Introduction to Christian de la Huerta

You're going to love our guest today. His name is Christian de la Huerta. He is a transformational coach. He is an award winning author. His newest book is called Awakening the Soul of Power, and it inspires readers to discover new ways to transform their relationship to power.

It has many great endorsements, and his TEDx talk helped bring the whole idea of breathwork to the forefront as an important component of any healing practice.

And again, if you haven't caught the buzz about breathwork, there's a lot of it that is out there now. And is to share with us some of the secrets of it and how he applies it in his own life.

He also has a group coaching program called Adventures and Transformation, and you can find more about his work at the website. soulfulpower.com soulfulpower.com Christian, wonderful to have you here.

I'm so happy to see you again. Dawson, it's hard to believe, as we were talking about before we started recording, that it's been 30 years. it's, Yeah, 30 years.

And, you know, we're all part of the same unity of healing energy of consciousness. And it's wonderful to feel as though that community continues. So it's great.

And so thank you for that beautiful introduction and the important information about epigenetics and the effects of a positive frame of mind on longevity and quality of life that is so critical.

I know I want to make a point to people because if we again make these choices, it really does pay off.

Finding a Calling Through Breathwork

In the short term and the long term. I'd love to just begin with you just sharing how you got into this whole idea, this whole field of change, consciousness and healing to begin with.

What was it that sparked your focus and interest in this, in this, in this field of awareness? Well, you know, I think it's always been in there. I think the calling the the mission, that's soul level mission was always in there.

It kind of I looked at it in different ways at different points. So at some point in my life I thought I was going to be a priest. I went to a Jesuit high school, and I thought I was going to be a priest until I realized that that structure, that organization didn't know through for me.

Say no more Christian. and then my dad was this, like, a psychiatrist. So I was on a track to get a PhD in psychology, as you have, until I discovered breathwork.

And that experience just changed my life. Even my first session, after my first session, I knew that I would never be the same. And I knew that I had to do it again.

And I knew that I had to make it available to others and jump tracks. Never went for the PhD. What was that first session and what was your experience there that was so powerful and transformative for you?

Was it was a combination of things. It was a weekend intensive, and I got two things from that which are still the two things that I that I include in every one of my retreats.

One was understanding the ego, mind and mind you, my dad was a psychiatrist. I had a bunch of psychology teachers, and I never really understood the ego.

Right. Yeah, but Freud's model, the personality, the ego, the super ego. But that's not really, really helpful in terms of liberating ourselves and empowering ourselves.

it was understanding the ego more from from the eastern perspective. and how to break free from its self-made prison of fear and lack and limitation and judgment, victim consciousness, projection, et cetera, etc., etc., all its machinations.

So the combination of that with the breathwork and the healing that I experienced even in my first session, healing at the cellular level. and I know that you know this because of you work with EFT, which, which also bypasses the mind.

And and I saw I was like, you know, with all due respect to psychotherapy and the right hands with clear goals and intentions, it can be profoundly helpful.

And we all know you can sit on somebody's couch for 5 to 10, 20, 30 years rehashing the same old crap and nothing happens.

Trauma, Emotions, and the Body

The reason for that is that understanding what happened to us when we were five or 10 or 15 or whatever. Sure. It's important. It's very important. But but the problem is that that trauma no longer lives in the mind.

It's been so matter sized, and now it's it's resides in the, in the tissues of our bodies. So no amount of talking about it is going to really add to it.

And practices like healing techniques like breathwork or EFT to bypass the mind and heal clear that trauma that is now stuck in the tissues of the body very effectively and very quickly, as you know, and then I thought, I mean, I remember thinking after my first breathwork session like, oh my God, I've got to do this again.

I don't care where I have to go, what it cost, but I have to do it again. And I got it. I got I give this to others and I never look back. And how can you know that you have trauma stuck in our tissues.

What is your what is the typical experience people have that that tells them and shows them that. Well. And it also connects to, to your work and to your research with the, with the emotions and what used to be spiritual teaching that everything is energy.

Now we know from from quantum physics that everything is in fact energy. That includes this chair that I'm sitting on this mic in front of my face, the body, the emotions. It's all energy.

