

House Series 1

Role Model

This episode includes issues of trust, truth, gratitude and sacrifice.

Synopsis

Dr House is asked to treat a black presidential candidate who has been taken ill during a speech. Meanwhile, he is engaged in a battle with the chairman of the board of the hospital, Ed Vogler, who has been battling with Dr House to make him do what he wants. The latest battle is a demand from Vogler that House fire one of his three doctors. No matter what Dr House suggests, Vogler turns down his suggestion, until it turns out that Vogler wants House to give a speech at a conference praising the benefits of an expensive drug made by Vogler's company. If he does this, boosting the drug's sales and making Vogler even more rich, House can keep his three staff. House eventually agrees to do it.

The senator has a rare infection which appears to suggest he has AIDS. He insists to House that he does not, and cannot have AIDS. Dr House believes that everybody lies and so thinks the senator, especially as he is a politician, must be lying. This is especially true because the senator spun a media-friendly story about why he has a scarred tongue which outrages House. He accuses him of wanting a better story so that he won't ruin his career with a scandal. But when the senator continues to insist that he cannot have AIDS, House decides he is hearing the truth and checks the tests again. The senator was telling the truth: he does not have AIDS. Dr Wilson observes that House did not just believe the senator, - he believed *in* the senator. He discovered how to trust him. Later Dr Foreman and the senator have a conversation about how black people, starting from a place of disadvantage, have to try even harder to appear upright and morally clean.

Dr House's patient in the clinic is a woman who has had a miscarriage even though she swears she has not had sex since splitting from her husband. When she asks what she should do, House says archly that she should 'start a religion'. It turns out that she has been having sex with her ex-husband in her sleep, and Dr House suggests that there are unresolved issues which draw her back to him. The truth will out.

Meanwhile Dr Cameron thanks Dr House for agreeing to do the speech to save their jobs. Dr House can't cope with her gratitude, but she asks him if he knows why people pray to God. He replies that she thought she didn't believe in God. She says she doesn't but the point about prayer and praise is not that God needs it, but that it does people good to be thankful and grateful for what they receive. That is why she thanked him.

Finally Dr House realises that the clue to the senator's condition lies in his untruthful story about his scarred tongue. He made it up to cover up the fact that he bit his tongue during an epileptic seizure as a child. He was lying after all. Once he tells the truth about his past and his history, it is possible for him to be treated.

Dr House turns up to give his speech as he promised, but he does not stick to the 14 page script given to him by Vogler. Vogler introduces him as having a reputation for integrity, believing that Dr House's recommendation will therefore boost sales of his new drug. House feels compelled to tell the truth, that Vogler doesn't care about patients, but about making money. Later Dr Cameron comes to Dr House's home and says she is sacrificing her job rather than wait to be fired. She offers Dr House her hand, but he refuses to take it.

Some excerpts to watch:

Dr Cameron and Dr House talk about prayer

Dr House becomes convinced by the senator

Dr House gives his 'speech'

Some questions:

What do you think about Dr Cameron's view that people need to pray because it is good for them?

Do you think Dr House should have taken Dr Wilson's advice and praised the virtues of the new drug? What do you think was the best course of action to take?

What do you make of the clinic patient's relationship with her ex-husband?

Why do you think Dr House said what he did in his speech?

What did you make of Dr Cameron's self-sacrifice?

What does this episode tell us about the issue of trust?

Some bible passages

Colossians 2.1-8

John 18.37-38; 19.10-11

1 Kings 3. 16-27