



## **Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace With Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan**

*Greg Mortenson , Khaled Hosseini (Preface) , Rika Iffati Farihah (Translator)*

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From the author of the #1 bestseller *Three Cups of Tea*, the continuing story of this determined humanitarian's efforts to promote peace through education.

In this dramatic first-person narrative, Greg Mortenson picks up where *Three Cups of Tea* left off in 2003, recounting his relentless, ongoing efforts to establish schools for girls in Afghanistan; his extensive work in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan after a massive earthquake hit the region in 2005; and the unique ways he has built relationships with Islamic clerics, militia commanders, and tribal leaders. He shares for the first time his broader vision to promote peace through education and literacy, as well as touching on military matters, Islam, and women—all woven together with the many rich personal stories of the people who have been involved in this remarkable two-decade humanitarian effort.

Since the 2006 publication of *Three Cups of Tea*, Mortenson has traveled across the U.S. and the world to share his vision with hundreds of thousands of people. He has met with heads of state, top military officials, and leading politicians who all seek his advice and insight. The continued phenomenal success of *Three Cups of Tea* proves that there is an eager and committed audience for Mortenson's work and message.

## **Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace With Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan Details**

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Author : Greg Mortenson , Khaled Hosseini (Preface) , Rika Iffati Farihah (Translator)

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# From Reader Review Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace With Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan for online ebook

## Claudia says

Mortenson shows such a power and a confidence in his story in this book. I think one reason is because he keeps the spotlight OFF himself. He tells moving stories of others, making them the heroes and heroines of his book. He talks honestly about how uncomfortable he feels with attention, and he generously shares the credit for the successes of his schools with so many others.

His stories made me laugh out loud, like the Taliban sympathizers who visit a school and play gleefully on the playground equipment, then demand a school -- and playground -- of their own. He made me cry as he told the stories of the children who lost their opportunities to go to school, one young boy stepped on a landmine and never got to attend school. And Farzana who explained to Dr. Greg what the devastating earthquake in Kashmir felt like...who explains she and the other girls in school need desks to feel safe.

Mortenson manages to find amazing, wise mentor: his father, Haji Ali, the village elder from the first book who inspired Greg to build his first school, and in this book, Abdul Rashid Khan, the Afghan elder whose school took 10 years to build.

Mortenson's passion for education, especially the education of girls, has exacted a terrible price for him and his family. But they continue to go forward, making a mark on the future.

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## Dolly says

As a followup to *Three Cups of Tea*, I found this book to be very interesting and timely. If you haven't read the first book, you might not be able to follow along as easily with the various people and places mentioned, although the books do stand alone. It is a quick read and I was highly impressed with the way that the small organization, Central Asia Institute, has blossomed with financial support and additional manpower to become a powerful force in bringing much-needed education to children (especially girls) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It's also heartening to know of the efforts made on behalf of those strucken by the terrible earthquake in Pakistan in 2005. Although the author, Greg Mortenson, wearis of the effort of fundraising, pressing the flesh and speaking before thousands of people on a daily basis, he has shown what you can accomplish with a lot of publicity and a ton of dedication.

This book isn't as much of a love-fest for Greg as the other book; he shines the spotlight on the members of his "Dirty Dozen" for accomplishing the lion's share of the work in country. And he shows his weaker side and his frustrations when things don't work out as planned. But it also shows his faith in others and his willingness to let go when he has to.

Sometimes I find some unusual coincidences in my eclectic reading choices. While reading this book, I found yet another coincidence that leaves me wondering how truly random our choices are. Greg Mortenson mentions a few times in this book that he communicated with Lt Col (and later Col) Christopher Kolenda, who was the Commander at FOB (Forward Operating Base) Naray, in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan. The book also mentions that Col Kolenda (when he was a Major) authored the book, *Leadership: The Warrior's Art*, which I just happen to be in the middle of reading right now. It is not a popular or best-selling

book (it is part of the Army War College library of books) and I just happened to come across it. One of the biggest criticisms of Kolenda's book was that it was written pre-9/11 and lacks the relevance of today's battles. I'm sure that during his time in Afghanistan he was given more than enough opportunities to demonstrate leadership in today's counterinsurgency context, and according to Greg, he excelled.

