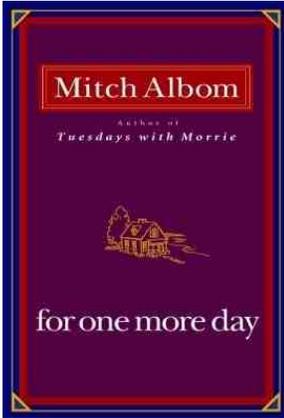


For One More Day

By Mitch Albom



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ABOUT THIS BOOK

The #1 bestselling author of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* returns with an uplifting new novel about family, regret, secrets, and redemption.

Charley “Chick” Benetto has reached the end of his rope. Raised by his absent father to play baseball, Chick made it to the big time -- the World Series -- but injury cut his major league career tragically short. Since then it’s been all downhill, and the slide became a plummet when he lied to his mother and his own family to get one last shot at glory, with disastrous results. Suicide comes to seem like his best choice, so Chick returns to his childhood home to put an end to his unhappiness. But what he finds there changes everything . . .

For anybody who’s ever wanted one more day with a departed loved one, for anyone who’s attained a dream only to feel disappointment afterwards, for anyone who believes in the incredible power of a mother’s love, *For One More Day* will bring satisfaction, joy, and undeniable insight.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

taken from mitchalbom.com

1. In the first paragraph of the novel, and repeated several times throughout the book, is the line “every family is a ghost story.” What do you think that means? Who is the real ghost in the Benetto family?
2. Which scene resonated with you the most, and why?
3. Re-read the “Beginning” section. Now that you know the identity of the narrator, how does your understanding of the section change? Did the narrator’s identity surprise you? Why, or why not?
4. Discuss the last paragraph of the “Beginning” section: “Have you ever lost someone you love and wanted one more conversation, one more chance to make up for the time when you thought they would be here forever? If so, then you know you can go through your whole life collecting days, and none will outweigh the one you wish you had back. What if you got it back?” What did you imagine this meant when you first read it? What does it mean to you now? Is there someone in your own life with whom you’d like to spend one more day?
5. Why do you think Chick tried to commit suicide? Was it for the reasons he stated, or was there something else behind it?
6. On page 4, Chick says “Mothers support certain illusions about their children.” What did he mean by that statement? What about fathers?

7. Consider the passage on page 6 in which Chick talks about missing his daughter's wedding. Given the identity of the book's narrator, what do you think is happening here? Is it manipulation, guilt, hubris, or something else entirely?
8. Several times in the novel, Chick says that you can either be a mama's boy or a daddy's boy, but not both. Which was Chick? Which did he believe himself to be? Do you agree that you can only be one or the other?
9. On page 33, Chick says, "kids chase the love that eludes them." How does this play out over the course of the novel? Whose love does he chase, ultimately, and why?
10. Chick believes strongly in the power of words: "divorcee" (page 67), "Mom" (page 157), "She died" (page 172). What makes these words so powerful? Is it the context of the story, or are they freighted in real life, too?
11. Throughout the novel, Chick outlines various times when he failed to stand up for his mother, and was often quite cold to her. Is there a special cruelty that children inflict on their parents? Is Chick cruel to other characters?
12. Novels about mother-son relationships are relatively rare. Can you think of any others you've read and enjoyed? How did their portrayals compare to *For One More Day*?
13. On page 142, a mountain climber tells Chick that descending is much more difficult than ascending: "The backside of a mountain is a fight against human nature. You have to care as much about yourself on the way down as you did on the way up." Do you agree with this statement? Where were Chick's ascents and descents? How did he deal with them?
14. Discuss the significance of the Old Timers' Game -- its timing, Chick's deception, his father's involvement. How is it a turning point?
15. Chick learns a shocking secret about his father's life on page 179. How does it change his understanding of his parents' relationship? How does it change your understanding of Posey, Leonard, and Chick as characters?
16. Consider the other characters' secrets: Chick's lies about the Old Timers' Game, Posey's hiding her work as a housecleaner. What motivated them? Are some lies more damaging than others?
17. On page 185, Chick says, "I ran away. In that manner, I suppose, my father and I were sadly parallel." Were they similar in other ways? Did Chick take after his father more than his mother?
18. Have you read any of Mitch Albom's other books? What thematic links do you see?
19. Does this story have a moral? If so, what is it?

Letters from a Young Fan: Interview with Mitch Albom

taken from mitchalbom.com

I receive thousands of emails each month from people of all ages. Many, like the young student whose note appears below, ask me what inspired my work. I've included Ryan's questions, and my replies, which I hope my readers and other students and teachers will find helpful.

To: Mitch Albom
From: Ryan K.

Dear Mr. Albom,

My name is Ryan and I am in the seventh grade.

I read your books Tuesdays with Morrie and The Five People You Meet in Heaven in my language arts class and I want to write my book report about you. I need help getting information about you. My mom said I should email you. Would you please answer these questions Mr. Mitch so I can do my report?

Thank you very much.

1. Where do you get your inspiration from?

I look to the moments in my life when I was overwhelmed by emotion, when I felt tears behind my eyes or when I felt my breath leaving me. And then I think what was behind those moments: what happened to push me to that point? I try to see if it is something universal, something many people feel. If so, I know I am I standing in the soil of something inspiring, and I begin to create a story from that moment.