Even though it might feel solid, we know it's all vibration and. Just, you know, because of that, it's whenever we stuff our emotions, which we've all done a thousand times, that stuff doesn't just go away like, well, you can't sweep it under the rug.

And how many times have we overridden our true feelings or thoughts or beliefs and stuff that because we were afraid of confrontation, because we didn't want to rock the boat.

We hate conflict. But the problem with that approach is as we stuff it, it doesn't go away. We know from physics to that energy cannot be destroyed. It can only transform, change forms.

And so what happens is that after a lifetime of suppressing emotions, that's only two things. That energy has to come out. Right. It's it's either going to we were going to suppress, suppress, suppress.

And then the next poor unfortunate one in our lives was says something to us the wrong way. And boom, volcanic eruption unfair to that particular situation.

or suppress, suppress, suppress that energy has to come out one way or the other. So it starts seeping up and out and showing up in the body as physical symptoms, cancer, heart attacks, ulcers.

so we've got to get this. We've got to get our relationship to our emotions and learn how to express them, how to get that stuff out of our body responsibly.

Right. Not like a two year old throwing a tantrum. but. I missed that. That laughter, by the way, was doing. but, you know, responsibly owning that our our emotions science and so community, you know, learning how to communicate from that place of responsibility courageously because it's always going to take courage to report our inner truth and compassionately like, rather that just dumping them on somebody else, learning how to communicate them in a way that that can be received in a way that they can be heard.

yeah. And otherwise otherwise that that stuff just continues festering under the surface and getting in the way of our relationships. Absolutely. And then how much of it is done verbally, cognitively, under the at least with a role played by the conscious mind and how much of it is done, and can it all be done in so many ways, like breathwork?

You know, I think I think the ideal combination is both. You know, we have a combination, a hybrid between the cognitive understanding and the more somatic release.

In fact, I have a lot of, you know, coaches and, therapist who refer people to me, especially when they hit a plateau or when they're stuck. and so it's a great combination, ideally so that you can have these and at the same time have somebody there to help you put a context and contextualize it, know where to hang it up and what to do with it.

And I've also I've also known many, many people who've come to me for one breathwork session. I never saw them again. And that was enough.

Relationship Healing and Breathwork Stories

It was actually life changing. And they released stuff that they'd been carrying around for decades, for a lifetime, and and just being willing to feel that stuff again, just for a few moments in order to release it, changed everything.

They saw themselves from a completely different perspective. And and it was like resetting, like rebooting, starting life, a new. Yeah. Give us a couple of examples too.

I love to just hear it in every segment just to share a story that is noteworthy or striking, like it is the one that really stands out to you of a person who in one session was able to catalyze, shift and change they hadn't been able to make before.

Wow, this was more than one session, but it's one of my favorite stories because it connects to so many of the struggles that that many, most of us, I would say, have with relationship and how subconscious unhealed stuff gets in the way of our relationship.

So this is a woman, probably in her 50s, incredibly successful. I like international VP of a multinational corporation. had never really had a successful relationship.

and so in a couple of we probably did a couple of retreats with several sessions each, but in the last session of the last retreat that she did with me, she had, found insight and she'd been kind of approaching it.

But she had such a profound insight and made connected in such a profound way how she had been abused sexually and as a kid, as a young kid by her pediatrician and, and she was dealing with the conflicted feelings because at the same time she felt the abuse of it.

She also felt that that was the only person who really saw her and understood her. so, you know, that guilt that many people who experience things like that, you know, have to navigate.

And so in getting to that place, she had this visual where she saw a locked door, but realized that she was inside the room and that she was the only one who could let herself out.

And this is all a little of a breathwork session. Long story short, that was on a Sunday. On Tuesday she was having lunch with a friend and the friend said, oh, I don't know.

I hadn't thought about this before, but you need to meet so-and-so. within a week that she was having lunch with so-and-so. Flash forward, three years later, I married them.

they've been together for a long time now, and. And incredibly beautiful. And, like, our partner, her ideal partner. And so so it goes back to the, you know, the work that in my relationships, retreats and coaching, paraphrasing the course of miracles, it's, you know, said something like, it's not our job to look for love, but to look within ourselves for the obstacles, to love.

You know, how do we block love? How how are we keeping love at bay? Sometimes even from the get go, even be by attracting the wrong people. People who are not a match.

