

## *Tuesdays With Morrie Interview*

Mitch Albom is so impressed with Morrie's stories and his advice that he wants to share it with others. He even begins to bring a tape recorder along with him on his visits to Morrie so that he can have a memento to cherish after Morrie has passed. The world can learn so much from Morrie, and there are so many other people in this world, just like Morrie, from whom we can learn, too.

**Assignment:** Choose an adult to interview. The person may be a parent, grandparent, other relative, teacher, pastor, coach, or other authority figure. Select a person that you think has had valuable experiences in his/her life that you could learn from, or someone that you should take more time to communicate with, such as an elderly or far-away family member/loved one. This person is to be significantly older than you.

You should then

1. Generate a plan for communicating with that person, maybe on a weekly basis. Please schedule soon, as life happens, people get busy, and they will probably not be able to accommodate last-minute meetings because you have procrastinated. Also, it is wise to schedule one more meeting day than you think you will need, as things do come up and this is called being proactive instead of reactive. Conversations should take place in person, on the phone, or via Skype/Facetime, etc. NOT EMAIL.
2. Decide what you want to ask the person about. You must discuss at least 7 topics. These should be topics that lend themselves to advice and conversation. You may use items from Mitch's list or you may think of your own. If you come up with your own ideas, make sure you get teacher approval for your topics. Mitch came up with the following list  
THE WORLD  
FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF  
REGRETS  
DEATH  
FAMILY  
EMOTIONS  
AGING  
MONEY  
LOVE  
MARRIAGE  
OUR CULTURE  
FORGIVENESS  
THE PERFECT DAY
3. **Create conversation starters for each section.** Remember this is not to be a question and answer interview. Use the conversation starters or questions to help get the focus of the conversation going, but wherever it leads you from there is fine. You'll want to at least start off with a topic focus.
4. Remember to develop questions that will get your person to TELL STORIES. You want to avoid a string of questions, such as a question and answer session or a barrage of yes/no questions.

## Examples:

**Poor:** Aunt Mary, tell me about love.

**Better:** Aunt Mary, do you remember the first time you fell in love? Tell me about it! or...How did Uncle Ned propose to you? Tell me about your wedding!

**Poor:** Grandma, what do you think about death?

**Better:** How did you get over losing your mother? or...What do you think happens when a person dies?

**Poor:** Do you forgive people, Grandpa?

**Better:** Tell me about a time when you had to find it in your heart to forgive.

\*Remember, be a listener. Your job is document the stories/life/perspective of the person you chose. You want them to tell you stories that capture who they are, what they believe, why and how they got there. Basically, you are putting their life experiences and lessons on paper. As long as you start out on topic, it is okay for the stories to take their course, and you should embrace wherever they take you.

5. Construct a paper based on this experience.
  - a. First paragraph should
    - Name the person and explain the relationship
    - Explain your rationale for choosing the person
    - Describe the schedule you made and how you conversed with that person (by phone, Facetime, in person, etc.)
  - b. Second section should
    - Summarize this person's most meaningful contribution to the project—you decide what was most meaningful to you and explain
  - c. Third section should
    - Describe advice the person gave
    - Explain the lessons you learned from this interview
  - d. Last paragraph should
    - Express your thoughts on the interviewee's story and advice. Your thoughts can include, but are not limited to, responses to the following questions: What do you think about his or her life experience? Can you relate? Are the lessons learned important lessons on living? Do you agree with the advice? (Note: Make sure you do not simply answer these questions with *yes* or *no*. You are responding in a paragraph and your answers to these questions should be discussed in your paragraph without the use of *yes* or *no*. These questions are just guidelines for reflections on the interview, so don't feel limited to just these questions).

***I know there are several students who will not embrace this opportunity to practice plotting a long-term project (a must in the majority of college courses) in order to fulfill the components by the due date. Sadly, this fact is inevitable. Those students will stay up all night the night before, take on a multiple personality and pretend to be Aunt Mary. They will hand in a meaningless project—a project that they spent all night crafting as a creative writing piece, instead of its intended purpose: to connect with someone in their lives who can share a unique, and hopefully engaging, perspective. I hope that poor planning, procrastination, and a general disregard for what could end up being a valuable experience doesn't force YOU to be THAT person. You will never be a kid again, and you will be busy with your adult life/responsibilities before you know it. Instead you should have a meaningful experience with someone in your life. I know Morrie appreciated his time with Mitch; the gift of your time, interest, and attention may be just as meaningful to someone in your life. Be a good listener and it will pay off. Trust me.***