**Tuesdays with Morrie**

By Mitch Albom

**A Book Report**

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**Introduction**

The last class of my old professor’s life took place once a week in his house, by a window in the study where he could watch a small hibiscus plant and shed its pink leaves. The class met on Tuesdays. It began after breakfast. The subject was The Meaning of Life. It was taught from experience. No grades were given, but there were oral exams each week. You were expected to respond to questions, and you were expected to pose questions of your own. You were also required to perform physical tasks now and then, such as lifting a professor’s head to a comfortable spot on the pillow or placing his glasses on the bridge of his nose. Kissing him good-bye earned you extra credit. No books were required, yet man topics were covered, including love, work, community, family, aging, forgiveness, and, finally, death. The last lecture was brief, only a few words. A funeral was held in lieu of graduation. Although no final exam was given, you were expected to produce one long paper on what was learned. That paper is presented here, The last class of my old professor’s life had only one student. I was the student. It is the late spring of 1979, a hot, sticky Saturday afternoon. Hundreds of us sit together, side by side, in rows of wooden folding chairs in the main campus lawn. We wear blue nylon robes. We listen impatiently to long speeches. When the ceremony is over, we throw our caps in the air, and we are officially graduated from college, the senior class of Brandeis University in the city of Waltham, Massachusetts. For many of us, the curtain has just come down on childhood.

After wards, I find Morrie Schwartz, my favourite professor, and introduce him to my parents. He is a small man who takes small steps, as if a strong wind could, at any time, whisk him up into the clouds. In his graduation day robe, he looks like a cross between a biblical prophet and a Christmas elf. He has sparkling blue green eyes, thinning silver hair that spills onto his forehead, big ears, a triangular nose, and tufts of greying eyebrows. Although his teeth are crooked and his lower ones are slanted back…as if someone had once punched them in…when he smiles it’s as if you’d just told him the first joke on earth. He tells my parents how I took everyday class he taught. He tells them, “You have a special boy here. “Embarrassed, I look at my feet. Before we leave, I hand my professor at present, a tan briefcase with his initials on the front. I bought this the day before at a shopping mall. I didn’t want to forget him. Maybe I didn’t want him to forget me. “Mitch, you are one of the good ones”, he says, admiring the briefcase. Then he hugs me. I feel his thin arms around my back. I am taller than he is, and when he holds me, I feel awkward, older, as if I were the parent and he were the child. He asks if I will stay in touch, and without hesitation I say, “Of course”. When he steps back, I see that he is crying.

**Background**

Morrie Schwartz was one of Mitch Albom’s college professors. Since his college graduation, Mitch and Morrie Gradually lost touch; however, Mitch rediscovered Morrie during last months of his life and they were able, to rekindle their relationship. Mitch visited Morrie every Tuesday, in his study, which turned into a private lesson. On how to live life. *Tuesdays with Morrie* is the magical result of Mitch and Morrie’s time spent together in the, Months leading to his death ? Mitch Albom is not only a best-selling author, he is also a newspaper columnist for the Detroit Free Press, radio. Host for ABC and WJR-AM in Detroit. Albom is a native of Philadelphia, PA and attended Brandeis University, where he obtained his…

**Themes**

**“**Love each other or die**”.** Through the book, Morrie recites a quote by his favourite poet or this, Variation in his own words. This is one of the most important lessons he wishes to teach Mitch and express on “Nightline”. Morrie feels that love and compassion are necessary for a person to be fulfilled. Morrie says that when love abounds, there is no higher sense of fulfilment one can experience. Additional themes are identified in the complete study guide.

**Major and Minor Characters**

*Major Characters*

**Morrie Schwartz** – The novel is centred on him; Morris is Mitch’s former college professor who was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gherig’s disease); he meets with Mitch in his home every Tuesday to teach him about; the meaning of life.

**Mitch Albom** – Morrie’s former student; he has since become a journalist and leads a very fast paced life; finds Morrie after hearing he is sick on “ABC’s Nightime” and visits him every Tuesday.

*Minor Characters*

**Ted Koppel** – A famous television news man/personality; he interviews Morrie three times for “ABC Nightline” show; he eventually describes Morrie as his friend and is almost in tears during his last interview with Morrie.

**Charlottee** – Morrie’s wife, who is also a college professor; she keeps her job as a professor even while Morrie is sick because it is what he wished for her.

Janine – Mitch’s wife; she takes a phone call from Morrie, whom she had never met, and accompanied, Additional characters are identified in the complete in the complete study guide.

**Settings**

The novel takes place during 1995, in Morrie’s study, in West Newton, Massachusetts. Mitch and Morrie meet ebery Tuesday, in his study, to discuss the meaning of life. Morrie was a college professor for most of his career, and Mitch tool all of his classes offered, when he was in College, When Morrie taught small classes, he would often hold them in his study.

