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## Research Article

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# The influence of parental attachment on Charley's personality development in Mitch Albom's *For One More Day*

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## Abstract

This research thesis discusses the influence of different attachment patterns on the personality development of Charley Benetto in Mitch Albom's *For One More Day*. The objectives of this research are to identify Charley's patterns of attachment to his parents, to analyze how insecure attachment influences his personality, and to analyze how secure attachment contributes to his personality development. This research thesis uses a psychological approach, employing John Bowlby's Attachment Theory and supported by Elizabeth Hurlock's Personality Development Theory. This research thesis employs a library research method. The primary data source is *For One More Day*, while secondary sources include scholarly books and journals related to attachment and personality development. The findings of this research thesis indicate that Charley's insecure attachment to his father causes him to constantly seek his father's approval, leading him to neglect his mother's love and make choices he regrets. In contrast, his secure attachment with his mother helps him to be confident, able to confront problems, develop emotional regulation, rebuild his broken relationships, and break free from his insecure attachment. These personality changes occur due to a change in self-perception, motivation driven by a deep internal desire to change, and a change in crucial individuals.

**Keywords:** insecure attachment; secure attachment; personality development

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## 1. Introduction

Building bonds with parents is important to support individuals' development. These bonds, also known as attachment, help individuals to define their self-concept, emotional health, and social skill. According to Ainsworth, there are two primary styles of attachment, secure and insecure. Both of which are influenced by the amount of affection parents provide to their child (in Mooney, 2010:29). Furthermore, individuals' attachment style influences how individuals behave and respond to their life experiences. Therefore, individuals who lack parents' affection will find difficulty in developing personality.

Mitch Albom's *For One More Day* is one of the literary works that explores the complexities of parents-child relationships. Focusing the narrative on Charley "Chick" Benetto as the main character, the story shows how his life is affected by parents' divorce. Living apart from his father, Charley grows up longing for his father's approval. It makes him difficult to recognize love from others, especially his mother. He dedicates his life to please his father yet never feels truly accepted. His desire to get his father's approval indirectly makes him leave his mother in her last day, which causes guilt that always haunts him. At the beginning, the story presents Charley's lowest point in life and how it leads him to

attempt suicide. However, he gets a magical chance to spend a day with his “ghost” mother. This day becomes a turning point of his self-reflection journey and the way for him to uncover truths about what happened to his family in the past.

*For One More Day*, published in 2006, is a fiction that explores the theme of family, regret, and forgiveness. Like many of Albom’s works, it combines elements of fiction and emotional insight. He writes *For One More Day* in a reflective and emotional tone with several flashbacks to the main character’s past moment. This writing style allows readers to gain deeper understanding about how the main character feels throughout the story.

Mitch Albom’s *For One More Day* becomes a well-known novel, drawing attention from both readers and scholars for its thoughtful reflection of essential moral values and emotional issues. While many previous studies have concentrated on the novel’s themes and conflicts, this thesis offers a new perspective by analyzing the psychological aspects of Charley “Chick” Benetto, the main character. The writer discusses about the attachment. Particularly, the writer discusses how Charley’s attachment styles with his parents influence his personality by using Bowlby’s attachment theory.

The thesis highlights this topic due to the writer’s interest in understanding how relationships in family shape individual’s personality. The writer believes that analyzing attachment to parents, especially through the story of Charley Benetto in *For One More Day*, provides meaningful insights related to personality development. It is expected that the readers will perceive more awareness of the importance of the significant influence of attachment in shaping personality.

## **2. Methods**

This research uses a qualitative method that highlights social context or human experiences through textual analysis rather than numerical data (Gupta, et al., 2018:3). The analysis employs John Bowlby’s Attachment Theory which describes attachment as behavior as any actions individuals do to keep the closeness with someone important or who is capable to support and protecting them (1988:25-26). Bowlby stated that attachment plays a crucial role in emotional development over a lifetime since children’s development is strongly influenced by how their parents treat them (1988:119). This analysis focuses on how secure attachment and insecure-ambivalent attachment patterns influence Charley’s personality development. In addition, this research employs Elizabeth Hurlock’s Personality Development Theory to examine Charley’s personality development’s characteristics and causes, especially about the change of crucial individuals, a change in self-perceptions, and drive from burning desire (Hurlock, 1974:120-128).

