

Tuesdays with Morrie  
Discussion Prompts

\*\*Starred questions indicate thought or opinion based questions\*\*

The Curriculum – The Syllabus (pages 1-13)

1. Where does Mitch Albom's last class with Morrie Schwartz take place? When do they meet? What is the subject they study?
2. What are some of the topics they cover? What is held in lieu of graduation?
3. When did Mitch graduate from college? Explain Morrie's parting request of Mitch and Mitch's reply?
4. Identify Morrie's fatal illness. Give the date he receives the diagnosis and prognosis. What famous person is the disease named for?
5. \*What is the first "loss" Morrie experiences? How do you think this affects him emotionally?
6. \*Identify Charlotte. What are her primary concerns after learning of Morrie's terminal illness? How do you think she will cope?
7. \*How does Morrie initially react to the diagnosis of ALS? Quote and explain the simile that describes his feelings.
8. Sequence the usual progression of Morrie's disease.
9. How does Morrie conduct his "living funeral"? Why does he do so? What is the outcome?
10. \***Prediction:** What will unfold during the most unusual part of Morrie's life?

The Student – Orientation (pages 14-31)

1. Identify three major events in Mitch's life since he last saw Morrie.
2. \*How does Mitch's life change after his uncle dies? Why do you think he makes these changes?
3. How does Mitch learn about Morrie's illness?
4. Describe Morrie's physical and mental condition the first time Ted Koppel interviews him.
5. \*How does Morrie initially react to Koppel? Why do you think he does so?
6. \*Quote one of Morrie's aphorisms and explain what you think it means (page 18).
7. \*During Koppel's interview, how does Morrie explain his philosophy about living with a terminal illness? What does he most dread about the decay of his body? Why do you think this especially bothers him?
8. Explain how Morrie and Mitch react to each other when they first meet at Brandeis University. What does Mitch begin to call Morrie? What are Mitch's two overwhelming desires during his acquaintance with Morrie at Brandeis?
9. \*\*What is Mitch doing when he first arrives at Morrie's house after seeing him on "Nightline"? What do you think this reveals about Mitch?
10. How does Morrie react to Mitch's first visit? How does Morrie introduce the "last class" he will ever have with Mitch

### **The Classroom – Taking Attendance (pages 32-47)**

1. \*How does Mitch analyze his life during the past 16 years? Explain whether or not you think he is happy with his life.
2. \*How does Morrie explain the interest people have in him since his appearance on “Nightline”? Why do you think he refers to himself as “a bridge”?
3. How does Morrie explain his dying process? How does Mitch react?
4. \*Explain what Morrie means by the “tension of opposites.” How do you think this phrase exemplifies Mitch’s life since college? Identify tensions of opposites in your life.
5. \*What major event does Mitch cover a few weeks after his first visit with Morrie? How has Mitch changed since this visit? Why do you think these changes have occurred?
6. When Mitch returns from London, what has happened at the newspaper where he works? How does he react?
7. \*During his sophomore year in college, what does Mitch tell Morrie he wants to do when he gets out of college? How does Morrie respond? Why do you think Mitch “lost his dream”?
8. \***Prediction:** Will Mitch continue his profession as sports writer or will he again pursue his dream of music?

### **The First Tuesday – The Second Tuesday (pages 48-61)**

1. During their first Tuesday, what does Morrie tell Mitch about his increasing dependency on others?
2. \*How does Morrie react to people who are suffering? What do you think this reveals about him?
3. What does Mitch mean when he tells Morrie they are “Tuesday people”?
4. \*State Morrie’s aphorism about the most important thing in life. Explain why you agree or disagree with this aphorism.
5. \*What does Morrie plan to teach his college students by silence? Do you think this is an effective teaching tactic? Explain why you are most comfortable with silence or with noise.
6. \*How far does Mitch travel for his Tuesday visits with Morrie? How do you think he feels about being there?
7. How does Morrie respond when Mitch asks him if he feels sorry for himself?
8. \*Why do Mitch describe Morrie’s students in the “Group Process” as human lab rats? How do you think you would react in a class like this?

### **The Third Tuesday – The Professor (pages 62-79)**

1. In addition to food, what does Mitch begin to bring to his Tuesday sessions with Morrie? Why does he do so? How does Morrie react?
2. \*List the subjects Mitch wants to discuss with Morrie. Explain which one of these is most important to you.

3. When Mitch is in college, what is the subject of his thesis? How long does it take him to complete it? How does this thesis fit into his future career?
4. \*Identify two signs that Morrie's health is deteriorating when Ted Koppel comes for his second "Nightline" interview. What physical functions does Morrie most dread losing? Why? Which one would you most dread?
5. What "pain" has Morrie retained for seventy years?
6. How old is Morrie when his mother dies? How does he cope with her illness?
7. What happens to Morrie's brother, David? Why does Morrie feel responsible?
8. Identify Eva and explain her significance in Morrie's life.
9. Where does Morrie's father want him to get a job? Why does this plan fail? How does Morrie feel about this?

