



## STAGES OF GRIEF REFLECTED THROUGH WISDOMS IN MITCH ALBOM'S *TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE*

Syifa Ravina Gamelia<sup>1</sup>, Imas Istiani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Semarang

Email: [syiparavina18@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:syiparavina18@students.unnes.ac.id)

Accepted :

11 June 2025

Published :

16 June 2025

Corresponding Author:

Syifa Ravina Gamelia

Email Corresponding :

[syiparavina18@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:syiparavina18@students.unnes.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This study explores the embodiment of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—through the philosophical insights of Morrie Schwartz as depicted in Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Emphasizing the transformative power of Morrie's reflections on mortality, the research reveals an unconventional approach to grieving that centers on acceptance, compassion, and introspection. Departing from the conventional portrayal of grief as a tumultuous emotional journey, Morrie's perspective reframes terminal illness as an opportunity for profound emotional clarity and growth. Utilizing a qualitative literary analysis, the study investigates the extent to which Morrie's emotional trajectory aligns with or diverges from Kübler-Ross's framework. The analysis finds that Morrie's experience of grief unfolds in a fluid, contemplative fashion, offering a nuanced understanding of how inner wisdom can mitigate the psychological burden of impending death.

**Keywords:** *Thanatology, Grief Psychology, Philosophical Resilience, Narrative Therapy, Existential Acceptance*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Grief constitutes an inherent psychological response to loss, particularly following the death of someone deeply cherished. While the experience of grief is universal, the capacity to navigate it constructively and with purposeful reflection varies significantly among individuals. When not managed effectively, grief has the potential to manifest in both physiological deterioration and psychological distress, disrupting overall well-being. Therefore, it must be identified and treated (Prigerson & Maciejewski, 2020) because sadness can change behavior and way of thinking. In general, humans will cry when they are grieving, but some choose to be silent and distance themselves from the people around them. According to Jaya et al. (2025), the grieving process is also uncertain; some feel grief for more than 12 months, depending on

nature and how humans accept their situation. Although it is challenging to live, humans must also let go and must continue to live life. In literary studies, grief is usually examined from the perspective of the bereaved. Novels such as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Foer, 2019), *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2020), and *Me Before You* (Moyes, 2018) explore the emotional intricacies experienced by bereaved persons. The perspective of individuals approaching death is not extensively examined, the universal phenomenon, and requires further investigation into how individuals perceive impending death.

Universal phenomena such as grief and death have garnered multidisciplinary attention, particularly within psychology, sociology, anthropology, and literature. Death is something that cannot be avoided. Death is a predetermined destiny because if

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

humans live, then humans will also die. Death is something that cannot be recovered or can also be said to be the loss of human consciousness (Romand & Ehret, 2025). Every human being must believe that death exists and will occur because if humans believe that death will occur, then that human being is a religious person (Davies, 2017; Jaya et al., 2025a). Everyone will die and does not know when that destiny will occur. If that destiny has arrived, then the human being will leave the people around him forever, for example, the death of parents, siblings, and friends. The death of a person itself will leave other people; for example, if a grandmother dies, there will be grandchildren left behind, and for parents who die, there are children left behind. A person can feel this way because, during his lifetime, the person was very close and was among the most loved people. Feeling the loss forever makes humans grieve the situation and drift in sadness for some uncertain period that may be long. Contemplating and thinking about how to live the next life after this makes people even feel hopeless and less happy in living their lives. However, some contemplation and thoughts on death can also be revealed through wisdom.

In this context, wisdom is a multifaceted notion. Wisdom, as articulated (He *et al.*, 2023; Veto Mortini et al., 2023; Fadilah et al., 2023). encompasses both human and natural domains and represents a confluence of intelligence and compassion. It encompasses cognitive and emotional competencies such as self-reflection, emotional regulation, spiritual awareness, proportionate reasoning, and acceptance of ambiguity. Jeste & LaFee (2020) underscores the increasing significance of wisdom in later life, as it fosters psychological well-being, longevity, and resilience amidst declining physical health. Similarly, contemporary insights, as expressed in Modern Theories of Wisdom, endorse its significance in human development, societal harmony, and cultural

perpetuation. This research aims to determine whether Morrie's insights align with or modify Kübler-Ross's five-stage model of grief. This research examines how the narrative both mirrors and interrogates the universality of the concept, proposing a more flexible, adaptive process shaped by introspective awareness and relational profundity.

