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Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Tuesdays with Morrie

by Mitch Albom

written by Michelle Ryan

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Tuesdays with Morrie

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. explain how Morrie Schwartz feels about death and dying and what he feels society's approach is to those who are dying.
2. explain Morrie's struggle with death throughout the novel.
3. discuss the characterization of Mitch as a man who is defined by society's idea of a successful man.
4. demonstrate an understanding of the variability between people and their experiences with death.
5. define and cite example(s) of:
 - imagery
 - motifs
 - flashback
 - symbols
 - foreshadowing
6. understand how popular culture may influence people's viewpoints about issues such as aging and death
7. define the way in which Morrie has created his own culture.
8. compare and contrast Mitch and Morrie and their beliefs about life.
9. explain the importance of love in Morrie's life.
10. understand Morrie's understanding of and use of religion in his life.
11. explain the use of reincarnation as a theme in Morrie's and Mitch's lives.
12. characterize Peter, Mitch's brother, and explain his purpose in the memoir.
13. explain the duality of media in current culture and justify an opinion about its benefits or detriments.
14. explain the conflict that drives the book.
15. describe the purpose and effect of the flashbacks throughout the narrative.
16. explain how themes of love, rejection, and acceptance function throughout the narrative.
17. explain the use of figurative language and rhetorical techniques within the text and how they function.

Tuesdays with Morrie

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Trace the mention of the pink hibiscus plant throughout the memoir. For each instance, explain the situation in which it is mentioned. How does it serve as a metaphor for Morrie's life? Explain its use as a motif in the memoir and how it may be a metaphor for the cycle of life.
2. Throughout the memoir, Morrie refers to the poet W.H. Auden. Explain why Morrie relishes this poet and relies on Auden's poetry as a way of illustrating his mantra, "Love or perish."
3. Explain the development of Morrie's religious beliefs. How does Morrie use religion in his life?
4. Throughout the memoir, the reader is given an insight into Morrie's relationship with Mitch Albom and Ted Koppel. Explain the relationship that Morrie has with each person. How does each person change as a result of a relationship with Morrie?
5. Even though this is an autobiographical work, explain the impact of the subjective point of view as Morrie's life is documented through Mitch Albom. How might Mitch have influenced the way in which Morrie's story is told? How would the memoir be different if it has been written by Morrie?
6. Morrie uses detachment as a way of coping with his disease. Explain Morrie's idea of detachment and how he utilizes it in his life.
7. Explain Mitch's relationship with his brother.
8. Describe Morrie's beliefs about the media and its importance in society. How does Morrie use media to his advantage?
9. Characterize the person Mitch Albom was before his Tuesday experiences with Morrie. Describe how Mitch changes.
10. Each reader will come to this text with a different belief about aging and dying. Explain your thoughts about aging, dying, and death before you read the memoir, and then describe how you feel after reading the book.
11. Explain the "effect of silence" exercise that Morrie uses in his classroom. What is a person supposed to learn through the exercise?
12. Explain the tension of opposites that Morrie describes to Mitch.

13. Choose one of Morrie's lessons in the memoir. Explain the lesson and then discuss whether you disagree or agree with the lesson.
14. Support the idea that "Love or perish" is a theme of this memoir.
15. Cite examples and explain how personal values may be more important than a generalized acceptance of cultural mores.
16. Discuss how Morrie's view of death is unique.
17. In the complete title to the book, *Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson*, Mitch alludes to "life's greatest lesson." Explain what you believe to be the lesson that Mitch is describing.
18. Discuss the significance of each chapter's title as it connects to the information in the chapter.
19. Explain what Morrie means when he states that he will be "that final bridge between life and death, and narrate the trip." (Pg. 10)
20. Throughout the class that Mitch shares with Morrie in the last few months of Morrie's life, Mitch does not feel like he contributes much to the relationship. What would Morrie's response to that assessment be? How does Mitch contribute to Morrie's life?

Tuesdays with Morrie

Literary Terms

Alliteration - the repetition of sounds at the beginning of words. **Example:** More Mischief and Merriment.

Aphorism - a short statement, sometimes humorous, that attempts to state a general principal about human behavior. **Example:** “Three people may keep a secret if two of them are dead.”—Ben Franklin

Figurative Language- words and phrases that have meanings different from their usual ones in order to create a poetic and/or literary effect. **Examples:** Love certainly has its own seasons; crumbling cities made of matches.

Flashback - a scene that interrupts the ongoing action in a story to show an event that happened earlier. **Example:** The movie, *Citizen Kane*, tells its story almost exclusively through the memories of its characters, who all knew Kane before his death.

Foreshadowing - the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come. Foreshadowing is frequently used to create interest and build suspense. **Example:** Two small and seemingly inconsequential car accidents predict and hint at the upcoming, important wreck in *The Great Gatsby*.

Imagery - the use of words to evoke impressions and meanings that are more than just the basic, accepted definitions of the words themselves. **Example:** The quotation, “Get thee to a nunnery,” from *Hamlet* implies that Ophelia must regain her purity and chastity and does not simply mean that she needs to go to a convent.

Irony - a perception of inconsistency, sometimes humorous, in which the significance and understanding of a statement or event is changed by its context. **Example:** The firehouse burned down.

- *Dramatic Irony* - the audience or reader knows more about a character's situation than the character does and knows that the character's understanding is incorrect. **Example:** In *Medea*, Creon asks, “What atrocities could she commit in one day?” The reader, however, knows Medea will destroy her family and Creon's by day's end.
- *Structural Irony* – the use of a naïve hero, whose incorrect perceptions differ from the reader's correct ones. **Example:** Huck Finn.
- *Verbal Irony* - a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant; sarcasm. **Example:** A large man whose nickname is “Tiny.”

Juxtaposition - the placement of two dissimilar items, people, thoughts, places, etc., next to one another to emphasize the differences or heighten the similarities. **Example:** In *The Pearl*, the main character instinctively touches the valuable pearl and his knife at the same time.

Metaphor - a comparison of two things that are basically dissimilar in which one is described in terms of the other. **Example:** The moon, a haunting lantern, shone through the clouds.

Motif - a situation, incident, idea, or image that is repeated significantly in a literary work. **Examples:** In *Hamlet*, revenge is a frequently repeated idea. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden continually comments on the phoniness of people he meets.

Point of View - the position or vantage point, determined by the author, from which the story seems to come to the reader. The two most common points of view are First-person and Third-person. **Examples:** First-person point of view occurs in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; the reader receives all information through Huck's eyes. An example of third-person point of view is Dickens' *Hard Times*, in which the narrator is not a character in the book.

Repetition – repeating of a word or phrase for stylistic effect. **Example:** “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.”—I Corinthians 13:11

Rhetoric – the art of eloquent speech or writing, which employs various techniques in order to persuade one's audience. **Example:** Congressional speeches.

Simile - a comparison between two different things using either *like* or *as*. **Examples:** I am as hungry as a horse. The huge trees broke like twigs during the hurricane.

Subjective - first-person narration in which the author is recording action from a character's point of view. **Example:** Huckleberry Finn tells his story from his own viewpoint, which is prejudiced, limited, and opinionated.

Symbol - an object, person, or place that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger than itself, usually an idea or concept; some concrete thing which represents an abstraction. **Example:** The sea could be symbolic for “the unknown.” Since the sea is something that is physical and can be seen by the reader, and also has elements that cannot be understood, it can be used symbolically to stand for the abstraction of “mystery,” “obscurity,” or “the unknown.”

Tuesdays with Morrie

Test

1. How does the book *Tuesdays with Morrie* get its name?
 - A. The publishing house uses Morrie's birthday as the day of the week in the title.
 - B. Morrie and Mitch always meet on Tuesdays.
 - C. Morrie is diagnosed with ALS on a Tuesday, so it is an important day in his life.
 - D. Morrie's wife chooses the name of the book, and Morrie had asked her to marry him on a Tuesday.
2. Who is Morrie's favorite poet?
 - A. e. e. cummings
 - B. W. H. Auden
 - C. Mahatma Gandhi
 - D. Langston Hughes
3. When Mitch graduates from college, what occupation does he want to pursue?
 - A. a writer
 - B. a doctor
 - C. a musician
 - D. an artist
4. How do Morrie and Mitch first become acquainted?
 - A. Morrie is Mitch's first piano teacher.
 - B. Morrie is Mitch's first employer.
 - C. Morrie is a friend of Mitch's uncle who passed away.
 - D. Morrie is Mitch's favorite professor.
5. Which television show is responsible for the "mini-series of death" about Morrie?
 - A. 20/20
 - B. Dateline
 - C. Nightline
 - D. 60 Minutes
6. The pink hibiscus is a symbol of
 - A. the dying relationship between Mitch and Morrie.
 - B. Morrie's decaying body.
 - C. Mitch's dwindling relationship with his brother Daniel.
 - D. Morrie's career at Brandeis University.

7. When Mitch comes to visit Morrie each week, what does he bring in order to feel like he is contributing to the relationship?
 - A. Mitch brings Morrie a new plant for his windowsill.
 - B. Mitch brings Morrie copies of the latest newspapers.
 - C. Mitch brings Morrie food.
 - D. Mitch brings Morrie medicine from doctors in Boston.
8. Morrie's father can be best described as
 - A. a mentor in the education business.
 - B. a nurturing and supporting parent.
 - C. a person who dies when Morrie is a child.
 - D. a poor person who works in a factory.
9. Mitch reunites with Morrie after
 - A. his wife reads an article in the newspaper about Morrie.
 - B. Mitch sees the Ted Koppel interview with Morrie.
 - C. Mitch visits Brandeis University to conduct an interview with the basketball team.
 - D. Morrie contacts Mitch to write Morrie's memoir.
10. Which of the following is *not* an example of a motif used in the book?
 - A. textbooks
 - B. food
 - C. the media
 - D. the pink hibiscus plant
11. In which of the following ways does Morrie celebrate his death?
 - A. Morrie celebrates his death by having a living funeral.
 - B. Morrie celebrates his death by visiting his burial site in the weeks before his death.
 - C. Morrie celebrates his death by having Ted Koppel interview him for *Nightline*.
 - D. Morrie celebrates his death by teaching a last class about death and dying at Brandeis University.
12. Mitch's relationship with his brother strained because
 - A. they disagreed about how to bury their uncle.
 - B. Mitch's brother is upset that Mitch did not become a lawyer like their father wanted.
 - C. are on opposite sides of the newspaper bargaining teams.
 - D. Mitch's brother is trying to deal with his illness by himself, and Mitch would like to be involved in his life.
13. According to the book, "When you're in bed,"
 - A. you're on your last leg."
 - B. you're dead."
 - C. you're on your last breath."
 - D. there is little time left."

14. What is Mitch's wife's occupation?
 - A. a professional cook
 - B. a lawyer
 - C. a professional singer
 - D. a teacher
15. Morrie's greatest form of relaxation is through
 - A. dancing.
 - B. reading.
 - C. meditating.
 - D. writing letters.
16. Which of the following events allows Mitch to visit Morrie regularly?
 - A. When Morrie undergoes treatment for ALS, he lives in the same town as Mitch.
 - B. Mitch's newspaper goes on strike; therefore, Mitch cannot go to work.
 - C. Mitch is independently wealthy as a result of writing books and is able to take time off from work.
 - D. Mitch moves in with Morrie in order to take care of him.
17. When Morrie is first interviewed by Ted Koppel, how does Morrie feel about Ted?
 - A. Morrie feels that Ted is too important of a man to do the interview.
 - B. Morrie is angered by Ted's reliance on the media to tell his story and as a result, Morrie refuses to do the interview.
 - C. Morrie is star-struck by Ted Koppel and is unable to contribute much to the interview.
 - D. Morrie feels that Ted Koppel is a narcissist.
18. What event is most responsible for Morrie's need for physical and emotional love?
 - A. the death of his father
 - B. the death of his mother
 - C. the death of his son
 - D. the death of his wife
19. The story of the wave crashing into the shore is symbolic of
 - A. Morrie's beliefs about reincarnation.
 - B. Morrie's beliefs about the importance of loving one another.
 - C. Morrie's beliefs about the media's influence on people's lives.
 - D. Morrie's life.
20. Which of the following is *not* a subject that Mitch and Morrie discuss?
 - A. Aging
 - B. Emotions
 - C. Love
 - D. Exercise

Essay Questions (Pick any Two)

1. Explain the idea of “detachment.” How does Morrie use it to cope with his disease?
2. Do you think that *Tuesdays with Morrie* is a book that everyone should read? Discuss why or why not using specific examples from the book to support your reasons.
3. Explain how does the use of flashbacks add or distract from the book. Discuss the author’s purpose in using this technique.
4. Explain the use of the following symbols in the book: waves, Morrie’s bed, food, and the hibiscus plant. What does each symbolize?

