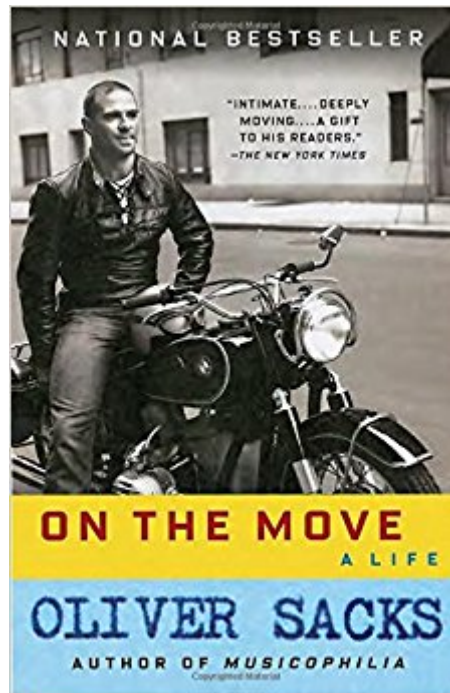




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# On The Move: A Life



## Synopsis

• A New York Times Notable Book  
• One of the Best Books of the Year  
• NPR  
• San Francisco Chronicle  
• St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
• BookPage  
• Slate  
• Men's Journal  
When Oliver Sacks was twelve years old, a perceptive schoolmaster wrote: "Sacks will go far, if he does not go too far." It is now abundantly clear that Sacks has never stopped going. With unbridled honesty and humor, Sacks writes about the passions that have driven his life—from motorcycles and weight lifting to neurology and poetry. 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—W. H. Auden, Gerald M. Edelman, Francis Crick—who have influenced his work. *On the Move* is the story of a brilliantly unconventional physician and writer, a man who has illuminated the many ways that the brain makes us human.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An 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 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“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’s 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’s 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

I fell in love with Oliver Sacks and his writing after my parents gave me "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" this past Christmas. Ever since, I've been hooked and can't get enough. I've now read "Hat", "Hallucinations," "Musicophilia," and now his autobiography. His writing is so elegant yet lucid, that it feels as though I'm reading fiction at times. This new book of his is no different, and may perhaps be the most fascinating of them all. To say that he has lived life to the fullest would be a severe understatement; he has filled his life with enough adventure and excitement to occupy four lifetimes, and he is still going (and may he continue to do so for many years, in spite of his cancer). His openness and honesty in "On the Move" is spectacular, moving, and one feels as though he is having a fireside conversation with Sacks himself. There is so much I never knew about him, so much that I almost found hard to believe! (You'll understand this as you read through the book). What a man, what a life! As a student who will be starting his first year at medical school this August, I can say that I aspire to be half the man that Oliver Sacks has become. He is part of the reason that I have fallen even more in love with the medical field, particularly neurology and psychiatry. There is much to learn from this book, regardless of one's profession, interests, and background. There is so much more to say, but I'm no wordsmith as Sacks is, so I'll let you read it for yourself. It is my hope that you enjoy every page, sentence, and carefully crafted word that Oliver Sacks has used to print his life onto paper. As Albert Schweitzer said, "my life is my argument," and no doubt Sacks will embody this message until the end.

Oliver Sacks is one of the most important thinkers of our time. His prior works have offered considerable insight about and needed compassion toward the immensely broad spectrum of the human condition: from memory loss and divergent modes of mental processing to profound sensory limitations. Above all, he has enabled us to walk in others' shoes and imagine perceiving the world from a wholly different perspective. Not only is he a compassionate and thorough physician, he is also an extraordinary writer. His prose is compelling, vivid, and persuasive. Yet in his intellectual discourse, it is easy to focus on his mind and think of him as purely a thinker, rather than as a complete person. *On the Move*, a brilliant autobiography, sheds considerable insight into the rest of his life, showing his 'human' side, including passions, strengths and weaknesses. It is a fascinating chronicle of a young man who discovers his sexual orientation during a very prejudiced age, who struggles with a drinking problem, who values the life of the body (working out) as well as the mind, and who loves roaming free, whether on his motorcycle, running or scuba diving. At last, the error in the film *Awakenings*, in which the character supposed to be Sacks is shown as timid and barely attuned to life, is corrected. Sacks is certainly not timid, and despite medical challenges, has shown himself to be very much full of life. It is society that has been too timid, and at long last needs to embrace diversity.

Paul Halpern, author of *Einstein's Dice and Schrödinger's Cat: How Two Great Minds Battled Quantum Randomness to Create a Unified Theory of Physics*

Both this and the earlier volume (*Uncle Tungsten*) are excellent autobiographies by Oliver Sacks. You would not have guessed from reading his books about neurology that he was a biker and weight lifter in his wild younger years, and also an experimenter (on himself) with drugs. He has described his shyness and a sense of a barrier between himself and others. But his autobiography is uncommonly open and self revealing. His writing made him famous and *On the Move* recounts his friendships with other famous people (Francis Crick, Robin Williams, etc). It is not stated in these books, but I would guess his friends and acquaintances found Dr. Sacks quite interesting and original. I hope one or more of those friends who are still with us might share their observations of this remarkable humanist/scientist.

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