

# Tuesdays with morrie by mitch albom: the path to making the most out of life

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## **Making Life Worth Living**

It may be hard to face it, but someday we will cease to exist. One day our lungs will stop breathing, and our hearts will refuse to beat. The sun in the sky will lose its shine, and the moon its glow. And although we are often consumed by this lingering fear of death and termination, why do people continue to live life without full purpose? How can masses of indifferent individuals continue to thrive on the materialism of our society and ignore the true essences of life, such as love, family and even death. So often do many find themselves burdened with the regret of past endeavors, as well as the fear to strive for new ones. In the novel, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, author—and narrator—Mitch Albom dives back to his personal forgotten realm of cherished philosophy and values, guided by his former professor and mentor Morrie Schwartz. Together they discuss the path of utilizing the most out of life, and in the process, help reform the broken fragments that formed what Mitch once considered his life.

Since life is deemed limited, one must set aside the time for the most important things in life, and yet be able to prepare to acceptance of death. However, whatever is the most important things in life are left to the individual. Suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, Morrie seeks to leave with no regrets and with all the satisfaction of the world. He does not look toward materialistic things in life but in the family, "This is part of what a family is about, not just love, but letting others know there's someone who is watching out for them...Nothing else will give you that. Not money. Not fame.' He shot me a look. ' Not work.'" (Albom 92). Morrie establishes the

importance of family as the sustenance for life and even comes to pick at Mitch's priority of work over family. This comes to support the idea of Mitch's struggle towards his maturation process, in which he inadvertently comes to grasp the last teachings of Morrie into his personal life. In fact, Mitch even acknowledges his need of Morrie due to the lack of a supportive family, " So once again I dove into work. I worked because I could control it...And each time I would call my brother...and get the answering machine—him speaking in Spanish...[a] sign of how far apart we had drifted...this is one reason I was drawn to Morrie. He let me be there where my brother would not" (97). The novel emphasizes the need to look more interpersonally, and find the most fulfillment out of one's life from what they are now, rather than waste precious time finding happiness someplace else.

Over the course of the novel, the teachings re-established by Morrie not only act as ideas themselves, but as catalysts toward the theme of maturation process. Initially confronting Morrie after years of aloofness and separation, Mitch cannot help but feel detached from his professor, " I was surprised at such affection after all these years, but then, in the stone walls I had built between my present and any my past, I had forgotten how close we once were. I knew...that I was no longer the good, gift-bearing student he remembered. I only hoped...I could fool him" (17). Although Mitch continued to feel uncomfortable for some time, the ideas that Morrie had come to realize through his time of slowly dying gradually opened his eyes. Mitch shut his eyes to the " spiritual" aspects of life, such as the virtues of sympathy and charity. Even Morrie pointed out how Mitch took life itself for

granted, ““You can see that? You can go out there, outside anytime...I can’t do that. I can’t go outside without fear of getting sick. But you know what? I appreciate that window more than you’” (84). Even though death continues to loom over Morrie, that doesn’t stop him from reaching to Mitch. With each major topic of life discussed, Mitch does not look at the aspects of life as ideas themselves, but as pieces of life missing from his own.

Though the tragic death of Morrie acted as the glue to finally hold Mitch through times of personal distress, he knew in his heart that he could finally live for the first time.

What started as a reluctant personal vendetta to score the last words of a popular dying man turned into one of the most influential learning experiences of Mitch Albom’s life. Though the time spent with Morrie was cut short, the life Mitch would continue to live would now be extended with the understanding of how life can be made worth living. The key ideas of love, family, and death would support the stimulation and growth of Mitch’s maturation process. In return, Mitch’s maturation process would act as living examples of applying the path toward a meaningful life. As Morrie would put it, “ We are too involved in materialistic things, and they don’t satisfy us. The loving relationships we have, the universe around us, we take things for granted” (84). Some say the best things in life are free, yet no one ever mentions how long it takes to get them. Some say life is too short. But one who lives in the family and love that gives them life will feel their blessings reach them for an eternity.