

## *Tuesdays with Morrie*

What I appreciate most about books such as *Tuesdays with Morrie* is the opportunity to reflect on the priorities in my life. I have always considered myself a spiritual person and have often considered myself a religious person. Even when I was young, I saw a purpose and value for religion in my life. Reading this book brought me back to times in my life when I was more on track with my religious beliefs than I am currently. Even though religion is something that I have questioned at times, I have a sense of spirituality that is with me always. This book gave me a chance for self-reflection and a chance to consider what it means to be spiritual.

When I think of spirituality, I think of a sense of meaning and purpose, or a sense that there is something greater in life. Morrie was a very spiritual person, not only on his deathbed, but throughout his life. This is most evident in his relationships with others and the way he took the time to listen to his friends and offer empathy. He saw the importance of love, as can be heard in his mantra: love each other or perish. Spiritually, he believed, we are dead if we do not love. This is something I believe to be true. Being far from the people I love most has been the most challenging aspect of moving across the country and has forced me to view love in a different way.

Another thing about Morrie is that he truly *experienced* emotion. So often I try to keep my emotions inside and remain stoic in difficult times. But Morrie is a reminder that it is okay to express oneself without holding back. In fact, this is a healthier way to live. One of my favorite things about Morrie is his love for dancing, the way he did not hold back in front of others. I really admire this quality. I was very shy when I was younger,

but had a passion for dancing. My dance teachers would always comment about how they loved seeing me open up and express myself. I felt most alive when I was dancing and still do to this day. One regret I have is not continuing with dance. I always say that I am going to take it up again, but I then I feel like there are more pressing things to do. Reading this book reminded me of the importance of embracing and making time for the things that make you feel alive. Maybe the things that seem so pressing can take the back burner for a while.

My favorite anecdote from the book was the story of the little wave that felt like it was about to be crushed into oblivion, but realized, with the help from another wave, that they were part of something bigger: the ocean. Though the little wave would not be seen any longer, it would continue to be part of the ocean. I like this simple metaphor for the cycle of living and dying because it makes me think about being a part of the bigger picture. Spirituality is a concept that embraces this notion of being part of something greater than oneself. Just like the waves live on in the ocean, humans live on in the love and memories of their families and friends.

I personally feel a spiritual connection when I am surrounded by nature. It gives me perspective to be surrounded by living things that have been around a lot longer than I have. It is a good reminder not to get bogged down by the stresses of daily life because the world is so much bigger than that. Being in nature makes me calm, thoughtful, and appreciative. It also makes me feel small in comparison, and reminds me of the bigger whole of which I am a small part. Sometimes it feels peaceful to be humbled by the vastness and beauty of nature. For me, this feeling is most alive when I am near the ocean. Having grown up near the ocean, this is one of the places I feel the most calm.

Throughout the book it was apparent that Morrie also felt this connection. Even though he was separated from nature by a pane of glass, there was a connection nonetheless. Just watching the plants and trees grow and change was satisfying to him.

Morrie found satisfaction and pleasure in the little things in life. In thinking about how he would spend a perfect day, Morrie chose a day spent at home with friends over an exotic vacation. I admire this simplicity and this value placed on friendship. I often feel that since being in graduate school, I have not valued my friends enough. I have so many excuses of being too busy that I use when I neglect to talk to friends for months. I have often thought that once I graduate, I will have more time for them or that being back in my home state will make it easier to stay connected. But when I think about what is most important to me in my life, it is my family, my boyfriend, and my friends, and I should make more quality time for them now instead of waiting until later. As Morrie learned, later may come more quickly than expected.

Just as Morrie's spirituality allowed him to find peace in a difficult situation, I feel that my spirituality helps me find peace in my life. Morrie lived life to the fullest and gave fully of himself. I feel blessed that I have had the opportunities to live a full life up to this point and am glad I chose a career in which I can give back to others. I also feel blessed to have had wonderful teachers like Morrie along the way.