The data for this research are collected through library research method, which involves collecting and finding sources that have related information to the research question (George, 2008:5). The primary data source is the *For One More Day* novel, supported by secondary sources including articles, journals, theory books, and previous studies related to the novel and the character. Additionally, this research incorporates psychological approach, which examines how the human mind influences specific behavior in particular situations (Beard, 2001:160). Through this approach, the research seeks to explain how Charley’s insecure-ambivalent attachment influences his personality and causes him to make poor life choices. Furthermore, this research examines how his secure attachment contributes to his personality development.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### *3.1. Charley’s Pattern of Attachment to His Parents*

In Mitch Albom’s *For One More Day*, Charley’s pattern of parental attachment plays a vital role in shaping his identity and personality. Since his parents treat him differently, he shows different patterns

of attachment toward his father and mother. This section explores the difference between those patterns in depth.

### *3.1.1 Charley's Pattern of Attachment to His Mother*

Charley's relationship with his mother, Posey, represents a secure attachment pattern. It is the result of Posey's consistent love and support during Charley's childhood into adulthood. Posey shows her affection through both actions and words, notably through the handwritten notes she begins giving Charley on his first day of school in 1954, when he is around five years old. Each time she drops him off, she gives the notes that provides comforting words such as "You can't lose your mother, Charley" to erase Charley's fear, convincing him that he will always have her by his side (Albom, 2006:26). To Charley, the note is more than just a piece of paper, it represents something far more meaningful. It carries the warmth and love of her mother that makes Charley able to face his early school phase. Additionally, Posey's unwavering support for Charley is evident in her presence at his baseball games, despite her lack of interest in sports. When Charley plays baseball with his father, Posey is always there with her usual fashionable style to support him. She may not really understand baseball, but every time Charley gets a chance to play, she yells for him (Albom, 2006:32). Charley counts it as the love of his mother to him and that is what he cares about.

Posey is not the type of mother who goes easy on her children, she disciplines and scolds them when necessary (Albom, 2006:33). However, Charley's trust in her never wavers. He knows that his mother does it for love. In his eyes, Posey will always be a fun and caring mother. She supports Charley's emotional well-being by making him laugh, putting him to sleep each night, and giving compliments, such as telling him that he is smart. Importantly, she also takes steps to ensure her words of praise are supported by action. For example, when eighty-year-old Charley asks about a new term for his homework, she quickly grabs a dictionary and helps Charley memorize the meaning of the term (Albom, 2006:43). Charley can feel her patience and dedication in helping him to learn. In addition, Posey encourages Charley's intellectual growth by taking him to the library. In one significant moment, when a librarian refuses to let Charley borrow a book deemed too advanced for him, Posey defends him, even scolding the librarian (Albom, 2006:51). This experience feels so intense to Charley because the librarian really scares him off, but her mother's defense saves him, reinforcing his sense of safety and value.

When Charley is ten years old and about to receive a tonsillectomy, Posey writes him a note to support him. She puts comforting words, helping Charley to be more relaxed during the surgery and reminds him to keep the note under the pillow, so he can read it again after the surgery. "Reading is like talking, so picture me talking to you there" (Albom, 2006:63). This quotation shows Posey's unique way of making Charley feel her presence even when she cannot be physically by his side. This note encourages Charley and wipes away his nervousness. A year later, when Charley is around eleven, he begins to notice the social consequences of his parents' divorce, including how neighbors treat his family differently. He also becomes familiar with the word "divorcée". In one troubling incident, he catches a group of boys spying on his mother while she is changing clothes. Charley punches them without hesitation, even though they are bigger than him (Albom, 2006: 69). His protective response reveals not only his deep love for her but also his strong sense of loyalty. This moment highlights the mutual love between Charley and Posey—their bond is built on trust, love, and a willingness to stand up for one another.

