



One with the Universe: Charles Holt Finds True Freedom Through Intuition

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The multitalented Charles Holt says a prayer that aligns himself with the Universe. It begins simply, "I am here to serve." The Broadway actor (*The Lion King*) and Hay House author continues, "I am here to be a blessing to everyone with whom I come into contact by sharing my gifts. That might happen through music, teaching,

art, healing, dancing, writing, speaking, and even a gentle smile. I will be the 'everything' that I have come to the planet to be, always aspiring to show the magnificent, unfathomable face of the Divine intelligence. This is my face and the face of everyone I meet. And together we truly are the world, connected to all that exists within. Amen."

Being one with the Universe, says Holt, requires listening

to the inner intuitive voice, embracing one's true essence, and swimming with the stream of life, not against it. "We must love ourselves fully, knowing our life experiences are a set-up to dive into self-discovery. When we immerse in the truth of our being, everything is a leaping-off point to become who we are meant to be. By seeing the possibilities within ourselves, we can see the possibilities in others as well. We are extensions of every living thing."

Holt's compelling life experiences and spiritual teachings are generously shared in his first book, *Intuitive Rebel: Tuning in to the Voice that Matters*. He also imparts profound wisdom in his healing workshop, "Finding Your Voice," as well as in a widely-viewed Internet TED (technology, entertainment, and design) talk. Acting on the world's stages is also an entry point to engage Spirit as is his soulful singing, both live and on recordings. "He is a very spiritual man," says Abraham Dixon, a graduate of Holt's self-empowerment workshop. "Heaven breathes itself through Charles's artistic gifts," adds best-selling author and minister Dr. Michael Bernard Beckwith.

Ambassador of Freedom

"Being free is being one with the

Universe," Holt explains. "I am an ambassador of freedom. I love to inspire people to be their most authentic, wonderful selves. What we came here to reveal and demonstrate will have the final word! There will be plenty of challenges where we will ask, 'Why is this happening?' But the truth of who we are is eternal. This Great Presence is in us."

It wasn't always easy for Charles Holt to discern his own inner voice of guidance. Growing up in Nashville, Tennessee, as the youngest of three, he was accustomed to being the center of attention. At age five, he entertained his parents' friends by dancing to the Jackson 5's hit song "Rockin' Robin"—incorporating a James Brown split. "Look at him get down!" his parents' friends said with astonishment, "Work it out, lil' man!" "My feet felt light as a feather," Holt writes, "and my body jerked and gyrated in total surrender to the rhythm. I became lost to the world around me." Mother Jennie's eyes lit up in amazement at her precocious young son. But suddenly Clarence, Holt's father, entered the room and snapped, "Shut that music off! Get in your room right now! All of that silly dancing and performing is uncalled for."

"I was crushed!" Holt writes.

"Too startled to breathe and too humiliated to cry, I quickly gathered my things and rushed to my room, throwing myself onto the bed and covering my entire body with my blanket. In that moment, dancing and all of what I had loved so much about this fun and free artistic expression became wrong and unachievable in my mind." Later, he reflected on his dad's words. "Perhaps I looked stupid and awkward dancing, and my father's reprimand was his way of protecting me from future embarrassment." More probably true, says Holt, was the fact that his dad "didn't know how to deal with the vibrant life force" of his youngest son.

Whatever the reason for his dad's disapproval, Holt concluded that performing was not for him. "My father's words affected me so deeply that it changed the course of my life for the next twenty years."

A Chameleon Turned Football Player

Charles Holt stopped doing anything creative and began doing things to gain approval. As a young kid, he was so good at so many things—effortlessly changing his skin like a chameleon—that everyone had a different guess as to his future career: doctor (Mom's

prediction), preacher (Granny's prediction), or famous baseball player (Uncle's prediction). "In order to please everybody, I grew up doing whatever they thought I should do. I completely forgot there was ever a time that I'd had a very deep and wonderful connection to all the things that I wanted to be."

His uncle's prediction gained the most traction. "I became a celebrated athlete—a star football player, sprinter, and baseball player who began seriously considering playing sports professionally," Holt writes. By his junior year, football took the lead. "I ate, breathed, and dreamed football, often falling asleep with my helmet in my hands." Holt's physical prowess validated him. Upon high-school graduation, he accepted a scholarship offer from the University of North Alabama, Florence. Even though he was fixated on sports, Holt wasn't fulfilled. He found "remote happiness," however, by singing rhythm-and-blues songs to the girls at Rice Hall. He had long ago discovered that he had the natural ability to sing and that his voice comforted himself and others.