**Body**

Morrie Schwartz was Mitch Albom’s favorite college professor. At the start of the novel Albom recalls a memory from his college graduation day: he is saying goodbye to Morrie and gives him a tan briefcase with his initials on it. They hug and then Mitch steps back he sees that Morrie is crying. Mitch promises to stay in touch with Morrie but he never does after college. Since his graduation, Mitch has become a newspaper reporter and husband. He leads a very fast paced life and is constantly working and traveling. He has become so engrossed in his work that it consumes his life. The novel recommences about sixteen years after Mitch’s graduation day; Morrie has since been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALC. Since Morrie’a diagnosis, he began jotting down ideas and thoughts onto crap paper, yellow pads or even envelopes. He also wrote philosophies about living knowing death was very near. One of his friends was so taken with his writing, he sent them to the Boston Globe reporter, who wrote a feature story about Morrie. The story intrigued one of the producers of the show, “Nightline”.

**General philosophical questions tacked in the book.**

How is popular culture and the media represented throughout the novel? Describe how Morrie has created his own culture. Pretending you are Mitch, use what have learned from Morrie’s teachings to outline a new set of your own culture values by which you will begin leading your life.

Describe how Mitch has suffered under the demands of the media and pop-culture. Illustrate a personal experience where you may have suffered as a result of pop-culture values and demands; how did you escape and create your own values, like Morrie? If you were not able to, how could you apply Morrie’s teachings to? See through pop-culture values?

**Conflict**

There are two conflict in this novel: the major conflict is Morrie vs. ALS and the second, minor conflict, is Mitch vs. himself. Morrie must come to terms with his illness and accept his coming death from ALS. In the meantime, Mitch, his former college student, visits him every Tuesday.

Protagonist

Morrie Schawartz is the protagonist of Tuesdays with Morrie; he is the character around which

Antagonist

The disease, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), is the most antagonist of the theory. This is the disease from which is suffering throughout the novel. We see the disease gradually begin taking over.

**Climax**

Mitch visits Morrie for the last time, when he is very close to death; after years trying…

**Conclusion**

I look back sometimes at the person I was before I rediscovered my old professor. I want to talk to that person. I want to tell him what to look out for, what mistakes to avoid. I want to tell him to be more open, to ignore the lure of advertised values, to pay attention when your loved ones are speaking, as if it were the last time you might hear them. Mostly I want to tell that person to get on an airplane and visit a gentle old man in West Newton, Massachusetts, sooner rather than later, before that old man gets sick and loses his ability to dance. I know I cannot do this. None of us can undo what we’ve done, or relive a life already recorded. But if Professor Morrie Schwartz taught me anything at all, it was this: there is no such thing as “too late” in life. He was changing until the day he said goodbye. Not long after Morrie’s death, I reached my brother in Spain. We had long talk. I told him I respected his distance, and that all I wanted was to be in touch…in the present, not just the past…to hold him in my life as much as he could let me. “You’re my only brother”, I said. “I don’t want to lose you”. I love you.” I had never said such a thing to him before. A few years later, I received a message on my fax machine. It was typed in the sprawling, poorly punctuated, all-cap-letter fashion that always characterized my brother’s words. “HI I’VE JOINED THE NINETIES!” it began. He wrote a few little stories, what he’d been doing that week. A couple of jokes. At the end, he signed off this way:

I have heartburn and diarrhea at the moment…life’s a bitch. Chat later?

*Sore Tush.*

I laughed until there were tears in my eyes. This book was largely Morrie’s idea. He called it our “final thesis”. Like the best of work projects, it brought us closer together, and Morrie was delightrd when several publishers expressed interest, even though he died before meeting any of them. The advance money helped pay Morrie’s enomous medical bills, and for that we were both grateful. The title, by the way, we came up with one day in Morrie’s office. He liked naming the things. He had several ideas. But when I said, “How about Tuesdays with Morrie?” he smiled in an almost blushing way, and I knew that was it. After Morrie died, I went through boxes of old college material. And I discovered a final paper I had written for one of his classes. It was twenty years old now. On the front page were my pencilled comments scribbled to Morrie, and beneath them were his comments scribbled back, Mine began, “Dear Coach….” His began, “Dear Player…” For some reason, each time I read that, I miss him more. Have ever really had a teacher? One who saw you as a raw but precious thing, a jewel that, with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine? If you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, you will always find your back. Sometimes it is only “Tuesdays with Morrie” By Mitch Albom 56

In your head, sometimes it is right alongside their beds. The last class of my old professor’s life took place one week, in his home, by a window in his study where he could watch a small hibiscus plant shed its pink flowers. The class met on Tuesdays. No books were required. The subject was the meaning of life. It was taught from experience. The teaching goes on.