People who are not available. you know, they live on the other side of the world. They're already with somebody else, or they're just not there. and so rather than looking for love, of course, the miracle says our job is to remove the obstacles.

And in her case, that was the obstacle. Fear of betrayal, fear of abandonment, the fear of, you know, like, how can I trust men? and when that was healed, boom, love showed up.

as one little story, in a change, the letter how to change. And I know I have quite a few friends in the LGBT Q community, and they often have real, real challenges.

like one of them. I was at a, mastermind with him a few months ago, and I just love this guy is a close friend, and, he is a brilliant human being. I don't want to go describe it.

He was, accomplishments because that would that would that would his his well known and certain probably in fields. But he said to me, Dawson, gays don't thrive.

We survive. I'm just surviving. I'm not thriving. And I thought, wow, I just felt I felt so sad when he said that because he was a brilliant human being.

And, he, he has just had a series of disastrous relationships, and, he, he just made that blanket statement that, you know, watching me and my wife and us doing our heterosexual thing and, you know, obviously after the after after, a lot of, personal growth we've done over the decades.

But, he, he made that comment to me and I just thought that I have it's several of my gay friends say similar things recently. And so what more challenges that are there, there that aren't there necessarily that are unique, that aren't there for heterosexual couples?

It's such a profound question, I think, and I'm so sorry about your friend. It's certainly not my experience. as a gay man, although I've certainly been there and I know self-doubt, I know that the deep underlying self-hatred, that many in the LGBT community struggle with, because of profound existential questions about, you know, like like my struggle, like part of me wanted to serve the sacred.

And yet that was being told by that religion in which I was raised that I was going to burn in hell for eternity just for being who I am. And so it is a profound existential question.

I think what your friend says, though, applies to most human beings. you know, most of us, I think, I think most humans are just surviving. Very few people I think are thriving.

There is that extra layer in the LGBT community because because of that existential question. and, and that's what the message of my first book coming out spiritually was about that.

It's really sad. It's really tragic that so many in my community struggle with with issues around spirituality because we confuse it with religion. And no wonder, given the treatment that we have received and continue to receive at the hands of most religions in this world.

But what is ironic and sad and tragic about that is that before the patriarchal times, back in the days when when women and the divine feminine were honored, you know, before the patriarchy, which was, what, several thousand years ago, when people that we today call LGBTQ, were not only spiritually inclined but were actually honored and revered in many cases for the roles of spiritual service and spiritual leadership that we played all over the world.

LGBTQ Identity, Spirituality, and Patriarchy

And so part of what I did in that book is help us reclaim some of those roles, by, you know, I call them archetypes, the people that we today call because, you know, LGBT because those are very, very, very recent words in human history.

even homosexuality is a very recent word, I think is from the 1800s, the late 1800s. but, you know, we know we've we've always been around. Call us whatever you call us.

and it's kind of turning that upside down. The fact that most of the oppression and the persecution of LGBT people is religiously based, and, and but here's another interesting point that I think is very pertinent to our times.

The more that I realized that homophobia and misogyny are two sides of the same coin. And, and I believe that the deeper one is really misogyny. Kristen, you made that statement that really rubbed me on my heels.

You were saying that misogyny and homophobia are two sides of the same coin. Go into that a little bit deeper? yeah. yeah. If you think about it, if you look at the religions or the cultures that oppress, persecute LGBT people, 100% correlation, they're the ones where women are not equal, where women are less than.

and if you look, for example, at some of them about the religious prohibitions, what some of those there's six what are called holy texts of terror which were translated or mistranslated or taken out of their cultural and historical context to be interpreted as oppressing LGBT people.

One of them is, I forget, you know, I think it's from Romans. I forget the numbers, of the chapter on the verse. But, you know, you should not lie with a man as you do with a woman.

well, I don't mention anything about women. And why is that? you can say that back then, women weren't even human. Women were property. And and even today, you know, if you, if you speak to, you know, some of the staunchest homophobes and you talk about two women together, it's like, ooh, I want some of that.

I want to get in there. Two men together. You're going to roast them out or they want to kill you. So what is that? What what's that about? And I think that what's going on beneath the surface is that two women together are not a threat to the status quo.

Whereas two men together, in their mind, one of them is willingly forfeiting the superior male status. That is a threat to the status quo. And that's my thinking about it, I think.