Stepping into adolescence, Posey continues to offer Charley the same unwavering love and support. When he is fifteen, she helps him to shave his mustache for the first time (Albom, 2006:95). As a boy who just hits puberty, that moment embarrasses him a bit, but in the end, Posey's presence and compliments make him feel better. Later, when he enters college, Posey shows even greater excitement than he does. She wakes up early, prepares complete breakfast, and drives for four hours to accompany him to campus, making sure he arrives safely.

As written in the paragraph: “I pulled away, lifted the trunk, and began my climb, leaving my mother in the stairwell of a dormitory, as close as she would ever get to a college education” (Albom, 2006:105). This moment symbolizes their distance and separation. Not only can Charley feel his mother’s love through her presence that day, but also experience a poignant moment, recognizing his mother’s sacrifice and the gap between their future. As usual, Posey slips a note for Charley, this time typed with her friend’s typewriter, expressing her pride and offering advice on being a good student (Albom, 2006:109). Her consistent encouragement, even as Charley grows older, reflects her understanding of the importance of affirmation in building his confidence.

Their relationship, however, is not entirely free of conflict. The most significant disagreement arises over Charley’s future. Posey insists on the value of education, as quoted in: “An education is how you’ll make something of yourself” (Albom, 2006:124), meanwhile Charley wants to follow his father’s suggestion to become a baseball athlete. Ultimately, in the end, Charley’s desire wins, he joins a minor league in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Despite her disappointment, Posey continues to show care, calling to check on his safety, meals, and living conditions (Albom, 2006:133). Charley recognizes her concern for his education, and he understands that his decision breaks his mother’s heart. However, at that time, Charley only cares in gaining his father’s approval.

Posey’s support continues until Charley becomes an adult. On his wedding day, she writes him a heartfelt note and slips it into the pocket of his tuxedo. In that note, she expresses her adoration to Catherine, the bride, and reminds him to remember three things: “You have to love 1) Each other. 2) Your children (When you have some! Hint! Hint!). 3) Your marriage” (Albom, 2006:138). Through this note, she reminds Charley to persevere in his marriage, even during difficult times. Charley takes his mother’s advice to heart, which helps him maintain a happy marriage and a strong relationship with his daughter—although, unfortunately, it does not last long.

The last time Posey shows her support to Charley is when he decides to open a sports bar. Catherine, his wife at the time, opposes the idea, believing it will be difficult to run a business since Charley lacks experience. Charley argues that his friend will manage the operations, but Catherine remains reluctant to give her approval. In contrast with Catherine, Posey’s concern focuses on Charley’s working hours, reminding him that he must be home at night because he has a family to protect. Charley assures her that he understands this responsibility. Despite her concerns, Posey ultimately encourages him, saying that if he believes in himself, he should go for it (Albom, 2006:163). Her support boosts Charley’s confidence to pursue his venture, even though the sports bar eventually fails two years later.

The only aspect of Posey that Charley finds challenging is her eccentric style, which he sometimes finds a bit annoying. However, he never complains about that because, deep down, he knows that Posey is the only person who loves him beyond everything, as quoted in: “She loved me through vomit and snot and bloody knees. She loved me coming and going, at my worst and at my best. She had a bottomless well of love for me” (Albom, 2006:33). Thus, Charley’s relationship with his mother is considered as a secure attachment pattern because it is filled with consistent support and mutual love.