Tuesdays with Morrie

Background

Tuesdays with Morrie is a true story about the relationship between Morrie Schwartz and his former student Mitch Albom. As Morrie is on his death-bed, suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, Mitch and Morrie discuss aspects of life, including, aging, death, relationships, marriage, and most importantly love. The book chronicles the time that Morrie and Mitch spent with one another before Morrie's death.

The book is one that anyone can enjoy and benefit from reading. While the book does not contain any inappropriate words or situations, the teacher should be prepared to discuss sensitive issues, especially those that deal with death. Some students may have difficulty verbalizing emotions that may be associated with the death of a loved one.

Tuesdays with Morrie

Test Key

1.	B	6.	B	11.	A	16.	B
2.	B	7.	C	12.	D	17.	D
3.	C	8.	D	13.	B	18.	B
4.	D	9.	B	14.	C	19.	A
5.	C	10.	A	15.	A	20.	D

Tuesdays with Morrie

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

The Curriculum

Vocabulary

hibiscus – a plant with large flowers

lieu – instead of

1. Explain the subject of the old professor's course.

The subject of the professor's course is "The Meaning of Life."

2. How does the course operate? How is it unique from other courses with which you may be familiar?

The course operates as a one-on-one dialogue between a student and a professor. The course is unique because it does not require books, and it does not focus on any one subject. The course covers many subjects, including: "love, work, community, family, aging, forgiveness, and finally, death." (Pg. 1)

3. Describe the narrator of this memoir. How does he frame this book?

The narrator is Mitch Albom, Morrie Schwartz's former student. Mitch frames the book by informing the reader that it is a long paper on what was learned in the last course he took with Morrie.

4. How does the use of "I was the student" add credibility to the memoir? (Pg. 2)

The phrase "I was the student" adds credibility because it shows the reader that the story told in the book is a first-hand experience.

5. The text on page three is in italics. After reading the text, decide how it functions in the book. What do you call this literary technique? How does the narration change during these passages?

These italicized passages serve as flashbacks that describe Mitch's prior experiences with Morrie. In the section, on page three, the narration changes the past to give the reader Mitch's perspective rather than Morrie's.

6. What does the reader learn about Mitch?

The reader should recognize that Mitch is a much different person now than he was as a student. The reader should also recognize the significance of the relationship that Mitch once had with Morrie. This will help the reader understand how the two are able to reconnect in such a fulfilling way.

7. Using evidence from the book, describe Morrie Schwartz' physical and personality characteristics when Mitch first new them.

His physical characteristics can be described through the following quotes:

- *"He is a small man who takes small steps...."*
- *"...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 graying eyebrows."*
- *"Although his teeth are crooked and his lower ones are slanted back...." (Pgs. 3-4)*

Morrie is a man who shows a great interest in his students. Morrie is charismatic and a person who shows affection to those he cares about. The narration describes Morrie with sparkling eyes, which should tell the reader that Morrie is full of energy. Mitch also describes an experience in which he and Morrie hug. Given the relationship between a student and a teacher, for them to hug would assume that Morrie is comfortable with affection and has a very loving heart with those he meets. Morrie also cries when Mitch graduates from college. The reader should assume that Morrie is a very emotional man.

8. How does Mitch feel about Morrie?

Mitch obviously has great respect for Morrie. Mitch has taken all of the classes that Morrie teaches at the university. Mitch also takes the opportunity to introduce Morrie to his parents.

9. At the end of the flashback, Albom states, "He asks if I will stay in touch, and without hesitation I say, 'Of course.'" (Pg. 4) Do you believe this statement? Why do you think it is included in the book?

Answers will vary. Some students might believe that because of the relationship that was described, Mitch and Morrie will stay in touch after graduation; however, some students might find the fact that Morrie is crying as an indication that Morrie does not believe that they will stay in touch. Its inclusion in the book could be a way of leading to Mitch and Morrie's reconciliation.

10. Cite two examples of figurative language in the italicized passage and explain their effects.

Answers will vary. Examples could include:

- A. *“For many of us, the curtain has just come down on childhood.” (Pg. 3)*
This is a metaphor that is used to provide the reader with a concrete example of the finality of graduating from college. The idea of the curtain coming down implies that the “first act” in a person’s life is over and now the person is left to continue with the life.
- B. *“...as if a strong wind could, at any time, whisk him up into the clouds.” (Pg. 3)*
This is hyperbole that exaggerates how physically small Morrie Schwartz is.
- C. *“...he looks like a cross between a biblical prophet and a Christmas elf.” (Pg. 3)*
This is a simile that is used to juxtapose two images of Morrie. One image is of Morrie as a scholarly man, as illustrated by the biblical prophet, and one image is of Morrie as a humorous and energetic person, as illustrated by the Christmas elf..
- D. *“...when he smiles it’s as if you’d just told him the first joke on earth.” (Pg. 4)*
This is another example of hyperbole. It is used to illustrate how devoted Morrie is to the people with whom he is speaking. He never lets people feel as if they are not part of the importance of any conversation. Morrie’s ability to make people feel this way will be visited later in the book. The quotation also illustrates Morrie’s innate joy for life.

11. Why does Mitch give Morrie a gift at Mitch’s graduation?

Mitch gives Morrie a gift because he wants Morrie to remember him. Mitch feels very close to Morrie and hopes that the gift will reflect these feelings.

The Syllabus

Vocabulary

blissful – filled with happiness

lindy – a dance

prominent – leading

commandeered – took over

inexplicably – unexplainably

neurological – dealing with the nervous system

normalcy – lack of unusual or different circumstances

profound – important and well-thought out

demise – death

meditation – the act of quiet thought and prayer

rousing – exciting

1. Describe the effect of beginning the chapter with, “His death sentence came in the summer of 1994.” (Pg. 5)

The statement sets the tone for the entire chapter, and after the brief introduction about Mitch beginning his final course with Morrie, the statement also serves as a catalyst to the rest of the story about Morrie.

2. What does Morrie love to do? What does this tell you about his personality?

Morrie loves to dance. Morrie’s love of dancing should imply to the reader that Morrie is a very energetic and fun person.

3. How might people have missed the early signs of his illness?

In Morrie’s younger years, he spends hours dancing at the Harvard Square. One day when he is walking, he loses his breath and has to be rushed to the hospital. A few years later, he loses his balance. People attribute these missteps to old age.

4. How do we know that Morrie understands what is happening to him?

Morrie is very in touch with his body. In the beginning, he knows that what is happening with his body is not simply old age.

5. Describe the tone of the book when the narration is describing the types of tests that Morrie undergoes when he is first being diagnosed.

The tone in this section is very blunt. The narrator does not try to make the tests less real by hiding them behind polite language. This mimics Morrie’s attitude toward death and aging. Morrie does not believe that we should hide from either.

6. What does Morrie learn is his affliction? Describe it.

Morrie learns that he is afflicted with Lou Gehrig's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). ALS is a disease that eats away at a person's neurological system. The book describes the disease with the following: "ALS is like a lit candle: it melts your nerves and leaves your body a pile of wax." (Pg. 9)

7. After Morrie learns that he is ill, what surprises him the most?

Morrie is surprised that people continue with life as if nothing is happening. The world does not stop.

8. How quickly does it take the disease to have an impact on Morrie's life? According to the doctors, how long does Morrie have left? What are the first signs of Morrie's illness?

Morrie is quickly overcome by the disease. The doctors believe that he has approximately two years until the disease kills him. The first signs of Morrie's illness are his asthma, his trouble walking, his fatigue, and his insomnia.

9. On pages 8 and 9, the narration uses an effective rhetorical technique called repetition. "That was the end..." is used in different ways. Cite some examples of repetition and then explain the meaning for each.

The narration describes several events in Morrie's life that he enjoys doing, but slowly, Morrie is no longer able to continue with those activities. After the narration describes how Morrie loses each activity, it completes the story with the phrase "that was the end." In the first activity, the narration states, "That was the end of his driving." In the second story, the narration states, "That was the end of his walking free." In the third story, the narration states, "That was the end of his privacy." In the last story, the narration states, "And that was the end of his secret." (Pgs. 8-9)

Answers may vary. The effect of the repetition is to demonstrate to the reader how slowly a person can lose the things that he or she takes for granted. The repetition of the phrase also serves to show the finality of each of these losses. By repeating "that was the end," the narration is able to remind the reader several times about the sadness of the loss.

10. As Morrie faces his loss, what decision does he make about how he will live the rest of his life?

Morrie decides that "he would not be ashamed of dying." (Pg. 10) He wants people to learn what happens with death.

11. Read the following passage from the text and then decide what literary term is used to describe the effects of ALS.

“By the end, if you are still alive, you are breathing through a tube in a hole in your throat, while your soul, perfectly awake, is imprisoned inside a limp husk, perhaps able to blink, or cluck a tongue, like something from a science fiction movie, the man frozen inside his own flesh.” (Pg. 10)

The metaphor is comparing the body to “a limp husk”. It is showing that the disease becomes a prison for the soul. Students could also point to the alliteration of fiction, frozen, and flesh.

12. Describe Morrie’s demeanor when he has visitors. How would people surprise themselves? How do you think you would respond if you would be in their position?

Morrie is very frank with his visitors. He continues with his daily activities while the visitors are there. He would involve people in his activities as well, often asking people to hold the beaker while he would urinate. People would surprise themselves by being willing to help Morrie.

Answers will vary.

13. Describe a “living funeral.” How did people react to Morrie’s living funeral?

A living funeral is a way for a dying person to be an active participant in his or her funeral. Instead of having the funeral after the person has already passed, a funeral is held when the person is still alive. Groups of friends and family pay tribute to the person, in this case, Morrie. The people involved in Morrie’s funeral laughed and cried, but they were able to tell Morrie how they appreciated him.

The Student

Vocabulary

averting – looking away

freelanced – to work on a temporary basis

insatiable – unsatisfied

spouting – vehemently declaring

hypocritical – characterized by acting in a way that is different from what one proclaims to believe

1. Describe Mitch's transformation after his graduation from Brandeis University. What would Morrie say about Mitch's transformation?

After graduation Mitch loses contact with the people he knows from school. He moves to New York City with aspirations of becoming a musician. After his first encounter with death, he becomes disillusioned with his dreams and goes back to school. He earns a degree in journalism and begins working on his career. He writes columns, sports books and has a radio show. Mitch begins to buy material things and gets married.

Morrie would have told Mitch that he should not be so involved in what society said was "accomplishment" and should instead have been thinking more about "being human."

2. Explain Mitch's first experience with death.

Mitch loses his favorite uncle to pancreatic cancer. Mitch witnesses the pain that his uncle undergoes and feels helpless. The uncle asks Mitch to look after his children when he is gone, and Mitch is unwilling to discuss his uncle's impending death.

3. How did Mitch's uncle's death change Mitch? Do you think that Mitch's reaction is normal? Why or why not?

The uncle's death is the catalyst to Mitch's disillusionment with his musical career. Mitch decides that wasting time working for a dream that might never materialize is a waste of time, and instead, Mitch spends his time chasing money and fame.

Answers will vary.