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance. By integrating Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief with Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the research offers a meaningful contribution to the understanding of grief through a literary lens. It demonstrates how literature serves as a powerful medium for articulating complex human emotions, particularly in the context of confronting loss and mortality. Through an in-depth exploration of Morrie's experience with grief and his philosophical acceptance of death, the study bridges the gap between psychological theory and narrative representation. Ultimately, it underscores literature's potential not merely as a source of storytelling, but as a profound vehicle for emotional insight and existential reflection on life, death, and the human condition.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research draws upon two principal sources: Mitch Albom's memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief theory. Published in 1997, *Tuesdays with Morrie* stands as Albom's most acclaimed work, offering a poignant narrative centered on Morrie Schwartz, a sociology professor diagnosed with ALS who faces his mortality with profound acceptance. Through his reflections and compassionate teachings, Morrie imparts invaluable lessons on embracing the inevitability of death not only to himself but also to those around him and to readers. The emotional and psychological trajectory of grief within the memoir is critically examined through the lens of Kübler-Ross's

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

theoretical framework. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' theory explains how a person generally feels grief due to the loss or death of a loved one. The five stages of grief are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

**Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom**

This research discusses the overarching life values in the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. The memoir tells the story of a professor named Morrie Schwartz, who has ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) and is diagnosed critically that his life will not last long; his death is predicted to come soon. Mitch, as one of Morrie's closest people, always visits Morrie's house every Tuesday. Every Tuesday, Morrie teaches Mitch about life, love, family, forgiveness, and death.

Mitch and Morrie emphasize the importance of life values, with Morrie emphasizing love, compassion, and forgiveness as essential components of a meaningful life. In their study of nurse-patient communication, Schaufeli and Enzmann (2020) assert that effective interpersonal interactions are essential for fostering supportive relationships, particularly in the context of mental health. This perspective aligns with Morrie's teachings on the importance of nurturing relationships and strengthening emotional bonds, emphasizing the role of communication as a vital link between individual experiences and feelings. Suarniti (2019) highlights that this memoir can provide meaningful lessons in human life through the relationship between the characters Morrie and Mitch. Lestari (2017) notes that in Indonesian society, values are expressed as abstract concepts that influence human behavior and social norms. On *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the characters face existential dilemmas, showing how collective life experiences foster a better understanding of values in a diverse cultural context. Morrie's reflections act as a cultural critique, encouraging individuals to reflect on and

define their values in the face of societal pressures and personal challenges. In a related context, Pike et al. (2021) and Lubis and Wangid (2019) highlighted the importance of storytelling in conveying moral lessons, which is consistent with Albom's narrative strategy. Morrie's anecdote is crucial in conveying ethical principles, illustrating how storytelling can transform abstract values into concrete life lessons while strengthening a sense of community and empathy between individuals. The memoir highlights the struggles that Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) brings for Morrie's character and integrates complex conversations about living, dying, and the simpler, contemporary themes of palliative care. The process of dying, combined with the inherent suffering of loss, allows for further analyses of the meaning of life and relationships (Larson, 2007). According to Morris (2018), Morrie's acceptance of his impending death is an important impetus for reflecting on the fundamental nature of life. He argues that understanding and accepting death can lead to a richer and more fulfilling life. This idea is in line with existential and philosophical research on death.

On *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Mitch Albom uses metaphors and vivid imagery to describe the impact of illness, specifically Morrie Schwartz's battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The metaphorical language throughout the narrative not only vividly depicts Morrie's deteriorating health but also offers profound existential insights into life, death, and the human experience. Morrie's illness is portrayed as a transformative journey that highlights the fragility of life and the importance of human connection. The film adaptation of "Tuesdays with Morrie" further emphasizes these life values, showing how Morrie's experiences with the disease and his subsequent reflections resonate with audiences (Syaifulah, M. A., & Perrodin, 2023). The depiction of Morrie's physical decline serves as a metaphor for larger themes like mortality

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

and the essence of a meaningful life. This link between illness and philosophical exploration suggests that understanding one's suffering can facilitate personal development and awareness; however, this claim may require further supporting evidence, as the references provided are not entirely congruent (Paiva, Martins & Ferreira, 2021).

**Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief**

Kübler-Ross (2018) Five Stages of Grief are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. It has proven to be influential in grief theory. The framework, originally designed to illustrate the emotional trajectory of terminally ill patients, has been used more broadly. Nonetheless, its linearity and universality have faced criticism. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross presented the Five Stages of Grief, a psychological paradigm, in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. This model was initially created to comprehend how patients reacted to receiving a terminal disease diagnosis. However, it was then used more widely to characterize other types of loss, such as losing a job, being divorced, losing a loved one, and so on.

The first stage of the five phases is denial. When someone is in the first stage of denial, they are unwilling to acknowledge the truth of the loss or challenging circumstance. A psychological defense mechanism called denial aids in the momentary alleviation of pain. Denial is a way for Kübler-Ross to shield oneself from emotional responsibilities that are too great to be faced all at once (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). "Denial helps us to survive the loss. It is the first response that helps us to pace our feelings of grief." (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). Hall & Pick, (2017) demonstrates that denial is not necessarily a complete rejection of truth but rather the incapacity to quickly and emotionally comprehend information.

The second stage is anger, which happens when people start to take reality

seriously but still feel unfairly treated or irritated by the loss they have gone through. A person may feel angry with God, the medical system, other people, or even himself. "Anger is a necessary stage of the healing process. Be willing to feel your anger, even though it may seem endless." (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). The anger stage is sometimes seen negatively despite the fact that it is a healthy way to process pain and can inspire someone to learn more about the reasons for the loss they have endured (Daniel, 2023).

To escape the complex realities of the bargaining stage, people attempt to create specific agreements or commitments, whether they be spiritual or real. "If only I could get better, I would have changed into a better person" and "If only I could have taken him to the hospital sooner..." are examples of sentences that capture this stage. The bargaining stage is frequently connected to feelings of guilt and presumptions about unchangeable things, according to a study by (Corr, 2021). "We want life returned to what it was; we want to go back in time... if only, if only, if only." (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019).

Depression is the fourth stage, during which people start to experience intense melancholy over an inevitable reality. It is a typical response after a significant loss. In this situation, depression is a normal and healthy emotional reaction rather than an illness. "In this stage, empty feelings present themselves, and grief enters our lives on a deeper level." (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). According to Avis, M (2021), social and professional assistance is crucial at this point to prevent people from experiencing chronic depression that interferes with their daily activities.

Acceptance is the last stage, during which people start to come to terms with the loss and start adjusting to their new lives. Acceptance is recognizing that the loss is genuine, and that life continues, not that you are "okay" or "forgetting." This phase

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

signifies the start of the emotional healing process and the creation of new meaning from the loss encountered (Kirmayer, 2023). "Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being 'all right' or 'okay' with what has happened... This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality" (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019).

There have been substantial studies that use the same theory, such as those found in (Kübler-Ross, 2019), who describe how adolescents experience stages, as in the theory of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross. Everyone experiences positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts are becoming more independent and worshipping, whereas the negative impact is self-isolation. The research found that grief is not just about grief itself, but grief is a difficult or complicated journey that can shape the individual's personality.

Another study on Kuhlner is employed by Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2014), who claims that the main character in the novel has lost both parents, and the main character experiences five stages of grief, which are denial, anger, grieving, depression, and acceptance. The main character, Grubbs Grady, experienced the loss of his parents not only physically but the main character also underwent traumatized feelings to become a strong person.

**3. METHODS**

This current research used a qualitative descriptive design with a content analysis methodology to investigate the representation of grieving phases and wisdom in Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Patton, 2020; Tisdell et al., 2025). The analysis concentrated on Morrie Schwartz, the narrative's central figure, and his experience and reflection on the Five Stages of Grief as defined by Kübler-Ross (2018), demonstrating how his emotional and philosophical responses reveal a profound

comprehension of wisdom in the dying process. The primary data source was the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Prajayani & Thoyibi, 2017), which consisted of 192 pages and was organized as a sequence of weekly dialogues between the author and Morrie Schwartz. The unit of analysis consisted of narrative pieces, including conversation and thoughtful monologue, that conveyed themes of loss and wisdom. Special emphasis was placed on literary evidence related to the five phases of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, along with markers of personal knowledge, including emotional control, perspective-taking, and compassion.