### *3.1.2 Charley’s Pattern of Attachment to His Father*

Unlike his relationship with Posey, Charley’s pattern of attachment to his father, Len, demonstrates an insecure-ambivalent attachment. During childhood, Len forces Charley to choose between being a “mama’s boy” or “daddy’s boy”. Charley undoubtedly chooses to be daddy’s boy, believing that a boy is destined to follow his father’s path (Albom, 2006:21). This choice, made in innocence, eventually leads Charley to become a pleaser, seeking his father’s approval. Len’s support, however, is limited to his own interests, especially baseball, a passion he has had since youth. He introduces Charley to baseball even before he can walk, and by age seven, Charley enthusiastically observes baseball through newspaper, dreaming of joining a league. Baseball becomes their private world, with stolen moments for practice during Len’s work hours or after church (Albom, 2006:31). Charley feels connected more

to his father when it is about baseball. Thus, he wants to keep that connection even though playing baseball is not always enjoyable for him. For instance, even though his hand stings while playing, Charley chooses to endure the pain to keep the game going on (Albom, 2006:21). He does this because he does not want the intimate moment between him and his father is bothered by anything, even by his own pain.

No matter how much Charley tries to become a good “daddy’s boy”, it is not enough to make his father support him consistently. Outside of baseball, Len shows little interest in Charley’s life. For example, when Charley is six years old, preparing his first Halloween parade, Len tells Posey, Charley’s mother, to buy him a cheap costume at the store. In contrast, Posey creates a special zombie costume for Charley out of toilet paper (Albom, 2006:39). Although Charley is initially embarrassed when his friends mock him, he later cherishes this moment and records it in his journal as priceless. Another example of Len’s indifference occurs when 34 Charley asks for help with his homework. Len shows minimal effort, and when Posey steps in to assist, Len dismisses it as “a colossal waste of time” (Albom, 2006:44). This experience once again highlights Len’s emotional distance while emphasizing Posey’s devoted love even more. Charley also admits that his mother becomes his hero again that that and he honors her action by putting this moment into his journal.

“Kids chase the love that eludes them, and for me, that was my father’s love. He kept it tucked away, like papers in a briefcase. And I kept trying to get in there” (Albom, 2006:33). From this quotation, it is clear that Charley feels he does not receive enough love from his father. He describes his father’s heart as hidden, “like papers in a briefcase,” suggesting emotional distance and inaccessibility. Yet, this lack of affection does not lead Charley to give up, instead, it motivates him to try harder to win his father’s approval. He also compares it with his mother’s constant love that looks less attractive than his father’s. He is confident, whether in good or bad condition, he will still get his mother’s love. He does not have to do anything to earn his mother’s love.

Charley gets used to being loyal to his father, following his hobby, and even supporting his opinion. One example occurs when Len complains about the baked ziti, an Italian-American dish that Charley’s mother made, insisting something is wrong with the ingredients. Posey, Charley’s mother, defends herself, saying she has tried ten different ways to prepare it. Lacking a strong argument, Len turns to the children for support, and Charley takes his sides (Albom, 2006:53-54). In truth, Charley has no idea what is wrong with the dish, but he lies and agrees with his father simply to earn his attention and approval. This moment reflects Charley’s pattern of aligning with his father, not out of genuine belief, but out of a deep desire to feel noticed and valued by him.

Growing up, Charley learns to tie his self-worth to his father’s approval. Thus, when his parents divorce and Len leaves the house, Charley is deeply wounded, filled with sadness, confusion, and anger. This aligns with Holmes’ idea that children with insecure-ambivalent attachment pattern often respond to separation with anger. Charley directs his anger towards his mother, as quoted in: “I am angry with her. I will remain angry with her until the day I leave this house for good. I know who it was. And I am angry that she wouldn’t let my father stay” (Albom, 2006:93). This moment occurs when Len sneaks back into the house, but Posey tells him to leave. At that time, Charley is about fourteen years old and does not fully understand the reason behind his parents’ divorce, he only longs to have his father back, and in that moment, sees his mother as the obstacle. However, years later, Charley understands that what his mother does is for the sake of him and his sister.