4. How is Mitch's frantic work pace driven by his past?

Mitch wants to get as much done and achieve as much as he can before he dies at a young age like his uncle.

5. How does the structure of the sentences and the paragraphs on page sixteen reflect the pace at which Mitch works?

The sentences on page sixteen are short and compact. When the reader is reading, he or she moves quickly through the paragraphs just like Mitch is moving quickly through his life.

6. How would Morrie feel about the Mitch who is described in this chapter?

Morrie would be unhappy with the lifestyle that Mitch chooses to have. Morrie believes that love should guide a person, and instead, Mitch is choosing to let money and fame guide him.

7. How does the end of this chapter serve as a narrative bridge to the next chapter?

The end of this chapter leads the reader with a tease about something that Mitch heard while watching television. The reader is interested to see how the lives of Mitch and Morrie connect, and the ellipses at the end of the chapter beg the reader to continue to the next.

The Audiovisual

Vocabulary

aphorisms –statements of principles

clamor – noise

awkward – uncomfortable

narcissist – a person overly concerned with him or herself

philosophy – a system of beliefs

withered – shriveled

composure – calmness

humility – the state of being submissive

induced – caused

insidious – subtle

1. What does the reader learn is the “something [that] caught my ear” from the previous chapter?

The reader learns that Morrie is going to be interviewed by Ted Koppel for Nightline. One of Morrie’s visitors has sent Morrie’s aphorisms to a reporter at a newspaper and from there, a producer at Nightline had shown the story to Ted Koppel.

2. How has Morrie changed physically since the onset of his disease?

Morrie is now in a wheelchair all the time. He is also having a difficult time chewing.

3. Describe the meeting between Morrie and Ted Koppel. How does Morrie's attitude toward Ted help to illustrate how Morrie feels about society?

When Ted Koppel comes to visit Morrie, Morrie is not as impressed by the man's star status as everyone else. Instead of Ted Koppel interviewing Morrie to make sure that he will be acceptable for the television program, Morrie interviews Ted. Morrie is upfront with Ted about the fact that he believes Ted is a narcissist. Morrie's attitude about the interview serves to prove that he is not as enamored by what or whom society determines to be important.

4. Why does Morrie refuse to dress up for his interview?

Morrie does not dress up or wear make up for the interview because "his philosophy was that death should not be embarrassing..." (Pg. 21)

5. How do you know that Morrie allows himself to grieve?

When Ted is interviewing Morrie, Morrie admits that he mourns for himself. Morrie also admits to be angry and bitter.

6. Describe Morrie's greatest dread about the disease.

Morrie dreads that eventually someone will have to help him use the bathroom.

7. Until this point in Morrie's life, he has not been reacquainted with Mitch. How do Mitch and Morrie become reacquainted?

Mitch is flipping through the television stations when he hears a voice say, "Who is Morrie Schwartz?" The implication is that when Mitch hears that voice he watches the interview where he learns what has happened to the old professor.

8. On page 24 and 25, Mitch includes another memory, as indicated by the italicized text. Why do you think this particular memory is inserted here?

Answers will vary. Many students will explain that the memory is inserted here, because it describes the time when Mitch is first introduced to Morrie. The previous narration describes the situation under which they meet again for the first time after many years. The memory on pages 24 and 25 also illustrates the fact that Morrie and Mitch were friends.

The Orientation

Vocabulary

gaunt – painfully thin

emerge – to come into view

1. Contrast Morrie's life with Mitch's life at the very beginning of this "final class."

Mitch's life is very different from Morrie's life. Mitch is running around with five things to do at once. He is on the phone all of the time and has deadlines that he must meet. Mitch is simply trying to stay ahead of the game. On the other hand, Morrie spends his days concentrating on what it means to live.

2. Why might Mitch be uncomfortable meeting Morrie again?

Mitch might be uncomfortable meeting Morrie again for several reasons. One reason might be because Mitch does not have good experience with dying people. He has already been through a traumatizing ordeal with his uncle. The other reason Mitch might be uncomfortable meeting Morrie again is because Mitch has not kept his promise about staying in touch with Morrie. Mitch graduated from college and has never been back to see his professor, whom at one time he called a friend.

3. Explain how you know that Mitch recognizes that he is not the same person he was in college.

Answers will vary. Some students may describe the differences between how Mitch leaves Morrie when he gives him the briefcase, and students may compare that moment with when Mitch first sees Morrie again. Mitch waits to finish his phone call. Other students may quote the passage in the book where Mitch thinks, "I remembered graduation day, the briefcase, his tears at my departure, and I swallowed because I knew, deep down, that I was no longer the good, gift-bearing student he remembered." (Pg. 28)

4. Explain the metaphor of the food and meal that Mitch receives when he first visits Morrie.

The food serves as a metaphor for the nourishment that Mitch and Morrie will offer one another. Food is a comfort, and Morrie has always been a comfort to Mitch. At the same time, Mitch returns to Morrie to be a comfort to him. The food illustrates how the two men will nourish one another.

The Classroom

Vocabulary

envious – jealous

efficient – effective

gingerly – carefully

pathetic – emotionally moving

serene – peaceful

1. How does Morrie characterize himself as he believes he appears to other people?

Morrie describes himself as a bridge between life and death. He states, “I’m not as alive as I used to be, but I’m no yet dead. I’m sort of...in-between.” (Pg. 33)

2. Why is Mitch jealous of Morrie?

Mitch is jealous of all Morrie’s friends. He is also jealous because Morrie has developed real relationships with people.

3. What does the reader learn about Mitch as he begins his final course with his old professor?

The reader learns that Mitch is recognizing that he is not the same person he used to be. Mitch “traded lots of dreams for a bigger paycheck....” (Pg. 33)

4. What types of questions does Morrie ask Mitch as they are catching up with one another? How would you respond to the same questions?

Morrie asks Mitch difficult questions about life choices. Answers will vary.

5. What nicknames do Mitch and Morrie use for one another? What do the nicknames imply?

Mitch refers to Morrie as “Coach,” and Morrie refers to Mitch as “Player.” The nicknames imply the deepness of the relationship that they had. The nicknames also demonstrate the roles that they play for one another. Morrie teaches Mitch about life and how to live life. Mitch is supposed to use those lessons to become a better person—the person he once was.

6. What does Morrie believe is the cause of people’s unhappiness?

Morrie believes that culture does not let people feel good about themselves and that people live unhappily.

7. The narration states, “Then Morrie did something that haunts me to this day.” (Pg. 36) Describe what Morrie does that is so disturbing for Mitch?

Morrie tells Mitch that he is dying, and then he shows Mitch how he knows the extent of his disease. Morrie explains to Mitch that when the disease reaches his lungs, he will be fast approaching death. Morrie demonstrates a breathing test that he uses to see how far the disease is spread. When Morrie is first diagnosed with ALS, he is able to hold his breath and exhale through the count of twenty-three. At this point, Morrie can only reach eighteen before he is out of breath. Mitch is able to exhale and reach eighty.

8. Summarize the memory that follows Mitch’s promise to come back and visit Morrie.

The memory is of Mitch’s reading lists when he took Morrie’s classes in college. The titles in the reading list illustrate how Morrie likes to study human relations. The memory also describes one of Morrie’s theories: the tension of opposites. The theory is that throughout life a person is pulled between two different things:

Life is a series of pulls back and forth. You want to do one thing, but you are bound to do something else. Something hurts you, yet you know it shouldn’t. You take certain things for granted, even when you know you should never take anything for granted. (Pg. 40)

9. What does Morrie believe always wins the tension of opposites?

Morrie believes that a person always lives in the middle of the tension of opposites and that love always wins.

Taking Attendance

Vocabulary

lamented – mourned

alienation – estrangement

1. Describe the lesson that Mitch learns while he is in London on business and explain how he learns it. Do you think that Mitch would learn this same lesson if he had not been reunited with Morrie? Why or why not?

When Mitch goes to London for business, he begins to engage in his usual activities, buying tabloids. As he sits and begins to read, Mitch recognizes that he spends time on things that mean absolutely nothing. Mitch thinks about Morrie, who is spending time with his loved ones and living a quality life.

Answers will vary. Some students will recognize that Mitch is already a different person than when he first meets with Morrie after the Nightline interview. If Mitch did not have the opportunity to see how Morrie lives his life, in spite of his disease, Mitch might not have recognized that what he is reading is unimportant.

2. Compare Mitch's culture with Morrie's culture. Explain which culture is more similar to your own.

Mitch's culture is the culture of nothingness. It is a culture that does not make people feel good about themselves. Mitch's culture is filled with tabloids and movies of the week. Morrie's culture is a "cocoon of human activities—conversation, interaction, affection—and it filled his life like an overflowing soup bowl." (Pg. 43) Mitch's culture has the effect of draining a person's life, and Morrie's culture fills a person's life.

Answers will vary.

3. How does Morrie believe a person gets meaning in his or her life?

Morrie believes that a person combats a meaningless life through the following: "devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning." (Pg. 43)

4. What happens when Mitch returns from London? How does Mitch react?

When Mitch returns from London, he finds that his newspaper is on strike. Mitch realizes that he is not as needed as he once thought he was and decides that he is going to visit Morrie.

5. List three things that you learn from the memory on pages 46 and 47.

The reader learns that Morrie has always served as a personal teacher for Mitch. The reader also learns that Mitch once has a dream of becoming a musician and that Morrie supported Mitch in that dream. Finally, the reader discovers that Mitch's father has a different dream for his son and that Mitch and his father are not able to discuss Mitch's dream to become a musician.

The First Tuesday: We Talk About the World

Vocabulary

atrophied – withered away

cynical – distrustful

anguish – pain and suffering

agitated – bothered

1. How does Morrie view his dependency on other people?

Morrie tries to look at his dependency on other people as his chance to be a baby again.

2. Why does Morrie try to stay caught up on the news? To whom does Morrie feel the closest?

Morrie tries to stay caught up because he wants to stay connected to the world. Morrie feels the closest to people who are also suffering. Morrie believes that he feels close to them because he is also suffering.

3. How is Morrie's reaction to the world's news different than Mitch's reaction?

Morrie is in tune with the suffering of people around the world. When Mitch covers the news, he does not weep for those who are suffering. In fact, he barely notices the emotions in the lives of other people.

4. Explain the following quotation "Maybe death is the great equalizer, the one big thing that can finally make strangers shed a tear for one another." (Pg. 51)

Answers will vary. Students' explanations should include a connection to Mitch's way of explaining people's emotions.

5. Explain the connection between the title of the book and the story.

Mitch and Morrie meet on Tuesdays, and Mitch remembers that they have always met on Tuesdays. When Mitch and Morrie meet for this final course, they will also meet on Tuesdays.

6. Morrie shares an aphorism with Mitch about love. What is the aphorism? What is your feeling about Morrie's aphorism on love?

The aphorism that Morrie shares is that "the most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in." (Pg. 52) He also states that "Love is the only rational act." (Pg. 52) Answers may vary. Love is usually thought of as being completely irrational. Some students will see Morrie's words as completely incorrect.

7. Explain the experiment that Morrie conducts with his class at Brandeis. What does the reader learn about Mitch and Morrie through the experience?

Morrie enters the classroom and does not say anything. The students in the class are uncomfortable at first, but eventually they sit and listen. Some students even become angry. After fifteen minutes, Morrie discusses the “effect of silence on human relations.” Morrie asks the class why people are embarrassed by silence. Throughout the experiment Mitch is very quiet. Morrie realizes that Mitch is much like Morrie was in his younger days. Neither Mitch nor Morrie is comfortable sharing his feelings. However, Morrie has grown out of feeling uncomfortable sharing with others, and Mitch is just beginning to learn how.

8. What is the reader supposed to learn from this chapter?

The lesson the reader is supposed to learn is that as humans we should remember that love is more important than money or fame. We cannot let society create a culture in which we do not value ourselves.

