

## House md Season 4, episode 12 Don't Ever Change

This is another episode of House which examines the House v God theme. The central issue within the story is whether people can really change and if so, why they do. The most important change which comes under discussion is religious conversion.

### Synopsis

The patient of the week is Roz, an ex-music producer who gave up a lifestyle of sex, drugs and rock and roll to convert to Hasidic Judaism, a form of the Jewish faith which has strict rules about morality, ritual, behaviour and devotion to God. Through the episode we learn that in Hasidic Judaism marriages are arranged quickly, women are expected to have plenty of children, 'frivolous' things like TV, movies and pop music are excluded and that husbands and wives should treat each other with respect and modesty. Roz's hair is covered and her husband is uncomfortable with seeing her undressed in the hospital: 'I respect my wife and I respect her body'.

The episode opens with Roz and her husband Yonatan celebrating their wedding. Roz smiles joyfully at her new husband and says 'I've been blessed'. When she collapses she is taken to hospital and put in the care of Dr House. House is intrigued about the changes she has made through her religious conversion, arguing that this cannot be real change, but a symptom of some mental illness or other disease. He says that being religious is 'irrational belief' and a 'groundless hope'. Dr Taub, exasperated, says that you can't just give somebody '10ccs of atheism' and hope they recover. House is adamant that Roz can't really have changed, something else must be going on.

House argues with Roz's husband claiming that science, not religion, is what Roz needs. He says 'In this temple, I am Dr Yahweh'. He remains dismissive of what religion does for a person. Dr Taub, himself Jewish, but unimpressed by Hasidic Judaism, comes to change his mind about their devotion to God. 'They have something we don't have'. House retorts 'imaginary friends'. House also argues that religious rituals are meaningless and that in the end everyone dies and to hope in something else is a false hope that wastes life. But he is thrown by Roz's response to what is happening to her. When House decides to see how she reacts to pain, he discovers that the activity in her brain, include her pleasure centres, was caused not by masochism but by her instinctive turn to prayer and this is something he cannot diagnose or understand properly. Indeed when Roz becomes critically ill, she starts to say the Shema, turning to God.

Dr Taub is humbled when he and Yonatan talk about love. Yonatan asks him if he loves his wife. Dr Taub (who left his job to save his marriage after he misbehaved) says he loves her as much as the day they got married. Yonatan looks at him and says he *should* love her more. A relationship should change, - it should get better. Similarly, we hear how Roz feels her

religion is what she has been waiting for all her life. She has not given up anything, she has gained everything.

House is further bothered when Roz refuses to have surgery until after she has celebrated Shabbat after sundown with her new husband. Dr Chase, the surgeon, (who once wanted to be a priest) suggests to House that if he is 'God', and if Joshua made the sun stand still, perhaps House could speed it up, - darken the room so she could begin Shabbat early. We see Roz and Yonatan celebrating Shabbat in her hospital room. He sings the words of the ritual for her and it is House who knows exactly what is going on and explains it to the other doctors. The husband blesses his wife: 'strength and honour are her clothing'. House is still impatient with them for putting God first, when Roz is running out of time. He agrees with the Jewish imperative to preserve life about all other things and thinks Roz is crazy for waiting to share Shabbat with her husband.

Meanwhile, House is learning in other ways about change. He finds out that his best friend Dr Wilson is going out with an ambitious, aggressive and cut throat doctor that Dr House fired. House is convinced that Amber is only using Wilson to get her job back or to exact revenge on House. Gradually however, he comes to realise that both Wilson and Amber have changed and that perhaps their relationship is genuine.

House discovers what is wrong with Roz (an internal abnormality which he calls a mistake on the part of God) and parts on amicable terms with Wilson, thus admitting tacitly that he has had to change too. Behind, the Rolling Stones plays 'Waiting on a Friend' as House comes to accept that one thing that will *never* change is that Wilson will always be his friend. Wilson's parting words to House are a religious blessing: 'Shabbat Shalom'.

### **Excerpts to watch:**

Yonatan and Dr Taub talking about love

The opening scene of the wedding and the scene of the Shabbat

The final scene with House and Wilson

### **Some questions for reflection:**

**What do *you* make of Roz's conversion?**

**Do you agree with Yonatan when he says that after 12 years of marriage Dr Taub should love his wife more than when they were married?**

**Do you think that it is possible for a person to change as radically as Roz and for the experience to be genuine?**

**How do you feel about the religious scenes in the episode?**

**What do you make of the fact that Dr House knows all about what is going on in the Shabbat?**

**How do you think Dr Taub changes in his thoughts and opinions throughout the episode?**

**How does the Wilson/Amber storyline show us what House is thinking about change?**

**Some suggested Bible passages**

**Look up Deuteronomy 6.4-9; 11.13-21 and Numbers 15.37-41 which make up the Shema. For Reform Jews, the first passage is the most important and the other two are sometimes not used.**

**Proverbs 31.10ff**

**Joshua 10.11-14**

**John 3.1-21**