

THE RUNAWAY BESTSELLER THAT
CHANGED MILLIONS OF LIVES

tuesdays with **Morrie**

an old man, a young man,
and life's greatest lesson

Mitch Albom

ONE OF THE FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN

Tuesdays with Morrie



An old man, a young man,
and
life's greatest lesson

Mitch Albom

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Praise for *Tuesdays with Morrie*

"As sweet and nourishing as fresh summer corn. . . . The book begs to be read aloud."

—USA Today

"A beautifully written book of great clarity and wisdom that lovingly captures the simplicity beyond life's complexities."

—M. Scott Peck, M.D., author of *The Road Less Traveled* and *Denial of the Soul*

"This is a sweet book of a man's love for his mentor. It has a stubborn honesty that nourishes the living."

—Robert Bly, author of *Iron John*

"I love this book. I've been telling all my friends, 'You *have* to read this.' Mitch Albom was given a wonderful gift from his teacher Morrie Schwartz and now we have the great pleasure of auditing the same class. As coach, humanist, and 'religious mutt,' Morrie gives his former student a crash course on living: clear and ruthless hindsight on what matters most when your days are numbered. And Albom is perfect as the prodigal son: the successful sports journalist who wonders if the idealism of his favorite professor has kept pace with the real world. This is a true story that shines and leaves you forever warmed by its afterglow."

—Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club*

"A deeply moving account of courage and wisdom, shared by an inveterate mentor looking into the multitextured face of his own death. There is much to be learned by sitting in on this final class."

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, coauthor of *Everyday Blessings* and *Everywhere You Go There You Are*

"I met Morrie in the last months of his life. To be with him was a gift of love and insight, courage and generosity. Mitch Albom has shared this boon with us in *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Don't wait until Wednesday to draw this fine being into your heart."

—Stephen Levine, author of *Who Dies?* and
Healing into Life and Death

"*Tuesdays with Morrie* is a sweet and gentle tribute to age and aging. Thanks, Mitch Albom, for introducing me to Morrie Schwartz. His dignity and frankness stirred me. His good humor and zest left me smiling."

—Alex Kotlowitz, author of *There Are No Children Here*

"All of the saints and Buddhas have taught us that wisdom and compassion are one. Now along comes Morrie, who makes it perfectly plain. His living and dying show us the way."

—Joanna Bull, Founder and Executive Director, Gilda's Club

"Poignant and powerfully moving, *Tuesdays with Morrie* captures the essence and spirit of a truly gifted teacher and his unwavering belief that the most important lesson in life is connecting to one another through compassion and love. Mitch Albom gives his cherished mentor the greatest gift of passing it on to us all."

—Dr. Jane Greer, author of *How Could You Do This to Me?*
Learning to Trust After Betrayal

"Sometimes if you take a second look around you'll notice we are amongst angels. Only a man—no, a saint—like Morrie Schwartz could take his own impending death and teach us how to live. After reading *Tuesdays with Morrie* you'll understand that class is never dismissed."

—Jeff Daniels

Lives changed by *Tuesdays with Morrie*

"I am now regularly using this book in my class. It is required reading. All, and I do mean all, of my students have said that it is the best book they have ever read."

—Myra Wood Bennett, MSW, Grantsburg, Illinois

"I bookmarked pages in your book, I read parts to my children. Thank you for a story I shall carry in my heart for the rest of my life."

—Diane Gaul Coveleski, Union City, Pennsylvania

"I laughed out loud and cried unabashedly."

—John G. Carney, Chairman of the Board,
National Hospice Organization, Wichita, Kansas

"Thanks to this book and its author, Mitch Albom! The most significant lessons about the wondrous significance of life jump off each page and penetrate each reader's heart and mind. This is 'must reading' for anyone who is a seeker of truth."

—Rabbi Allen I. Freehling, Los Angeles, California

"I absolutely loved it. I have not stopped thinking about this book since I finished it."

—Nancy Duke, Washington, D.C.

"Today, I woke up, I opened Tuesdays with Morrie, and, together with a pot of coffee, read it in one sitting. Immediately after, I called my sister, told her I loved her . . . called a few friends, and told them all to read your book."

—Alan Camhi, Seattle, Washington

"After reading Tuesdays with Morrie, I understood again why I am a teacher. And I understood better that love and compassion for others is central to being human. This book has so enriched me."

