

Study Guide: Three Cups of Tea
by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

Introduction: In Mr. Mortenson's Orbit, p. 1

1. What is David Relin's thesis for this book?

Ch. 1: Failure, p. 7

2. Why did Greg decide to climb K2?

3. How was Greg among the real heroes of the expedition to K2?

Ch. 2: The Wrong Side of the River, p. 17

4. When Greg went out of his way, how did Mouzafer Ali go out of his way to care for him?

5. Compare and contrast the Balti and Sherpa people.

Ch. 3. "Progress and Perfection," p. 27

6. What in Greg's past allowed him to connect with the people of Korphe?

7. What is ironic about this chapter's title?

Ch. 4. Self-Storage, p.34

8. List at least 2 features from Greg's background that would help him fulfill his promise to the people of Korphe.

Ch. 5. 580 Letters, One Check, p. 47

9. For what cause would you sell all the memorabilia from your parents, your favorite car and the gear from your favorite hobby?

Ch. 6. Rawalpindi's Rooftops at Dusk, p. 57

10. Where did the pleasure Greg felt in praying like a Muslim come from?

Ch. 7. Hard Way Home, p. 70

11. Trace on the map located after the title page the Karakoram Highway, the Indus Gorge and the road from Skardu to Korphe.

Ch. 8. Beaten by the Bradlu, p. 83

12. Describe the three setbacks Greg experienced in this chapter and the outcome of each.

Ch. 9. The People Have Spoken, p. 98

13. What further setback did Greg experience upon returning to San Francisco after failing to deliver the building materials to Korphe?

14. What was wrong with the bridge to Korphe that they needed another one?

Ch. 10. Building Bridges, p. 108

15. How did the 800 lb. reels of cable for the bridge get from Askole to Korphe?

16. What did Greg learn from the ibex-hunting trip?

Ch. 11. Six Days, p. 125

17. To what does the chapter title refer?

Ch. 12. Haji Ali's Lesson, p. 136

18. What did the 65 year-old Mouzafer do to help build Korphe's school?

19 Why did Haji Ali confiscate Greg's plumb line, level and ledger?

20. Why did Haji Ali smile after he handed over half the wealth of the village?

Ch. 13. "A Smile Should Be More Than a Memory," p. 154

21. How did Greg hold off the black water of despair?

22. What did Greg learn about the character of the Wasir that he might not have if he had heeded the advice of Haji Ali not to go alone and to seek the hospitality of the village chief?

Ch. 14. Equilibrium, p. 174

23. What kind of equilibrium did Dr. Hoerni need to learn?
24. What kind of equilibrium did Greg Mortenson need to learn?
25. What did the author mean by “the planet’s relentless march toward equilibrium.”

Ch. 15. Mortenson in Motion, p. 184

26. What two adult education centers did Greg start and for what purpose?

Ch. 16. Red Velvet Box, p. 198

27. What was the reason for the judgment kept in the red velvet box?
28. What did Mohammed Aslam Khan have to endure to attend school?

Ch. 17. Cherry Trees in the Sand, p. 211

29. Whose war was causing the refugees in Baltistan?
30. What was the refugees’ chief need?

Ch. 18. Shrouded Figure, p. 225

30. What was the surprising result of Greg’s talk to three people in Apple Valley, MN?
31. Identify two problems Greg needed to address in himself.
32. What did Greg admire about Mother Teresa?

Ch. 19. A Village Called New York, p. 241

33. What made the promise to the Kirghiz so difficult to keep?
34. What about Syed Abbas’ speech did Greg wish some Americans would hear?

Ch. 20. Tea with the Taliban, p. 261

33. What is your impression of the quality of questions the CIA asked Greg during his passport replacement process?

Ch. 21. Rumsfeld’s Shoes, p. 278

34. Following 9/11, what was the general public perception of Greg’s work?
35. Greg told his Pentagon audience that the worst thing the military could do in Afghanistan is _____.
35. Why did Greg turn down \$2.2 million offered from the military after he had just compared the cost of a missile to the cost of a school?

Ch. 22. “The Enemy is Ignorance,” p. 297

36. Why did Greg hand dynamite to the would-be watchman?
37. List at least three benefits to CAI that came from increased donations.

