

About this Book

In 1993 Greg Mortenson was an exhausted survivor of a failed attempt to ascend K2, an American climbing bum wandering emaciated and lost through Pakistan's Karakoram Himalaya. After he was taken in and nursed back to health by the people of an impoverished Pakistani village, Mortenson promised to return one day and build them a school. From that rash, earnest promise grew one of the most incredible humanitarian campaigns of our time — Greg Mortenson's one-man mission to counteract extremism by building schools, especially for girls, throughout the breeding ground of the Taliban. Award-winning journalist David Oliver Relin has collaborated on this spellbinding account of Mortenson's incredible accomplishments in a region where Americans are often feared and hated. In pursuit of his goal, Mortenson has survived kidnapping, fatwas issued by enraged mullahs, repeated death threats, and wrenching separations from his wife and children. But his success speaks for itself. At last count, his Central Asia Institute had built fifty-five schools. *Three Cups of Tea* is at once an unforgettable adventure and the inspiring true story of how one man really is changing the world — one school at a time.

<http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio?inkey=2-9780143038252-0>

About the Authors

David Oliver Relin

David Oliver Relin, a contributing editor for Parade and Skiing magazine, has won more than forty national awards for his work as a writer and editor. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time*, has been named nonfiction winner of the 2007 Kiriyama Prize, 2007 Pacific Northwest Booksellers' Book of the Year, *Time* Magazine Asia Book Of The Year, *People* Magazine Critic's Choice, and a BookSense Notable Title.

Relin is a graduate of Vassar and recipient of the prestigious Teaching/Writing Fellowship at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. He received a Michener Fellowship, which provided support for a groundbreaking 1992 bicycle trip across the length of Vietnam. He lived two additional years in Hue, the former imperial capital, reporting about Vietnam opening to the world. He has traveled to, and reported from, much of East Asia. Over the past two decades, Relin has garnered awards for his reports on international social issues and their effect on children. His interviews with child soldiers have been included in Amnesty International reports. His investigation into the way the INS abused children in its custody contributed to the reorganization of that agency. Relin is currently at work on a secret book about food, a children's book with the artist Amy Ruppel, and a novel about Vietnam.

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Greg Mortenson

Greg Mortenson is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Central Asia Institute.

Since a 1993 climb on Pakistan's K2, he has dedicated his life to promote community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson is also founder of Pennies For Peace and co-author of the New York Times best-seller, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School At A Time* (Penguin 2007)

<http://www.gregmortenson.com/welcome.php>

Note to Teachers

Although the book is written in classic journalistic style, Relin is careful to acknowledge in the Introduction that this book is not an objective account and that he is not simply acting as an unbiased reporter, but rather because he wants Greg Mortenson to succeed. It is a story that Relin feels should be told and, as he himself puts it, “If we Americans are to learn from our mistakes, from the flailing, ineffective way we, as a nation, conducted the war on terror after the attacks of 9/11, and from the way we have failed to make our case to the great moderate mass of peace-loving people at the heart of the Muslim world, we need to listen to Greg Mortenson” (5).

As an expository text, *Three Cups of Tea* can be used to teach the primary rhetorical elements of argument analysis and critique: patterns of organization, evidence and its relationship to assertions, and authorial use of persuasive appeals as these relate to audience and purpose. This text allows students to study philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences that shape character, plot, and setting, and to analyze the authors’ implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about their subject. You will find that, in crafting the discussion questions, particular emphasis has been placed on this analytic aspect of underlying values and beliefs.

In the social studies or history classroom this book can serve as catalyst for discussion and research projects focusing on the politics of the Middle East, America’s foreign policy, America’s role in Afghanistan’s conflict with the Soviet Union, the causes of Muslim fundamentalism, to name just a few. In addition, the responses of Americans to Mortenson’s work with the conservative Muslims of Afghanistan in a post 9/11 world

can offer opportunities for analysis and thoughtful discussion. The narrative also deals with other important social issues, including such topics as cultural biases against the education of girls, poverty, American foreign aid, and other nongovernmental humanitarian efforts.

Three Cups of Tea easily lends itself to multiple levels of examination and discussion in various grade levels from high school through college. However, although in-text explanations are always provided for foreign terms, second-language learners may need additional assistance with Relin’s liberal use of American idiomatic expressions such as “getting out of Dodge.”

Teaching Ideas

The themes and ideas addressed in this text are complex—religion, cultural practices, prejudice and stereotypical beliefs about others who are culturally different, political conflict, terrorism, war, poverty, education (particularly attitudes toward the education of girls and women), and other issues. Because of this complexity, this text lends itself well to the type of in-depth analysis and research required in high school language arts (as advocated by the National Council of Teachers of English) and social science courses as well as college courses in a number of disciplines, including first-year College Composition and Rhetoric, Political Science or Cultural Studies.

The reading and analysis questions offered in this guide are tailored to the 11th and 12th grade textual analysis curriculum and are particularly well-suited to address the four strands of language arts instruction: reading, writing, communication, and research (Information on the NCTE standards is downloadable at:

<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>). Activities that engage students in the examination of language use, specifically Relin’s word choice and use of similes and examples, offer students opportunities to better understand how authors seek to influence readers.

The questions offered in this guide are predominantly higher order text-based questions. They require students to examine the text closely and to demonstrate comprehension through explanation, inference, and synthesis, rather than rely on mere recall and retelling. Most questions lend themselves well to in-class group work and discussion or can be assigned as homework or as short in-class writing tasks. Others can be used as prompts for full-length essays.

And finally, *Three Cups of Tea* is of significant instructional value as it offers insight into and knowledge about a country that many Americans might have trouble locating on a map, and a culture unfamiliar to many Americans. To gauge and document the impact of adopting this book into the curriculum, teachers can construct and administer a short survey before and after reading and discussing the book. For ease of scoring, this survey would ideally be presented as a small set of multiple choice and True/False questions that assesses students’ level of knowledge about Pakistan— the country’s location (continent), neighboring countries, major landmarks, major religion, language, current political leader.

