TuSalud

Watch a Powerful HIV Disclosure (With Self-Esteem Vitamins!) on Fox Soul

"I don't like saying I'm HIV positive," said "The House" host Aaron Johnson Levy. "I prefer saying I'm living with untransmittable HIV."

July 1, 2022 By Trent Straube

The season 2 finale of the Black LGBTQIA talk show The House included a transformative and unique HIV storyline. Cohost Aaron Johnson Levy disclosed he's "living with untransmittable HIV," and the ensuing discussion was heartfelt, educational and raw—and damned good TV.

You can watch the relevant segment at the top of this article as well as on YouTube. The full episode is available (for free) on Fox Soul, a streaming network that hosts The House and a collection of shows that celebrate Black culture and community.

On each episode of The House, cohosts Levy, Antonio LeMons, Cheryl Rich and Chris Curse join special guests at a dinner table where they spill the tea. In the season 2 finale, Levy broached the topic of HIV in a remarkable fashion. Here's a transcript:

> "This is a big moment for me. I've never done this and don't want to get so emotional so fast. But I've learned that this moment I'm going to give to you is an invitation into my heart and my life, and I've only given it to a few people.
>
> [Levy places a weekly pill planner on the table.]
>
> "This is my pillbox, and I call this little thing here [Holds up a pill]—I call this my self-esteem vitamin. And I take it every day. [Swallows it with a sip of water]. And that's it. I have no side effects. What that does is, it keeps me healthy, keeps my immune system strong.… So [this is] my little pill—'cause she don't want no big pill! [Laughs] I had to lighten up with a little RuPaul.
>
> "I don't even like saying I'm HIV positive. I prefer saying I'm living with untransmittable HIV. Because by taking this pill every day, it's literally impossible for me to transmit the virus to someone else."

Levy’s cohosts showed support, and in the conversation that followed they shared personal histories and losses experienced due to HIV.

Levy, who learned his HIV status through a testing service at a bathhouse, also expanded on the phrase “self-esteem vitamin,” saying that one of the reasons he didn’t use condoms or PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis, the daily pills and long-acting injections that prevent HIV) was that he had low self-esteem and just wanted to be close with someone in the moment. But now, Levy says, he’s on a journey toward empowerment, for himself and others.

“Since you first told me this,” cohost Cheryl Rich tells him, “the growth that you are embracing now, the voice that you are about to be—and I didn’t know if you would have the courage to come to this table [and disclose]—but now you are on a mission. And once we have a mission in our life, all the rest is all fair game. And courage don’t cost a dime. Who you’re going to touch now? It’s to the sky. And that’s real talk.”

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