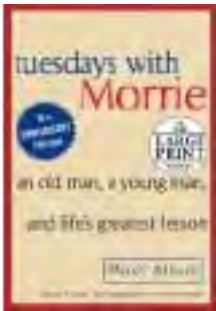


Tears, a Part of Life



Have you read *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom?

It is a heart-warming, profound story of a student spending quality time, on Tuesdays, with his favorite professor (*for they were “Tuesday people” from college days*).

Years later his teacher is slowly dying from Lou Gehrigs disease (*ALS*), “a brutal, unforgiving illness of the neurological system.” One soon learns that Morrie Schwartz was a man in touch with life, love, feelings, and death. While his physical abilities decreased, his heart abilities continued to expand and touch more and more people.

Among the many wonderful qualities of Morrie was his ability to be in touch with his feelings, including the need to cry, freely, without embarrassment. In U.S. culture, crying, especially for men, also for women, is often a time of discomfort for those crying and for those observing the tears. Not so with Morrie:

- He allowed himself a good cry in the mornings, when he needed it, to grieve the loss of his physical abilities, “what he’s lost,” before he focused on the positive aspects of his dying process, such as the chance for quality time with loved ones. “Mitch, I don’t allow myself anymore self-pity than that. A little each morning, a few tears, and that’s all.”
- While being interviewed by Ted Koppel of Nightline, he cried as he recalled the loss, and subsequent loneliness, of losing



his mother at a young age, over 70 years ago. Ted Koppel, incredulous, asked if the “pain still goes on?” ‘You bet,’ Morrie whispered.” Yet, while he felt pains of long ago, they did not cripple his spirit; instead, they enhanced his ability to reach out to others and to experience love, joy, and peace.



- And he cried even more easily during his illness. “Now that I am suffering, I feel closer to people who suffer than I ever did before. 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. I feel their anguish as if it were my own.” Wouldn’t our world be more peaceful and just if we were as deeply in touch with the joys and sorrows of others as was Morrie? (*Reminds one of Jesus.*)

At one of the moments when he was crying, Morrie, recognizing that Mitch was ill at ease with tears, especially with men crying, said to his cherished student, “Ah, Mitch, I’m gonna loosen you up. One day, I’m gonna show you it is OK to cry.” And before their final goodbye, that is one of many truths that Mitch learned from his beloved professor of life.

How about you? Is it OK to cry? Do you “feel the anguish of others as if it were your own?” Are tears a comfortable part of life for you? Are they part of your humanity, as they were with Morrie?