The Second Tuesday: We Talk About Feeling Sorry for Yourself

Vocabulary

mimicking – imitating

hoisting – lifting

1. Describe how Mitch is changing through these Tuesday meetings.

The reader should recognize even in this short time that Mitch is more comfortable with himself. He is giving up time and money to travel to see Morrie, and Mitch used to give up relationships in order to make money. Mitch leaves his phone at home, determined to let people wait. Mitch describes his visits with Morris as “a cleansing rinse of human kindness.” (Pg. 55)

2. How does food serve as a motif in the story?

Food serves as a pleasant memory for Mitch and Morrie. When they met together in college, it would often be for lunch. The first time Mitch comes to visit Morrie, Morrie feeds him. Now, Mitch feels compelled to bring food when he comes to visit Morrie. Morrie is feeding Mitch’s soul, and in turn, Mitch is trying to nourish Morrie’s body.

3. How has the disease progressed?

Morrie is unable to lift his arms higher than his chest. He is forced to sit in a chair rather than spend his time in the living room or kitchen. Morrie needs assistance when he uses the toilet.

4. Describe how Morrie perceives self-pity and mourning.

Morrie allows himself time to mourn each morning. He takes time to explore his body and see how the disease has progressed. When he is finished, he stops mourning. Sometimes he will cry, but he will not cry for long.

5. Would you consider Morrie a pessimist or an optimist? Explain your choice.

Morrie is an optimist. While he is sad for his disease, he is happy that he is given so much time to say good-bye to his loved ones. He views being able to say good-bye as a lucky thing because there are some people who are not given that opportunity.

6. What is happening with the strike at Mitch's newspaper? What does it illustrate in light of the conversations that Mitch and Morrie are having?

The strike is getting worse. People are confronting one another; people are being beaten; people are getting arrested. The confrontations at the paper illustrate two points. First, people are acting in way totally contradictory to what Morrie encourages: love. If people would follow Morrie's aphorism that love is the only rational act, they might not be acting in such an irrational way. The second thing that the confrontation at the newspaper illustrates is that once a person becomes consumed with money as life's motivation, all other important parts of life, like relationships with other people, are harmed.

7. Describe the event that prompts Mitch to realize that time is running out with Morrie.

Mitch realizes that time is running out when he offers to help Morrie into his bed. Mitch describes Morrie as "a big damp loaf." Mitch states that he "felt the seeds of death inside his shriveling frame...." (Pg. 59)

8. When Mitch says that he needs to do something, what do you think he is going to do?

Answers will vary. Students may write that they think Mitch wants to spend more time with Morrie. Some students may believe that Mitch wants to record his last moments with Morrie.

9. How does Mitch's memory of his junior year in college compare with his experiences with Morrie now?

The memory describes an experience in Morrie's Group Process class. The experiment asks people to trust one another as they fall back into the other person's arms. People are unable to successfully trust the other people until they close their eyes. The experiment teaches people that they need to believe what they feel instead of what they see. In Mitch's life, he believes what he sees. He believes that money and fame are the most important, even if at times he is unhappy as a result of chasing those dreams. When he meets Morrie at this point in his life, Morrie teaches him again that believing and acting upon what he feels will help him more than only believing what he sees.

The Third Tuesday: We Talk About Regrets

Vocabulary

clamoring – insisting

nostalgia – sentiment

imminent – threatening

ambivalence – uncertainty

egotistical – filled with self-importance

grapple – to struggle

opiate – painkilling drug

1. What does Mitch decide to do in order to preserve his memories with Morrie? What is Mitch's fear in asking Morrie for this intrusion?

Mitch asks Morrie if he can tape record their sessions so he can have them later. Mitch is afraid that he is asking for too much from Morrie when so many other people want and need his time.

2. How does Morrie feel about the tape recorded?

Morrie is happy to have it because he wants to tell about his life. He wants to be able to tell Mitch about his life before he is unable to even do that.

3. Explain the irony in the following passage:

But it was also becoming clear to me—through his courage, his humor, his patience, and his openness—that Morrie was looking at life from some very different place than anyone else I knew. A healthier place. A more sensible place. *And he was about to die.* (Pg. 63)

The irony in the passage is that most people not only fear death, but would be depressed and withdrawn if they had to endure what Morrie is going through.

4. When Mitch first sees Morrie on Nightline, what does Mitch wonder?

Mitch wonders if Morrie has regrets about life. He also wonders what he would do if he were in Morrie's shoes.

5. Does Mitch have any regrets about his life? Explain.

Mitch is ashamed of things in his past. He obviously does have secrets and regrets, and he is learning to recognize that he has lived his life in a way that has not been positive. However, Mitch is at least thinking about where his life was heading.

6. How does Morrie respond to Mitch's question?

Morrie responds by telling Mitch that all people worry about their last day on earth. Morrie also believes that there should always be someone who is asking us to think about that question all the time.

7. What conclusion does Mitch make about Morrie's response?

Mitch concludes that because people do not look at their lives and realize that they have something missing, everyone needs a teacher in life.

8. What does Mitch hope to gain from his conversations with Morrie? Cite the imagery that he uses on page 65-66.

Mitch wants to gain clarity about life. He wants the clarity of "standing on the tracks, listening to death's locomotive whistle." (Pg. 66)

9. What list of topics does Mitch want to discuss with Morrie?

Mitch wants to discuss the following: death, fear, aging, greed, marriage, family, society, forgiveness, and a meaningful life.

10. Explain the purpose of the last line of the chapter.

The list was in my bag when I returned to West Newton for the fourth time, a Tuesday in late August when the air-conditioning at the Logan Airport terminal was not working, and people fanned themselves and wiped sweat angrily from their foreheads, and every face I saw looked ready to kill somebody. (Pg. 66)

The passage is meant to contrast the activities in Mitch's life. Mitch is concerned about what he is going to gain from Morrie before Morrie passes away, and the society that is reflected back at him is at the opposite end of the spectrum. When Morrie is teaching about love, metaphorically, society is ready to kill over the lack of air conditioning.

11. To what time does the memory take the reader?

The memory takes the reader back to Mitch's senior year.

12. Morrie encourage Mitch to write an honor's thesis. What is the topic?

The honor's thesis will be about the ritualism of football.

13. How does Morrie's reaction to Mitch's thesis illustrate the tension of opposites?

Morrie believes that Mitch's analysis is good enough for graduate school. Morrie encourages Mitch to apply to graduate school. The application to the tension of opposites is that Mitch is being pulled into the real world, and he wonders what it will be like, but at the same time, he is encouraged by Morrie's praise and the relationship that he has developed with his professor.

The Audiovisual, Part Two

1. Explain the meaning of this chapter title.

The chapter is a connection to the original interview that Morrie had with Ted Koppel.

2. Compare Ted Koppel's first visit with Morrie to this visit. How do things change?

Morrie's first visit with Ted Koppel is more constrained than this second visit. Morrie did not have any misgivings about telling Ted what he thought about him. In the first visit, Ted is interviewing Morrie, and in this second visit, there is more of a give and take between the two men. When Ted visits Morrie the second time, Ted is warmer. Physically, Morrie is less animated than he is during the first interview.

3. Who is Morrie Stein?

Morrie Stein is a former colleague of Morrie's. Morrie Stein is the man who had first sent the aphorisms to the newspaper, which then prompted the interview with Ted Koppel.

4. What does Ted Koppel wonder about Morrie's relationship with his friend Morrie Stein?

Morrie Stein is going deaf and Morrie Schwartz will soon be unable to speak. Koppel wonders how the two will communicate when that time comes. Morrie explains to Ted that after so many years of friendship, Morrie and Morrie need to do nothing more than sit and hold hands.

5. What does the reader learn about Morrie as he relates a letter to Ted Koppel?

The reader learns that Morrie is very hurt by the death of his mother.

The Professor

Vocabulary

synagogue – a Jewish place of worship

murky – dark and heavy

boccie – a game like bowling

antidote – a remedy

1. Explain the connection between this chapter and the previous chapter. How does the focus of this chapter change from the story so far?

The connection between the two chapters is that the end of the previous chapter and the beginning of this chapter deal with Morrie and his mother. The book is different at this point because the focus is no longer on Morrie Schwartz now, but the story is about Morrie Schwartz as a child. The story about Morrie and his mother is allowing the reader an insight into Morrie's childhood.

2. How is the way Morrie confronted his mother's death similar to the way Mitch confronted Morrie's death?

Both Morrie and Mitch ignore the death sentence of their loved ones. They both try to ignore the fact that someone they care about is going to die.

3. Describe Morrie's childhood.

Morrie's childhood is filled with poverty. His father does not work often and does not show Morrie or his brother much affection. During Morrie's youth, his brother David becomes paralyzed because of polio. Morrie believes that he is responsible for his brother's illness and goes to the synagogue to pray for his brother and his mother. When Morrie's father remarries, Morrie is loved and encouraged by his father's wife. Eva encourages Morrie to value education, however, Morrie is conflicted about his step-mother because his father wants Morrie to pretend, for David's sake, that Eva is his natural mother. When Morrie is in high school, his father takes him to get work at a local factory. Morrie cannot stand the atmosphere and is relieved when they do not give him a job.

4. Describe how does Morrie's childhood influence his adulthood?

Morrie's childhood affects his adulthood on many levels. One way the influence is demonstrated is in Morrie's love for physical affection. Morrie is not afraid to cry, hold hands, hug, and show people that he loves them. Because Morrie is not given this affection after his mother dies, he longs for the affection now. Another influence is through education. Morrie is able to learn at a young age that knowledge is powerful, and, therefore, he pursues knowledge for the rest of his life.

5. Does Mitch agree with Morrie's career choice? How do you know?

Answers will vary. Students should respond by stating that Mitch thinks that Morrie is the best teacher there is. The first way the student should support this is through the last line in the paragraph. The second way the student may choose to support this is through the quote that is included with this chapter.

The Fourth Tuesday: We Talk About Death

Vocabulary

indecipherable – incapable of being understood

solidarity – unity

agnostic – a person who is not convinced that God exists

transcend – to overcome

exuberance – extreme joy

quivered – shook

ambitious – motivated

deficient – lacking

materialistic – characterized by a belief that importance comes from only money

1. Describe Morrie's mood as the chapter begins.

Mitch notes that Morrie is in a businesslike mood. Morrie is prepared for the "Tuesday lesson" with prepared notes.

2. As Mitch and Morrie sit to talk about death, what is going on in the world?

The newspaper strikes are not improving. People with mental illnesses are killing one another, and Mitch describes the people in the O.J. Simpson trial as becoming celebrities.

3. What imagery is used to describe Morrie's plastic breathing tube?

Mitch describes the tubing as being clamped on "like a leech." It is a simile.

4. What does Morrie believe are people's attitudes about death?

Morrie believes that people do not believe they are going to die because if they did, they would not live the way they do. People have to learn how to die so they can learn how to live.

5. According to the book, what question should a person ask himself or herself everyday in order to live life to the fullest?

People should ask If today is the day that they will die?

6. What does Morrie observe about Mitch's life? Do you think his observation is correct? Explain why or why not.

Morrie believes that even Mitch does not believe that he is going to die. Morrie believes that if Mitch lived each day like he is going to die, Mitch would not be so ambitious.

7. Describe Mitch's attitude toward spiritualism?

Mitch compares spiritual things with touchy-feely stuff; Mitch avoids all things that involve demonstrating emotion.

8. Explain the significance of the line: "The disease owns him." (Pg. 88)

Previously in the book, all of the italicized sections have been memories, or in one case, a quote. In this section, the memory fits with the chronology of the disease. The line is significant because it illustrates how the disease is progressing. Morrie's body is filled with the disease.

9. Mitch mimics Lou Gehrig's famous quotation from baseball (see Pg. 89) and Morrie responds by saying, "'Yeah. Well. I didn't say that.'" (Pg. 89) Why is this moment so poignant?