2. How do you come up with the ideas for your books?

Well, my inspiration tends to come from people I know. For example, obviously, Morrie and his unique personality – and unique approach to dying – was the inspiration for “Tuesdays with Morrie” along with the need to pay his medical bills. The inspiration for “Five People” was my real uncle Eddie, who was much like the character in the book, a man who felt he didn’t matter in life. I wanted to write a story in which Eddie got to know, in heaven, that he did matter here on earth – much as I would like my real uncle Eddie, wherever he is now in heaven, to experience that. The inspiration for “For One More Day” came, again, from a real person, my mother, who stood up for me all my life, even when I didn’t always stand up for her. I have imagined what life will be like when she is no longer here, and I know I will want another day with her. That feeling became the ground floor of that book. It’s a little derivative of the idea “Write what you know” which they always tell you when you begin to do fiction. I’m not so much writing what I know – after all, I don’t know amusement parks or heaven – but I am writing WHO I know. And that gives me a comfort to move ahead with my stories.

3. Are your books true stories?

All of my books begin with feelings and experiences that I have had myself. “Morrie” was an autobiographical experience. Five People was inspired by – and dedicated to - my old Uncle Eddie. For One More Day has a good deal of my own mother and me behind the characters.

4. Where were you born and where did you grow up? How old are you?

I was born May 23, 1958 in Passaic, NJ. We lived in Buffalo for a little bit but then settled in Oaklyn, NJ. It’s close to Philadelphia.

5. What is your family like? What are your mom and dad like? Do you have any sisters or brothers?

I’ve been blessed with wonderful parents, who wanted me to fly and to aspire and do things. I grew up in a small, middle class neighborhood from which most people never left. But my parents always said, “Don’t expect your life to finish here. There’s a big world out there. Go out and see it.” My older sister, my younger brother and I all took that message to heart and traveled extensively, with my siblings settling in Europe. Now, of course, our parents say, “Great. All our kids went and saw the world and now no one comes home to have dinner on Sundays.” I have an older sister and a younger brother.

6. When you were a kid my age, what did you want to be when you grow up?

The first time someone asked me what I wanted to be I said “a garbage man”. I was five. It seemed like a cool job, But then I began reading and collecting comic books, and wanted to be a cartoonist. That led me to the idea of stories. I ended up creating my own little comic books. Later I went into music because I was surrounded by people who were in music—my father was a singer, my uncle was a piano player (he taught me

how to play). I think I just had a sense that it was more fun to create than it was to just slog away at some kind of labor. The people who I knew as I was growing up who seemed to be having the most fun were the people who were doing creative things. I grew up in the 60s, and you could always tell the creative people dressed more comfortably than the ones who were going to work with ties. At the beginning I said, I want to look like that, I want to act like that, I want to be happy and free like that. I think I was always more drawn to creative things. Music, writing, cartoons, you name it. It was always that over, say, accounting.

7. What was Morrie like?

Morrie was a treasure. What I often remind people who read Tuesdays With Morrie is that he was mostly the way he was even *before* he was dying. When I knew Morrie as a student, he was always present, involved, a great listener, a tease, a warm and gentle and academically curious professor who challenged you with his questions but comforted you with his answers. When he got sick, it was as if his best traits just magnified. I don't know if I ever did a perfect job of describing what being with him was like; even when he couldn't move, he made you feel loved and embraced. He loved to teach and he did it to the end.

8. Why did you choose five people? Who are your five persons you want to see in heaven?

This is a question I get all the time. There is no significance in the number 5. It could've been 4 or 6, but 4 seemed too few and 6 seemed too many. Sometimes when I've thought about it, it's kind of generational; twenty years is about a generation, and if you begin when you're an infant then every twenty years is another generation. Eddie was eighty years old, so there would be five people in it. People have tried to read more significance into this, but it just worked for the story. For my five, I don't have a predetermined list and it doesn't include anybody famous, but I hope it's the people who are gone from my life that I miss. I'd love to have a chance to speak with Morrie and ask him what he thinks of everything that's happened since he's been gone. I wish I could hand my uncle Eddie the book and so he could know he wasn't a "nobody." I don't really have a list of big time people that I would like to see. Most of them are loved ones who I haven't seen for a while and I'd love to catch up with. But if there were room, I think it may be nice to meet one person who you didn't know particularly well and you found out that you had an influence on them.

9. What do you think about death?

My mother lost her father when she was 15. He died of a heart attack. Her life was completely changed by that, and growing up, she always told us about it. When I was 22, my beloved uncle Mike – my mother's brother – died of cancer. I was living by him at the time. That had a profound affect on me. All three of my grandparents died in the years that followed, as did my older uncles and aunts, including my Uncle Eddie, the inspiration behind "The Five People You Meet In Heaven." And of course losing Morrie was obviously a huge event in my life. So I have been exposed to people dying at various stages of my development. That may have been more positive than it sounds. Each of those events ultimately taught me the value of cherishing every day, and the foolishness of pretending death isn't a real part of life, or that it is a subject to be shunned or avoided. I have realized that loss, love and finding meaning in your life while you are here are all universal themes, they are true for Americans, Africans, Europeans, rich, poor, black, white, man, woman, you name it. So I know that my stories, if I do them well, should resonate with people no matter where they are reading them.