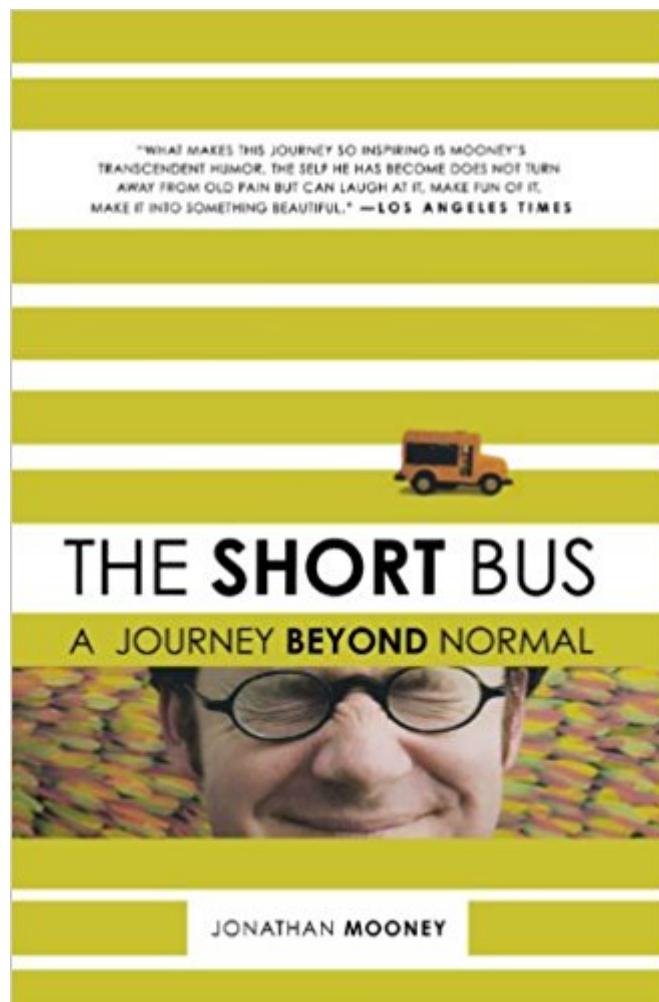


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# The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal



## Synopsis

"What makes this journey so inspiring is Mooney's transcendent humor; the self he has become does not turn away from old pain but can laugh at it, make fun of it, make it into something beautiful." •Los Angeles Times Labeled "dyslexic and profoundly learning disabled," Jonathan Mooney was a short-bus rider •a derogatory term used for kids in special education. To learn how others had moved beyond labels, he bought his own short bus and set out cross-country, looking for kids who had dreamed up magical, beautiful ways to overcome the obstacles that separated them from the so-called normal world. The Short Bus is his irreverent and poignant record of that odyssey, meeting thirteen people in thirteen states who taught Mooney that there's no such thing as normal •and that to really live, every person must find their own special way of keeping on. The Short Bus is a unique gem, propelled by Mooney's heart, humor, and outrageous rebellions.

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Holt Paperbacks; Reprint edition (May 27, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805088040

ISBN-13: 978-0805088045

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (77 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Short bus. I rode a short bus. I hid in the bathroom during round robin reading. I faked sick on Spelling Bee day. I had teachers that were damning but I had teachers and parents who believed in me. I'm one of the "odd" people with ADD and a learning disability. Now I teach kids with learning disabilities so I have the perspective from both sides. Mooney paints a vivid picture of the darkness a disability can bring. I cried through this book, but I laughed too. I hope people read this book with an open mind. For every kid with a bad school experience there is a kid with a good one. I wish Mooney could move beyond his bitter anger and make lemonade from the lemons he is sucking on.

I think his next book should focus on alcohol and drug abuse of adults with ADD and LD. He might learn something about himself. I gave this book 4 stars because it is beautiful but I wish a could talk to Jonathan and remind him that our world is better because of the struggle people like us went through. More later, I need to think this one over.

I received the book yesterday afternoon and proceeded to sit down intending to read a just a few chapters and then get dinner on the table for my boys...5 hours later, I was still reading-- I could not put the book down. I ended up reading it cover to cover at the kitchen table. I haven't done that in ages. Luckily the boys are old enough to fend for themselves!!! This is an emotional book. It's also a really wonderful book. Jonathan has really challenged me to look inside my own self and confront my own pre-conceived ideas and ways of looking at people who are labeled disabled. I really think this book should be required reading for educators and professionals who are dealing with students or clients with disabilities, it reminds you that behind the label there is an individual who brings with them their own unique gifts and wonderful qualities. We cannot.. no we must not forget that.

I didn't ride the short bus; I came from a previous generation. However, Jonathan's experience rang true. I didn't hear any false notes. Getting my doctorate didn't take away the scars from the educational system. But I came from a different era. That's why I couldn't believe my eyes when I read the one negative review posted by J O'neil. Certain words have an emotional impact and are only said to hurt. To publically shame a LD person for mispelling something is familiar and one of the most abusive things we can experience. It's a not-so-subtle way in our culture to win an argument or to announce to the world that you think someone is stupid. Spelling is a gift that many LD people don't have, even though we possess many marvelous gifts. Yet O'Neil, a principal of a LD program no-less, did this. What is most disturbing is that this person seems blind to the irony. There are good teachers who fight this sick system, where these attitudes are tolerated. Thanks to J O'neil, the problem is all there in a paragraph--everything that Jonathan articulated. As I said, I found his insights about school true and I thank him for expanding the conversation. Jonathan also takes on the issue of "normal," something that gets kicked around loosely but seldom discussed in depth. His reflections allowed me to look beyond myself, again, to the bigger question of how we all fit in this larger community. He does this in a way that's both fair and sensitive. Thanks.

So this book came highly recommended and was also mandatory reading material for my major. Personally I did not feel as though the ideas were all that new, wild, or enlightening. But then again,

I am from Olympia... so I guess "weird" is not that weird to me. Now that I live in NYC I am surprised at how bland and narrow minded people can be, even in a huge and "progressive" city. Apparently not everyone appreciates individuality. The book is a good read with some interesting characters. I just didn't feel like it was as epic and transcending as some people indicated to me. I thought he was actually pretty "normal" all along.

This book was a requirement for a graduate course I took on learning disabilities. The teacher had a copy on hand for us to thumb through the first day of class. After just reading a couple of paragraphs here and there I couldn't let it go. I had to borrow the book that night and devoured it immediately. I bought a copy anyway because I think that all adults who consider themselves educated could benefit from Mooney's writing. I learned more in this text than I had in dozens of expensive textbooks. My copy is worn from being lent out to friends, colleagues, and family. Mooney does not simply teach the symptoms of disability. He teaches interaction, empathy, and most of all that as with all things a sense of humor is a must. I appreciated his tone and found comfort in the idea that while things can seem heartbreaking, it is always okay to laugh. I am beginning my journey in the field of special education. When finding my interactions with students awkward and scary, I can open this book to nearly any section and find insight and support. The people that Mooney discovers on his path are what makes our world colorful, imaginative, and fun. This book is a must have for any educator, family of a person battling with "normal", or anyone that considers himself a well rounded human being. Buy it! You'll be better off because of it.

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