

DAVID ARCHULETA TALKS LEAVING THE CHURCH, CONFRONTATION WITH APOSTLE, COMING OUT

David Archuleta, artist/American Idol contestant, appeared on "Books That Changed My Life" to discuss the impact of Paulo Coelho's book, The Alchemist.

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The Book That Started It All: David Archuleta on [Books That Changed My Life](#). Archuleta first encountered The

Alchemist at age 17, riding on the American Idol tour bus between

shows. Fans had pressed multiple copies of the book into his hands, sensing, he believes, that the wide-eyed teenager newly catapulted into national fame might need its message.

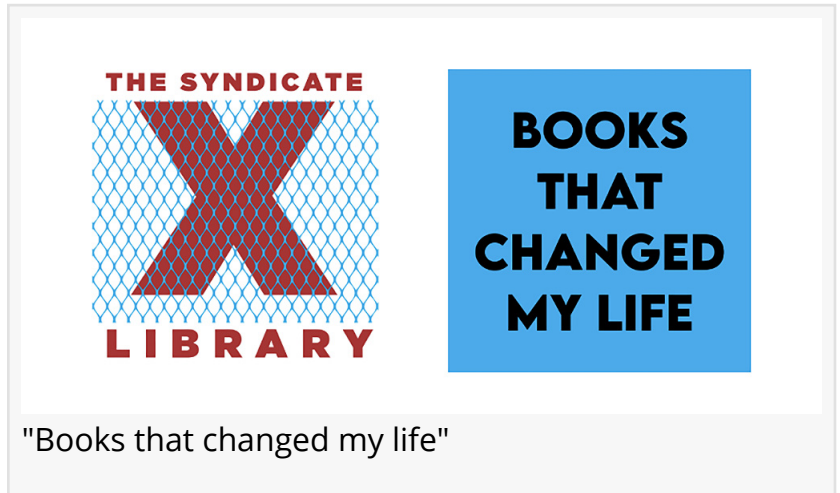
"I kept getting this book from fans," Archuleta told Collins. "I had no idea what I wanted. I was just — I like to sing, but I don't really know what to do with all of this."

Paulo Coelho himself reached out after Archuleta quoted the author on Twitter. The two connected, and Coelho later sent Archuleta signed copies of several of his books, having listened to Archuleta's Christmas album. "To know that your art benefited someone who benefited you — that is so cool," Archuleta said. "That's the beautiful thing about art. You can exchange it like that."

Coming Out, Coming of Age

Raised in a devout Latter-day Saint household, Archuleta describes a childhood defined by obedience and a deep fear of what curiosity might cost him. "Obedience gives you power is what I was always raised on," he explained. "I was afraid to be curious because I thought if I got too curious, I might lose my soul."

That fear compounded when Archuleta began reckoning with his sexuality. He shared candidly that there was a period during which he believed ending his life would be a lesser sin than living openly as a gay man — a belief he now recognizes as the product of deep religious



conditioning.

"In my little Mormon head, it was impossible to be happy and to feel a connection with God and accept that you're gay," he said. "But I gave myself permission to think the unthinkable. The second I stepped past that line of limitation, the second I realized — oh, it is possible. And then it's like: what else can I challenge?"

A Confrontation With Church Leadership

One of the episode's most striking passages involves Archuleta's recounting of a private conversation with a senior apostle in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — the third-highest-ranking official in the global organization. Rather than receiving reassurance or guidance, Archuleta found himself educating the apostle. "I've never spoken this in depth with a gay person before." Archuleta recalls the apostle saying. "I didn't know how y'all think and what y'all believe." Archuleta's response was pointed: "You're making decisions for people like me on behalf of God, but you don't even know what our experience is."

Devout — Writing Toward Clarity

Archuleta's memoir, *Devout*, takes its title from the dual meaning embedded in Archuleta's story: a portrait of both deep religious devotion and the liberation that came from stepping outside it. The book's title font uses differential shading to visually suggest both "devout" and "out" — a nod to the multiple forms of coming out the memoir chronicles: out of the closet, out of his religion, and out of a pattern of codependent submission to authority figures. The full conversation is available on the Syndicate X Library YouTube channel.

About Books That Changed My Life

"Books That Changed My Life," hosted by bestselling author Chris Collins, is a YouTube show exploring how great books transform us in profound and unexpected ways. Each episode features a special guest who shares a book that shaped or inspired them, sparking deep conversations that unearth profound personal stories.

Recent guests include R&B icon Eric Benét, former covert CIA officer Andrew Bustamante, Country music star Jordan Davis, American Idol alum David Archuleta, comedian and writer Adam Conover, *Dancing With the Stars* pro Jenna Johnson, and television superstar Kelsey Grammer.

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