Holt transferred schools, ending up at a liberal arts school in Memphis, Tennessee, earning a bachelor's degree in

sociology. His college football career was “less than stellar,” and a serious injury to his knee sidelined him for a season. He returned for senior campaign and subsequently was offered the opportunity to work out with several NFL teams. Nothing came of his valiant efforts, and suddenly, his dream of being a professional football star was over in a flash. “I wanted more than anything to figure out where I belonged,” he reflects. “I wanted to know why I’d ended up doing what I was doing rather than living out my dreams.”

Stepping into the Silence

Introspective by nature, Charles Holt went within. “Stepping into the silence [was] one of the most difficult things I’ve ever learned to do in my life,” he admits, quickly sharing that the process of minimizing mental chatter took time. “It took years of searching, learning, apologizing, and trial and error until finally I began to recognize my true self as something separate and apart from the noise in my head.” His spiritual tools to access inner guidance were meditation to quiet the mind and spoken mantras to change consciousness. “I began speaking mantras like ‘God is all there is.’ And that made it harder for the chatter to get through.” During this time,

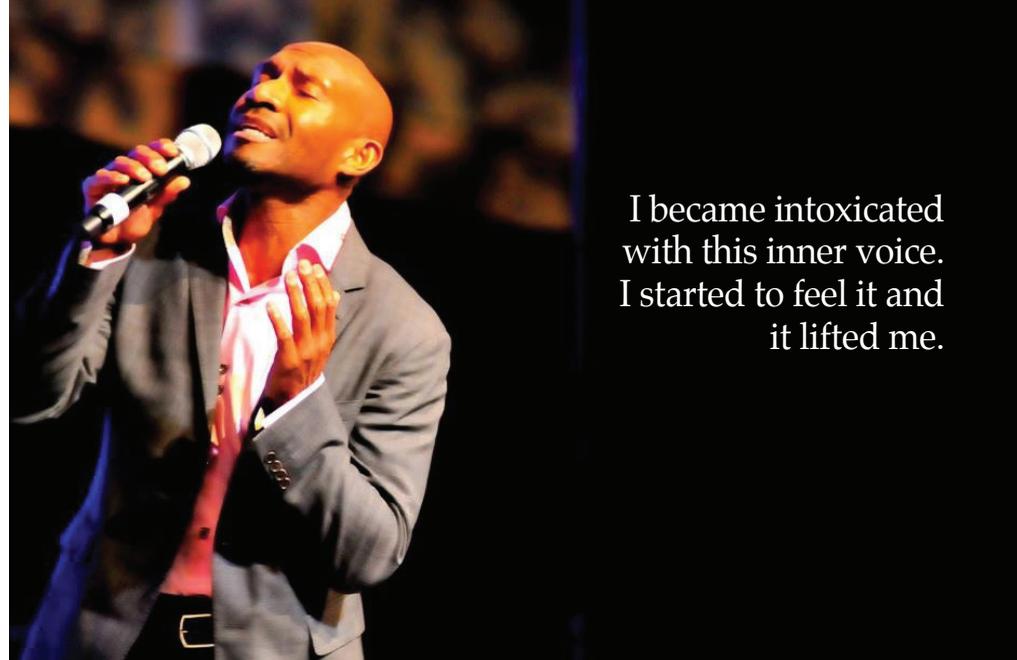
life events took Holt to Atlanta, Georgia, to work at a corporate sales job. The work was unfulfilling, and as Spirit would direct, Holt was eventually fired. Hearing this news, his friend Padro said, “They didn’t fire you; they released you!”

His friend continued, “When you sing, you change things.” Holt thought to himself, “I didn’t know that this Presence could operate through me.” And yet, he had to admit that getting fired must be for a higher good. “I declared to the Universe, ‘I don’t know what’s next, but I will trust and have faith and learn to swim with this stream and not against it.’”

Releasing to a World of Unexpected Joy

Everything began falling into place artistically, Holt says, after he surrendered to the Universe. “In releasing, so many things were activated. I began to remember that music was always my stride.” Listening to his intuitive voice also strengthened his spiritual muscle. “I became intoxicated with this inner voice. I started to *feel* it and it lifted me. It was bigger than anything I had ever experienced, as if it was from another realm. [Being in awareness of this voice] was pure bliss, unlike anything I’d known.”

A serendipitous call from a theater director who heard about



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Charles Holt at Agape International Spiritual Center.
Picture taken by Kirby Williamson

Holt’s acting abilities presented an extraordinary opportunity: to be cast without audition in a regional production of *The Amen Corner*. Reports Holt, “The show ran for a month: packed houses, standing ovations, and hands clapping; people filled the aisles singing, dancing, and rejoicing in ‘hallelujah’ happiness.”