**Analysis**

***Compare and Contrast Mitch and Morrie belief about life.Describe the importance of love in Morries lif*e.**

Morrie say “Path ends a life, not a relationship,,” that’s what different it is “I also believe that the parents, If they have you, will hold you , Up safety above there Swindlind, and Mitch believe Morrie had died this way in Tuesday,” as not to scar any of his family member in .. Friend will not be waiting in his study in Tuesday with a smile and a lesson of life…

***Explain the development of Morrie’s religious beliefs. How does Morrie view religion in his life?***

May Sinton say: “Old age is a Foreign country with a” Tuesday with Morrie about Albom Sociology teacher in, our System thought endow. Morrie respond that he had not thought very much about death before his illness, in her hand, their mother had died of ALS.

***Explain what you believe to be the ultimate lesson reader is supposed to take away from the book.***

“Accept what you are able to do and what you are not able to do.”

“Accept the past as past, without denying it or discarding it.”

“Learn to forgive yourself and to forgive others.”

“Don’t assume that it is too late to get involved.”

Find someone to share your heart, give to your community, be at peace with yourself, and try to be as human as you can be.

“Love always wins.”

“The culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves. And you have to be strong enough to say if the culture doesn’t work, don’t buy it.”

***Cite the favorite quotation/s from the book and explain why it is personally significant to you.***

*“Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.”*

Morries says this during the fourth Tuesday when he and Mitch discuss death. Morrie feels that people refuse to believe that they will one day die, and therefore, do not live their lives as fully as they would have liked and also have many regrets as they become older and their death becomes closer. He feels that once we learn and accept that we are one day going to die, we learn to live us lives fully and without any regrets. Morrie repeats this quotes frequently throughout the chapter to emphasize how important and helpful it is to accept death, and what a benefit it would be to living the remainder of our lives. Morrie also wants Mitch to see how he is able to appreciate the smaller, more genuine things in life, knowing that his death is approaching.

***Explain how Morrie feels about death and dying and what he feels society's approach is to those who are dying.***

Morrie's attitude toward death is positive and accepting. He does not feel sorry for himself because his body is slowly deteriorating. Morrie continues to focus on the positives in his life.... the things he is still able to do. He views dying as a natural progression. Morrie feels that society should not be afraid of death, nor should people exhibit uneasiness around people that are dying.

***Discuss Morrie’s struggle with death throughout the novel.***

Morrie's biggest struggle with death is that it progresses so quickly and causes him to be dependent on others. He isn't afraid to die, in fact, he embraces the knowledge that he will die as an opportunity to do what he feels he needs to do. Detaching himself from the reality and engrossing himself in the story he wants to share paves the way for us as readers to learn from his expereince.

***Describe the characterization of Mitch as a man who is defined by society’s idea of a successful man.***

Mitch flies to Massachusetts and rents a car for the drive to Morrie's house. However, being a busy man, Mitch is not focused on Morrie during the drive. He is on the phone with a producer about a piece they were working on together. As he approached the house, he spots Morrie on the porch. However, he does not get off the phone, instead finishing his conversation before his sixteen-year reunion. This is a conflict for Mitch. Does he finish his job or spend every precious second re-uniting? Both are important to him and he struggles with this throughout the book.

***Explain how popular culture may influence people’s viewpoints about issues such as aging and death.***

Western society does not have a good track record with ageing and death. We live in a youth obsessed culture. The elderly are seldom celebrated and often put out of sight when they no longer can care for themselves. Death is something to be feared. We have many euphemisms for it because we can't even talk about it. Death is the undiscovered country and, in Western society at least, we are very afraid of it.

***Describe the importance of love in Morrie’s life.***

*Mitch asking Morrie about his perfect day and getting a response about a normal day ties in all of Morrie's lessons. Morrie did not want an extravagant day. He did not need to fly to Europe and dine on the best foods. Instead, his perfect day would be spent in his community, with his loved ones. This really proves Morrie's point (and a major theme in the book) that love is vital and all one needs to be happy.*

After Morrie's death, Mitch finally decides to get in touch with his brother. He likely would not have done so without Morrie's lessons about love and family. Even in death, Morrie played a big part in the reincarnation of a relationship. This is ironic because Morrie never met Mitch's brother or knew the details of why they were apart, but he played the biggest part in getting them back in communication. Even in death, Morrie continued to change the life of Mitch and likely that of many others that read the book and learned the professor's final lessons.

***Explain your thoughts about aging, dying and death before and after reading the book***.

This question requires your thoughts and opinions. My feelings about death and dying did not change after reading this book. To answer this question you will need to examine your beliefs, fears, and expereinces.