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On the Move: A Life

By *Oliver Sacks*



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On the Move: A Life By Oliver Sacks

When Oliver Sacks was twelve years old, a perceptive schoolmaster wrote in his report: “Sacks will go far, if he does not go too far.” It is now abundantly clear that Sacks has never stopped going. From its opening pages on his youthful obsession with motorcycles and speed, *On the Move* is infused with his restless energy. As he recounts his experiences as a young neurologist in the early 1960s, first in California, where he struggled with drug addiction, and then in New York, where he discovered a long-forgotten illness in the back wards of a chronic hospital, we see how his engagement with patients comes to define his life.

With unbridled honesty and humor, Sacks shows us that the same energy that drives his physical passions—weight lifting and swimming—also drives his cerebral passions. He writes about his love affairs, both romantic and intellectual; his guilt over leaving his family to come to America; his bond with his schizophrenic brother; and the writers and scientists—Thom Gunn, A. R. Luria, W. H. Auden, Gerald M. Edelman, Francis Crick—who influenced him. *On the Move* is the story of a brilliantly unconventional physician and writer—and of the man who has illuminated the many ways that the brain makes us human.



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On the Move: A Life By Oliver Sacks Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of May 2015: Oliver Sacks' *On the Move* is a disarming book. His honesty, energy, and clear restlessness illuminate each page, drawing the reader in to a life of great achievement in spite of some hurdles. The highest of those hurdles may have been his difficulty with romantic love. The origin of that difficulty can be traced to his mother's severe reaction upon learning that he was gay: she called him "an abomination." Sacks forgave his mother for that, even if he couldn't shake her words. His solution appears to have been just to move on and keep moving—and the entire book is imbued with a sense of movement. This can be seen in his love of motorcycles and weight lifting, in his desire to travel, in his move from England to the United States, and even when he writes of his former addiction to amphetamines. Of course his mind was moving at all times as well, and in this book Sacks continues to write convincingly about the ways our minds make us human. Despite claiming shyness, Sacks amassed an impressive list of friends and acquaintances—from the poets Thom Gunn, Richard Selig, and W.H. Auden, to Francis Crick and Stephen Jay Gould, to Robert De Niro and Robin Williams. And there was always the writing. "I am a storyteller, for better and for worse," he writes at the end of the book. When I read that line, I realized that I felt like he was sitting in the same room with me. -- *Chris Schluep*

Review

"Intimate. . . . Brim[s] with life and affection." —*The New York Times*

"[A] wonderful memoir, which richly demonstrates what an extraordinary life it has been. . . . A fascinating account—a sort of extended case study, really—of Sacks' remarkably active, iconoclastic adulthood." —*Los Angeles Times*

"A glorious memoir. . . . In this volume Sacks opens himself to recognition, much as he has opened the lives of others to being recognized in their fullness." —*The Atlantic*

"Pulses with his distinctive energy and curiosity." —*The New York Review of Books*

"A beautiful vision, one that embraces an infinite spectrum of wonder. . . . *On the Move* illustrates what an exceptional human being he is. . . . He is fascinated by seemingly everything, and, damn, the man can write." —*Salon*

"Marvelous. . . . He studies himself as he has studied others: compassionately, unblinkingly, intelligently, acceptingly and honestly." —*The Wall Street Journal*

"Sacks' ability to enact and celebrate intuition in medicine and precision in art is singular." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"[Sacks is] a wonderful storyteller. . . . It's his keen attentiveness as a listener and observer, and his insatiable curiosity, that makes his work so powerful." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

"Remarkably candid and deeply affecting. . . . Sacks's empathy and intellectual curiosity, his delight in, as he calls it, 'joining particulars with generalities' and, especially, 'narratives with neuroscience'—have never

been more evident than in his beautifully conceived new book.” —*The Boston Globe*

“Intriguing. . . . When describing his patients and their problems, he is attentive and precise, straightforward and sympathetic, and he brings these worthy qualities to his descriptions of his younger self.” —*The Washington Post*

“A compelling read. . . . Offers a glimpse into one of the greatest minds of our time.” —*Men’s Journal*

“What a self this book reveals! A man animated by boundless curiosity, wide-ranging intelligence, gratitude for flawed humanity, perseverance despite setbacks. . . . We’re lucky to have all the books, including *On the Move*. It’s intensely, beautifully, incandescently alive.” —*Newsday*

“An ebullient telling of a remarkable life.” —*Paste*

“This remarkable man lifts us all. . . . [On the Move] is not only a record of his life-affirming characterological extravagance but also a meditation on what it is to be human in an age of medical arrogance and the numbing clout of technology.” —*The Los Angeles Review of Books*

“An unforgettably passionate, joyous journey.” —*The Daily Beast*

“[A] beautifully constructed and moving memoir. . . . His life and work are a gift.” —*The Times Literary Supplement* (London)

“Moving. . . . Written with exceptional grace and clarity.” —*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

About the Author

Oliver Sacks was a physician, writer, and professor of neurology. Born in London in 1933, he moved to New York City in 1965, where he launched his medical career and began writing case studies of his patients. Called the “poet laureate of medicine” by *The New York Times*, Sacks is the author of more than a dozen books, including *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, *Musicophilia*, and *Awakenings*, which inspired an Oscar-nominated film and a play by Harold Pinter. He was the recipient of many awards and honorary degrees, and was made a Commander of the British Empire in 2008 for services to medicine. He died in 2015.

www.oliversacks.com

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Miguel Philip:

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Reading can called thoughts hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book especially book entitled *On the Move: A Life* your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a e-book then become one application form conclusion and explanation this maybe you never get ahead of. The *On the Move: A Life* giving you one more experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful information for your better life in this particular era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

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