Suggested Research Projects

Most people who accomplish exceptional feats are influenced by a variety of sources, both personal and public. An interesting project might be to engage students in examining

Three Cups of Tea for evidence of these influences in Greg Mortenson's life. The book makes it clear that his sense of mission is rooted in his childhood, his upbringing, and the values his parents promoted. Additionally, Mortenson's frequent references to famed climber Sir Edmund Hillary indicate that he was influenced by him. Teachers might wish to have students research the life and work of Sir Edmund Hillary and read his 1964 book about his humanitarian efforts, *Schoolhouse in the Clouds*. Students might be asked to compare the work of these two humanitarians to explore the extent that Hillary and his philanthropic work influenced Mortenson.

Look up *shalwar kamiz* and do a presentation for the class (The internet is a good source for finding this information). Engage the class in a discussion about why Mortenson wears this garment when he works and travels in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Does it fit into the category of mountaineering attire? What might have been his reasons for wearing it when he attempted to climb K2?

Study the geography of Pakistan and Afghanistan and how geographic location might be linked to development in various areas. Include a map in which you trace the locations of Mortenson's school-building and other humanitarian work.

Examine the political and religious belief system of the Taliban. Develop an informative presentation.

Develop and conduct a survey at your school to get a sense of classmates' knowledge about and attitude toward the Muslim cultural tradition of *purdah* and wearing the *burkha*. Starting with the information presented in Chapter 21(289) as a guide, study the attitudes of Muslim women in regard to the *burkha*, and contrast it to typical western

beliefs. In a multimedia presentation that includes the results of your survey in the form of graphs or pie charts, present your findings to the class

Investigate what aid the U.S. promised to Afghanistan after 9/11 and what happened to those promises. What responsibilities do you think America has to the rest of the world, specifically countries where we have initiated military intervention? What reasons and evidence are your ideas based on?

Read the April 6, 2003 *Parade* cover story about Greg Mortenson and the reader response that followed it. Construct a list of reasons given for supporting Mortenson's work. What overarching values and beliefs expressed by readers does your research reveal?

Based on evidence from the book, make a "values list" (ideas, sentiments, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that Mortenson values. Remember that values can be expressed by actions as well as words and also through opposition. For example, if someone condemns war, it becomes evident that she values peace. Prepare a presentation in which you explain how these values comprise Mortenson's philosophical assumptions and beliefs.

Research the similarities and differences, both political and social, between the United States and Islamic countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Develop a presentation in which you explain the differences and then examine similarities that provide the basis of a bridge between our respective countries and cultures.

Beyond the book

Students could learn about "Pennies for Peace" and initiate a "Pennies for Peace"

campaign at their school.

Students could learn about non-governmental organizations (NGOs) developed by young people and set up an NGO at their school to benefit CAI. (Bill Clinton's book, *Giving*, provides rich information and guidance for this project).

Students could learn about service projects developed by young people to benefit local, national, and international communities and develop one or more such programs at their high school.

About this Guide's Writer

Liane Bryson teaches Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University and has served as educational consultant to the Sweetwater Union High School District, San Diego City Schools, the San Dieguito Union High School District, and the Imperial County Office of Education. She has advised on and developed curriculum for grades 7-12 and is the co-developer of the Sweetwater Union High School District's 12th grade Rhetoric and Writing Course.

Introduction

In the Introduction to *Three Cups of Tea* Oliver David Relin, who co-wrote the book with Greg Mortenson, establishes his own credentials and confesses that the book is anything but an objective journalistic account that merely observes and reports events, but rather, an endorsement of Mortenson's work written so that others might join his cause. From the Introduction, readers get to know Mortenson as a most remarkable person, intimately familiar with Pakistan, its terrain and people, and much admired by all who have come into contact with him. Ultimately, Relin concludes that Mortenson's effort to repay the kindness of the villagers sows the seeds of peace and is worthy of our attention and support.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is the function of the introduction? What "work" is it doing?

How do the quotations that precede the chapters guide the reader?

What is the purpose of the chapter titles? How do they work?

Three Cups of Tea is an example of what genre?

What is the difference between this book and a novel?

What does it mean to "be pulled into someone's orbit?" Why did the author choose this phrase for the chapter title, "In Mr. Mortenson's Orbit" (3)?

What details do we learn about Greg Mortenson's character from the introduction?

Who is Oliver Relin? How does he describe himself? What evidence from the Introduction could you use to argue that Relin could be considered an "insider" to Balti life and culture?

According to Oliver Relin, what is the role of journalists and why does he say that, as a journalist, he needs to make a confession (3,5)?

Why does Relin include the quote from novelist Graham Greene (4)? How does it function in relationship to his “confession”?

Why does Relin say “ I listened to hundreds of Mortenson’s allies and enemies” and “We sorted through thousands of slides, reviewed a decade’s worth of documents and videos, recorded hundreds of hours of interviews, and traveled to visit with the people who are central to this unlikeliest of narratives...(5)? What purpose does that information serve for the author and what effect does it have on the reader?

Relin says that Mortensonson has “independently won more hearts and minds than all the official American propaganda flooding the region” (5). What is the meaning of the phrase “winning hearts and minds”? What is the political significance of this term?

What is a *madrassa*? According to Relin, how do they come into existence?

What does Relin believe are the root causes of terrorism? What, according to Relin, is the remedy?

Discussion or Writing:

What beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors does Relin value and what passages in the introduction are indicators of these values?

Does Relin see human nature optimistically or pessimistically? What paragraphs provide evidence for your claim?

What is Relin’s attitude toward the Muslim world? Does he have positive or negative views? What evidence can you provide for your claim(s)?

Chapter 1

This chapter recounts Mortenson's attempt to climb Pakistan's K2, the world's second-highest mountain. Exhausted by the effort to rescue a French expedition teammate, Mortenson fails in his own attempt to summit and becomes separated from his group and from his guide. Disoriented, without food and shelter, he ponders his failure as he prepares to spend a freezing night on the glacier with only a light wool blanket for cover.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is a *shalwar kamiz*? Why do you think Mortenson was wearing one on this expedition? What does it suggest about Mortenson?

What had been Mortenson's goal in climbing K2? How close had he come to achieving his goal? What prevented him from achieving it?

What feelings does Mortenson experience as a result of his failure to summit?

