A Teacher till the End

5,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with the disease ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), or the Lou Gehrig’s disease, every year. Morrie Schwartz was one of the victims of this disease. In *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Mitch Albom projects a story where, a young and an old man learn from each other as they are going through life changing events. Morrie explained how to deal with emotions, the importance of marriage and to raise a family, and how to understand and what to believe in society. Morrie was Mitch’s teacher till the end.

Morrie believed that a person should not be embarrassed to express his emotions. Morrie would start openly crying if a sad event had happened or something had touched him. “‘The other night, on TV, I saw people in Bosnia running across the street, getting fired upon, killed, innocent victims . . . and I just started to cry…’ His eyes got moist, and I tried to change the subject, but he dabbed his face and waved me off. ‘I cry all the time now,’ he said. ‘Never mind.’” (pg. 50, 51). The quote tells that when Mitch or someone visits Morrie, the visitor may be embarrassed by how Morrie reacts but Morrie could express his true feelings without felling awkward. Morrie had taught Mitch that a man could cry in public, or with people around, without them questioning his masculinity.

However, if Morrie never married and raised a family, the disease will be so much worse for him to deal with. Charlotte, Rob, and Jon, Morrie’s wife and sons, were all extremely caring and considerate of Morrie and the disease that was taking over his body. “‘If you don’t have the support and love and caring and concern that you get from a family, you don’t have much at all. Love is so supremely important. As our great poet Auden said, ‘Love each other or perish.’ [Morrie stated.] ” (pg. 91). Morrie believed what Auden said was the most important belief, which family was important and you should love all the people around you. Mitch learned that he could never have the same relationship with a friend or someone and it will be the same as having a family of your own.

Society persuades you to do what is considered normal in that culture. If your culture says the only way you will be recognized is to buy a better everything than your neighbor, you will do so. “’Owning things is good. More money is good. More property is good. More commercialism is good. *More is good. More is good…* Wherever I went in my life, I met people wanting to gobble up something new. Gobble up a new car. Gobble up a new piece of property Gobble up the latest toy. And then they wanted to tell you about it.’ Morrie sighed.” (pg. 124, 125). Morrie thought these people who thought this way needed love and compassion. The stuff they buy with their money will not provide these things; nothing materialistic will. Morrie never told people that money could solve any problems and that they should not always follow what their culture says to do.

Morrie had taught Mitch everything he knew before his body withered and he passed away. Morrie taught him not to believe everything in society, love and a caring family was important, and emotions should be expressed. If you were Mitch, would you have found your old professor and learned from him? What are the chances of you finding that professor? Next time, when a loved one is dying, try to learn from them and experience what they are going through.