

Dexter Finale: What Showtime's Dexter Morgan Means to Me



By [Brian Frydenborg](#) September 21, 2013

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Spoiler Alert!

While not my favorite show of all time, Dexter is *definitely* up there. And the reasons for this are very personal.

I started watching Dexter right after my mother had a subarachnoid hemorrhage and a stroke. Without going into too much detail, it was an awful time for my family and things got very ugly. Amazingly, my mom survived and began a slow process of recovery that would never bring her

fully back to where she was before, but it was a remarkable recovery nonetheless.

For many reasons I won't go into here, but also some obvious ones that don't need an explanation, I was reeling when this happened. Her recovery took four full months in a hospital and a rehab facility. If you've read [my piece on 9/11](#), you'll already know that I have no real religious "faith" on which to fall back. I felt dead inside. I think I just shut down my emotional side because to have it function at all was to be in agony in those days. I felt like a zombie, going through motions, getting ready to start graduate school, but feeling nothing. I didn't want to go out. I didn't want to see people. I didn't want to do much of anything, wanted to shut myself off from the world.

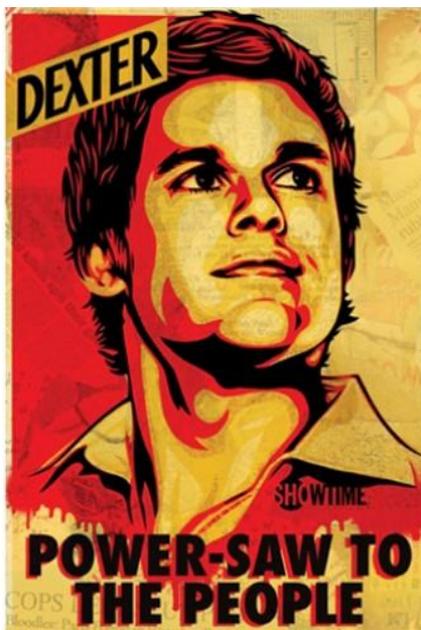
And I started watching *Dexter*. Now, I'm not the serial killer type, but at this awful time in my life, Dexter wormed his way into my heart. I remember how Dexter felt cold, emotionless, that he had to pretend to act normal, fake normal emotions, just felt he could not connect with people and felt no attachment to them. Dexter, like me, was something of a zombie. I could really identify with him as I watched him struggle to connect with people, even those closest to him: his coworkers and his sister and girlfriend, Rita, as D.C., my then-and-current-home, was full of people that just weren't my type.

Watching *Dexter* grow and change as a person was amazing for me. It was at times agonizing to watch Dexter try to be something he wasn't, try to show the emotions he knew normal people felt in certain situations but wasn't able to, hurt those close to him. But something happened slowly, where he began to realize how important certain people actually were to him. Being a father figure to Rita's kids Astor and Cody, marrying Rita and having a son with her, growing to be a better brother for his sister

Deb and a helpful friend to his coworkers, Dexter, in spite of himself, became as human as anyone.

That's what made Rita's death difficult, not because she was a great character (she wasn't), but because after making so much progress, Dexter began to doubt himself again, worried that letting people into his life put them at risk. And whenever he tried to open up to some people, they often became killers without scruples, like his brother, Lila, Miguel Prado, and, it seemed, Hannah McKay. Lumen left him, which was crushing for Dex, and Hannah tried to kill his sister.

Despite his unique difficulties, despite his loneliness, despite his need to keep a huge part of himself, his "Dark Passenger," secret from everyone else, Dexter grew and came to care deeply for those around him. He wanted to share his secret but it was (at least partly) his love for these other people that prevented him from telling them his secret because he was afraid it would hurt them. It was heartbreaking to see his reaction when Deb found out his secret. And the turmoil in their relationship since has been the best acting and most emotional scenes of the series (I'm sure it helped that the [in real life, these actors were married to each other and then divorced!](#)).



Dexter showed me no matter how you feel at any given point, you can come back. No matter how dead and cold you feel inside, it *is* possible to find ways to feel, to connect again. Dr. Vogel kept telling Dexter he was a sociopath, but Dexter kept telling her that he really did care, really did have feelings, really did feel human, and proved her wrong. That's why last season was so hard to see, to see Deb sink so low to help her brother, to see Dexter have to push Hannah, the love of his life, away. Yet now he's made peace with his sister and has found a way to make his relationship with Hannah work. Whatever happens in the final episode, that Dexter has come this far has been a joy to watch and an inspiration to me personally. I will miss him and his big heart. And his killing bad guys as the friendly neighborhood serial killer, of course.