—Benjamin J. Hubbard, Costa Mesa, California

"A rare and precious jewel exists in the gift of Tuesdays with Morrie. This gift is the courage of one man willing to express publicly his devotion, admiration, respect, and love for his former professor as he is dying. Told in simple words, it is rich with the complexity of human thought, wisdom, frailty, sensitivity, and compassion. And what is truly important in life."

—Katherine P. Hux, MPH, Raleigh, North Carolina

"My wife and two daughters wanted their own copies to read and reread. . . . I think about Morrie's lessons often and quote him regularly."

—William M. Polk, Groton, Massachusetts

"A wonderfully honest exchange between a terminally ill professor and his 'successful' student. They both gave and both received wonderful gifts of love and friendship."

—Joie Glenn, RN, MBA, CAE, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"One of the most profound and beautiful books that I have ever read. A treasure!"

—Virginia S. Humphrey, Cheshire, Connecticut

"This book is a gem, and should be read by everybody! I felt like I was right there with Mitch when he was having his "Tuesdays with Morrie," and found myself reflecting on what is really important in life."

—Rev. David L. Klingensmith, Hospital Chaplain,
Fresno, California

"A wise and loving story that teaches us those things we ought to know already, but have somehow forgotten."

—Rev. L. Annie Forester, Minister Emerita,
St. John's Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

Also by Mitch Albom

Bo

Fab Five

Live Albom

Live Albom II

Live Albom III

Live Albom IV

The Five People You Meet in Heaven



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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO MY BROTHER, PETER,
THE BRAVEST PERSON I KNOW.

Acknowledgments

~ I would like to acknowledge the enormous help given to me in creating this book. For their memories, their patience, and their guidance, I wish to thank Charlotte, Rob, and Jonathan Schwartz, Maurie Stein, Charlie Derber, Gordie Fellman, David Schwartz, Rabbi Al Axelrad, and the multitude of Morrie's friends and colleagues. Also, special thanks to Bill Thomas, my editor, for handling this project with just the right touch. And, as always, my appreciation to David Black, who often believes in me more than I do myself.

Mostly, my thanks to Morrie, for wanting to do this last thesis together. Have you ever had a teacher like this?

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The Curriculum

~ The last class of my old professor's life took place once a week in his house, by a window in the study where he could watch a small hibiscus plant shed its pink leaves. The class met on Tuesdays. It began after breakfast. The subject was The Meaning of Life. It was taught from experience.

No grades were given, but there were oral exams each week. You were expected to respond to questions, and you were expected to pose questions of your own. You were also required to perform physical tasks now and then, such as lifting the professor's head to a comfortable spot on the pillow or placing his glasses on the bridge of his nose. Kissing him good-bye earned you extra credit.

No books were required, yet many topics were covered, including love, work, community, family, aging, forgiveness, and, finally, death. The last lecture was brief, only a few words.

A funeral was held in lieu of graduation.

Although no final exam was given, you were ex-

pected to produce one long paper on what was learned. That paper is presented here.

The last class of my old professor's life had only one student.

I was the student.



It is the late spring of 1979, a hot, sticky Saturday afternoon. Hundreds of us sit together, side by side, in rows of wooden folding chairs on the main campus lawn. We wear blue nylon robes. We listen impatiently to long speeches. When the ceremony is over, we throw our caps in the air, and we are officially graduated from college, the senior class of Brandeis University in the city of Waltham, Massachusetts. For many of us, the curtain has just come down on childhood.

Afterward, I find Morrie Schwartz, my favorite professor, and introduce him to my parents. He is a small man who takes small steps, as if a strong wind could, at any time, whisk him up into the clouds. In his graduation day robe, he looks like a cross between a biblical prophet and a Christmas elf. He has sparkling blue-green eyes, thinning silver hair that spills onto his forehead, big ears, a triangular nose, and tufts of graying eyebrows. Al-

though his teeth are crooked and his lower ones are slanted back—as if someone had once punched them in—when he smiles it's as if you'd just told him the first joke on earth.

He tells my parents how I took every class he taught. He tells them, "You have a special boy here." Embarrassed, I look at my feet. Before we leave, I hand my professor a present, a tan briefcase with his initials on the front. I bought this the day before at a shopping mall. I didn't want to forget him. Maybe I didn't want him to forget me.

"Mitch, you are one of the good ones," he says, admiring the briefcase. Then he hugs me. I feel his thin arms around my back. I am taller than he is, and when he holds me, I feel awkward, older, as if I were the parent and he were the child.

He asks if I will stay in touch, and without hesitation I say, "Of course."

When he steps back, I see that he is crying.