After the divorce, Charley’s father, Len, completely disappears from his life. Charley’s longing for his father’s love is so strong that he visits Len’s former liquor store after school, hoping to see him, but his father never shows up. He does not know where he lives or how to reach him. The only place Charley can still see his father is in his dreams (Albom, 2006:111). This absence highlights the one-sided nature of their relationship. While Charley continues to make efforts to reconnect, his father shows no willingness to do the same.

After eight years of absence, Len finally reappears. Charley is around nineteen years old at that time. He unexpectedly shows up at one of Charley's baseball games, watching silently from a distance before leaving without saying a word (Albom, 2006:113). This sudden presence shocks Charley yet motivates him to perform well to impress his father. Len attends a few more games, and during one visit, he persuades Charley to join a minor league team (Albom, 2006:123). As a young man who has spent his life craving his father's love, Charley is easily swayed. Without much thought, he drops out of college and join minor league team, starting his baseball career to reach his dream, and also to satisfy his father (Albom, 2006:131). Nonetheless, Charley's sacrifice to give up college is meaningless in his father's eyes. When his baseball career fades after he injures his legs, Len gradually pulls away just like he does before (Albom, 2006:142). He disappears without any words, leaving Charley alone, making him feel like a failure.

At the time his baseball career fails, Charley still has a family to provide. He tries to work as a coach, but the job does not last long. Charley finds difficulty in finding a job, meanwhile his father looks unbothered with his distribution business without offering any help (Albom, 2006:143). Despite the fact that Len could easily give him a job, he never does, and Charley sees it as a reflection of his father's disappointment in his failure. At this point, Charley finally understands that his feeling for him is a one-sided love. Baseball was the only connection they shared, and beyond that, Len never truly cared for or supported him. Thus, Len's inconsistency support and emotional imbalance are the reason why their relationship is considered as an insecure-ambivalent attachment pattern.

### *3.3 The Influence of Insecure Attachment on Charley's Personality Development*

Charley's personality is highly dependent on his father. This idea is reflected in how Charley clings to baseball even more after his father's departure, as quoted in: "And as I grew, I held on to the game like a raft in the bumpy sea, faithfully, through the chop. Until at last, it restored me to my father. As I always knew it would" (Albom, 2006:112). This quotation illustrates how Charley views baseball as a medium through which he can feel Len's presence and as a bridge that brings him back to his father. Charley's emotional dependence on his father makes him seek excessive attention from his father because he is afraid of abandonment. In this case, Charley uses baseball to gain his father's attention.

For some moment, his effort to maintain a bridge that reconnects him with his father succeeds. When Len reappears, he finds Charley is still devoted to the sport, which leads him to confidently suggest that Charley leave college to pursue baseball career. Eager for his father's approval, Charley welcomes the idea and joins the Pittsburgh baseball team (Albom, 2006:123). He acknowledges, to some degree, that this decision is driven by his desire to impress his father, as quoted in: "Was I seduced by baseball or my father's approval? Both, I suppose" (Albom, 2006:132). In other hand, Charley is aware that his choice disappoints his mother, Posey. Hoping to ease that guilt, he tells her he can return to college if necessary. However, Posey gently warns him that going back is harder than it seems (Albom, 2006:133). Then, Charley realizes that his decision breaks his mother's heart on the deepest level.

In the end, Charley decision to follow his father's advice has a negative impact on his life. Although his baseball career initially soars as he is recruited by the major league team, the Pirates, at age twenty-three, this does not last long. After six weeks, he injures his knees and his athletic career ends (Albom, 2006:139-141). Charley hardly finds a job because he lacks educational qualifications. He has no choice but to take a job as a salesman (Albom, 2006:142). This leads Charley to a feeling of disappointment in himself. He often compares his good days when he still being a part of baseball team with his dull days as a salesman, which only highlights how far he has fallen.