Relin quotes Mortenson as saying that when he and Darsney approached base camp towing the desperately ill Etienne Fine in a bag behind them, "All the other expeditions strolled about a quarter of a mile up the glacier to greet us and give us a hero's welcome" (15). What feelings do you think Mortenson seeks to convey by using this descriptive phrase(13)?

Discussion & Writing

How do Mortenson's actions on K2 reveal his character and his values?

Chapter 2

Mortenson, disoriented, half frozen, and utterly exhausted, stumbles onto his Balti guide, Mouzafer who, worried about Mortenson's weakened condition, makes him drink three cups of *paiyu cha*, the butter tea that forms the basis of the Balti diet and which Mortenson describes as "stinkier than the most frightening cheese the French ever invented" (22). On the seventh day of his descent, while his guide hikes ahead to prepare camp, a weakened and disoriented Mortenson again loses his way and ends up in the tiny village of Korphe perched on a shelf eight hundred feet above the Braldu river, mistaking it for his intended destination, the village of Askole.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is Mortenson's frame of mind after spending a freezing night on the glacier with only a thick wool blanket as protection from the cold?

What do we learn about Mortenson's past when he reports that while retracing his steps to find the trail, he sang in Swahili, is reminded of Kilimanjaro, and has memories that come up "like a warm beacon from the country he had once called home" (18)?

What makes Mortenson think he is near a donkey caravan?

When Mortenson finally locates his guide, Mouzafer Ali, why does Ali immediately cook tea for him?

What is *paiyu cha* and how does Mortenson describe it (21-2)?

Who is Haji Ali? Based on his words and actions, what type of person do you judge him to be?

Discussion & Writing

On page 21, who describes the Balti as conniving, complaining, frustrating, having foul odor and being brigands? What is your reaction to this description? Why do you think they were described in this way?

Chapter 3

Mortenson is welcomed and cared for in Korphe by Haji Ali, the village chief or *nurmadar*. Initially, Mortenson is reunited with his guide Mouzafer who takes him to Askole to meet up with members of the climbing expedition. However, Mortenson feels himself drawn back to Korphe by the feeling, as he puts it, that there, “he’d found something rare” (29). Rather than going on with his teammates, Mortenson, exhausted from the exertions of the climb and its aftermath, returns to Korphe and recuperates at Haji Ali’s house. The pivotal event of this chapter comes when Mortenson asks Haji Ali to show him the village school and Ali shows him Korphe’s children, gathered together without a teacher (because Korphe cannot afford to pay a teacher the salary of \$1.00 per day), practicing their multiplication tables by scratching the numbers into the frozen ground with sticks. Profoundly touched, Mortenson realizes that he can honor his dead sister’s memory in a much more meaningful way than by climbing K2. He promises Haji Ali that he will return and build a school for the children of Korphe.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why did Mortenson return to Korphe after descending to Skardu (29)?

How does Mortenson characterize the typical Westerner’s idea of the Himalayan villages? What is the life of the Balti really like (30)?

What does Mortenson find so impressive about the Korphe children?

Why does Mortenson want to build a school? What event in the chapter acts as catalyst for his decision?

What is the villagers’ attitude toward the Pakistani government (32)?

What do we learn about Greg Mortenson’s character and values in this chapter?

What role does Mortenson’s deceased sister, Christa, play in his decision to do something for the children of Korphe?

How does the author let readers see the characteristics and qualities of the Balti?

How does the epigraph from **Schoolhouse in the Clouds** function in relationship to this chapter? Why did the author choose it?

Discussion & Writing

How does Mortenson's view of his own reasons for climbing K2 change? Why does he consider his decision to build a school more "meaningful" than placing his sister's necklace at the summit of K2?

Chapter 4

This chapter fills us in on Mortenson's childhood in Tanzania, his high school years in Roseville, Minnesota, his stint in the Army as a way of paying for his college education, and his subsequent training as trauma nurse. We learn that after the death of his father at age 48, and the death of his younger sister, Christa, to whom he was singularly devoted, Mortenson moves to Berkeley, California and devotes his energies to mountain climbing. He signs on to serve as a medic on an expedition to K2.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What feelings and values does the author juxtapose in the first paragraph of this chapter? What contrast does he want the audience to reflect on?

What was Greg Mortenson's father's nickname? Why was he called that?

What does the author mean when he writes that Dempsey and Jerene were "wearing their faith lightly" (36)?

What do readers learn about Mortenson's beliefs about the relationship between people when Relin recounts Mortenson's experience at the Moshi International School in Tanzania?

Why is this chapter titled "Self-Storage"?

What claim in the last paragraph on page 36 is supported by the details about Mortenson joining an all-African dance troupe?

What happened on Mortenson's first day in his American high school in Roseville? What do these details reveal about Mortenson?

Chapter 4 contains a number of references to race. What do you think is the author's purpose in including these. How do they help readers understand Mortenson's values?

Discussion & Writing

Three Cups of Tea is dedicated: "To Irvin "Dempsey" Mortenson, Barry "Barrel" Bishop, and Lloyd Henry Relin, for showing us the way while you were here." How does Chapter 4 develop and explain that dedication in respect to Mortenson's father?

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 recounts Mortenson's efforts to raise the money it will take to build a school in Korphe. Mortenson writes 580 letters and twelve grant applications. The only response he receives is a \$100.00 check from Tom Brokaw and a \$623.45 check for the 62,345 pennies collected by the students at Westside Elementary School in River Falls, Wisconsin where his mother, Jerene, is the principal. After months of depression and living in his car to save on expenses, Mortenson's breakthrough comes when a short article written by Dr. Tom Vaughan, a colleague of Mortenson's, catches the attention of a multimillionaire scientist, Dr. Jean Hoerni. Hoerni sends Mortenson \$12,000, the full amount needed to build the school. Mortenson sells everything he owns to buy a plane ticket and catches a flight to Pakistan.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion:

How does Mortenson decide whom to ask for donations for his school?

From whom does Mortenson get instruction in computer literacy? Why is this ironic?

Why does Mortenson feel that the contribution from the children at Westside Elementary was significant?

Who is Sir Edmund Hillary and what is his legacy in Nepal?

What reasons did Edmund Hillary give for his project? How does this compare to Mortenson's reasons?

Who is Tom Vaughan and how does he help Mortenson's cause?

