



One Doctor: Close Calls, Cold Cases, and the Mysteries of Medicine

By Brendan Reilly M.D.

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Told by a unique voice in American medicine, this epic story recounts life-changing experiences in the career of a distinguished physician, and is described by *The New York Times* as “a true service [to history]. Dr. Reilly deserves a resounding bravo for telling it like it is.” Malcolm Gladwell agrees: “Brendan Reilly has written a beautiful book about a forgotten subject—what it means for a physician to truly care for a patient.”

Every review of *One Doctor* noted its beautiful writing and compelling story, the riveting tension and suspense. “Remarkable with heart-pounding pace and drama” (*Publishers Weekly*); “a gripping, moving memoir” (Abraham Verghese); “a terrific read” (*The Boston Globe*); “an astonishingly moving and incredibly personal account of a modern doctor” (*The Lancet*).

In compelling first-person prose, Dr. Brendan Reilly takes readers to the front lines of medicine today. Whipsawed by daily crises and frustrations, Reilly must deal with several daunting challenges simultaneously. As Reilly’s patients and their families survive close calls, struggle with heartrending decisions, and confront the limits of medicine’s power to cure, *One Doctor* lays bare a fragmented, depersonalized, business-driven health care system where real caring is hard to find. Every day, Reilly sees patients who fall through the cracks and suffer harm because they lack one doctor who knows them well and relentlessly advocates for their best interests. Filled with fascinating characters in New York City and rural New England—people with dark secrets, mysterious illnesses, impossible dreams, and limitless courage—*One Doctor* tells their stories with sensitivity and empathy, reminding us of professional values once held dear by all physicians.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Reilly's medical narrative nicely intertwines true stories of challenging patients—difficult diagnoses, tough medical and ethical decisions, and the management of critically ill people—with valuable lessons on doctoring and patienthood. A fever of unknown origin, profound thyroid deficiency, severe hypoglycemia, chest pain, delirium, bleeding bladder cancer, and life-threatening infection of a heart valve are some of the medical problems encountered. Reilly, a hospital physician with 40 years of experience, also recounts caring for his elderly parents. He writes about the importance of grunt work in medicine, sustained doctor-patient relationships, and clinical instinct. The doctor confesses, Over the years I've learned to listen to my gut, but that doesn't mean I can trust it. Indeed, medical decision making can be hard and hazardous. Risk and probability always factor into it. A medical problem can be handled in multiple ways, but outcomes are never guaranteed. Benefit and harm are both possibilities. Reilly admits that physicians know lots about regret but rarely discuss it. Empathy and thoughtfulness—*One Doctor* has oodles of it. --Tony Miksanek

Review

"A gripping memoir by a doctor's doctor. Reilly's career has taken him from inner city hospitals to remote rural practices. He writes movingly about what it is like on the front lines: the mysteries, the frustration and the rewards of his chosen calling. A must read for the general public and any young person contemplating a career in medicine." (Abraham Verghese, author of *Cutting for Stone*)

"*One Doctor* contains the essence of all of it: our humanity and nobility – and why we are all entranced by medical dramas of every kind. A stunning book." (Christiane Northrup, M.D., ob/gyn physician and author of the New York Times bestsellers, *Women's Bodies*, *Women's Wisdom*)

"Extraordinary up-close story-telling. Brendan Reilly takes us bedside to witness the dramas and dilemmas of everyday medicine. *One Doctor* is a love story about a man and his lifelong passion for the mysteries and miracles of medicine." (Lisa Sanders, New York Times columnist and author of *Every Patient Tells a Story*)

"Brendan Reilly has written a beautiful book about a forgotten subject – what it means for a physician to truly care for a patient. *One Doctor* shows why this matters today more than ever before." (Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Blink*, *The Tipping Point*, and *Outliers*)

"Heart-pounding pace and drama ... remarkable ... His book is about more than the joy of saving lives and the sadness of losing them – it's an intimate exploration of modern medicine and the human condition." (*Publishers Weekly*)

"Reilly provides valuable insight into modern medicine as he relates his most challenging cases up to the present. Gripping and compassionate." (*New York Daily News*)

"Reilly's medical narrative nicely intertwines true stories of challenging patients with valuable lessons on doctoring and "patienthood." Empathy and thoughtfulness—*One Doctor* has oodles of it." (*Booklist*)

"Compassion, dedication, respect, professional competence, humility. All of these qualities shine through the many stories that make up the bulk of Brendan Reilly's "*One Doctor*." This book is much more than merely a gripping memoir written by an expert storyteller who also happens to be one of the nation's most respected

leaders of academic medicine. Spanning a 40-year career, the deftly woven tapestry of anecdotes and scholarly analysis...nimble alternates between two time frames. Reilly's moving and eloquently written book will be sure to interest not just those working in the medical professions. "One Doctor" is simply a terrific read." (*Boston Globe*)

"Powerful...Many of the diagnoses Dr. Reilly discusses begin as little more than gut feelings. But watching him piece together a diagnosis, scrap by scrap, makes for riveting scenes—part mystery, part thriller. The action is all the more intense because some patients, despite his brilliance, really will die." (*WSJ*)

"Empathy and thoughtfulness – ONE DOCTOR has oodles of it." (*Booklist*)

One Doctor is gutsy and heartfelt, a recommended read for anyone interested not only in modern medicine but also one man's professional and personal journey, as instructive as it is inspirational....Reilly's insightful ruminations make for a fascinating read, further strengthened by fast-paced, first-person accounts of challenging cases." (BookBrowse Editor's Choice)

About the Author

Dr. Brendan Reilly is executive vice chair of medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. A widely published clinical researcher and educator, he has served as the chair of medicine and physician-in-chief at Chicago's Cook County Hospital, which, during Reilly's thirteen-year tenure there, was the inspiration (and setting) for the hit NBC television series *ER*.

Users Review

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Carol Ray:

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