And that's why in the second book, even though it's for everybody, it has a particular message about women's empowerment. And that's coming from my belief, my conviction that the empowerment of women is the single most important thing that needs to happen in the world.

Not to idealize women, not to put women up on a pedestal, not to give women more crap that they have to clean up in this world. It's because as a world, as a species, which we've been working very off balance, we're very off kilter

even today between the balance between the masculine and feminine energies that if we think about it course through all of us, no matter what kind of body we're in, these are universal cosmic energies.

And yeah, maybe much the surprise of some humans, we're part of the cosmos. So these energies are also going to course through all of us. but the problem is that we have turned the feminine into something weak.

you know, like with and, and we all pay a price for that, by the way. because like, like especially guys, you know, like, without minimizing the price that women have paid during the last several thousand years of the patriarchy and the oppression and the just unnamable, horrible stuff that that women have had to put up with, men have also paid a price for that.

so, you know, little, little boys don't cry, right? That's that's how most of us were raised, maybe not so much these days. But why is that? How come little boys don't cry?

because only little girls do. And so a couple of really faulty assumptions there. One, that the feminine is weakness. It's like, wait a minute. You want to talk courage, strength, resilience.

Let's talk about the courage of men, about the power of creation that resides in the female body. and then the emotions that the emotions are weakness.

And I paused for a moment. I was debating whether to tell this joke, but I think I will. I think you'll appreciate it. And we get to hear your laugh again.

I dare you. So anyway, this is attributed to Betty White, you know, who left us earlier this year? so apparently she was being interviewed in one of those group celebrity interviews, and somebody said something about having balls, and she said, wait a minute, wait a minute.

How come we have this association with courage and strength, with balls? You thump those little things and the guy bends over, collapses in sheer pain.

you want to talk courage and strength. Let's talk vaginas. Those things take a pounding. Hahahahaha! And then the you know what we're talking about the emotions.

You know, emotions aren't strength. They're not weakness. They're not good, they're not bad. They're just energy. How we express them, depending on how we express them, they have a good or not so good effect.

But they're energies neutral. Yeah, yeah. And, there has been this this idea of, of emotions being weakness. I know that I've done a lot of research with veterans with PTSD, and a lot of them are just trained out of expressing their emotions and they're not only trained out of it as children, like big boys don't cry also as adults, that they don't show their emotions.

And so they come into therapy. They realize that PTSD, they realize things aren't going well in their lives, and then they just have they, you know, if they with for one thing, they have no emotional literacy.

They can't even explain how they feel. You also know how you feel. And they look around like they're searching for a feeling. Where is that? In the room?

And no wonder then, right? No wonder that the rate of longevity, you know, like in the US, women outlive men by five years. Globally seven years. And if you look at the the number, the rate of suicide, I only have the numbers for the US.

But in the US, men commit suicide for times as frequently as women. in fact, 70% of the suicides in the US were committed by middle aged white men. which begs the question is like, why is that?

Because you would think that the group that ostensibly and I think pretty arguably and pretty obviously holds the

majority of the power in the world. Still, you would think that they would live longer, have a lot more benefits and privileges, but yet they're taking their life.

70% of the suicides.

Emotions, Masculinity, and Mental Health

And I think it's because of what we're talking about, but because of all that suppression of emotion that we walk around like these uncaring, unfeeling robots, we think that's what it means to be a man.

and what is limited and limiting, perception and definition of masculinity and what it means to be a man Christian. Again, this whole idea of power that you're referring to, you referred to earlier and about how we have this ambivalent relationship with power, this conflicted, relationship with power.

How is that? Yeah. there's a part of us that wants it, and there's a part of us that is terrified of it. And I think what we fear doesn't is that if we really step into our power, if we really beat all of who we are authentically, that other people might not be able to handle that and that we might end up rejected alone.

And who wants that? I think we also fear that we might abuse it. And no wonder how many abuses of power have we all witnessed throughout our lives. In fact, all you got to do is turn on the news any given day to witness at least one abuse of power, and then add to that this other, whole other layer that we've been conditioned to believe that power is a bad thing, that power is a negative thing with quotes like power corrupts, an absolute power corrupts absolutely.