Who is Dr. Jean Hoerni? What impression do you get of Hoerni's personality? What specific words does the author choose to indicate that?

Discussion & Writing

Do you think that at this point, Mortensen sees the building of the Korphe school as an isolated project or a more permanent direction or career path?

Chapter 6

In chapter 6, we meet Abdul Sha, nightwatchman at the Khyaban Hotel in Rawalpindi, who helps Mortenson not only purchase all the building materials for the Korphe school, but also assists him in finding a tailor to sew two new *shalwar kamiz*, the traditional Pakistani trousers and shirt, to replace his ripped and worn out one. We learn more about the cultural ritual of bargaining in Pakistan, haggling about the price of goods over endless cups of tea. Readers gain insight into Mortenson's interest in and respect for the Muslim religion as he asks for and receives instruction in how to pray and perform ablutions the Muslim way. Mortenson reflects on the "pleasure to be found in submission to a ritualized fellowship of prayer" (68), a fellowship that makes him feel as part of the culture and less as an outsider.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is Mortenson suggesting when he calls his room at the Khyaban Hotel "an afterthought" (57)?

Why is Mortenson "swollen with tea" on the second day of his supply purchasing excursion (67)?

Why does the tailor, Manzoor Khan, say "very horrible" when Mortenson puts on his new trousers (67)? What is the meaning of the word "tripwires" within the context of this passage?

When Manzoor Khan instructs Mortenson the second time in how to prepare for Muslim prayer, where do they end up praying?

What does Mortenson experience and realize as he kneels and prays among "one hundred strangers" (68)?

What does the washing ritual symbolize to Muslims?

Discussion & Writing

What do you think prompted Mortenson to ask the tailor, Manzoor Khan, to teach him how to pray according to the Muslim faith? Would you have expected this of the son of Christian missionaries? Why or why not?

Chapter 7

Describes Mortenson travels along the Karakoram Highway from Rawalpindi to Skardu in a truck loaded with building materials for the Korphe school, and provides vivid descriptions of the wild and terrifying beauty of this road. Along the way, Mortenson gets caught in a stand-off between Taliban and Pakistani soldiers. With the skirmish ultimately resolved, the chapter ends with Mortenson's arrival in Skardu and his anticipation of a happy ending to his school-building adventure.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is a Morris (71)? Why is it referred to as “flotsam abandoned in ‘Pindi’ by the ebbing tide of British empire” (71)?

What are “ritualized ablutions” (71) and why are they performed?

What is the meaning of “salaamed” in the phrase “Mortenson salaamed to him” (72)?

Why is Mortenson referred to as an “infidel” (72)?

What transforms Mortenson, at least symbolically in Abdul's eyes, to being like a Pakistani man (72-3)?

Who is Isabella Bird and why does the author include this reference and the quotes? What insights do they offer?

Why does Mortenson say that “the collision of tectonic plates that had occurred in this zone millions of years earlier was more to the point than the collision of Buddhism and Islam that may have occurred in that place hundreds of years ago” (75)? How does this relate to the Isabella Bird reference in the next paragraph?

Discussion & Writing

Why is this chapter called “Hard Way Home”? How do this title and the epigraph that frames the chapter relate to the content?

Chapter 8

We learn of the tug-of-war for a school that evolves when Mortenson arrives in Skardu with the building supplies. First off, the supplies are stored in Ali Changazi's warehouse in his home village of Kuardu. Mortenson describes Changazi as an "operator" and fears that he is not all together trustworthy. Next, Mortenson is virtually kidnapped by various village chiefs, including Changazi, who prepare elaborate feasts and try to convince him to build his school in their village. The pressure and frustration drive Mortenson to tears before he finally prevails and gets Ali Changazi to drive him to the place opposite Korphe where the Braldu river could be crossed in a rickety cable car. At the end of the chapter Haji Ali tells Mortenson that the elders of the village have decided that a bridge must be built first so that the building supplies can be carried to Korphe.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is the "Partition" referred to on p. 83 and how did it affect the village of Skardu?

How does the author describe Mohammed Ali Changazi and how does this description foreshadow a problem?

What is the "tug-of-war" that Mortenson gets caught up in?

When Mortenson is served a lavish meal at Changazi's home village, why does Mortenson run away from the meal and burst out in tears (97)?

Why did the Korphe villagers decide that a bridge must be built before the school?

How does Mortenson's arrival in Korphe via the rickety, one-person cable car foreshadow the problem about to be revealed?

Discussion & Writing

Why is this chapter titled "Beaten by the Braldu"? How is this title explained at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 9

Mortenson returns to San Francisco only to find that his girlfriend, Marina, has left him and reunited with an old boyfriend and that he has been fired from his job at the UCSF Medical Center because he didn't keep his promise to return to work the Thanksgiving shift and missed the Christmas shift as well. The account then shifts back to Korphe to recount that when Haji Ali told Mortenson that a bridge had to be built first, Mortenson stayed in Korphe to learn everything he could about building the bridge. Back in the U.S., down on his luck, and depressed about his failure, Mortenson receives a call from a friend, a climber he much admires. After Mortenson confides his troubles and his failures, the friend advises him to call Jean Hoerni to tell that story and to ask him to pay for the building of the bridge.

Reading comprehension & Writing

How does Mortenson react to the news that he cannot build the school?

Why are the villagers of Korphe not as disappointed as Mortenson about not getting the school built?

What does Mortenson do when he returns to San Francisco?

What is Mortenson's frame of mind when he returns? What words does the author use to indicate this?

Who gives Mortenson the courage to call Jean Hoerni?

Discussion & Writing

What feelings does Mortenson communicate when he says "the people have spoken"?

