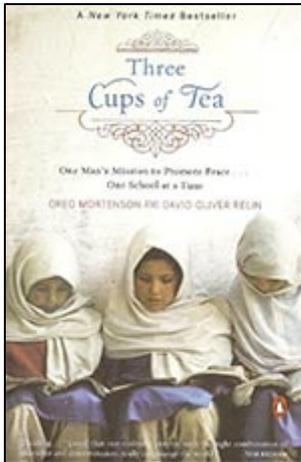


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- February 2008



I'm sure you've noticed by now that I only review books that I like. Perhaps if I did this more often, I might critique books, but I doubt it. I know how much nasty reviews hurt, and life is too short to be deliberately cruel. But of all the books I've read because I LOVE to read, some stand lighthouse tall above the rest. *Three Cups of Tea*, written by David Oliver Relin, and lived by Greg Mortenson, is a lighthouse kind of book.

I bought this book because a woman working in the bookstore in Truckee, CA pointed me in the direction of display of books with info cards from the staff and staff picks labels. She put this book in my hands and said, "You have got to read this book." I need to write to her with thanks for her guidance.

Greg Mortenson failed his climb of K2, and on the way down ended up in a village where he saw children in vacant field in Pakistan, doing math using a stick in the dirt. They had no teacher because the village couldn't afford one. Greg promised to return and repay their care by building them a school. This school was the first of more than fifty, all in areas where there are no schools, especially not for girls. From 1993 to the present, Greg has devoted his life and every dime he has raised to building not only schools but health centers, in a land so impoverished by war, harsh climate, and lack of education that other villages are crying for him to come to them too.

*Three Cups of Tea* is about one man making a difference in this world, not just in his own country. He saw a need and committed to fulfilling that need.

To write this book, David Relin traveled with Mortenson across Pakistan, into Afghanistan, and saw first hand how the ordinary people there respect him and clamored for his help. An article about Greg in *Parade Magazine* took his efforts to new levels as Americans became aware of what he was doing, and realized they could help financially in building schools.

As an author, I have a hard time comprehending the research, the travel, and the time it took to write this book, let alone the danger due to the Taliban and other terrorists. I do a lot of research, but I don't go so far as living in another country and society to make my story accurate. I tell stories, this author writes about reality.

So what does this mean to writers, and how could it make a difference in your life? Imagine taking someone else's life and current adventures and condensing all the incredible events he saw and took part in into one book. Getting a handle on what to include and what to leave out boggles my mind. Talk about living what you are writing about.

Most of us are not given chances like this, but how many opportunities have we let go on by? What people do you know who have amazing stories, but who don't have the time

or capabilities to write them? What are you doing to hone your skills so that if an adventure or opportunity falls into your lap, you can go with it?

Reading and keeping an eye on the publishing market is one thing to do. Talking to new people, not just staying with ones you've always known, might open a door. Tending to your curiosity bump (as children we had huge ones but we've let them shrink) will help open new vistas. If you read something and it piques your interest, follow up on it. You never know where that trail might lead.

One of the comments in *Three Cups of Tea* has stayed with me, and makes me want to find ways to become part of Mortenson's mission. "If you educate the women in a society, the society will change and grow." Perhaps that is why some societies are very careful to keep their women hidden and in the dark.

May this be *your* year to find a new adventure. Some adventures you will find in books at your local bookstore.

Until then,

*Happy Readin' and Writin' from Lauraine*