It’s Time!

During one evening performance, Holt went to his dressing room during an intermission. “Suddenly, I heard a voice say, ‘It’s time!’ I became very still.” There was no one else present when the “voice” spoke again. *It is time.* Holt knew what was next. “On July 6, 1996, two

months after *The Amen Corner* closed, I left Atlanta and life in the South, which was all I’d ever known. With four-hundred dollars in my pocket and a conviction that ‘something’ was leading me down this unfamiliar road, I headed off to a new life in New York City. I was certain that something greater than anything I’d ever known or experienced awaited me.”

Within days of arriving in New York, Holt auditioned for the national touring production of Jesus Christ Superstar show with the stirring anthem “America the Beautiful.” “The entire auditioning panel leapt to its feet and applauded,” Holt shares in amazement. He was

one of the few actors called back for further auditions. The waiting game was stressful. "I could hear my mother's overly protective voice and my father's disapproving voice both fighting for space inside my head to see which one would get the privilege of telling me how crazy I was!" But another thought came immediately. "I realized at that moment that I had stepped beyond my comfort zone, out into a higher understanding and awareness." He relaxed a bit, anchoring into his intuitive sense that his life was unfolding perfectly as Spirit directed.

Holt was cast as Simon in the touring production of *Superstar*. "I'd only been in New York for a month, and I'd already landed a national tour!" A lead in another touring production, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, followed. Then, Holt was cast in the "most beautiful, innovative spectacle" Broadway audiences had ever seen.

Circle of Life

On December 17, 1999, Charles Holt made his Broadway debut in the ensemble of *The Lion King*. It was a singular moment in his life. "The costumes, the lights, and the energy: It's a feeling I wished every person could experience at least once, to get a taste of what being in a state of unparalleled ecstasy felt like.

That one opening night alone changed my life." Holt had come full circle into an authentic life, just as the lyric from the title song from *The Lion King* triumphantly proclaims:

*It's the Circle of Life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Til we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the Circle
The Circle of Life*

"Circle of Life" from *The Lion King* (lyrics by Tim Rice)

Path Unwinding

Many gifts came to Holt during his four years and eight months in *The Lion King*, including a new awareness of his abilities as a spiritual teacher through the sharing of his spiritual artistry. "I knew that being an actor in the show was more than performing for me. It was a ministry," Holt says. "I was able to engage with people during 'Talk Backs' after the show, and I could see that there was a profound impact."

Holt sensed that there was more to the path unwinding. One day, he lay down on *The Lion King* stage and asked the existential question, "Why am I here?" The answer came immediately: "To be a vessel for God to use me." He left the show a short while later and moved to

California to begin a new phase of his life—sharing insights from his own spiritual path. Granny was right; her grandson was a preacher!

While not an ordained minister, Holt today inspires thousands of people to follow their inner intuitive voices. Columbus State University senior Abraham Dixon, who attended Holt's workshop on "Finding Your Voice" says, "Charles taught me that I can't live my life for others. I have to embody self-empowerment. If I accept who I am, there's nothing else to talk about!"

Holt also ministers through his musical recordings, one-man shows, college lectures, corporate speaking engagements, and writing. In addition to *Intuitive Rebel*, he has just released his second book entitled *Between Me and Dad: A Journey Through Forgiveness to Freedom*, which recounts the complicated and painful relationship with his father and the gifts that flowed through two compassionate hearts in the days leading up to his dad's death in 2013. "Forgiveness is the genesis of freedom. In the end, my father couldn't stop saying he loved me." This powerful book, destined to become a 'go-to' textbook for men's work, is self-published by his new

publishing company, Wrenbird Publishing, named after his mother's nickname. "She is my champion!" Holt exclaims. He also sings in spiritual communities most weekends. People universally acknowledge that music is one of his most profound and healing gifts.

One with All— Including the Trees

Charles Holt easily accesses oneness with the Universe by being in nature. His face lights up when he shares that he is a "tree hugger" who loves to meditate with mighty redwoods. "I often think, what do they want me to know? They have been around so long and are so wise. I sense that they have just come here to 'be'—never to compete. I ask them, 'How have you weathered your storms?' They tell me, 'All wisdom comes from within.'"

The response of the tree is not lost on Holt who continues to tune in to the voice that matters most—the voice within. ■

For more information on Charles Holt, please visit www.charlesholtproductions.com or www.intuitiverebel.com.