Answers may vary. When Lou Gehrig spoke the words, he had not been decimated by the disease. When Mitch is repeating the quotation for Morrie, Morrie is consumed by the disease and does not feel lucky at all. For Morrie to express those feelings amplifies that this must be a bad day for Morrie, because on normal days he has a much more positive spirit. Lou Gehrig was expressing the fact that baseball made his life "lucky" and full of love and joy. Morrie, while he feels good about his past, is not able to call his degenerative disease and death "lucky."

The Fifth Tuesday: We Talk About Family

Vocabulary

lavalier – to hang on the lapel

responsive – capable of seeing a result

1. How is this Tuesday different than the other Tuesdays?

This Tuesday is different because it is the first Tuesday in thirty-five consecutive autumns that Morrie does not have a class waiting for him at Brandeis University.

2. "The fact is, there is no foundation, no secure ground, upon which people may stand today if it isn't the family" (Pg. 91) How is this concept demonstrated in Morrie's life?

This idea is demonstrated in Morrie's life by the infiltration of his family in his care. Morrie surrounds himself with pictures of his family, and it is rare if one or all of them are not there to support him.

3. Cite the imperative that Morrie makes Mitch write. Why is it so important to Morrie?

Morrie makes Mitch write, "Love each other or perish." This is important to Morrie because he cannot imagine what his death would be like if he did not have his family. Morrie believes that it is important to have someone watching you all the time, not just during the times that you have visitors

4. What causes Morrie to become so emotional?

Morrie is emotional because he cannot think about leaving his children so soon.

5. What does Morrie imply when he says:

There is no experience like having children. That's all. There's no substitute for it. You cannot do it with a friend. You cannot do it with a lover. If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another human being, and to learn how to love and bond in the deepest way, then you should have children. (Pg. 92)

Would Morrie agree that everyone should have children? Why or why not?

Morrie implies through his directive that having a family and raising children is one of the most, if not the most, important jobs a person can have.

Answers will vary. Students should base their conclusions on the aphorisms that he has already shared. Morrie would probably think that people should not have a child if they cannot learn how to live life first. A person who is only interested in money and fame would have a difficult time putting someone else first.

6. Describe the differences between Mitch and his brother.

Mitch's brother does not look like him. His brother is blond-haired and hazel-eyed. He is only two years younger than Mitch, and like Mitch, wanted to do something in the arts. Mitch's brother loved acting and singing. While Mitch was the good student; his brother was a bad student. Mitch's brother broke rules and got involved in drugs and alcohol. Mitch's brother was always the one who could make people laugh and have fun.

7. What happens to Mitch's brother? How does Mitch feel about this?

Mitch's brother gets the same type of cancer as his uncle. Mitch spends his life believing that he (Mitch) would get cancer, so he is very upset when his brother is afflicted.

8. How does his brother deal with the illness?

Mitch's brother does not want anyone around. He flies to Europe to seek treatments. He holds his family at bay even though they want to help. Mitch tries to leave several messages for his brother, but his brother would be very slow to return the calls.

9. How does the memory that Mitch inserts in the story connect with the previous chapter?

The memory is connected to the previous chapter through death. In the story, Mitch and his brother are sledding. They are almost hit by a passing driver, but they escape death; Mitch describes feeling like they can face death again. When Mitch's brother gets cancer, instead of being elated that they faced death together and won, they are facing death separately.

The Sixth Tuesday: We Talk About Emotions

Vocabulary

laurels – small trees with red or white flowers

lilting – rhythmic

impermanent – temporary

vulnerability – openness

instinctively – prompted by a natural tendency

1. What does the food that Mitch brings Morrie represent in this chapter?

The food represents Morrie's declining health. Morrie cannot eat the food that Mitch brings. Morrie needs to eat mostly liquid food.

2. What does Charlotte tell Mitch that he brings to Morrie? Why does she tell him this?

Charlotte tells Mitch that he brings Morrie a sense of purpose. She tells him this because Mitch just learned that Morrie cannot eat the food that he is bringing. Mitch is upset because he wants to feel like he is contributing.

3. Explain the changes in Morrie's physical condition.

Morrie is coughing more than usual. He is eating liquid food and having difficulty sleeping.

4. What does Morrie want Mitch to learn how to do? Why does this confuse Mitch?

Morrie wants Mitch to learn how to detach himself because everything is impermanent. Mitch is confused because Morrie also tries to encourage Mitch to experience all the good and bad emotions in life. Detaching oneself and experiencing all of the emotions seem to contradict one another.

5. Explain Morrie's "Theory of Detachment."

Morrie's Theory of Detachment is that a person should become fully immersed in the experiences of life. When one is fully immersed in experiences, he or she is able to leave them behind, recognize the emotion, and then detach from it.

6. How does Morrie want to die? Why?

Morrie wants to die serenely. He is plagued with violent coughing spells and does not want to let the disease violently take him. He uses detachment to work through those violent times.

7. As Morrie and Mitch discuss dying, they also discuss reincarnation. Morrie concedes that he believes in reincarnation. When he does, Mitch asks him how he would like to return. How does Morrie respond? How does this make sense to Mitch?

Morrie would like to return as a gazelle. Mitch understands this because of Morrie's shrinking body. Morrie used to envelop energy, and slowly the disease is taking that energy away from him. A gazelle is an animal that races across deserts and Mitch can picture Morrie wanting the freedom to do that.

The Professor, Part Two

Vocabulary

deceptively – misleadingly

exploiting – taking advantage of

snarled – snapped

deferments – postponement of military service

levitate – to raise above the ground

1. Before Morrie is a professor, where does he work? Why?

Morrie spends several years working at a mental hospital outside of Washington, D.C. He works there because it is one place he can work without exploiting others—something he vowed to never do after his job-hunting experiences with his father. Morrie is given the opportunity to conduct research by observing patients and recording his observations.

2. What does Morrie learn through his observations of the female patient at the hospital?

Morrie is given the opportunity to observe one woman who is ignored at the hospital. Every day she comes out of her room and lies on the floor. Doctors walk over her; nurses walk over her. No one speaks to her. Morrie is saddened by how the woman is treated and begins to sit with her. He is able to connect with her. After Morrie's experiences with the young woman, he befriends other people at the hospital. The one lesson he learns is that everyone wants the same things. We all want to be loved. We all want to be noticed. And, money will never buy happiness or contentment no matter how much a person has.

3. How does what the reader learns about Morrie in this chapter reflect what Morrie tries to teach Mitch?

Through the examples of Morrie's first job and the stories of Morrie's influence on the Brandeis campus, the reader should recognize that Morrie has never been a person who follows popular culture. For the 60s and 70s, Morrie is ahead of his time. Morrie still tries to teach the same concepts today. He tries to convince Mitch that he should not be concerned or misled by society's standards; Mitch should create his own culture.

4. As Mitch learns about life through Morrie's experiences with death, he also learns about how different cultures view death. What is the purpose of including what he learns about the tribe in The Arctic?

The important lesson that the reader can learn from the tribe in North America is that life is circular. When there is a death, there is a life. We all have a small part inside ourselves that lives on when we pass. Our spirit never leaves the earth.

The Seventh Tuesday: We Talk About the Fear of Aging

Vocabulary

inclination – a tendency

sultry – seductive-looking

inadequacy –insufficiency

manipulating – unfairly controlling

revel – to take pleasure in

1. The chapter begins with the following lines:

“Morrie lost his battle. Someone was now wiping his behind.” (Pg. 115)

How is this a turning point for Morrie? How does he deal with the situation?

When Morrie was being interviewed by Ted Koppel, Morrie told Ted that his greatest dread was being unable to take care of himself in the bathroom. He is now at the point when he needs help going to the bathroom, but he deals with the situation in the same way that he has dealt with the others. He is not ashamed and he detaches himself from the experience and returns to when he was a child. He enjoys being taken care of and having someone offer him that unconditional love.

2. Why has Mitch gone from being proud of saying his age to not wanting to bring it in to conversation? What is Morrie's response?

Mitch is embarrassed to bring up his age because he feels like he is over the hill. Morrie responds by telling Mitch that age is not a competitive issue. Morrie wonders why people should be jealous of being young again when they have already lived that life. A person should feel connected to the time and realize that aging is growth, not decay.

3. What does Morrie envy about young people?

Morrie envies a young person's ability to go dancing or swimming like he used to be able to do.

The Eighth Tuesday: We Talk About Money

Vocabulary

mogul – a great and important person

disillusioned – dissatisfied

comradeship – friendship

colleagues – associates

inconsequential – unimportant

1. How does Morrie feel about music? How does this connect with what he is trying to teach Mitch about money?

Morrie is very connected to music now, even more so than he was before. He will listen to music and be moved to tears. Morrie finds comfort in simple pleasures that can give you experience. He is trying to show Mitch that there is no significance in material things. Morrie has always lived by the philosophy that you "can't take it with you." (Pg. 124)

2. Agree or disagree with the following passage from the book and explain your reasoning.

These were people so hungry for love that they were accepting substitutes. They were embracing material things and expecting a sort of hug back. But it never works. You can't substitute material things for love or for gentleness or for tenderness or for a sense of comradeship. (Pg. 125)

Answers will vary.

3. Explain Morrie's view of materialism.

Answers will vary. Students should demonstrate an understanding of Morrie's attitude that culture tries to brainwash people that having things means that you will have a fulfilling life. There are several passages in this chapter that illustrate Morrie's dislike for the way that money is becoming a substitute for love. Students might point out that Morrie himself has not purchased anything new because he does not need to have purchasing power now that he is going to die. Students might explain that Morrie believes that people are confused between what they need and what they want.

4. How does Morrie believe a person should find a meaningful life? Cite the passage directly from the book.

Morrie believes that a meaningful life means that you must: "Devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning." (Pg. 127)

5. How does Mitch feel about his life as it reflects his attitude toward materialism?

After listening to Morrie's lessons about materialism, Mitch realizes that he spends his life chasing material things. Mitch had convinced himself that he is not greedy but realistic.

6. Describe the wealth the surrounds Morrie.

The wealth that surrounds Morrie is different than the typical wealth that people want. Morrie is surrounded by a wealth of family and love.

7. According to the quote on page 129 by Mahatma Gandhi, does one have to die to be reborn? Explain.

The quote states that Gandhi believes that when he sleeps, he dies and is then reborn again when he wakes up. Most likely, the death that Gandhi describes is not a physical death each night, so in reality people do not have to die to be reborn. Many religions believe that a person needs only to resolve to live again in order to be reborn.

The Ninth Tuesday: We Talk About How Love Goes On

Vocabulary

stagnated – stopped

pilgrimage – a journey

catheter – a medical tubing device used to inject or remove liquid from the body

gargle – a congested sound

fatigued – tired

scoffed – sneered

ruddy – red in complexion

accosted – approached in a harassing manner

corpses – dead bodies

1. Mitch keeps revisiting the labor war at his newspaper. What is the purpose of including this topic in the book? Do you believe that Mitch would still be visiting Morrie if the labor was over? Explain.

Including the topic of Mitch's past is important because it provides perspective about the direction Mitch is moving in his life.

Answers will vary.

2. Why does Morrie insist on being out of bed?

Morrie believes that "when you're in bed, you're dead." (Pg. 130)

3. Why does Mitch begin the chapter with information about what is happening in the world outside of Morrie's home?

The stories that are happening in the real world offer the reader a chance to see that not everyone lives a life like Morrie. There are still people who kill other people. There are still people who are consumed with what is happening in other people's lives rather than their own. Mitch still has relationship problems with his brother, despite what he is learning from Morrie.

4. Morrie's room holds a hibiscus plant on the windowsill. Explain what it symbolizes.

The hibiscus plant is a metaphor for the physical deterioration of Morrie's life. Just as the pink hibiscus plant goes through its life cycle, Morrie does as well. As Morrie becomes more dependent on others, the hibiscus plant withers and dies.

5. How does Morrie feel about a final interview with Ted Koppel and Nightline?

Ted Koppel wants to come and do a final interview with Morrie, but the show's producers would like to wait until Morrie is "on his last breath." Mitch is angry about this because he feels like they are using Morrie for ratings, but Morrie feels like this is a good compromise because he is using the show to reach millions of people.