But anyway, this is not a review of Kolenda's book. So I will finish by merely saying that I really liked this book. I'm happy that CAI's plans and efforts are fruitful and I wish them nothing but the best in the years to follow. I truly believe that it is their efforts that will empower the people of those war-torn and poverty-striken areas to rise above their misery and make a better life for themselves and generations to follow. I hope that it will also bring about a lasting peace, something that bombs and bullets won't do.

new words: sobrietet, interregnum

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### **Ben Warren says**

Things to think about from the first 50 pgs:

- 1) Girl Effect - changing communities through the education of women
- 2) "Last person First" Principle - is this a good principle in missions as well?
- 3) Mortenson's raggedy Pakistani staff. Is it much different from the 12 disciples - uneducated, yet perfectly in tune with the local culture and passionate for the cause of their leader.

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### **Tony Taylor says**

An outstanding read ... if you enjoyed "Three Cups of Tea," you will enjoy this more... it is the content and the purpose that makes it so great. Unfortunately I think that some people were turned off by the title of his first book by not understanding the message (it is not about little old ladies sipping tea and gossiping.) "Stones into Bridges" picks up where his first book left off, and is current right up to October 2009.

Greg Mortenson has received well deserved recognition for what he and his non-profit organization, the Central Asia Institute are doing in both Pakistan and Afghanistan to bring schools to the most impoverished parts of those countries against all odds. To date they have established 131 schools, many of them for girls only, and in doing so have gone a long way in helping establish peace in the region as well as good will toward Americans. Mortenson has gained the confidence and respect of leaders both in the civil and military segments... he has informally advised both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon as well as the generals on the ground in Afghanistan. Fortunately for the reader, the book is well written and is not dry reading despite the fact that the reader gains a tremendous insight into the people, their customs, and the geography of the area.

Read this book, and when you are finished, go to its Web site to learn more about this story and to see more great photos.

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### **Michelle says**

Amazing read especially when you think that the only news coming out of Pakistan and Afghanistan is bad.

Would some body please nominate Greg Mortenson for a Nobel Peace Prize. He and his Dozen" have done more for world peace, interfaith understanding, and girls' education in 15 years than "Dirty anyone--even he--would have ever dreamed possible. He has coordinated the building of over 100 schools, where thousands of children, mostly girls are receiving a moderate, secular education. Books not bombs are going to win peace in Central Asia.

The narrative of his Afghan Adventure starts off like a scene from Lawrence of Arabia when a group of "Kirghiz horsemen from Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor rode into Pakistan and secured a promise from Mortenson to construct a school in an isolated pocket of the Pamir Mountains known as Bozai Gumbad," which the Afghans' call the "Rooftop of the World." Bozai Gumbad is the last place that anyone, including the Afghan government, think to put a school and that is exactly what drives Mortenson, who has a "the last best place" sticker on his beat-up CAI briefcase. "Those words affirm my belief that the people who in the last places--the people who are most neglected and least valued by the larger world--often represent the best of who we are and the finest standard of what we are meant to become. This is the power that last places hold over me, and why I have found it impossible to resist their pull."

His work with the communities is so respected and successful the US Military has started to work with him and his first book, *Three Cups of Tea* is on the mandatory reading list for all Counterinsurgency forces in Central Asia. Mortenson credits the military wives for the reading list recommendation. The military community is also one of the CAI's biggest financial supporters--elementary schools that serve military bases have collected more Pennies for Peace (P4P) than other elementary schools.

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Chapter 11 has this H.G. Wells quote on the page, "History is a race between education and catastrophe." Mortenson is winning the race with the stones he turns into schools.

### **Briynne says**

I ran to the library to get this pretty much the moment I finished *Three Cups of Tea*, and I found it to be a enjoyable continuation of the story. Most of my thoughts on this are already mirrored in my review of the first book, so I won't repeat myself. The only real qualm I had was that the first 100 pages of this were a lot like a paraphrase of the last 100 pages of *Three Cups of Tea*, where the author tries to lay the groundwork for how his charity attempted to make headway into Afghanistan.

One thing I liked about this book was that it was less prone to glossing over negatives than the first book. Maybe that has to do with the fact that the co-author for *Three Cups of Tea*, didn't collaborate on this one, and I'm hearing more of Mortenson's voice? Either way, I enjoyed his occasional bluntness; it was very relatable.