On another occasion, Charley's insecure-ambivalent attachment pattern once again influences his decisions. While spending a day at his mother's house with his wife and daughter, Charley accidentally receives a call from his father, Len (Albom, 2006:157). This call triggers his longing for his father's affection. His father tells him that he is been looking for him and offers an opportunity to reconnect

through playing baseball with former Pirates players (Albom, 2006:159). His father wins him once again. Despite Charley's efforts to resist, he feels powerless, as if "another boy had taken his place" (Albom, 2006:161). This implies how quickly his heart changes, from wanting to stay with his mother and family to an overwhelming desire to please his father.

Charley lies to his family and skips brunch to attend the baseball game (Albom, 2006:161). This decision later burdens him with guilt for choosing the game, as he is unaware that at the same moment, in another place, his mother takes her last breath. Moreover, his father gives him none of the recognition or support Charley desperately hoped for, leaving him feeling as though he has lost both parents at once, as quoted in: "I lost both parents on the same day, one to shame, one to shadow" (Albom, 2006: 173). This loss fills him with deep regret over his choice to attend the game. Even years after his mother's death, Charley carries this regret and realizes that his decision to prioritize his father's approval, the choice to be a "daddy's boy", is a wrong choice.

### *3.4 The Influence of Secure Attachment on Charley's Personality Development*

Having a secure bond with his mother, Posey, helps Charley in his personality development process. Throughout his life, his insecure attachment pattern to his father takes over his thoughts and actions, causing him to neglect the consistent affection provided by his mother. However, Posey's death makes him realize that he cannot live without her mother's love and support. After her death, Charley feels lost, believing he can no longer seek her forgiveness or love, until he experiences a magical day with her that changes everything (Albom, 2006:42).

#### *3.3.1 From Having Low Self-Esteem to Becoming More Confident*

Charley's personality development begins with a shift from his low self-esteem to becoming a more confident person. His low self-esteem begins when he loses his mother "Mother supports illusion about their children" (Albom, 2006:4). Without Posey, Charley's faith in himself fades, and he sinks into bitterness over his failed sales career. Financial losses and losing his job lead him to alcohol, and he feels like a great disappointment for his family, so that his daughter, Maria, does not invite him to her wedding (Albom, 2006:6). He sees himself as a person that will be easily forgotten by the others (Albom, 2006:17). Charley feels unable to fulfill his responsibilities as a husband and father, both financially and emotionally. Despite his desire to make things right, he struggles to find a solution. As a result, he decides to divorce his wife, Catherine, and isolates himself. However, during a day with his mother's "ghost", she reassures him of his worth, calling him a "granted wish" and expressing gratitude for his existence (Albom, 2006:73). This affirmation helps Charley regain a sense of self-confidence, reminds him that he is also important in his mother's eyes. Because of this, Charley, who used to feel bad about himself and think he was not good enough, starts to feel better and believe in himself. His self-esteem continues to increase, it is shown in the end of the novel, as quoted in: "I feel ashamed now that I tried to take my life" (Albom, 2006:193). It reflects Charley's awareness of the importance of his life. Furthermore, his request to his family to remember him after he dies (Albom, 2006: Epilogue) also proves that Charley sees himself as someone who is worth to remember, not merely about his career, but for his personality, signifying a renewed belief in his value. This development is caused by Charley's change of self-perception from feeling unwanted to realizing he is worth loving.

#### *3.3.2 From Avoiding Problems to Confronting Them*

Charley's personality development is also illustrated in how he evolves from avoiding problems to confronting conflicts effectively. He faces tension with several people, including his ex-wife, Catherine. His complicated grief and self-destructive behavior push Catherine to leave him. Things worsen for Charley when he discovers that he was not invited to his daughter's wedding (Albom, 2006: 10). Charley feels like Catherine betrays him for not defending him. Not only with Catherine, but he also faces a conflict with his daughter, Maria, so that she decides not to invite him to his wedding (Albom, 2006:6). The novel does not specify her reason, however Charley assumes that she is embarrassed by