Chapter 10

Mortenson, having obtained the additional \$10,000 from Jean Hoerni to build the bridge, returns to Korphe to build it. He engages Ali Changazi to assist him in purchasing the building supplies for the construction that will connect Korphe to the wider world. And it tells of Mortenson's participation in an Ibex hunt, which provides him further insight into the life of the Balti, their relationship to nature, and to each other. Mortenson also meets George McCown, an influential American who is trekking to a K2 base camp to visit an expedition he is sponsoring. As former president of Boise Cascade, McCown had been active in the American Himalayan Foundation. McCown takes an immediate liking to Mortenson and, after hearing the story about the school and the bridge, becomes one of his most powerful American advocates. McCown's guide, Faisal Baig, later returns to Korphe to volunteer to become Mortenson's bodyguard. As life and travel for Americans becomes ever more dangerous in Pakistan, Faisal Baig accompanies Mortenson wherever his work takes him in Pakistan and fiercely guards and protects him.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Rather than opening Chapter 9 by telling readers Jean Hoerni's response to Mortenson's failure to build a school and request for more money, Chapter 10 begins rather surprisingly with Mortenson apparently in Skardu negotiating the purchase of steel cable for the bridge. What effect does this have on readers?

From Ali Changazi, who is a bit of a ladies man, Mortenson learns about *muthaa*, a custom still common in parts of Pakistan that grants temporary marriages to married men who have to spend long periods of time separated from their wives. Why do you think Mortenson asks Ali Changazi if women could also be granted *muthaa* (110)?

Why is Haji Ali's wife, Sakina, shocked when Mortenson enters her kitchen to make tea (113)?

What do we learn about Mortenson's feelings and values from his description of the rugged mountain ranges of the Karakoram?

Why do Mortenson and Relin include frequent references to and quotes from famous mountaineers and others who have written about the Karakoram? How do you think these passages function in the book?

What does the Ibex hunt show about the Balti's attitude toward and relationship with nature and the wild animals of their region?

Who are Faisal Baig and George McCown and how do they become important in Mortenson's life (122-3)?

What does the bridge make possible for the people of Korphe (124)?

Discussion & Writing

Why does Mortenson describe the village of Askole, the trailhead for all expeditions heading up the Baltoro, as "contaminated" (111). How does he connect this to Helena Norberg's book *Ancient Futures*? What competing values does Mortenson grapple with? Do you think we should "question progress"? Why or why not?

Chapter 11

Begins with Mortenson feeling very much like an outsider at an event at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco featuring Sir Edmund Hillary. But then Jean Hoerni and James McCown tell Mortenson that they will pay him \$20,000 to cover his living expenses for the coming year. Mortenson meets Tara Bishop, daughter of the late Barry Bishop, a *National Geographic* photographer who was part of the first American expedition to successfully climb Everest. She shares Mortenson's interests and passions, and he describes her as "the one person in the world I was meant to be with" (135). After a six day courtship, they marry. Two weeks later Mortenson is off again to Pakistan, this time to oversee the building of the Korphe school.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What does Mortenson mean when he tells Marina, "The door is closed"?

What do we learn about Mortenson's character from Jean Hoerni's description (127)?

Why did Jean Hoerni think Mortenson would not receive help from Americans? (127)?

What does Mortenson wear to the talk at the Fairmont Hotel (127)? Why does the author include this detail?

To what extent do you think Hillary served as a model for Mortenson?

How does the chapter title, "Six Days," capture the main idea of this chapter?

Discussion & Writing

Mortenson says that the gilded Venetian Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel seemed "full of insiders" while he felt "very much on the margin" (128)? What information does the author present to suggest that the opposite might be true?

Chapter 12

Jean Hoerni endows a foundation and provides Mortenson with a modest but stable yearly salary by making him the director. Mortenson tries to oversee the construction of the Korphe school but is “demoted” to spectator by Haji Ali, who tells him he’s “making everyone crazy” with his Western approach, his anxiety about completing the project and hurrying everyone along. Haji Ali tells Mortenson, “If you want to thrive in Baltistan, you must respect our ways” (150), and explains the idea of “three cups of tea.”

Mortenson feels that this message “to slow down and to make building relationships just as important as building projects” (150), to be the most important lesson he’s ever learned in his life. At the end of the chapter, Mortenson learns yet another lesson, this time about the sacrifices Haji Ali is willing to make for his people so they may become educated. Haji Ali gives in to the demands of Haji Mehdi, Askole’s corrupt nurmadar who forbids construction of the school because it is being built by an infidel. He allows Mehdi to extort twelve rams, half the wealth of Korphe, as a bribe in exchange for permission to build the school. Haji Ali, himself illiterate, tells his people that the pleasure and benefits of the rams are temporary but education will last forever.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why is Mortenson disheartened when he arrives back in Korphe?

In Baltistan, why do women cry, sometimes inconsolably, at their wedding (141)?

How do the Balti pass down their history and culture given that they do not have a written language (141)?

Why did Mortenson worry that praying like the tailor had taught him might be a problem (142)?

Why does the Muslim temple in Korphe contain ancient Buddhist carvings (142)?

What is the *chogo rabak*? What function does it perform for the Korphe villagers? (143)?

What are the goals of the Central Asia Institute?

How does the Korphe bridge “strengthen maternal ties” (147)? What information from earlier in the chapter does the author expect readers to remember so that they might understand this reference?

Who is “the skilled guest” Mortenson brought from the big city” (147)?

Why does Mouzafer say he values Mortenson?

Why does Mortenson drive the Balti so hard to complete the school?

What is “the most important lesson” of his life that Mortenson learns from Haji Ali (150)? What values does this cause him to question? What new values does he come to appreciate?

What is the significance of Sher Taki, the religious leader of Korphe, carrying wood from Skardu to Korphe to build the school (151)?

Discussion & Writing

When Mortenson says, “I thought how much the different faiths had in common, how you could trace so many of their traditions to the same root” (143, what do you think he might be considering? What are your thoughts on this issue?

Chapter 13

Describes Mortenson's ill-fated efforts to get to Waziristan, the most untamed of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Provinces, in 1996, a time of political upheaval. In Peshawar, a frontier town, Mortenson observes Taliban forces moving across the border toward Kabul to overthrow the Afghanistan regime, and refugees moving in the opposite direction, fleeing the fighting. Osama Bin Laden has landed in Jalalabad and called for armed struggle against Americans. Amid this chaos, Mortenson gets a driver willing to take him to Waziristan where he wants to scout for schools. Along the way, Mortenson is kidnapped and held in a cell for eight days for reasons that remain unclear. He is ultimately released through the intervention of an English-speaking Wazir who Mortenson believes to be a Taliban commander. Mortenson tells him about his work in Baltistan, and his plans for building schools in Waziristan. Before taking him back to Peshawar, his captors hold a feast, embrace him warmly, and give him hundreds of rupees for his school-building project.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why were the Taliban converging on Kabul in August 1996 (155)?

