

## Discussion Guidelines

As we've already discussed, the *Tuesdays With Morrie* unit is going to be mostly composed of student-led discussion. In order to conduct this discussion, there needs to be some sort of structure to keep everything positive and productive. These are some of the guidelines in place for this unit (and for future units that involve student-led discussion) that will keep discussions fruitful and constructive.

- Positive interaction
  - During class discussions, opinions on different ideas and concepts (especially personal ideas and concepts) are obviously going to be different. It can be easy to blow off somebody else's opinion because of that difference.
  - Keeping that in mind, always respond positively to somebody else's ideas. Never blow them off, even if those ideas seem outrageous. There is ALWAYS something to be gained from a different perspective. **Every voice in the classroom is valuable.**
- Direct responses to comments
  - In order to make discussion more fluid, you need to be responding to what others are saying. This can be done through follow up questions, taking .
  - This can also be done through repeating the most important ideas that the previous person said before expressing your own. An example of this would be "I like when \_\_\_\_\_ talked about how Mitch's thoughts on death. That made me think of \_\_\_\_\_." Constantly string together ideas to make the conversation build off of itself."
- Active listening
  - **DO NOT interrupt other people while they are talking.** Instead, wait until they are finished and then say what you are thinking. While other people are talking, be sure to focus on and analyze what they are thinking. Don't just wait for your turn to talk.
  - Always use body language to show that you are listening. Don't sag in your seat or look bored. Sit up straight and look at the person that is speaking.
- Equal participation
  - No one person should be dominating the conversation. **Everybody has a unique voice and a unique perspective on things.** If one person isn't saying very much, suggest that they voice their opinion on the topic. The topics in the "Tuesday" readings deal directly with "life lessons" and "life issues", things that everybody has an opinion on.
- Referencing the text
  - You do not have to reference specific quotes, but recall specific moments from the story when you are speaking. **STAY ON TOPIC.** Using the story should always keep you grounded in the topic that you're focusing on. If you find yourself straying from the topic, either ask the discussion question again or look at a moment from the story.