6. Mitch uses the idea of reincarnation through his stories about other culture's beliefs about death. Morrie also believes in an idea of reincarnation but without the actual physical rebirth of someone. What is Morrie's idea of reincarnation?

Morrie believes that reincarnation can also be through memory. Through remembrance, a person lives again. Morrie tells Mitch, "I've got so many people who have been involved with me in close, intimate ways, And love is how you stay alive, even after you are gone." (Pg. 133)

7. What does Morrie want on his tombstone?

Morrie wants his tombstone to say: "A Teacher to the Last." (Pg. 135)

8. What does Mitch believe is Morrie's special talent?

Mitch believes that Morrie's special talent is how he is able to make each person that he is with feel like they are important. Morrie believes that it is necessary to be fully present with the person you are with. You should not be thinking about the ten other things that you have to do, but you should be engaged with the person mentally.

9. Describe the relationship between Morrie and his father. How does it influence the type of father Morrie is today?

Morrie and his father were not close. He was not a man who shared affection easily. Morrie vowed that when he was a father, he would do the things for his children that his father did not do for him.

10. Describe Morrie's father's death. How did his death prepare Morrie for his own death?

Morrie's father was alone when he died. He was accosted by two men, and even though he was able to escape, he later had a heart attack and died. Morrie did not see his father before he died. The only glimpse he had of his father was at the morgue. Morrie knew that in his own death, he wanted to be able to hold people and tell them that he loved them. He did not want there to be words that were not said. He did not want anyone to get a telegram of his death like he received a telegram of his mother's death.

11. What does the story of the Desana reflect about life?

The story of the Desana reflects the cyclical nature and the replenishing need for life. The Desana believe that if people do not die, nothing can be born. A person who takes from the earth must help replenish the earth.

The Tenth Tuesday: We Talk About Marriage

Vocabulary

intuitive – natural

commode – a toilet

supplements – nourishment

puree – a blend

crescent – curved, like a half-moon

1. How has Morrie's condition worsened since Mitch's last visit?

The disease reaches Morrie's lungs. He is unable to breathe very well, and he needs oxygen nightly. His coughing spells last for hours, and people must bang on his chest.

2. Who is the new visitor that comes to see Morrie? What do we learn about this person based on this visit?

Morrie requests that Mitch's wife also come to visit. Without asking Mitch, Janine joins him on his next trip to see Morrie. Janine is a very giving woman. Many people would be embarrassed by the dying man, but Janine gives of herself to Morrie by singing to him.

3. What does Mitch discover when he and Janine come to visit Morrie? How does Mitch react to this discovery? What does he decide to do instead?

As mentioned before, when Mitch comes to visit Morrie, he brings food because he feels like he is helping by helping to nourish Morrie. However, when he comes to Morrie's for this visit, he discovers that Morrie is unable to eat any of the food that he brings. Mitch is upset by this because he feels like there is nothing he can do to help or comfort Morrie. During Mitch's visit with Morrie, he decides that he will start helping Morrie by doing some of the physical demands that the nurse once did. Mitch begins to help Morrie dislodge the phlegm that is in his throat, which allows Mitch to feel like he is doing something to help Morrie.

4. How does Mitch describe the commitment of marriage?

Mitch describes the commitment of marriage "as if it were an alligator from some murky swamp." (Pg. 147) Mitch believes that people in his generation are unable to commit.

5. What does Morrie believe about marriage? List the rules that he has for marriage. List each one the way Morrie says it and in a few words.

Morrie believes that marriage is important because loved ones are important. A friend is great, but a friend will not be there when you are not doing well. Morrie does not believe that marriage is always easy. He tells Mitch that in marriage people are tested. Morrie gives the following rules about love and marriage:

If you don't respect the other person, you're gonna have a lot of trouble. If you don't know how to compromise, you're gonna have a lot of trouble. If you can't talk openly about what goes on between you, you're gonna have a lot of trouble. If you don't have a common set of values in life, you're gonna have a lot of trouble. Pg. (149)

- *mutual respect*
- *give and take*
- *communicate*
- *similar values*

6. About what Bible story does Mitch ask Morrie? What is Morrie's response?

Mitch asks Morrie about the story of Job, a man with faith who God makes suffer in order to test his faith. Morrie responds that he believes God overdid it.

The Eleventh Tuesday: We Talk About Our Culture

Vocabulary

solidifying – becoming solid

alabaster – white

calisthenics – exercises

squeamish – uneasy

innately – inherently

1. How does the reader know that Morrie is close to the end?

The reader knows that Morrie is close to the end because the disease has spread to his lungs. The poison is solidifying in his lungs and a therapist must bang it out so Morrie can cough it up. Morrie could suffocate from not being able to breathe.

2. How does Morrie believe that people can change?

Morrie believes that people are always experiencing change. He is experiencing growth and change, even as he suffers from his disease. Morrie also believes that people are good by nature. Our culture makes us believe that we are threatened, and we react. Morrie believes that we should make our own culture and not simply accept what society tries to create for us.

3. What secret does Morrie share with Mitch?

Morrie tells Mitch that we need others to take care of us when we are born, and we need others to take care of us when we are old, but the secret is that we need others in between as well.

4. Explain the irony when the Trial of the Century reaches its conclusion and its connection to Morrie's life.

The Trial of the Century consumes American culture. People spent a great deal of time watching the drama play out on television. The trial is the sort of media circus that Morrie abhorred, and the people in the trial represent what Morrie thinks is wrong with American culture. The irony is that while everyone is watching the conclusion of the trial, Morrie uses the restroom.

5. How does the story about the 1979 basketball game reflect who Morrie is as a person?

The story of Morrie at the basketball game reflects Morrie's understanding of human nature. He knows that people do not think beyond what happening at the moment, and they only see life as a competition that needs to be won and not enjoyed. This basketball is a "teachable moment" for Morrie as he tries to impart wisdom to those around him.

The Audiovisual, Part Three

Vocabulary

tenor – a mood or tone

stoic – composed

coaxed – persuaded

mantra – a saying

1. Describe Morrie's relationship with Ted. Would Morrie consider it a relationship or a business deal?

Morrie does, in fact, have a relationship with Ted. They have developed a camaraderie that allows them to say good-bye, rather than just sit through an interview.

2. How is this interview different from the previous two?

This interview is different because it is conducted in Morrie's study. Morrie is visibly weakened. The interview is also different because it takes the form of a conversation rather than an interview.

3. How does Morrie respond when Ted asks him if he is more afraid of death now that it is near?

Morrie responds by telling Ted that he is less afraid. He is practicing his theory of detachment, and he is able to let go of the outside world.

4. What glimpse do we get of Morrie's religion? Does it seem consistent with the way Morrie spoke about religion before?

Morrie talks to God. His religion does seem consistent with his views earlier in the book. Even though Morrie juxtaposes many religions into one, he still believes that God is in control of his destiny.

The Twelfth Tuesday: We Talk About Forgiveness

Vocabulary

patriarch – a father-figure

estranged – alienated

whimsical – carefree

reconcile – to reunite

audible – capable of being heard

dwindling – diminishing

1. How does Morrie need to forgive himself?

Morrie describes a situation where he parted ways with a man named Norman. The man was a very close friend of Morrie's and Charlotte's. When Charlotte became ill many years ago, Norman and his wife did not get in contact with them. Charlotte and Morrie were very hurt, and then decided to drop the relationship. When Morrie would see Norman on other occasions, Norman would try to make amends, but Morrie would not forgive him. Since that time, Norman has passed away, and Morrie never saw him to forgive him. Morrie must now forgive himself for his actions.

2. Again, Mitch is surprised that Morrie feels lucky in spite of his disease? Why does Morrie feel lucky?

Morrie feels fortunate because he is given time to say good-bye, and in this instance, he is given time to forgive. Morrie keeps explaining to Mitch that not everyone is given that chance.

3. Explain the symbolism in the following statement: “The hibiscus plant behind his head was still holding on, small but firm.” (Pg. 167)

The imagery in the hibiscus plant reflects the life that Morrie still holds in his weakening frame. Morrie’s body is fading physically, but spiritually and mentally, Morrie is still holding on to life. At the beginning of the book, the hibiscus plant was full of life, and by revisiting the withering plant now, it symbolizes Morrie’s decline.

4. How does Morrie’s admission reflect the nature of the relationship that Morrie has with Mitch in the last page of the chapter? (Pg. 168).

Morrie and Mitch have always been extremely close, despite the many years that they spend without contact. Morrie’s statement reflects the way in which he fathers Mitch, through advice and teachings.

5. Describe the place Morrie chooses to be buried.

Morrie finds a place on a hill, beneath a tree, and overlooking a pond. Morrie describes the place as being a perfect place to think.

6. What does Morrie ask Mitch to do after Morrie passes away?

Morrie would like Mitch to visit him at his grave. Morrie asks Mitch to visit on Tuesdays because they are “Tuesday people.”

The Thirteenth Tuesday: We Talk About the Perfect Day

Vocabulary

raspy – hoarse

grapple – to tackle

negotiated – dealt with

1. Why does Morrie want to be cremated?

Morrie wants to be cremated because he believes that his body is only a shell. He believes that his body is only the container that holds a person’s soul.

2. Morrie believes that we are part of nature. The reader is reminded of this imagery every time the text describes the life cycle of the hibiscus plant. Even though we are part of nature, how does Morrie believe that we are different?

Morrie believes that we are different because we can love each other.

3. Explain the following quote: “Death ends a life, not a relationship.” (Pg. 174)

Answers will vary. In part, the quote reflects the request that Morrie makes of Mitch about visiting his tombstone. Morrie wants to maintain the talking relationship that the two men have. The quote also reflects Morrie’s beliefs about the nature of love and memory. A relationship cannot die if the person is remembered in someone’s heart and mind.

4. Why does Morrie believe that he could never become the man he once was?

Morrie does not think that he could be the old Morrie because he has faced the ultimate questions.

5. What does Morrie believe are the ultimate questions?

Morrie believes that the ultimate questions “have to do with love, responsibility, spirituality, awareness.” (Pg. 175)

6. Describe Morrie’s perfect physical day? Describe your perfect day? What do our perfect days tell us about ourselves?

Morrie’s perfect day is described as:

“I’d get up in the morning, do my exercises, have a lovely breakfast of sweet rolls and tea, go for a swim, then have my friends come over for a nice lunch. I’d have them come one or two at a time so we could talk about their families, their issues, talk about how much we mean to each other. Then I’d like to go for a walk, in a garden with some trees, watch their colors, watch the birds, take in the nature that I haven’t seen in so long now. In the evening, we’d all go together to a restaurant with some great pasta, maybe some duck—I love duck—and then we’d dance the rest of the night. I’d dance with all the wonderful dance partners out there, until I was exhausted. And then I’d go home and have a deep, wonderful sleep.” (Pg. 176)

Answers will vary.

7. Explain the relationship between the idea of renewal and Mitch’s relationship with his brother.

The connection is between the idea that we constantly bring relationships to life. Throughout their lives together, Mitch and his brother have renewed their relationship many times. Now that they are separated again, Morrie would like Mitch to try to renew that relationship.

8. Explain the allegory of the wave and how it connects to Morrie's ideas about reincarnation.

Answers will vary. Students should connect the story of the wave to the other stories about renewal. The allegory is about how the wave as it crashes into the shore does not ever die but becomes part of the ocean. Morrie does not believe that when he dies, he will be nothing; Morrie believes that when he dies he will live through memory, and somehow he will be part of the human race again.

9. How does the last line of the chapter connect to Mitch's acceptance of Morrie's eventual death?

Throughout the Tuesdays that Mitch spends with Morrie, Mitch must accept that Morrie is going to die. Breathing becomes a way for Mitch to prepare for Morrie's death. As Morrie has more and more trouble breathing, Mitch knows that he is getting closer to his last days. The final line of the chapter reminds the reader that Morrie's days are numbered.