What were Osama Bin Laden's reasons in issuing his first call for armed struggle against Americans (156)?

What does Mortenson think of how the Europeans drew divisions across Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India? How is Mortenson's attitude signaled to readers?

Why does Mortenson describe the meal at Haji Mirza's house as "the most primal, barbaric meal I've ever been a part of" (162)?

At the end of Mortenson's confinement in captivity, why does one of his guards give him money (172-3)?

What is the significance of the chapter title?

Discussion & Writing

What is Mortenson's attitude toward the Wazir? What claims, specifically, does Mortenson make about the Wazir that communicate his attitude and feelings?

Chapter 14

Shortly after Mortenson's daughter is born he returns to Pakistan to see the completion of the Korphe school. Trust continues to build between Mortenson and the villagers as he uses his nursing skills to help their lives, including saving the life of a village woman dying of septic shock after childbirth. Mortenson returns to America to bring the dying Jean Hoerni the picture he longs to see, the completed Korphe school, and takes over round-the-clock nursing care for the dying man. Before his death Hoerni endows the CAI with one million dollars.

Reading Comprehension & Writing

Why is Jean Hoerni so impatient to see the completion of the Korphe school?

According to Twaha, Haji Ali's son, how is Mortenson different from other Europeans?

In Chapter 12, Mortenson learns from Haji Ali to make building relationships just as important as building schools. In this chapter, how does Haji Ali use the idea of relationship building to show Mortenson how to go about developing schools in this 'backward' area (177)?

After Mortenson saves the life of Ibrahim's wife and newborn baby, why does Mortenson say he "felt humbled by how much they'd come to trust [him] (179)?"

Discussion & Writing

What details in this chapter illustrate Mortenson's feelings about Jean Hoerni?

Chapter 15

We learn that a *fatwa*, a religious ruling, has been declared against Mortenson by the religious leader of a village in the Braldu valley because Mortenson is educating girls. Mortenson returns to Pakistan and meets with Pakistan's supreme Shia cleric, Syed Abbas, who offers to help him in any way he can. Mortenson builds and inaugurates three more schools in record time, adds rooms to an existing school, provides the funds to pay the salary of teachers at yet another school, and builds a Women's Vocational Center where the Korphe women, under the tutelage of a master tailor, relearn the rich tradition of Balti sewing and weaving.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is a *fatwa*? Why was one declared on Greg Mortenson (185)?

When Syed Abbas, the religious leader of Pakistan's Shia Muslims, meets Mortenson, what character traits does he ascribe to Mortenson?

What causes Mortenson to marvel at how efficiently he'd been able to summon members of the CAI to Skardu after the *fatwa* was issued (187)?

Why does Mortenson call his group of CAI associates a "mismatched group"?

What was Jean Hoerni's advice to Mortenson about the villagers who had tried to bribe him into building a school in their village rather than in Korphe? What action does Mortenson take as a result of that advice?

Why does Syad Abbas, the Shia leader, decide that Mortenson does not seek to bring down Pakistani politics or religion?

Who and what causes environmental damage in the Baltoro each climbing season?

How does Mortenson set up the recycling program for the porters?

Discussion & Writing

Mortenson established a recycling program for the porters that removed more than a ton of tin cans, glass, and plastic from K2. What ecological responsibilities do you think mountaineers and other expedition members have?

Chapter 16

The *fatwa* against Mortenson is lifted and the Supreme Council of Ayatollahs in Iran gives its blessings to his work because it follows the highest principles of Islam. Mortenson meets Mohammed Aslam Khan, the *nurmadhar* of Hushe, who asks Mortenson to build his next school there. Aslam's daughter, Shakeela, influences a change in attitude among the people of Hushe regarding the education of girls. Mortenson makes continued CAI funding contingent upon the increase in enrollment of girls by 10% a year. Mortenson and the CAI board are careful to offer a balanced education rather than a curriculum dominated by Western or American ideals and culture. Mortenson builds a freshwater supply for five villages, hires eighty teachers for four thousand Afghan students in refugee camps across northern Pakistan, brings an American eye surgeon to Pakistan to provide free cataract surgery, and sends the only eye doctor in Baltistan to Nepal to receive specialized training. Mortenson's school-building projects and other humanitarian works make Mortenson a famous and revered person in Pakistan.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What does the chapter title, "Red Velvet box," refer to?

What event does the "Supreme Council's ruling" refer to? Why does Mortenson envision putting rockslides and avalanches in its path?

What does the Koran say about the education of girls?

What reasons does the Supreme Council give for permitting Mortenson's work (199)?

How does Mortenson cut the infant mortality rate of a community of two thousand people in half (201)?

What character traits does Mortenson ascribe to Syed Abbas? Why does Mortenson value these traits in a religious leader (201)?

Why is building a school in Muzaffer's village a priority for Mortenson (203)?

Why does Mortenson refer to the Khane school as “doomed” (206) and decide to build a school upside in Hushe, Aslam’s village?

How does Aslam describe Mortenson?

What beliefs in Hushe is Shakeera changing through her example (208)?

What, according to Mortenson, is the best strategy for bringing change to villages (209)? Why? How does Mortenson influence this strategy?

What is the central tenet of the CAI’s educational philosophy (209)?

Discussion & Writing

What expectations about the relationship between people are expressed in Aslam’s comment that “Although many thousand climbers had passed through my village for many years, not one had offered to help our children” (205)? Do you think climbers passing through villages have such a responsibility? Why or why not?

Chapter 17

Central to this chapter is the Kargil conflict, the hostilities between India and Pakistan that flared up in the spring of 1999 and caused a flood of refugees from the Gultori valley to flee to Skardu. Although governmental and international agencies were unwilling or unable to assist with the most basic needs of the refugees, specifically, the need for fresh water, conservative mullah Syed Abbas and Mortenson build the first uplift water scheme in the history of northern Pakistan. They also build a school which allows the girls of the settlement to receive their first formal education. On the basis of these humanitarian works, we come to understand more clearly what David Oliver Relin meant when he said in the Introduction that Greg Mortenson “has independently won more hearts and minds than all of the official propaganda flooding the region” (5).