The data-collecting process included methodical close reading and theme categorization. The coding framework for grief was derived from Kübler-Ross's five-stage model (Kübler-Ross, 2018). In contrast, wisdom indicators were classified according to the multidimensional frameworks of Ardel (2019), encompassing cognitive, reflective, and affective Baltes and Staudinger (2020), who characterize wisdom as specialized knowledge in the pragmatics of life. Textual passages were examined to discern explicit or implicit representations of these notions. The data analysis was performed interpretively, emphasizing both explicit material and underlying meanings within the text. Analytical rigor was bolstered by researcher triangulation and peer validation to augment credibility. The study, being a literary analysis, did not engage human participants and hence did not need ethical approval. This approach adhered to recognized qualitative and narrative analytic methods for literary and psychological research (Creswell, 2017).

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research critically examines Mitch Albom's memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie* through the conceptual framework of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression,

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

and acceptance. While these stages do not necessarily occur in a fixed sequence, the study reveals how each stage is intricately woven into Morrie Schwartz's profound reflections as he confronts his terminal illness. The memoir underscores the deeply personal and non-linear nature of grieving, illustrating that no two individuals experience loss in the same way. Through Morrie's philosophical outlook and emotional clarity, the narrative advocates for introspection and the cultivation of wisdom as essential tools for navigating grief with depth and purpose. Through Morrie's process of going through the emotional aftermath of being diagnosed with a terminal illness, the process will be associated with Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief theory. According to Kubler-Ross & Kessler (2019), "The stages... are responses to loss that many people experience, but there is no typical response to loss as there is no typical loss." The quote illustrates that every human being, including Morrie, does not have sequential stages.

**Five Stages of Grief Reflected through Morrie's Wisdoms****Denial**

Morrie's wisdom has influenced his handling of the five stages of grief in many ways. Aware of his impending death, introspection, and emotional sensitivity comes naturally to him. Rather than fighting or denying his feelings, he calmly accepts and understands them and has given himself the grace to feel and accept them deeply. The first is denial, which Morrie experienced rather subtly or overtly because Morrie prefers to think about things he can do to enjoy the rest of his life after being diagnosed with a terminal illness. "I give myself a good cry if I need it. But then I concentrate on all the good things still in my life" (Albom, 2018; Albom, 2021). This statement suggests that Morrie does not deny his illness, nor does he allow himself to be overwhelmed by the sadness associated with his diagnosis. He allows himself to experience negative emotions but then focuses on the positive aspects of life. This approach can be seen as

a form of moderate and constructive denial, as it allows the person to manage their emotions and begin to adapt to the changes they are facing. The quote also corresponds to "a person disengages from situations that allow him to survive the loss" (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). People dealing with denial often adopt a form of selective detachment, which disconnects them from the reality of their loss. This detachment acts as a temporary psychological defense mechanism. In Morrie's case, he "decoupled" his attention from the physical pain he was experiencing, choosing instead to immerse himself in social relationships, philosophical contemplation, and emotional experiences that enriched his life. This strategy allowed him to avoid being completely overwhelmed by fear and despair.

**Anger**

The anger stage that Morrie goes through does not give excessive emotions, but Morrie feels deep sadness because of the loss of bodily functions due to a deadly disease. "Sometimes, in the morning, that's when I mourn. I feel around my body... and I mourn what I've lost" (Albom, 2018, p. 57). Morrie says that reflects despair and is a hidden emotion. This observation underscores that Morrie is not channelling his anger outward. Instead, he is experiencing profound grief over the decline of his bodily functions. He perceives the gradual loss of his body's ability to fulfil its purpose, resulting in very personal grief. In this context, anger goes beyond a simple reaction; it becomes an expression of despair and helplessness in the face of irreversible physical decline. This emotional reaction can be understood as a form of mourning, reflecting a part of himself that is missing, even though he remains physically alive. Similarly, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross states that "Anger surfaces once you are feeling safe enough to know you will probably survive whatever comes" (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2019). In this context, anger arises after a person has overcome denial and achieved the emotional stability necessary to confront the harsh reality they are experiencing. After the diagnosis, Morrie experiences deeper

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

emotions, including previously repressed anger. However, his emotional maturity and wisdom allow him to manage these feelings without harming himself or others.