The Fourteenth Tuesday: We Say Good-bye

Vocabulary

facade – the front of a building

observant – perceptive

buoyant – lighthearted

1. Morrie's aphorism "When you're in bed, you're dead" seems to be working. How does this image work its way in to the chapter?

Mitch is asked to visit Morrie again. When Mitch comes to the house, he is startled because he cannot find Morrie. He realizes that Morrie is in bed, and Mitch thinks about Morrie's aphorism.

2. Why does Mitch continue to bring food to Morrie's family?

Mitch continues to bring food because he is trying to hold on to a tradition that he and Morrie shared. Mitch describes it as trying to hold on to a small part of a relationship when you are losing someone.

3. What is Morrie finally able to make Mitch do?

In Mitch's last visit with Morrie, Mitch cries when he says good-bye.

Graduation

Vocabulary

serenely – peacefully

1. How is Morrie's death different from the way in which he lived his life in the months before his death?

Morrie spends the last months before his death surrounded by his friends and family. Throughout his experience with ALS, Morrie wants the physical affection and mental stimulation of being around people. When Morrie passes away, he is alone.

2. How might Morrie's and Mitch's relationship be considered circular?

Morrie and Mitch have always been Tuesday people. Throughout Mitch's college career, a majority of the courses he takes with Morrie are on Tuesdays. When Mitch returns to visit Morrie, he comes on a Tuesday. Finally, Morrie's burial is on a Tuesday.

Conclusion

1. Describe Mitch before and after his renewed relationship with Morrie.

Before Mitch reunited with Morrie, Mitch was a shell of a man. He spent his time in search of fame and money. He did not have time for relationships with people. He has lost sight of his priorities and his dreams. Over the course of his visits with Morrie, Mitch rediscovers his priorities and shuns the popular conception of happiness. Mitch learns to create his own culture instead of falling into the trap that society creates.

2. What becomes of Mitch's relationship with his brother Daniel?

Mitch and his brother reconnect. Mitch vows that he would like to keep Daniel a part of his life.

3. Explain why Mitch Albom wrote the book.

The book is published because Morrie suggests it to Mitch. Morrie suggests that the book be Mitch's final thesis. The profits from the book pay for Morrie's medical bills.

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

Answers will vary. Students could list among others, any of the following:

- respect
- acceptance of death
- age is only a number
- children are precious
- love is most important

Tuesdays with Morrie

Study Guide Student Copy

The Curriculum

Vocabulary

hibiscus – a plant with large flowers

lieu – instead of

1. Explain the subject of the old professor's course.
2. How does the course operate? How is it unique from other courses with which you may be familiar?
3. Describe the narrator of this memoir. How does he frame this book?
4. How does the use of "I was the student" add credibility to the memoir? (Pg. 2)
5. The text on page three is in italics. After reading the text, decide how it functions in the book. What do you call this literary technique? How does the narration change during these passages?

6. What does the reader learn about Mitch?
7. Using evidence from the book, describe Morrie Schwartz' physical and personality characteristics when Mitch first new them.
8. How does Mitch feel about Morrie?
9. At the end of the flashback, Albom states, "He asks if I will stay in touch, and without hesitation I say, 'Of course.'" (Pg. 4) Do you believe this statement? Why do you think it is included in the book?
10. Cite two examples of figurative language in the italicized passage and explain their effects.
11. Why does Mitch give Morrie a gift at Mitch's graduation?

The Syllabus

Vocabulary

blissful – filled with happiness

lindy – a dance

prominent – leading

commandeered – took over

inexplicably – unexplainably

neurological – dealing with the nervous system

normalcy – lack of unusual or different circumstances

profound – important and well-thought out

demise – death

meditation – the act of quiet thought and prayer

rousing – exciting

1. Describe the effect of beginning the chapter with, “His death sentence came in the summer of 1994.” (Pg. 5)
2. What does Morrie love to do? What does this tell you about his personality?
3. How might people have missed the early signs of his illness?
4. How do we know that Morrie understands what is happening to him?
5. Describe the tone of the book when the narration is describing the types of tests that Morrie undergoes when he is first being diagnosed.
6. What does Morrie learn is his affliction? Describe it.

7. After Morrie learns that he is ill, what surprises him the most?
8. How quickly does it take the disease to have an impact on Morrie's life? According to the doctors, how long does Morrie have left? What are the first signs of Morrie's illness?
9. On pages 8 and 9, the narration uses an effective rhetorical technique called repetition. "That was the end..." is used in different ways. Cite some examples of repetition and then explain the meaning for each.
10. As Morrie faces his loss, what decision does he make about how he will live the rest of his life?
11. Read the following passage from the text and then decide what literary term is used to describe the effects of ALS.

"By the end, if you are still alive, you are breathing through a tube in a hole in your throat, while your soul, perfectly awake, is imprisoned inside a limp husk, perhaps able to blink, or cluck a tongue, like something from a science fiction movie, the man frozen inside his own flesh." (Pg. 10)
12. Describe Morrie's demeanor when he has visitors. How would people surprise themselves? How do you think you would respond if you would be in their position?
13. Describe a "living funeral." How did people react to Morrie's living funeral?

The Student

Vocabulary

averting – looking away

freelanced – to work on a temporary basis

insatiable – unsatisfied

spouting – vehemently declaring

hypocritical – characterized by acting in a way that is different from what one proclaims to believe

1. Describe Mitch's transformation after his graduation from Brandeis University. What would Morrie say about Mitch's transformation?
2. Explain Mitch's first experience with death.
3. How did Mitch's uncle's death change Mitch? Do you think that Mitch's reaction is normal? Why or why not?
4. How is Mitch's frantic work pace driven by his past?
5. How does the structure of the sentences and the paragraphs on page sixteen reflect the pace at which Mitch works?
6. How would Morrie feel about the Mitch who is described in this chapter?
7. How does the end of this chapter serve as a narrative bridge to the next chapter?

The Audiovisual

Vocabulary

aphorisms –statements of principles

clamor – noise

awkward – uncomfortable

narcissist – a person overly concerned with him or herself

philosophy – a system of beliefs

withered – shriveled

composure – calmness

humility – the state of being submissive

induced – caused

insidious – subtle

1. What does the reader learn is the “something [that] caught my ear” from the previous chapter?
2. How has Morrie changed physically since the onset of his disease?
3. Describe the meeting between Morrie and Ted Koppel. How does Morrie’s attitude toward Ted help to illustrate how Morrie feels about society?
4. Why does Morrie refuse to dress up for his interview?

5. How do you know that Morrie allows himself to grieve?
6. Describe Morrie's greatest dread about the disease.
7. Until this point in Morrie's life, he has not been reacquainted with Mitch. How do Mitch and Morrie become reacquainted?
8. On page 24 and 25, Mitch includes another memory, as indicated by the italicized text. Why do you think this particular memory is inserted here?

The Orientation

Vocabulary

gaunt – painfully thin

emerge – to come into view

1. Contrast Morrie's life with Mitch's life at the very beginning of this "final class."
2. Why might Mitch be uncomfortable meeting Morrie again?
3. Explain how you know that Mitch recognizes that he is not the same person he was in college.
4. Explain the metaphor of the food and meal that Mitch receives when he first visits Morrie.

The Classroom

Vocabulary

envious – jealous

efficient – effective

gingerly – carefully

pathetic – emotionally moving

serene – peaceful

1. How does Morrie characterize himself as he believes he appears to other people?
2. Why is Mitch jealous of Morrie?
3. What does the reader learn about Mitch as he begins his final course with his old professor?
4. What types of questions does Morrie ask Mitch as they are catching up with one another? How would you respond to the same questions?
5. What nicknames do Mitch and Morrie use for one another? What do the nicknames imply?

6. What does Morrie believe is the cause of people's unhappiness?
7. The narration states, "Then Morrie did something that haunts me to this day." (Pg. 36) Describe what Morrie does that is so disturbing for Mitch?
8. Summarize the memory that follows Mitch's promise to come back and visit Morrie.
9. What does Morrie believe always wins the tension of opposites?

Taking Attendance

Vocabulary

lamented – mourned

alienation – estrangement

1. Describe the lesson that Mitch learns while he is in London on business and explain how he learns it. Do you think that Mitch would learn this same lesson if he had not been reunited with Morrie? Why or why not?
2. Compare Mitch's culture with Morrie's culture. Explain which culture is more similar to your own.
3. How does Morrie believe a person gets meaning in his or her life?
4. What happens when Mitch returns from London? How does Mitch react?
5. List three things that you learn from the memory on pages 46 and 47.

The First Tuesday: We Talk About the World

Vocabulary

atrophied – withered away

cynical – distrustful

anguish – pain and suffering

agitated – bothered

1. How does Morrie view his dependency on other people?

2. Why does Morrie try to stay caught up on the news? To whom does Morrie feel the closest?

3. How is Morrie's reaction to the world's news different than Mitch's reaction?

4. Explain the following quotation "Maybe death is the great equalizer, the one big thing that can finally make strangers shed a tear for one another." (Pg. 51)

5. Explain the connection between the title of the book and the story.
6. Morrie shares an aphorism with Mitch about love. What is the aphorism? What is your feeling about Morrie's aphorism on love?
7. Explain the experiment that Morrie conducts with his class at Brandeis. What does the reader learn about Mitch and Morrie through the experience?
8. What is the reader supposed to learn from this chapter?

The Second Tuesday: We Talk About Feeling Sorry for Yourself

Vocabulary

mimicking – imitating

hoisting – lifting

1. Describe how Mitch is changing through these Tuesday meetings.
2. How does food serve as a motif in the story?
3. How has the disease progressed?
4. Describe how Morrie perceives self-pity and mourning.
5. Would you consider Morrie a pessimist or an optimist? Explain your choice.

6. What is happening with the strike at Mitch's newspaper? What does it illustrate in light of the conversations that Mitch and Morrie are having?
7. Describe the event that prompts Mitch to realize that time is running out with Morrie.
8. When Mitch says that he needs to do something, what do you think he is going to do?
9. How does Mitch's memory of his junior year in college compare with his experiences with Morrie now?

The Third Tuesday: We Talk About Regrets

Vocabulary

clamoring – insisting

nostalgia – sentiment

imminent – threatening

ambivalence – uncertainty

egotistical – filled with self-importance

grapple – to struggle

opiate – painkilling drug

1. What does Mitch decide to do in order to preserve his memories with Morrie? What is Mitch's fear in asking Morrie for this intrusion?
2. How does Morrie feel about the tape recorded?
3. Explain the irony in the following passage:

But it was also becoming clear to me—through his courage, his humor, his patience, and his openness—that Morrie was looking at life from some very different place than anyone else I knew. A healthier place. A more sensible place. *And he was about to die.* (Pg. 63)
4. When Mitch first sees Morrie on *Nightline*, what does Mitch wonder?
5. Does Mitch have any regrets about his life? Explain.
6. How does Morrie respond to Mitch's question?

7. What conclusion does Mitch make about Morrie's response?
8. What does Mitch hope to gain from his conversations with Morrie? Cite the imagery that he uses on page 65-66.
9. What list of topics does Mitch want to discuss with Morrie?
10. Explain the purpose of the last line of the chapter.

The list was in my bag when I returned to West Newton for the fourth time, a Tuesday in late August when the air-conditioning at the Logan Airport terminal was not working, and people fanned themselves and wiped sweat angrily from their foreheads, and every face I saw looked ready to kill somebody. (Pg. 66)

11. To what time does the memory take the reader?
12. Morrie encourage Mitch to write an honor's thesis. What is the topic?
13. How does Morrie's reaction to Mitch's thesis illustrate the tension of opposites?

The Audiovisual, Part Two

1. Explain the meaning of this chapter title.
2. Compare Ted Koppel's first visit with Morrie to this visit. How do things change?
3. Who is Morrie Stein?
4. What does Ted Koppel wonder about Morrie's relationship with his friend Morrie Stein?
5. What does the reader learn about Morrie as he relates a letter to Ted Koppel?

