MITCH. Uh … I could ask you questions, annndd … you could answer them.
MORRIE. *(Smiles, a glint.)* Oooo. You know my weakness. *(Gets serious.)* For how long would you come every Tuesday?
MITCH. … Until the end.
MORRIE. Mitch. I'm sick. Maybe you're not so great with sick people. All the pills and laxatives, the bed pans, the smells … They're not going away. They're just gonna get worse —
MITCH. I'll see you next Tuesday.
MORRIE. *(As if Mitch just passed a test.)* OK! And bring a list.
MITCH. A list?
MORRIE. Of all the questions you wanna ask me. If I'm gonna be your teacher, then you're gonna be my student. So be a good one. You got a week! *(Light change. Up on Mitch.)*
MITCH. *(To us.)* Why did I do that? Why did he let me back in? Of all the students he's known … There were others who'd been better to him, who'd actually kept in touch. Why me? Anyhow, there I was, the next Tuesday with my homework and some food … annnnd … *(Light change. Mitch holds up a mini-cassette recorder.)*
MORRIE. A tape recorder?
MITCH. I want to record us talking, so I can listen to it … Later.
MORRIE. When I'm dead.
MITCH. No …
MORRIE. No?
MITCH. Well … Yes. We don't have to do this if it makes you uncomfortable.
MORRIE. It doesn't make me uncomfortable, it's just … it's so *small.*
MITCH. What?
MORRIE. Your tape recorder. Fred Koppel's was *much* larger. Set it up.
MITCH. It's OK?
MORRIE. You're asking a teacher who's been lecturing his whole life if it's OK to record his voice? Come on, hook me up, plug me in, watch me go! So, is it on? Is it running?
MITCH. Yeah.
MORRIE. Can I speak into it now?
MITCH. Sure.
MORRIE. Everybody knows they are going to die, but nobody believes it.
MITCH. Geeze, whatever happened to "Testing 1-2-3"?

MORRIE. Why be predictable? What's your first question about?
MITCH. Death.
MORRIE. You see? I'm just saving you tape.
MITCH. So. How can one be prepared to die?
MORRIE. Do what the Buddhists do. Every day, have a little bird on your shoulder that asks, "Is today the day?" Am I ready? Am I being the person I want to be?
MITCH. You're into Buddhism now? I thought you were an Agnostic.
MORRIE. I used to be Agnostic; now I'm not so sure. The truth is: *Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.* I wish I'd been aware of death every day of my life …
MITCH. What do you mean?
MORRIE. Get that book for me. The red one.
MITCH. *(Gets it.)* Auden? You're gonna read me some poetry?
MORRIE. Auden I can recite from memory: "We must love one another or die."
MITCH. *(Opens it to find a folded telegram.)* There's a telegram inside.
MORRIE. *(Nods.)* It's very old, so don't tear it. Read.
MITCH. *(Reads.)* "Dear Mr. Schwartz: We regret to inform you of the death of your wife, Bessa."
MORRIE. My mother died when I was very young. She'd been sick a long time, went to the hospital, one morning my father gets my brother and me up for breakfast … and just as we sit down … that telegram arrives. My father couldn't read English, so I translated it for him into Yiddish: *"Mir huben rachmones tzu dir moydia zein vegen dee Niftoyres foon dein veib Bessa."* Death. What was death? I was eight years old. I wanted my mother back. I wanted her to hold me, to sing me the songs she used to sing. After my father remarried, he forbid any mention of her. So every morning, I would go to Synagogue to say a prayer for my mother. It was the only way to keep her memory alive.
MITCH. Don't you have any pictures of her, any letters, or…?
MORRIE. The only evidence I have of my mother's life is this telegram announcing her death. If I had been more aware…! *(Voice thickens with a memory.)*
MITCH. Morrie, what is it?
MORRIE. Never mind … I think we should stop now.
MITCH. … Sure … *(Turns off recorder.)* We'll pick up next time. If I start for the airport now, I won't be running to the gate.