling, and walking. I've not done them all that well, but I've tried to keep moving. You need to keep the body moving in some manner. YOU MUST! Endorphins get working, calories might get burned, smiles form. DO IT!!

BREATHING: I know, seems like stating the obvious, but I learned this from doing Yoga. Deep breathing seriously helps reduce the flow of cortisol. You can find more information in this article I wrote not too long ago, "[Yogic Science: Lower Your Stress Through Breathing.](#)"

BOOK STUFF

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING



The *Odd Thomas* Series—by Dean Koontz

I've definitely mentioned this [author and book series](#) at The Sanity Search. It's the kind of story I love best. A likeable young protagonist up against some truly nasty human and inhuman monsters, aided by some equably likeable and unique friends.

Odd Thomas is an unassuming young man who works as a fry cook. He had a terrible upbringing, but is still full of good manners, a good sense of humor, and a lot of Grace. He can see the dead, and sometimes aids them in "crossing over", but the stories reach far beyond that. Check them out!

***Become a Giver: 30 Ways to Change Your World* by Alicia-Joy Pierre**

This is a quick little gem that—no pun intended—keeps giving. Pierre explores some decent reasons for giving, and even better, some practical examples of how to do that, mixed with personal tales that resonate. From Chapter Two:

"As stewards of humanity and the well-being of this planet, let's take the initiative to offer help where we see a need."

Yes, yes, yes...a thousand times YES. This is the sort of thing I want to foster everywhere I can. And I hope, so will you.



Memoirs and More

***Yes Please* by Amy Poehler**—I received this as a gift for Christmas, I had not asked for it, but was still glad to get it. Besides that she grew up in my hometown, I have always liked Amy P. I barely started reading her book, but it does look good. (That darn Koontz book took priority) :)

***Dear Mr. You* by Mary-Louise Parker**— OK OK, It's not like I have a *thing* for celebrity memoirs, or do I? ;) Actually, *Dear Mr. You*, isn't necessarily a memoir, but still, it's meant to capture a lot of what Parker's been through. It's mostly a set of letters written to men who have impacted her life in various ways. She's smart and eloquent. Check it out.

***City on Fire* by Garth Risk Hallberg**— Another Christmas gift, this novel is set in 1970s New York City. It's a big heavy book in both scope and content. For me at this moment, it's a bit of a slog, but I'm still intrigued. I'll let you know how it goes.

TV STUFF

MY PICKS FOR THIS ISSUE

Pretty Little Liars—Season Six—Part Two.

I want to explore the series a little more on [my blog](#), but here let me just say that I'm so excited that the show is back. The hook for the second half of the season is that the timeline has sped up by five years. The girls have pretty much finished college, and have begun their careers. Alison is a teacher now! Emily has some kind of medical secret! Caleb is living in Spencer's barn, and I swear there is something brewing between the two of them. Hannah is engaged to a filthy rich accented dude, who seems ok-ish. Ezra is broken. Aria is working in publishing, or something related to writing. Is it me, or does she seem a bit dark? Anyway, come join me, Tuesday nights at 8:00 pm on Freeform TV (formerly ABC Family). Neato escapism!



X-FILES—Limited Six Episode Season



Too bad it's just six episodes! Of course, it could suck, and I might want it to be over sooner—but somehow I really doubt that. Mulder and Scully are back for all sorts of exploits—or maybe one or two—since again, only six seasons. Smoking man is also back it seems? Also Chief Skinner, and yes, yes, yes....the Lone Gunmen!

Begins Sunday 1/24/16 at 10pm, continues on Monday nights at 8:00 pm on Fox.

EXTRAS

Limitless—really loving this show. I'm still behind watching on Demand, but I am really enjoying this series. It's got create espionage drama, a good solid cast, and it's funny! Airs Tuesday nights at 10pm on CBS

Casual – I'm watching this on Hulu. It's great, if not a bit depressing. It has a *Six-Foot Under* feel, definitely cable TV sensibilities, what with the cursing and liberal sexual attitudes. The story of two adult siblings and one teenager under the same roof is addicting.

Younger— The premise is far-fetched, but once you get past the idea that a 40something is trying to pass for a 26 year old —it's pretty good. I adore Sutton Foster, and was a bit sad when *Bunheads* was canceled. Debi Mazar seems to play the same snappy caustic character as she did on *Entourage*, but she's still appealing. And Hilary Duff isn't too shabby either. Created by Darren Star of *Sex in the City*, it's got some good stuff going on.

I'm not such a sportsing girl, but I do like **watching my New England Patriots**. Hoping they clinch the AFC and beyond!

There are tons of great shows out there, this is just a wee glimpse into a few that I'm kind of — OK, I'll say it—Hooked on.

Sanity Smörgåsbord

OTHER STUFF TO SHARE

A Recipe to try: One Pan Pasta and Sausage Dish

This is adapted from a recipe called One Pan Orecchiette Pasta that I found on Allrecipes.com. It was originally written by “Chef John”, and this is my version. And it’s freakin’ delicious! And easy! Feeds five or six happy people.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup olive oil	1 lb. spicy or sweet ground Italian sausage meat
1 or 2 cloves fresh garlic, diced	7 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided, or as needed
1 onion, diced	1 lb. of bow-tie or orecchiette pasta
Salt to taste	1 bag of fresh spinach (from grocery salad section)
1/2 cup or less finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese	

Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir onion and garlic with a pinch of salt in hot oil until onion is soft and golden, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir sausage into onions; cook and stir until sausage is broken up and browned, 5 to 7 minutes.

Pour 1 1/2 cups chicken broth into sausage mixture and bring to a boil while scraping the browned bits of food off of the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Add pasta; cook and stir pasta in hot broth, adding remaining broth when liquid is absorbed, until pasta is cooked through and most of the broth is absorbed, about 15 minutes.

Stir spinach into pasta-sausage mixture until it wilts. Ladle pasta into bowls and dust with Parmigiano-Reggiano

Peace, Peace?

As I’ve been developing the Sanity Search site, it’s become my practice to close posts or emails with “Shanti and Shalom.” Most everyone knows that *Shalom* is a Hebrew word for “peace.” *Shanti*, from Sanskrit, (typically chanted three times, preceded by *Om*,) also means peace. OK, that’s all nice and earthy crunchy, right? But for me, this, especially the *Shalom* means something personal, not just that it might sound good on a touchy-feely website such as mine.

A few months back I was in church, listening to my Pastor’s sermon, based on the concept of *Shalom*. And there I learned that the word means not simply “peace”, like no more war, it means a kind of acceptance of life, as it is right now. I can’t remember how she explained it exactly, but in the deep Hebrew meaning, *Shalom* is a sense of completeness, peace, welfare, harmony, health, and contentment. Stress-free!

And from what I can tell, although I have to read further, *Shanti* is quite similar.

So why say them together? First, because I think it’s a beautiful cultural pairing, and secondly, because the lesson of accepting our “new normal” - (sickness, joblessness, divorce, etc.) needs repetition, doesn’t it? These situations may or may not be permanent, but we need to find the contentment and harmony no matter what is going on. Not easy, I know. But it’s worth a shot!

Shanti and Shalom.