**Bargaining**

Morrie does not express a literal desire to prolong his life in stage bargaining. Instead, he chooses to make more sense of the time he has left. He states, "I want to try to enjoy the time I have left" (Albom, 2018, p. 56). This statement reflects not just a passive acceptance of death but an active effort by Morrie to enrich his life through meaningful activities, such as imparting knowledge, nurturing relationships, and building an emotional legacy for those around him. It is a form of inward-looking negotiation centered on personal values and the life lessons he wishes to share. According to Kübler-Ross, (2019), people in this stage often find themselves engaged in an inner dialogue characterized by thoughts such as "What if..." or "If only..." as they attempt to cope with a sense of helplessness in the face of impending loss (p. 38). In Morrie, this bargaining does not manifest as regret or denial of the past; instead, it takes the form of a conscious reflection on the time that remains.

**Depression**

In the memoir "Tuesdays with Morrie," the protagonist Morrie's descent into depression is evident as he struggles with the gradual loss of his bodily functions. Rather than denying or repressing these emotions, he chooses to acknowledge them openly and accept sadness as an inherent part of the experience. He said, "It's horrible to watch my body slowly wilt away to nothing. But it's also wonderful because of all the time I get to say goodbye." (Albom, 2018, p. 57). This statement reflects the depth of Morrie's grief at the deterioration of his physical condition while highlighting the emotional clarity that allows him to make sense of his suffering. Rather than succumbing to the debilitating effects of deep grief, he recognizes that the moments he has left are a precious opportunity to say goodbye and deepen his

meaningful connections. Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2019) refer to this stage as "preparatory grief," which occurs when a person begins to emotionally prepare for a significant loss, such as a death. It is important to note that this stage does not necessarily indicate mental illness. "This stage is not a sign of mental illness. It is the appropriate response to a great loss." (p. 21). The profound emotional reactions, including loss, despair, and tears, experienced during this time are important components of the adjustment process that allows a person to transition to acceptance. Morrie's experience demonstrates that grief is not synonymous with weakness; instead, it catalyzes resilience, promoting a sense of calm and deep self-awareness.

**Acceptance**

In the context of Morrie Schwartz's character in "Tuesdays with Morrie," the stage of acceptance is the deepest expression of his wisdom and inner peace. This acceptance is not merely a passive acquiescence to death; rather, it reflects a deliberate, contemplative, and meaningful response to the recognition of his impending end. Morrie's approach to death is characterized by open-mindedness and a sense of peace rather than despair or denial. As (Albom, 2018, p. 174) puts it, "Death ends a life, not a relationship," a sentiment that sums up the essence of the acceptance stage. This statement reflects not only the recognition of the biological reality that life will eventually end but also the spiritual and emotional belief that love and human connections endure even after a person's death. For Morrie, the passage toward death does not diminish the importance of the relationships formed during life; on the contrary, it values the emotional bonds that have been cultivated. According to the framework established by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, acceptance is conceptualized as a psychological stage in which individuals move beyond the denial, bargaining, or resistance associated with recognizing loss. Instead, they are asked to "acknowledge all that has been lost and learn to live with that

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

loss". Kubler-Ross & Kessler (2019, p. 25). Morrie is a paradigm of this form of acceptance, recognizing death not only as the end of physical existence but also as a transformative opportunity to share lessons, deepen love, and create an emotional legacy.

**Table 1. Reflections on the Five Stages of Grief Kübler-Ross in the Wisdom of Morrie Schwartz**

Five Stages of Grief	Definition by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross	Morrie's Wisdom	Grief Process
Denial	"a person disengages from situations that allow him to survive the loss."	"I give myself a good cry if I need it. But then I concentrate on all the good things still in my life" (Albom, 1997, p. 57).	Morrie shifted his focus to the things that made him happy. He did not dispute the diagnosis of his terminal illness.
Anger	"Anger surfaces once you are feeling safe enough to know you will probably survive whatever comes."	"I feel around my body... and I mourn what I've lost" (Albom, 1997, p. 57).	Morrie's anger is depicted as sadness because Morrie feels that his body is no longer functioning correctly.
Bargaining	"What if..." or	"I want to try to	Morrie negotiate