Ch. 23. Stones into Schools, p. 314

38. Why was the jeep stopped in the tunnel?
39. What did the stones painted red signify?
40. Who was shooting across the road?
41. What in Sadhar Khan’s speech indicated he was turning his thoughts towards peace?

Acknowledgements, p. 337

Which of these suggestions makes most sense to you and why?

Summative questions (answer in at least 4 paragraphs):

42. The author contends that Greg Mortenson has waged the war on terror with his schools. Like many war heroes, he has been wounded by his efforts. Describing at least three incidents that have wounded him, tell whether he should be considered a war hero.
43. Doing social justice with the poor involves a distinctive way of using power that enables without imposing. Cite at least three incidents from the book that show how Greg discovered this balance between courage and consultation.

Character matching:

1. Abdullah Rahman, p. 282	A. Mountain climber whose failure to top K2 led to his taking a wrong turn into building schools
2. Ahmed Shah Massoud, p. 247	B. Greg's bodyguard
3. Badam Gul, p. 156	C. Nurmadhar of Askole who objected to the education of girls
4. Christa Mortenson, p. 8, 43	D. Nurmadhar of Korphe, where Greg built the first school
5. Dr. Jean Hoerni, p. 54	E. Porter whom Greg hired to carry his gear down from K2
6. Dr. Marina Villard, p. 49	AB. Charismatic leader of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, murdered by al Qaeda on Sept 9, 2001
7. Faisal Baig, p. 123	AC. A Skardu-based trekking agent who stored the materials for building a school
8. Ghulam Parvi, p. 137	AD. Resident anesthesiologist and mountain climber with 2 girls whom Greg met while working in an emergency room in San Francisco
9. Greg Mortenson	AE. First teacher at the Korphe school
10. Haji Ali, p. 24	BC. The girl whose death from a brain seizure led to an ascent of K2
11. Haji Medhi, p. 151	BD. Badakshan warlord who funneled opium trafficking tariffs into his people's welfare.
12. Hussein, p. 113, 118	BE. Accountant who became chief Pakistani organizer for CAI
13. Mohammad Ali Changazi, p. 84	CD. A butterfly collector who set Greg up to visit the Waziris in the north-eastern part of Pakistan
14. Mouzafer Ali, p. 20	CE. Mullah and Shia scholar whose judgment cleared the <i>fatwa</i> against the CAI schools
15. Sadhar Khan, p. 326	DE. Inventor of the integrated circuit layering process for the silicon computer chip, and major donor of Korphe's school-
16. Syed Abbas Risvi, p. 190	ABC. Greg's driver in Kabul who was severely burned by a land mine.
17. Tara Bishop. P. 130	ABD. Greg's wife, whom he met at a talk by Edmund Hillary

Terminology matching:

1. Alpiniste, p. 13	A. A tribal assembly of elders which makes decisions by consensus, popular for resolving disputes in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan
2. Bedford, p. 71	B. An Islamic school focusing on memorization and interpretations of the Qur'an. The book refers to fundamentalist versions of these schools funded by Saudi Arabia and targeting poor boys in Pakistan and Afghanistan
3. Bradlu, p. 97	C. A conservative, fundamentalist offshoot of Sunni Islam, supported by Saudi rulers' money, which builds mosques and schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan
4. Central Asian Institute, p. 338	D. Pashtun tribal code of defending family, treasure and land
5. dua, p. 73	E. Fiercely private Pashtun tribe that imprisoned Greg for 8 days near Pakistan's border with Afghanistan
6. fatwa, p. 184	AB. A European style of fast, light hiking with a minimum of gear. Dangerous if one climbs too fast without acclimatizing.
7. jirga, p. 4	AC. Term for a village chief among the Balti people of northern Pakistan
8. madrassa, p. 5, 242-3	AD. A judgment by a Muslim authority
9. nurmadhar, p. 24	AE. Former British army transport truck used for heavy loads in Pakistan
10. Wahhabism, p. 242-3	BC. Islamic prayer for a safe journey or for protection
11. Wazir, p. 158	BD. The guest as stranger, as friend, as family for whom one would die
12. What 3 cups of tea represent, p. 150	BE. The river near Korphe that needed to be bridged before the school could be built
13. zan, zar and zameen, p. 161	CD. Corporation Greg started to build schools for Pakistan and Afghanistan.