

Books, Seasons, and the Making of Meaning

A Reflection on Learning, Wisdom, NeuroFaith®, and Saditude



Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D.

There was a time when books were simply requirements. In undergraduate school and early graduate training, books were assigned, measured, and tested. They were things to get through rather than companions to sit with. Knowledge came in syllabi and deadlines, shaped by institutions that often told you what to think long before they taught you how to think. Like many students in psychology, I learned the language of the field before I learned its soul.

It wasn't until later, well into graduate school and especially after leaving academic institutions behind, that books began to change for me. Once the pressure of exams, comprehensive reviews, and institutional dogma fell away, something remarkable happened. I was finally free to choose what I wanted to learn. That freedom changed everything.

The Early Season: Building the Collection



My first true book collection began at UC Berkeley and University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. That was where the family started, what I affectionately call my chilens (my



affectional modification of children). From there they traveled with me through my internship in California, then across the ocean to Kaiserslautern, Germany. Later they moved to Texas, Washington, back to Germany again, this time Frankfurt, and then once



more to Washington, before finally arriving in Arizona. Through hospitals, treatment centers, and countless clinical settings, my books remained constant companions. Wherever I went, they came with me.

In those early seasons, my reading was largely scientific and clinical. Neuroscience, trauma theory, attachment, developmental psychology, addiction science. These were the foundations I pursued. I was hungry to understand what actually happens inside a human being when suffering takes hold. Those books built my competence. They sharpened my clinical instincts and taught me how to think independently rather than merely repeat what I had been taught.

The Middle Season: Knowledge That Begins to Speak Back

As the years passed, something shifted. The books stopped merely informing me and began confronting me. Some challenged assumptions I didn't realize I carried. Others exposed blind spots or forced me to wrestle with uncomfortable truths. I came to understand that a good book is much like a good friend. A good friend doesn't simply affirm you. A good friend tells you the truth, even when it is difficult to hear.

The books that shaped me most were not loud or dogmatic. They did not rely on intellectual bravado or rigid certainty. Instead, they spoke clearly and patiently, inviting me to think deeper, wider, and more honestly. Over time, these conversations began to converge. Neuroscience began speaking to trauma, trauma to attachment, and attachment to meaning. Slowly, almost quietly, a framework began to take shape. What would eventually become the NeuroFaith® model was not born from a single moment or text, but from years of dialogue. Books speaking to books, ideas speaking to experience, science speaking to the human heart. My books did not simply inform my mind. They touched my soul.

The Later Season: Pulling It All Together

As we age, the hunger changes. Earlier in life, we seek knowledge. Later, we seek coherence. We want to know what it all means. We begin asking different questions about what endures, what heals, and what merely sounds impressive. This becomes the philosophical season, the season of synthesis. And in that season, one truth becomes unmistakably clear. Knowledge alone is not enough.

aThe Book Above All Books



It would be impossible to tell my story honestly without naming the book that ultimately helped me make sense of all the others, the Bible. Not as a competing source of knowledge, but as the lens through which knowledge becomes wisdom. Scripture does not replace science. It redeems it. It helps discern what knowledge builds life and what knowledge quietly dehumanizes, reminding us that human beings are not machines to be optimized but souls to be restored.

Through God's Word, the fragmented pieces begin to align. Truth with grace, knowledge with humility, healing with meaning. The Bible does not answer every scientific question, but it teaches us how to hold knowledge rightly. It orients the mind and anchors the heart. In many ways, NeuroFaith® was born at this intersection, where neuroscience and psychology meet something older, deeper, and wiser. Where empirical understanding bows

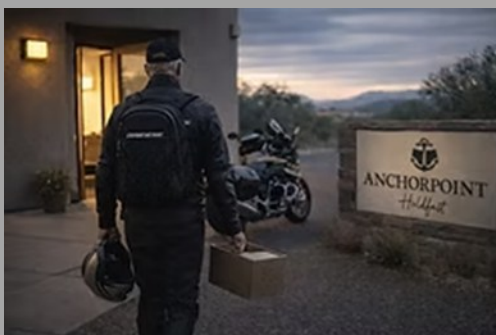
not in submission, but in reverence.

A Quieter Season and Saditude

Today, my books finally rest in one place, my garage, affectionately known as my man cave. From this space I have written six or seven books of my own. When I brought my chilens home and placed them on the shelves, I felt a deep sense of comfort and belonging. And yet, alongside that happiness came something else as well, a quiet sadness.

This move felt different from all the others. In earlier years, each relocation carried momentum, another hospital, another leadership role, another institutional challenge. At one point, I served as a clinical director in addiction treatment, work that demanded intensity, structure, and relentless pace. Those years mattered deeply, and I remain grateful for them. But I also know that this move is different because it is likely the final one.

The era of institutional urgency, the hospitals, committees, and formal systems, has closed.



What remains is quieter work. Slower work. Work shaped less by hierarchy and more by reflection. Now the task is philosophical, pulling together decades of learning, experience, faith, and science into something coherent and humane. I work now as an older man, a senior psychologist, emphasis on senior, yet still with a strong and curious mind, sustained in large part by my lifelong relationship with books.

This season has taught me a word I have come to cherish, *saditude*. *Saditude* is a term I coined a few months ago as I prepared to leave my work at Holdfast Recovery and AnchorPoint for the final time. It emerged not from theory, but from lived experience. I felt genuine sadness in closing that chapter, leaving colleagues, patients, and a role that had once carried deep responsibility and meaning. At the very same time, I felt profound gratitude for the years of service, growth, and purpose that work had given me. *Saditude* names that paradox, the ability to hold sorrow and thankfulness together without needing to resolve one against the other.

It is gratitude for a life of learning, for those I have served, and even for the institutions that shaped me before I outgrew them. And it is sadness, tender and honest, for chapters that will not return. *Saditude* is not despair. It is the emotional signature of a life honestly examined, where striving gives way to meaning and knowledge slowly becomes wisdom.

In this quieter season, surrounded by my books, I am still listening. Still learning. Still grateful.