	"If only..."	enjoy the time I have left" (Albom, 1997, p. 56).	d time by setting reasonable goals, such as imparting wisdom to those closest to him, and did not negotiate in terms of religion.
Depression	"This stage is not a sign of mental illness. It is the appropriate response to a great loss."	"It's horrible to watch my body slowly wilt away to nothing. But it's also wonderful because of all the time I get to say goodbye." (Albom, 1997, p. 57).	Morrie felt deep depression and faced it calmly, combining it with a meaningful farewell.
Acceptance	"acknowledge all that has been lost and learn to live with that loss."	"Death ends a life, not a relationship," (Albom (1997, p. 174)	Morrie accepted death with sincerity because, according to him, death was not the end of

			everythi ng.
--	--	--	-----------------

### The Progression of Grief Reflected in the Memoir

In "Tuesdays with Morrie," Morrie Schwartz illustrates the stages of grief, which do not follow a linear sequence, with some appearing more dominant in his emotional process. The stage of acceptance is the most striking aspect of his approach to death. Morrie faces the inevitability of death with serenity and contemplation, acknowledging the imminent end of his life and focusing on creating meaning for the time he has left. His statement illustrates this perspective, "Death ends a life, not a relationship," which reflects a deep understanding of the enduring value of love and human relationships, even in the face of mortality.

Two distinct but interconnected facets characterize Morrie's experience with depression. First, there is a notable acceptance of the impending loss of his physical abilities and autonomy. Second, there are periods of profound sadness, during which Morrie consciously confronts the emotional and psychological repercussions of his condition. This profound sadness is neither avoided nor concealed but instead accepted as an integral part of a healthy grieving process, thus illustrating Morrie's deep connection with human emotions. In addition, anger arises internally in response to the frustration caused by the deterioration of his physical condition and the loss of his ability to perform daily activities. This anger, however, is not an expression of aggression toward others; rather, it is a manifestation of the sense of loss Morrie experiences in the process of acceptance and mourning. The bargaining phase manifests itself in the form of existential compensation, where Morrie renounces his desire to prolong his life. Instead, he uses the time he has left to impart life lessons and strengthen his interpersonal relationships. Conversely, the denial phase seems to play a negligible role in Morrie's journey, as he faces the reality of his illness

head-on without escape or denial. Morrie's experience demonstrates that the stages of grief can occur simultaneously and in a simultaneous sequence, with acceptance serving as a fundamental emotional process that promotes serenity and a deeper understanding of the essence of life and death.

### 5. CONCLUSION

An analysis of Morrie Schwartz's experiences in Tuesdays with Morrie shows that the stages of grief he goes through do not follow a linear pattern, as described in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief theory. On the contrary, Morrie experiences them in an intertwined and dynamic way, reflecting the complexity and emotional depth of the process of confronting death. The stage of acceptance is the most dominant and reflective aspect, accompanied by expressions of depression and anger that emerge simultaneously, contributing to the feeling of loss. The stage of bargaining appears as Morrie's attempt to give meaning and legacy to his story through relationships and teachings, while denial is almost invisible in his narrative. These results emphasize that the grieving process is not a series of rigid and distinct stages but rather a flexible and personal emotional journey. This approach enriches the psychological understanding of how individuals gain strength and wisdom in the face of the end of life while encouraging readers to consider death as an integral part of the meaning of life. Future research is recommended to explore how different cultural, spiritual, or generational contexts may influence the experience and expression of grief in terminally ill individuals, particularly through the lens of autobiographical narratives or literary works. Such studies could provide more nuanced insights into the individualized nature of grief and further challenge universal models like Kübler-Ross's by emphasizing diverse, context-sensitive understandings of end-of-life experiences.

### 6. REFERENCES

- Albom, M. (2018). *Tuesdays With Morrie*. New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

