

2009

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Make It Your Element

New Student Orientation

Summer Reading Program for New Students

Welcome to Arcadia University! Orientation to the University consists of many facets, not the least of which is an Orientation to academic life. As a way of helping you to become an active member of our academic community, it is our tradition to ask new students to read a book during the summer, with the expectation that you will be part of a small discussion group during Fall Orientation in August. The group discussions will be just like many of your classroom experiences at Arcadia. For first-year students, this also will be the first time that you will meet with the members of your Learning Community. Transfer students also will meet in small groups with other transfer students.

You should purchase this book as soon as possible so that you can read it prior to your arrival in August. You should also bring the book with you in August as we will be using them that weekend. You can find this book many places—at bookstores and online.



Can one person make a difference?

This is a question we often ask ourselves when thinking about the problems that exist in our complex global society. *Three Cups of Tea* is a book that helps you to think about this very question. Through Greg Mortenson's story and through his quest to bring education to remote villages in Pakistan, you'll understand how one person can have a dream and with the help of many others bring this dream to fruition.

Greg Mortenson's amazing success began with what seemed like a failure—his inability to reach the summit of K2. And yet out of this seeming failure came a great triumph. While lost and disoriented he wandered into the village of Korphe—on a path that would lead him to his life's work and one that would change the lives of many young people.

This book is a perfect introduction to Arcadia University and your education. We want you to explore the world and to understand cultural difference. We want you to become involved in projects that have an impact on you and on those with whom you work. A text like *Three Cups of Tea* can show you how we are all global citizens and what that means. It can show you how one makes global connections—in this case with Muslim culture and its beauty. At a time when much of our information about Pakistan and Afghanistan comes to us in the context of war, this book will show you about the people and country in the context of peace.

As you read the text, you should not only focus on the story but also begin to think about the issues raised in the book that will be very relevant to your education.

- One of the people to whom Mortenson refers is Helena Norberg-Hodge, who wrote a book called *Ancient Futures*. In this book, Norberg-Hodge discusses whether modern development really improves a culture and its standard of living. After reading what happened when Mortenson had the bridge built to Korphe and after the schools were established, what do you think? Is progress always a positive development? What actually marks the quality of a society?
- The title of the book is explained on p. 150.

“The first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become family, and for our family, we are prepared to do anything, even die.”

Why do you think Mortenson chose this as the title to the book? How is it related to what happened? In trying to understand what this means can you think of something in your own culture that is similar?

- Much of Mortenson’s work was related to providing educational opportunities for young women. On p. 209 he writes, “If you really want to change a culture, to empower women, improve basic hygiene and health care, and fight high rates of infant mortality, the answer is to educate girls.” What do you think of this statement?

These questions are intended to provoke thought—they are not the sort that call for right or wrong answers. It is your reasoned opinion that has the greatest value in this intellectual exercise. And you are not expected to write out answers, but some notes would be useful. Please bring your responses and the book with you when you arrive on campus in late August. The Arcadia University faculty, staff, and I look forward to discussing your reactions to *Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time* when we meet on Saturday, Aug. 29, at 11 a.m.

A *New York Times* Bestseller

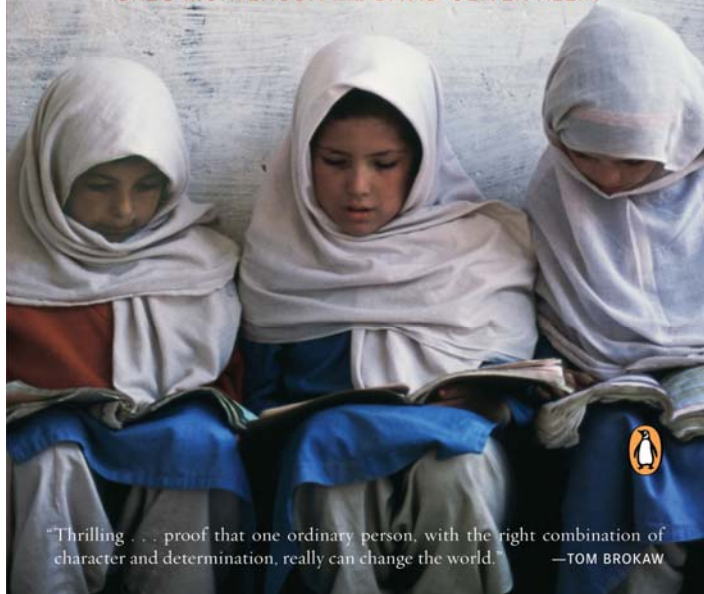


Three Cups of Tea



One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . .
One School at a Time

GREG MORTENSON AND DAVID OLIVER RELIN



"Thrilling . . . proof that one ordinary person, with the right combination of character and determination, really can change the world."
—TOM BROKAW

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