his presence. Nevertheless, after spending a day with his mother's "ghost", Charley gains a deeper grasp of how his actions hurt his daughter the way she retaliates emotionally (Albom, 2006:89). His mother also convinces him with her words, making him believe that no matter how bad his relationship with his family, he can still fix it (Albom, 2006: 108). By the end of the story, Charley's development is shown in how his relationships with his ex-wife and daughter get better. It is reflected in how he speaks regularly with his ex-wife and lives near his daughter (Albom, 2006:196). His daughter even writes about his life and names her son after him (Albom, 2006: 197). This shows that his mother's words are impactful to Charley in changing his personality, encouraging him to solve the conflicts he always avoids before.

### *3.3.3 From Lacking Emotional Control to Regulating Emotions*

Another aspect of Charley's personality that develops is his emotional regulation. Previously, Charley relies on alcohol to cope with sadness and problem, but after the special day with his "ghost" mother, he manages his emotion better and never touch alcohol again (Albom, 2006: 194). Charley perceives the importance of communication. He realizes when he gets into trouble, he must at least talk to other people about it instead of trying to solve it all alone. This development is also caused by the desire to change for the better for his family and himself.

### *3.3.4 From Having Insecure Attachment to Developing Secure Attachment*

On the other hand, Charley uncovers a truth that contributes significantly to his personality development. During the day he spends with his "ghost" mother, she reveals the real reason behind her divorce from Len—his affair with an Italian woman. At the end of their day, Posey takes Charley to the woman's house (Albom, 2006:176). She explains that Len met the woman during the war, the same time he and Posey were exchanging letters. Posey believes Len feared he might not survive and sought comfort in another love. However, when the war ended, he returned to Posey, saying, "I guess he wanted a different plan—his old plan with me" (Albom, 2006:180). Years later, Len brings the Italian woman to America and resumes the affair. Upon discovering this, Posey leaves him immediately. Charley realizes the depth of his mother's sacrifice in hiding the truth to protect him. Even more devastating, he learns Len has a son with the woman—older than Charley (Albom, 2006:181). Feeling betrayed, Charley sees his lifelong loyalty to his father as meaningless. This revelation marks a crucial turning point, as it shatters his yearning for paternal approval and allows him to begin breaking free from his insecure-ambivalent attachment to his father.

### *3.3.5 From Feeling Deep Loneliness to Experiencing Connection*

The last development in Charley's personality is the disappearance of his deep sense of loneliness. After losing his mother and living apart from his family, Charley struggles with loneliness every day (Albom, 2006:5), dealing with sadness and problems without support. However, his special meeting with his mother helps him reflect on the many moments she stood by him, making him realize she never truly left. Charley believes that spending a day with his "ghost" mother is a gift—a chance to feel her love again. His mother appears to help him release his burdens (Albom, 2006:193). Charley lives the rest of his life with the belief that she is always with him, as reflected in: "When it's quiet, I can hear my mother's echo still" (Albom, 2006:193). This belief mirrors the qualities of those with secure attachment, who trust their caregivers will support them in hard times. In short, Charley's journey reflects positive change—replacing his negative traits with better ones. This development is driven by a change in self-perception, a deep desire for growth, and the influence of a crucial figure in his life.

## **5. Conclusions**

The attachment to parents plays a crucial role in shaping Charley Benetto's personality in Mitch Albom's *For One More Day*. This study focuses on how Charley's insecure attachment to his father leads to emotional instability, low self-esteem, and poor decisions—such as dropping out of college to

pursue baseball and choosing a game over time with his mother, a decision he later regrets deeply. These choices result in failure, guilt, and isolation. His turning point comes after a day spent with the “ghost” of his mother, which reactivates his secure attachment to her. Through her support and the revelation of his father’s betrayal, Charley begins to rebuild his self-worth, detach from his unhealthy attachment, and grow emotionally. This magical day helps him believe he was never truly alone, reflecting secure attachment behaviors that lead to meaningful personality development.

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