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What is the reason for the fighting that has suddenly flared in Kashmir (213)?

The author opens the chapter with the story of 10 year-old Fatima Batool rather than with the detailed explanation of the Kargil Conflict. Why do you think the author chose this structure?

Who are the Kabulis (215)?

Who are the two men who ask Mortenson to have tea with them at the Indus Hotel (215-17)?

Why does Mortenson feel like he needs to suppress a smile as he imagines making a request to the CAI board to build schools in Daryle Valley?

What values of Islam does Mortenson highlight when he describes Syed Abbas’ effort to bring water to the Kardu refugee camp? What is the effect of comparing those values to the Torah and the Bible?

What is the average age of a 5th grade student at the Gultori Girls Refugee School in Skardu, and why (223)?

What is the meaning of the chapter title “Cherry Trees in the Sand”?

Discussion & Writing

How does what Fatima Batool says about Americans at the end of this chapter connect to what David Relin said in the Introduction about Mortenson's work winning hearts and minds (5)?

Chapter 18

The CAI is having financial worries, and Mortenson is frustrated as he seeks unsuccessfully to solicit funds from potential donors. Mortenson travels to Asia to learn more about rural development. After visiting the Bangladesh Rural Reconstruction Association's girl's education initiative, he is reenergized in his belief that educating girls is the way to create cultural and political change. On a brief layover in Calcutta, Mortenson sits by the bed of the just deceased Mother Teresa and marvels at how "such a tiny person had such a huge effect on humanity" (237). Back home, he is unable to find a way to help the more than ten thousand Afghans, mostly women and children along the Tajik border who were slowly starving to death after fleeing the Taliban. The only hopeful note is the birth of Mortenson's son, Khyber Bishop Mortenson.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why is Mortenson traveling around the country giving talks (225-6)?

According to a February 1999 article by Terry Richard in the *Oregonian*, how does Mortenson's work in Pakistan reduce political tensions (228)?

Why do Mortenson's CAI associates in America become frustrated with him (229-30)?

How is Mortenson's notion that it is vitally important to educate rural girls confirmed on his flight from Dacca to Calcutta (234)?

What does Mortenson want to point out when he reports that "Wealthy contractor Tom Lang showed [Mortenson] off to his guests with the same pride of ownership with which he pointed out his custom bathroom fixtures" (232)?

How do the events of the chapter lead up to the question Amira asks: "Do little babies like that grow up to be big like us? (240)?"

What does the chapter title, "shrouded figure" refer to? Why do you think the author chose this title for the chapter?

Discussion & Writing

Why do you think Mortenson failed to make anyone care about the Afghan women and children refugees? Can you draw parallels to current humanitarian crises?

Chapter 19

While Mortenson and George McCown are on their way to the inauguration of McCown-financed humanitarian projects in northern region of Pakistan along the Afghan border, they hear of the New York Trade Center attacks and immediately find themselves encircled by a protective cordon of Pakistani friends and military who safeguard them until a safe transport out of Pakistan can be arranged. At the inauguration of the Kuardu Primary School, Syed Abbas, the supreme religious leader of Baltistan, gives an eloquent and moving speech in which he offers the apologies of Muslims and asks for the Americans' forgiveness, emphasizing the true values of the Muslim faith: justice, tolerance, and charity.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why do many parents see the *madrassa* system as the only educational opportunity for their sons (243)?

When Mortenson says "I don't want to give the impression that all *Wahhabi* are bad" (243), what character trait is revealed to readers?

Why do you think that rather than presenting the facts himself, Relin quotes "Ahmed Rashid, perhaps the world's leading authority on the link between *madrassa* education and the rise of extremist Islam" (243)? What effect do the quotes from this expert have?

What belief system does Aziza Hussain, Zuudkhan village's first ever healthcare worker, say has been changed as a result of her CAI funded healthcare training (249)?

What impression of Mortenson's work in Pakistan is confirmed for readers by the story of Mortenson's encounter in the fall of 2000 with Kirghiz nomads from Afghanistan who had ridden for six days to reach Mortenson when they learned he was in the area (251)?

How does the explanation of the Saudi funded rise in Wahhabi madrassas, mosques and proselytizing at the beginning of the chapter set the stage for better understanding the 9/11 events?

Why did Faisal Baig post guards around the house where Mortenson and McCown were staying (253)?

When Sayed Abbas, the supreme religious leader of Baltistan, speaks at the inauguration of the Kuardu primary school four days after the 9/11 attacks, what Muslim values are

emphasized? What image of Muslims are readers presented with (256-7)?

Discussion & Writing

Why does Mortenson feel that now more than ever he needed to dedicate himself to education? What kind of education do you think is necessary to achieve the changes Mortenson says education can bring?

Chapter 20

Following the events of 9/11, Mortenson spends time in Peshawar talking to American journalists, giving information about his work, and asks that Americans not lump all Muslims together. He is viewed with suspicion and questioned by U.S. officials in Nepal when he goes there to get a replacement passport. Upon his return to America, Mortenson is inundated with a barrage of hate mail so virulent that he fears for the safety of his family. The chapter ends with Mortenson giving a talk at a CAI fundraiser organized by John Krakauer, renowned journalist and author of the recent bestseller *Into Thin Air*, and with Mortenson feeling proud of all he has so far accomplished.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

Why do security guards for the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad inspect Mortenson's car with guns drawn and probe under the car with mirrored poles (262)?

Why is the world's press corps camped out at the Islamabad Marriot at this time?

Who does journalist Kathy Gannon refer to as "clowns, jugglers, and high-wire acts" (264)?

From Mortenson's description of the journalists crowding together at the Marriot, what impression do we get of the press corps? What does Mortenson conclude is their intent?

What information about the Taliban leaders do readers glean from the author's account of Mortenson's "Tea with the Taliban" (267)? How does this information connect to Mortenson's work and CAI goals?

Why is Mortenson detained and questioned at the American embassy in Katmandu, Nepal where he goes to get a replacement passport (269-72)?

What does Mortenson think are the real causes of terrorism and how does he seek to do battle against them?

