



# **Heart Full of Soul: An Inspirational Memoir About Finding Your Voice and Finding Your Way**

*Taylor Hicks*

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For the longest time, during some rough boyhood years in Alabama and the grind of performing on the road, the odds against me were discouraging. But there was always a voice inside telling me it was going to get better.

Mom and Dad certainly started out with good intentions, but early on, as their marriage went south and I went in whatever direction was necessary to avoid the fallout, I realized my life was going to be up to me.

Thinking back, my first step toward singing for a living was stealing an Otis Redding album when I was nine. What I heard on that platter was life-changing, and pretty soon I was learning to play the harmonica, which, I can assure you, didn't attract many female fans—in fact, any fans at all.

I eventually decided that not being taken seriously can be a good thing. It stokes the fires. Maybe the reason I like soul music so much is that it inspires with its pain. The best artists, like Ray Charles, reach out and say, “You're not alone, brother.”

In all my years on the road—trying to make it in Nashville and those Southern honky-tonks known as the “Chitlin Circuit”—I never thought it would take an act of God to push my destiny into the right groove. But as you'll hear, it was nearly getting washed away by Hurricane Katrina that led to my Idol tryout. And what happened next was a little bit like when Alice dropped down that rabbit hole—just substitute Simon Cowell for the Mad Hatter.

In *Heart Full of Soul*, I share some life stories that will hopefully inspire you—give you a sense of my philosophy and how it drove me. For example, I talk about my good friend who died in a tragic accident and the prediction he made that tugged at my thoughts throughout Idol's qualifying rounds. I also discuss what it was like when I realized Eminem has it right: when you only have one shot, you'd better lose yourself in the music.

A lot of great fans lined up behind me the night of the Idol finale. This book is about the strange path that led me to that pop-culture moment, and the sharp directional changes that occurred after that phenomenal night, including touring America, producing an album, and experiencing that two-sided gig known as American celebrity.

I hope that some of the lessons I've learned along the way will help you, especially if the shot you've been yearning for is just around the corner.

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