#### **The Fourth Tuesday – The Fifth Tuesday (pages 80-99)**

1. What is the newest addition to Morrie's house when Mitch arrives for his fourth Tuesday? How does Mitch react to it?
2. \*Explain what you think Morrie means by his aphorism, "Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live."
3. Explain the metaphor, "He (Morrie) was a religious mutt,"
4. How does Morrie apply the idea "if you accept that you can die at any time" to Mitch's life?
5. Identify Rob and Jon. How do they assist Morrie when they visit on Sunday?
6. \*Explain Morrie's philosophy about family. What kind of rapport does he have with his own family? Explain whether you do or do not agree with Morrie's philosophy.
7. What is the "painful price" Morrie must pay for having children?
8. \*Who is Mitch's brother? What is their relationship? Why do you think Mitch includes the flashback about their childhood?
9. \***Prediction:** Will Peter allow Mitch to reenter his life?

#### **The Sixth Tuesday – The Seventh Tuesday (pages 100-122)**

1. When Mitch arrives for the sixth Tuesday, how does Charlotte react to Mitch's gift of food?
2. \*How does Morrie think a person should approach emotion? How does this contrast with the way Mitch feels? Explain which approach is closest to the way you deal with emotion.
3. How does Morrie tell Mitch he wants to die? What prompts this statement?
4. \*What animal would Morrie like to be if he were reincarnated? Why do you think he chooses this animal?
5. Explain Morrie's first work experience after receiving his Ph.D. and how this affects his future.

6. What effect does the Vietnam War have on Morrie's department at Brandeis University during the 1960's?
7. \*How does Morrie now feel about his dependence on others for everything except breathing and swallowing his food? How do you think you would react to becoming this dependent?
8. Briefly summarize how Morrie feels about aging.

### **The Eighth Tuesday –The Ninth Tuesday (pages 123-141)**

1. \*What doesn't Ted Turner want written on his tombstone? What do you think this reveals about him? How does Morrie react to Turner's statement?
2. \*What does Morrie mean when he refers to the "brainwashing" going on in the United States? Explain why you agree or disagree.
3. What is Morrie's philosophy about money and power?
4. \*What does Morrie believe is the key to a meaningful life? Explain whether you agree or disagree?
5. \*Explain your interpretation of the quote from Mahatma Gandhi on page 129.
6. What is Morrie's latest aphorism when Mitch comes for the ninth Tuesday?
7. Does Morrie think he will be forgotten after he dies? Why or why not?
8. \*What does Morrie want engraved on his tombstone? Explain whether or not you think this portrays his life.
9. \*How did Morrie's father die? Why do you think Mitch includes this recapitulation?

### **The Tenth Tuesday – The Eleventh Tuesday (pages 142-159)**

1. Who is Janine? What does she do for Morrie? How does he react?
2. What does Mitch think is his generation's primary struggle with marriage? How does Morrie respond to Mitch's concerns about marriage?
3. \*How long have Morrie and Charlotte been married? How would you describe their marriage?
4. What Biblical character does Mitch mention to Morrie? Why does he do so? How does Morrie respond?
5. Describe Morrie's physical condition when Mitch comes for the eleventh Tuesday. What does Mitch mean when he says that Morrie's disease is dangerously close to his surrender spot? What does Mitch do to help him?
6. How has Mitch changed during the months he has been visiting Morrie?
7. \*What does Morrie mean about people building their own little subcultures? Explain why you agree or disagree.

### **The Audiovisual – the Thirteenth Tuesday (pages 160-180)**

1. \*What does Morrie tell Koppel living means to him? What prompts his statement? Explain whether or not you agree with Morrie.

2. Quote Morrie's aphorism about dying and explain how Morrie wants to die.
3. \*What are Morrie's final words to the TV audience? To Ted Koppel? What do you think this indicates?
4. \*Quote Morrie's aphorism about forgiveness and explain how this applies to himself and others. Why do you think many people struggle with forgiveness?
5. What two things does Morrie regret in his life?
6. Who is Norman, and why is he significant to Morrie?
7. How does Morrie apply the "tension of opposites" to himself?
8. \*What does Morrie ask Mitch to do after his death? Why do you think this is significant?
9. \*How does Morrie explain his near-death experience the night before the thirteenth Tuesday? Why do you think he asks to see the hibiscus plant?
10. \*What does Morrie consider to be the important question in life? Which one of these is the most important to you? Why?
11. \*What conclusion does Mitch draw from Morrie's depiction of a perfect day? What is your idea of a perfect day?
12. What does Morrie tell Mitch about his brother?

#### **The Fourteenth Tuesday – Conclusion (pages 181-192)**

1. How does Charlotte let Mitch know about Morrie's final days have come?
2. \*Briefly explain Morrie about Mitch's farewell visit. How do you think each of the men has changed since their first lesson began?
3. \*Why do you think Mitch titles the chapter about Morrie's death and funeral "Graduation"?
4. \*Which of Morrie's words does Mitch recall as he watches Morrie's ashes being placed into the ground? Why do you think this is significant?
5. What does Mitch want to tell the person he was before he rediscovered Morrie?
6. \*How do Mitch and his brother reestablish contact? What do you think their future relationship will be?
7. What does Morrie call the book Mitch writes about their visits? Who names it? How does the publication of the book assist Morrie?
8. What does Mitch say about Morrie in the conclusion of the book?