And who wants to be corrupted? But what they didn't tell us about that quote is that Lord Acton, who spoke those words, was speaking specifically about political power, not the personal power that we're talking about.

So when you add to that mix what we were talking about, the emotions and the fact that we hate conflict, we avoid confront confrontation, what happens is that we give away or power or innate inherent power that nobody can give to us, nobody can take away.

We are the only ones who give it away, who sell out on our power. And the saddest part to me is the reasons for which we give away our power. Like how many times have we said yes when inside it really wasn't okay with us.

Inside it was a definite no. How many times have we played small like stuff? So our stuffed ourselves into into small little, little packages so as to not rock the boat too much, but to not cause conflict.

and the thing is that we settle for an illusion of security, a false sense of acceptance and morsels, crumbs of pseudo love. Because it's not even real love.

Because if we're not presenting ourselves authentically, anything that we get in return is not going to be authentic either. It can only mirror how we're presenting ourselves.

so it's not a really good strategy. And so what this book is about is like, how do we step into power, into personal power in a way that's not about hierarchy, control, fear or domination manipulation.

How do we do it in a way that doesn't require that we push anybody down, step on them, put our knee to their neck in order for us to feel powerful. And so one of the first steps, toward, you know, on that journey of reclaiming our powers, realizing that we're talking about different kinds of power.

So I talk about worldly power or ego power in contrast to spiritual power or soulful power. And how do most of us be what how do we associate power? What kind of people do we associate power with?

People who are famous. People who have money, people who are higher up in some kind of hierarchy, whether it's the corporate ladder or any institution.

But the thing about all those kinds of power and expressions of power is that they're external, they're outside of us. So therefore fickle here today, gone tomorrow.

And that kind of power is always it always has an agenda. So it's always trying to grab something for itself. And it's always self aggrandizing. So it's always blowing itself up to seem bigger than it actually is.

Reclaiming Personal Power

And we don't need to look very far in history to, to, to to. Think. Of examples of people who have all the money, all of how you could one in the whole world and their sense of self, their self esteem is like fragile, like one tweet sends them and do a whole, either reactivity or you can just see through it how poorly they think of themselves without mentioning the obvious names.

so in contrast with spiritual power or social power, that's again in it. We all have that inside of us, and it has nothing to prove. It just is. and it's rather than being like having about self service and having about agenda, it's about serving others and making a difference.

and, and it's humble so has nothing to prove. So I think for example, a Gandhi or a Gandalf, if you're a Lord of the rings fan, in their simple monastic robes, they're sandal feet.

From looking at them, you'd never know how much power they hold until it's necessary and then get out of the way. Gandhi brought the British Empire to its knees when it was at its highest point in terms of global reach.

And he did that without ever shooting a gun or landing a single punch. That power. Yeah. I wonder why that example hasn't been followed in more places.

And so we saw that example with Gandhi, which rocked the world, which which just changed our paradigms and our assumptions. And we see other frozen conflicts all over the world, you know, Somalia and Somaliland, Palestine, there's so many places where, there there are just Syria, where there's isn't that ability to, to, to make change even at it's, you know, the U. S.

has produced all kinds of, really, violent acts to even think about people reclaiming their power. So, that's, that's we look at those shining examples like Gandhi.

And yet, I'd love to have a few dozen more Gandhi's around right now. Yeah. Boy, could we need another Gandhi or another Mandela. he also embodied or another Doctor King who also embody the those principles of nonviolence.

Yeah. That events that we can track all the way down to Jesus, by the way. Yeah. Yeah. So so some of stay here and really being thoughtful and looking at their own relationship to power.

How do you start to find that point of inner power in yourself? Well, you know, it's a process of course. And and it begins with self-awareness. We can't do anything about what we're not aware of, what we can't see.

So I would begin by asking like, like to a two pronged approach beginning to expand how we think about power. And so continuing this, this frame, the frame of thinking is like, oh my God, I didn't realize that there's a way that I can step into power that would be congruent, that would be a match with who?

With the goodness in my heart. and then begin to notice the patterns like, like and asking yourself questions like, where do I tend to give my powers away?