- Albom, M. (2021). *The Stranger in the Lifeboat: The uplifting new novel from the bestselling author of Tuesdays with Morrie*. Hachette UK.
- Ardelt, M. (2019). Empirical assessment of a three-dimensional wisdom scale. *Research on Aging*, 25(3), 275–324. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027503025003004>
- Avis, M., Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2021). The role of support systems during grief-related depression. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*. [https://doi.org/26\(4\),329-344](https://doi.org/26(4),329-344)
- Baltes, P. B., & Staudinger, U. M. (2020). Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 122. <https://doi.org/https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2000-13324-012>
- Corr, C. A. (2021). Should we incorporate the work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in our current teaching and practice and, if so, how? *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 83(4), 706–728.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Daniel, J. (2023). *Grieving the right way: The psychology of anger in loss*.
- Davies, D. (2017). *Death, ritual and belief*.
- Fadilah, I. A., Jaya, A., & Uzer, Y. (2023). Visual Representation and Comprehension: the Exploration of Multimodal Text To Energize Reading of the Tenth Grade Students' At State Vocational High School 5 of Palembang. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme*, 6(1), 125–130. <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v6i1.10226>
- Foer, J. S. (2019). *Extremely loud & incredibly close*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Green, J. (2020). *The fault in our stars*. Penguin Books.
- Hall, C., & Pick, D. (2017). Thinking about denial. *History Workshop Journal*, 84, 1–23.
- He, H., Han, Q., Wang, S., Long, M., Zhang, M., Li, Y., Zhang, Y., & Gu, N. (2023). Design of a multifunctional nanozyme for resolving the proinflammatory plaque microenvironment and attenuating atherosclerosis. *ACS Nano*, 17(15), 14555–14571.
- Jaya, A., Hartono, R., Wahyuni, S., & Yulianto, H. J. (2025a). From silent to supreme: The transformative power of project-based learning on language learners. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 8(8), 2025258. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2025258>
- Jaya, A., Hartono, R., Wahyuni, S., & Yulianto, H. J. (2025b). Los efectos de la estrategia de aprendizaje basado en proyectos con actividad física en función del género sobre el rendimiento escolar y la confianza en sí mismos de los estudiantes. *Retos: Nuevas Tendencias En Educación Física, Deporte y Recreación*, 66, 349–360. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v66.110067>
- Jeste, D., & LaFee, S. (2020). *Wiser: The scientific roots of wisdom, compassion, and what makes us good*. Sounds True.
- Kirmayer, L. J. (2023). Cultural poetics of illness and healing. In *Transcultural Psychiatry* (Vol. 60, Issue 5, pp. 753–769). SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (2018). *On death and dying*. Routledge.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (2019). *Death: The final stage*. Simon and Schuster.
- Kubler-Ross, E., & Kessler, D. (2019). *On grief and grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. Simon and Schuster.
- Kübler-Ross, E., & Kessler, D. (2014). *On grief and grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. Simon and Schuster.

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

- Larson, T. (2007). *The memoir and the memoirist: Reading and writing personal narrative*. Ohio University Press.
- Lestari, S. M. (2017). The influence of Morrie on Mitch's personality development as reflected in Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie. *Unpublished Thesis*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Sanata Dharma.
- Lubis, A. H., & Wangid, M. N. (2019). Augmented Reality-Assisted Pictorial Storybook: Media to Enhance Discipline Character of Primary School Students. *ERIC Journal*, 6(1), 11–20. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1265730>
- Morris, V. (2018). *Talking about death*. Algonquin Books.
- Moyes, J. (2018). *Me Before You & After You*. Penguin UK.
- Paiva, B., Martins, R. S., & Ferreira, P. L. (2021). *Patients' perspectives on death and dying: A thematic synthesis of qualitative studies*.
- Patton, M. . (2020). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
- Pike, M. A., Hart, P., Paul, S.-A., Lickona, T., & Clarke, P. (2021). Character development through the curriculum: teaching and assessing the understanding and practice of virtue. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 53(4), 449–466. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2020.1755996>
- Prajayani, S. A., & Thoyibi, M. (2017). *Improving Quality of Life in Mitch Albom's Memoir: Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson (2006): Humanistic Psychological Perspectives*. Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.
- Prigerson, H. G., & Maciejewski, P. K. (2020). *Prolonged grief disorder and its clinical implications*. Depression and Anxiety.
- Romand, R., & Ehret, G. (2025). Neuro-functional modeling of near-death experiences in contexts of altered states of consciousness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.846159>
- Schaufeli, W., & Enzmann, D. (2020). *The Burnout Companion To Study And Practice: A Critical Analysis*. CRC Press.
- Suarniti, N. K. (2019). Makna kehidupan dalam novel Tuesdays with Morrie. *Jurnal Humaniora*. [https://doi.org/18\(3\), 201–209](https://doi.org/18(3), 201–209)
- Syaifullah, M. A., & Perrodin, D. (2023). Life values in film adaptations: A study of Tuesdays with Morrie. *Journal of Film and Literature Studies*.
- Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Struckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Veto Mortini, A., Jaya, A., & Akbar Zam, M. A. (2023). the Effect of Map Libs Technique on Students' English Learning Achievement in Learning Personal Pronoun. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme*, 6(2), 216–225. <https://doi.org/10.31851/esteem.v6i2.12316>