What is the "new America" Mortenson's wife refers to when Mortenson asks her why, America is decorated like it is the Fourth of July (274)?

What comments published in the *Denver Post* and the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* garnered Mortenson a barrage of hate mail from American readers (275)?

Why does Mortenson say he would expect such a response perhaps from ignorant village mullahs but not from his fellow Americans?

Discussion & Writing

When Mortenson takes *Denver Post* reporter Bruce Finley with him to visit the Shamshatoo Refugee Camp in Peshawar, where nearly 100 CAI-supported teachers worked to teach refugee children, Finley files a story in which he quotes Mortenson as saying that “The only way we can defeat terrorism is if people in this country where terrorism exists learn to respect and love Americans, and if we can respect these people here” (268). What values does Mortenson emphasize here? What do you anticipate the reaction of American readers will be?

Chapter 21

Mortenson's travels to Afghanistan works to get the schools destroyed by America's war against the Taliban back in operation. Upon his arrival, he makes friends with his taxi driver, Abdullah Rahman and his friend Hash who drive him around Kabul and outlying villages to assess the damage. In addition to being worried about the devastation he sees in Afghanistan, Mortenson finds out that his newest project, a nearly completed coed school in Hemasil, in Pakistan's Shigar Valley has been destroyed by a band of thugs organized by Agha Mubarek, a powerful village mullah who has also issued a *fatwa* banning Mortenson from working in Pakistan. Gulam Parvi seeks to settle this dispute in Skardu's Islamic Court and advises Mortenson to work in Afghanistan until the issue is resolved. Mortenson and Julia Berman work in Kabul assessing damage and distributing supplies. Back in America, Mortenson seeks to influence Congress to make good on its promise to deliver aid to and rebuild Afghanistan. While he is politely received, he senses that the victims in Kabul had been reduced to "collateral damage." As 2002 turned into 2003, Mortenson senses that the government and the military have another agenda as talk turns to weapons of mass destruction and headlines announce the approaching war with Iraq.

Reading Comprehension & Writing

What is Mortenson's goal in speaking to large crowds in American cities post 9/11 (280)?

How is Mortenson's recalling that his address in Minnesota to two hundred empty chairs "had turned out well in the end" borne out again at the talk at the big Sky Ski Area attended by only six people (280)?

Why is Mortenson worried about Julia Berman's safety when they stop for bread and tea at the Spin Ghar Hotel in Jalalabad (286-7)?

What western belief about or attitude toward the Muslim traditions and culture does Julia Berman reveal when she asks Uzra Faizad, the principal of the Durkhani School in Kabul why women in Afghanistan still wear the *burkha* even though the Taliban is gone (289)?

Why does Mortenson emphasize the importance of America keeping its promise of aid to Afghanistan?

Who is calling the victims of America's war in Afghanistan "collateral damage" and why does Mortenson think the American government is behaving unconscionably (294)?

Why does Mortenson not want to accept money for schools from the American military?

Discussion & Writing

Mortenson is the only American that Hash, the young ex-Taliban fighter, has ever met (283). Similarly, most Americans have never met an Iraqi or an Afghani, yet distrust and hate flow freely both ways. What forces and values are at work here?

In a letter to the editor published in the *Washington Post* on December 8, 2001, Mortenson asked: "Why do Pentagon officials give us numbers on Al Qaeda and Taliban operatives killed in bombing raids but throw their hands in the air when asked about civilian casualties" (279). How does this question reveal Mortenson's political assumptions and values? How would you answer Mortenson's question?

Chapter 22

Mortenson and the CAI achieve notoriety as a story on his work written by Kevin Fedarko appears in *Parade Magazine* on the eve of American forces' attack on Baghdad. There is an enormous outpouring of letters of support and donations to CAI from Americans who agree with Mortenson's approach to fighting the war on terror through education. With over a million dollars contributed by *Parade* readers, Mortenson returns to Pakistan to share his fortune with his Pakistani staff by way of raises and to construct new schools. With the *fatwa* resolved in Mortenson's favor, he applies himself with renewed vigor to his mission of reducing ignorance and poverty and to building relationships with the Muslim world one school at a time. He takes great pride in Jahan and Tahira's success as the CAI's first scholarship students in Skardu and in their plans to make their professional work benefit not only Korphe but the entire Braldu valley and he takes great satisfaction in seeing the work he began together with Jahan's grandfather, Haji Ali, bear such rich fruit only ten years later.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

What was Kevin Fedarko's objective in coming to Korphe?

Why does Fedarko think what Mortenson is doing is more important than the story he'd come to report on?

Why were local village elders at first "amazed that a grown man would waste hours inquiring about the hopes and dreams of girls" (299)?

What did Mortenson appreciate about Pakistani president Musharaf (309)?

What does Jahan mean when she says she is "revising her goals upward" (313)?

What is the fruit of "five hundred and eighty letters, twelve rams, and ten years of work" that Mortenson thinks Haji Ali would have been proud to witness (313)?

Discussion & Writing

When the *fatwa* issue is resolved in Mortenson's favor, why does Mortenson call the

experience “humbling”? Explain Mortenson’s mention of Guantanamo Bay. What connection or comparison is Mortenson making?

Chapter 23

We are reminded again that America is not fulfilling its promise to help Afghanistan for a second time (the first being the abandonment of the mujahadeen after helping them to defeat the Soviets). We learn of the destruction of the land by the Taliban, the poverty, and of the resurgence of the opium trade. In Commandhan Sadhar Khan, Mortenson meets a warlord with a vision, wisdom, and concern for his people reminiscent of Haji Ali. As he plans to build schools for the villages already identified by Khan, Mortenson sees the path of his future—building schools in Afghanistan—clearly unfolding before his eyes.

Reading Comprehension & Discussion

When Mortenson makes good on a promise he made to a group of Kirghiz men who rode six days to speak to him about building schools in their villages, what do we learn about Mortenson's values and character?

What incongruity is evident in the more usual use of the plane General Bashir wants to use to fly Mortenson directly to Faizbad (317)?

What is a *commandhan*?

What does the future hold for Mortenson now that he has met Sadhar Khan?

Discussion & Writing

What role does Mortenson think America should play in Afghanistan? What is your position on the role America should play there?