Right? What are my patterns? What kind of relationships? What kind of situations in life trigger that? That behavior of me playing small or hiding my light under a bushel, or giving my power away and saying yes when it's time to really feel now, so is it, for example, with authority figures, parental figures, bosses, religious leaders, coaches, you know, HR professionals, whatever.

or is it perhaps with romantic, intimate sexual relationships? Right. And so by beginning to observe our lives, we begin to see the patterns. And once we see the patterns, then we can choose other ways we can right those learned behaviors.

Christian. So full power. most people think of the soul as being this mysterious thing out there in the universe. not part of my physical body and my physical reality.

That's something that's ephemeral. I can't touch it or taste or smell, tell or see it. That can be powerful. You're telling me. Go ahead and share more about soul power.

That's funny. well, here's how I think about soul. and I'm not a theologian, but I think of it as our own piece of sacred real estate. Right. So if the sacred is, as religion's claim, omnipresent everywhere, we're all part of it.

That means that it's also in us and expressing itself through us. Once we realize that once we we, we understand what the ego is and how it is such a tiny, tiny, tiny, infinitesimal part of who we are and we don't have time to dive into what the ego is here.

But but here's a beautiful, quick visual, but a baseball in the center of the stadium. That's what the ego is. Who we are is actually the stadium. And we've allowed this tiny, tiny, tiny part of who we are to think that it is all who we are and to make it really important, critical, consequential choices from its very small, limited and always fear based perspective.

So to me, part of.

Soul Power, Ego, and Transformation

Reconnecting with our soul. The process of transformation is about dis identifying with a baseball and re identifying with the stadium. I call that the soul.

Call it the higher self, call it whatever you want to call it. Like, you know, stadium nature. and so of course, how can that not be powerful? But it's a different kind of power, right?

Because of the, because it, it's sort of that conundrum of, you know, we tend to think of surrender to our own stadium nature. we think of that word surrender as giving away our power, throwing it, throwing in the white towel.

But ironically, counterintuitively, that's where the power is, is in that act, because we're actually tapping into our stadium nature. and, and it's a different kind of power, right?

It's it's not power over, but power with. And it's the more humble kind of power but that the, the stadium reality is more it's that's where, you know, we use words because we don't really have the words to describe it.

So we use words like miracles and magic to, to to refer to it. That's the kind of reality that we all have access to get to who we are ultimately. Yeah.

And we have to, as I say, this identify. We have to raise our gaze beyond all those fear based messages we're getting from that ego side of ourselves that we can get sucked into that.

And it's a tragedy. We spend all our lives there, as many people do, and never shift their perspective to be in the stadium and to be that great itself.

But when you are that of self, when you realize you are that self, then the ego is it's something. It's there, it's it's it's handy. Like, you know, and it keeps my calendar for me.

It drives my car. it's true. it is so true. And that's really important too, because, you know, where there's some misunderstandings, even in spiritual circles, that you got to kill the ego, you got to annihilate the ego because it's

the source of all suffering.

And that's true. It is the source of all our suffering. But there's a lot of good that comes from having an ego, from having that individual sense of identity.

This is Christian. That's Dawson over there at the Ego means I. That's what the word means in Latin is I. So it's that sense of individual, separate personality, ultimate, ultimately an illusion, both a helpful illusion and the source of all our suffering. but as, as far as I understand, as long as we're in a body in this third dimensional reality, it's not a bad thing to have a an ego identity.

The thing is not to identify with it and not to to let it run our lives. So, so rather than killing it or annihilating it, it's just like putting it like it has kind of usurped the place as if it were the sun.

and it thinks that it is the sun that the center of the universe or the solar system, at least. and what we're saying is like, you don't get to make those choices for me anymore, because all those choices are made from a limited and fear based perspective.

So we put it in its proper place in service to an orbit around the sun, which in this case it goes back to the soul or the stadium or whatever we call that.

One of the most simplistic, ways of putting that is the way the course of miracles say says that everything is either based in love or fear. And that's just a very binary kind of choice.

But when you look at what you're worried about, what you're thinking, what you focused on, that is a really good question to ask. And the chances are, if it's all about fear, it's ego driven.

If it's all about love, you are the stadium. What a beautiful analogy, Christian. Thank you so much for sharing with us. Thank you for being yourself.

Thank you for all of the the trailblazing things you've done over the last while and your books and your work. I'm deeply grateful to you. Thank you.