The Professor

Vocabulary

synagogue – a Jewish place of worship

murky – dark and heavy

boccie – a game like bowling

antidote – a remedy

1. Explain the connection between this chapter and the previous chapter. How does the focus of this chapter change from the story so far?
2. How is the way Morrie confronted his mother's death similar to the way Mitch confronted Morrie's death?
3. Describe Morrie's childhood.
4. Describe how does Morrie's childhood influence his adulthood?
5. Does Mitch agree with Morrie's career choice? How do you know?

The Fourth Tuesday: We Talk About Death

Vocabulary

indecipherable – incapable of being understood

solidarity – unity

agnostic – a person who is not convinced that God exists

transcend – to overcome

exuberance – extreme joy

quivered – shook

ambitious – motivated

deficient – lacking

materialistic – characterized by a belief that importance comes from only money

1. Describe Morrie's mood as the chapter begins.
2. As Mitch and Morrie sit to talk about death, what is going on in the world?
3. What imagery is used to describe Morrie's plastic breathing tube?
4. What does Morrie believe are people's attitudes about death?

5. According to the book, what question should a person ask himself or herself everyday in order to live life to the fullest?
6. What does Morrie observe about Mitch's life? Do you think his observation is correct? Explain why or why not.
7. Describe Mitch's attitude toward spiritualism?
8. Explain the significance of the line: "The disease owns him." (Pg. 88)
9. Mitch mimics Lou Gehrig's famous quotation from baseball (see Pg. 89) and Morrie responds by saying, "'Yeah. Well. I didn't say that.'" (Pg. 89) Why is this moment so poignant?

The Fifth Tuesday: We Talk About Family

Vocabulary

lavalier – to hang on the lapel

responsive – capable of seeing a result

1. How is this Tuesday different than the other Tuesdays?
2. “The fact is, there is no foundation, no secure ground, upon which people may stand today if it isn’t the family” (Pg. 91) How is this concept demonstrated in Morrie’s life?
3. Cite the imperative that Morrie makes Mitch write. Why is it so important to Morrie?
4. What causes Morrie to become so emotional?

5. What does Morrie imply when he says:

There is no experience like having children. That's all. There's no substitute for it. You cannot do it with a friend. You cannot do it with a lover. If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another human being, and to learn how to love and bond in the deepest way, then you should have children. (Pg. 92)

Would Morrie agree that everyone should have children? Why or why not?

6. Describe the differences between Mitch and his brother.

7. What happens to Mitch's brother? How does Mitch feel about this?

8. How does his brother deal with the illness?

9. How does the memory that Mitch inserts in the story connect with the previous chapter?

The Sixth Tuesday: We Talk About Emotions

Vocabulary

laurels – small trees with red or white flowers

lilting – rhythmic

impermanent – temporary

vulnerability – openness

instinctively – prompted by a natural tendency

1. What does the food that Mitch brings Morrie represent in this chapter?
2. What does Charlotte tell Mitch that he brings to Morrie? Why does she tell him this?
3. Explain the changes in Morrie's physical condition.
4. What does Morrie want Mitch to learn how to do? Why does this confuse Mitch?
5. Explain Morrie's "Theory of Detachment."
6. How does Morrie want to die? Why?
7. As Morrie and Mitch discuss dying, they also discuss reincarnation. Morrie concedes that he believes in reincarnation. When he does, Mitch asks him how he would like to return. How does Morrie respond? How does this make sense to Mitch?

The Professor, Part Two

Vocabulary

deceptively – misleadingly

exploiting – taking advantage of

snarled – snapped

deferments – postponement of military service

levitate – to raise above the ground

1. Before Morrie is a professor, where does he work? Why?

2. What does Morrie learn through his observations of the female patient at the hospital?

3. How does what the reader learns about Morrie in this chapter reflect what Morrie tries to teach Mitch?

4. As Mitch learns about life through Morrie's experiences with death, he also learns about how different cultures view death. What is the purpose of including what he learns about the tribe in The Arctic?

The Seventh Tuesday: We Talk About the Fear of Aging

Vocabulary

inclination – a tendency

sultry – seductive-looking

inadequacy –insufficiency

manipulating – unfairly controlling

revel – to take pleasure in

1. The chapter begins with the following lines:

“Morrie lost his battle. Someone was now wiping his behind.” (Pg. 115)

How is this a turning point for Morrie? How does he deal with the situation?

2. Why has Mitch gone from being proud of saying his age to not wanting to bring it in to conversation? What is Morrie’s response?

3. What does Morrie envy about young people?

The Eighth Tuesday: We Talk About Money

Vocabulary

mogul – a great and important person

disillusioned – dissatisfied

comradeship – friendship

colleagues – associates

inconsequential – unimportant

1. How does Morrie feel about music? How does this connect with what he is trying to teach Mitch about money?

2. Agree or disagree with the following passage from the book and explain your reasoning.

These were people so hungry for love that they were accepting substitutes. They were embracing material things and expecting a sort of hug back. But it never works. You can't substitute material things for love or for gentleness or for tenderness or for a sense of comradeship.
(Pg. 125)

3. Explain Morrie's view of materialism.

4. How does Morrie believe a person should find a meaningful life? Cite the passage directly from the book.
5. How does Mitch feel about his life as it reflects his attitude toward materialism?
6. Describe the wealth the surrounds Morrie.
7. According to the quote on page 129 by Mahatma Gandhi, does one have to die to be reborn? Explain.

The Ninth Tuesday: We Talk About How Love Goes On

Vocabulary

stagnated – stopped

pilgrimage – a journey

catheter – a medical tubing device used to inject or remove liquid from the body

gargle – a congested sound

fatigued – tired

scoffed – sneered

ruddy – red in complexion

accosted – approached in a harassing manner

corpses – dead bodies

1. Mitch keeps revisiting the labor war at his newspaper. What is the purpose of including this topic in the book? Do you believe that Mitch would still be visiting Morrie if the labor was over? Explain.
2. Why does Morrie insist on being out of bed?
3. Why does Mitch begin the chapter with information about what is happening in the world outside of Morrie's home?
4. Morrie's room holds a hibiscus plant on the windowsill. Explain what it symbolizes.
5. How does Morrie feel about a final interview with Ted Koppel and *Nightline*?

6. Mitch uses the idea of reincarnation through his stories about other culture's beliefs about death. Morrie also believes in an idea of reincarnation but without the actual physical rebirth of someone. What is Morrie's idea of reincarnation?
7. What does Morrie want on his tombstone?
8. What does Mitch believe is Morrie's special talent?
9. Describe the relationship between Morrie and his father. How does it influence the type of father Morrie is today?
10. Describe Morrie's father's death. How did his death prepare Morrie for his own death?
11. What does the story of the Desana reflect about life?

The Tenth Tuesday: We Talk About Marriage

Vocabulary

intuitive – natural

commode – a toilet

supplements – nourishment

puree – a blend

crescent – curved, like a half-moon

1. How has Morrie's condition worsened since Mitch's last visit?
2. Who is the new visitor that comes to see Morrie? What do we learn about this person based on this visit?
3. What does Mitch discover when he and Janine come to visit Morrie? How does Mitch react to this discovery? What does he decide to do instead?
4. How does Mitch describe the commitment of marriage?
5. What does Morrie believe about marriage? List the rules that he has for marriage. List each one the way Morrie says it and in a few words.
6. About what Bible story does Mitch ask Morrie? What is Morrie's response?

The Eleventh Tuesday: We Talk About Our Culture

Vocabulary

solidifying – becoming solid

alabaster – white

calisthenics – exercises

squeamish – uneasy

innately – inherently

1. How does the reader know that Morrie is close to the end?
2. How does Morrie believe that people can change?
3. What secret does Morrie share with Mitch?
4. Explain the irony when the Trial of the Century reaches its conclusion and its connection to Morrie's life.
5. How does the story about the 1979 basketball game reflect who Morrie is as a person?

The Audiovisual, Part Three

Vocabulary

tenor – a mood or tone

stoic – composed

coaxed – persuaded

mantra – a saying

1. Describe Morrie's relationship with Ted. Would Morrie consider it a relationship or a business deal?

2. How is this interview different from the previous two?

3. How does Morrie respond when Ted asks him if he is more afraid of death now that it is near?

4. What glimpse do we get of Morrie's religion? Does it seem consistent with the way Morrie spoke about religion before?

The Twelfth Tuesday: We Talk About Forgiveness

Vocabulary

patriarch – a father-figure

estranged – alienated

whimsical – carefree

reconcile – to reunite

audible – capable of being heard

dwindling – diminishing

1. How does Morrie need to forgive himself?
2. Again, Mitch is surprised that Morrie feels lucky in spite of his disease? Why does Morrie feel lucky?
3. Explain the symbolism in the following statement: “The hibiscus plant behind his head was still holding on, small but firm.” (Pg. 167)
4. How does Morrie’s admission reflect the nature of the relationship that Morrie has with Mitch in the last page of the chapter? (Pg. 168).
5. Describe the place Morrie chooses to be buried.
6. What does Morrie ask Mitch to do after Morrie passes away?

The Thirteenth Tuesday: We Talk About the Perfect Day

Vocabulary

raspy – hoarse

grapple – to tackle

negotiated – dealt with

1. Why does Morrie want to be cremated?
2. Morrie believes that we are part of nature. The reader is reminded of this imagery every time the text describes the life cycle of the hibiscus plant. Even though we are part of nature, how does Morrie believe that we are different?
3. Explain the following quote: “Death ends a life, not a relationship.” (Pg. 174)
4. Why does Morrie believe that he could never become the man he once was?
5. What does Morrie believe are the ultimate questions?

6. Describe Morrie's perfect physical day? Describe your perfect day? What do our perfect days tell us about ourselves?
7. Explain the relationship between the idea of renewal and Mitch's relationship with his brother.
8. Explain the allegory of the wave and how it connects to Morrie's ideas about reincarnation.
9. How does the last line of the chapter connect to Mitch's acceptance of Morrie's eventual death?

The Fourteenth Tuesday: We Say Good-bye

Vocabulary

facade – the front of a building

observant – perceptive

buoyant – lighthearted

1. Morrie's aphorism "When you're in bed, you're dead" seems to be working. How does this image work its way in to the chapter?
2. Why does Mitch continue to bring food to Morrie's family?
3. What is Morrie finally able to make Mitch do?

Graduation

Vocabulary

serenely – peacefully

1. How is Morrie's death different from the way in which he lived his life in the months before his death?
2. How might Morrie's and Mitch's relationship be considered circular?

Conclusion

1. Describe Mitch before and after his renewed relationship with Morrie.
2. What becomes of Mitch's relationship with his brother Daniel?
3. Explain why Mitch Albom wrote the book.
4. Explain what you believe to be the ultimate lesson the reader is supposed to take away from the book.

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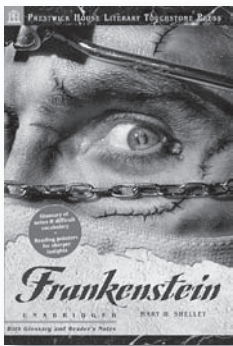
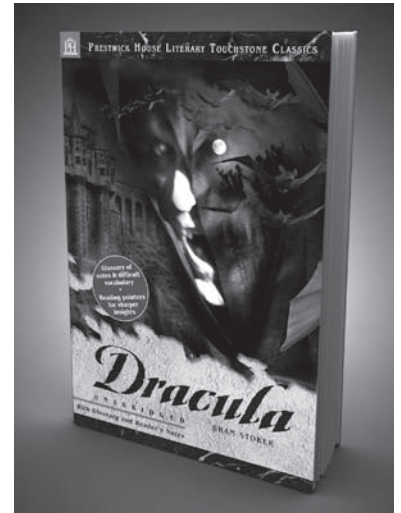
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