On a separate note, I had a chance to Google this NGO when I was roughly in the middle of *Stones into Schools*, and saw all the to-do from a couple years ago stemming from a 60 Minutes exposé. Here's my thoughts: is Mortenson a self-aggrandizing jerk who is only working for celebrity? No. Is he living it up

stateside like one of those super-sleazy televangelists who are supposedly do-gooders but are actually robbing from the offering plate? No. Is it possible that he's not much of a book-keeper but was possibly too busy trying to save the world to itemize receipts? Yup. Was he personally responsible for coordinating the building of over 100 schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan that welcome girls in areas where they are desperately needed? Definitely. Ok - so who really cares if he maybe made the story a little more interesting for the sake of creating a book that would captivate the hearts, minds, and pocketbooks of people in the interest of building more said schools? Not me. Go for it, Greg. Job well done.

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### **Chuck says**

This book, which picks up where *Three Cups of Tea* left off, is different and better than Mortenson's first book about his quest to build schools for small villages in Pakistan and Afghanistan. To begin with, there is no ghost writer. This is a first person account. So unlike the last book, it is more personal, and the reader gets more insight into the passion about school building that has consumed Mortenson. Some of the stories he tells are quite touching. On the road to a distant mountain village, Mortenson meets an orphaned eleven-year-old mechanic who works for food and shelter. He also tells the tale of a young boy who is blown up by an old Soviet land mine while he watches the school he wants to attend being built.

What is also missing is a lot of the biographical details that appear in the first book. Thus, the book reads more like an adventure story than a memoir. We really see how Mortenson and his staff sacrifice to promote peace and literacy in a very violent and dangerous part of the world. We see their struggles to reach remote villages and see the harsh lives of people he tries to help.

This book contains a lot of historical, geographical, and cultural information about this mysterious part of the world. Mortenson really tries to educate the reader about the world he works with every day.

And of course, the primary focus of this book is the message. If we really want to defeat the Taliban and Islamic extremism and promote health and literacy, then building schools in remote villages is a great first step. Mortenson proves his thesis again and again and inspires us to do something about it.

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### **Laurel says**

If you haven't read this yet, put down what you ARE reading, and head to the library or bookstore for this book. Actually, if you haven't read Mortenson's first book, *Three Cups of Tea*, read that first to get the background, and then dive into this one.

This true story of what one man can start - in this case, educating girls in the most remote parts of Central Asia - the mountains of Pakistan and Afghanistan - is not just an inspiring read, but an amazing testament to the power of what people can accomplish when they have an overpowering mission. Mortenson's colleagues in Asia come to life in this book, working respectfully with the locals while they drive themselves unmercifully to accomplish miracles at warp speed. In the meantime, Mortenson is driving himself sick in the states, raising funds for their work and positively influencing U.S. military commanders.

I had to stop after each chapter to remind myself to breathe - I was so amazed. Beautiful photographs and delightful quotes adorn the chapter headings as well.

Give this to all your friends. The outcome of Mortenson's work is vital to the health of the world.

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### **Savitri says**

Amazing book! Amazing person! Amazing people!! A MUST read!!!

I thought Three Cups of Tea was great but I have to say, this one is way better. The book is more personal, written in first person, and there is more history. I've definitely learned a little bit more about Afghanistan and its' diverse and wonderful people (and not wonderful). The book has also made me a bit more warm and fuzzy towards the military... which seems odd coming from an Air Force spouse. It's just that despite my support for the troops, esp. my husband, and my understanding that sometimes people do need some butt kicking I am not for war - it just seems so barbaric and a waste of many things. So for me, as somebody who's about education and diplomacy, it was nice to know that there are many people in the military who also believe that it's not all missiles and guns.

I love all the stories in this book. Each page made me realize how lucky my girls and I are. I can't wait for our oldest to be a bit bigger so that we can read the young version of Three Cups!

I'd love to meet Greg one day. I wouldn't mind being one of those people driving 8hrs to listen to his speech and then open my pocket book. It'd be an honor to just shake his hand! I hope he writes another book because right now I am just so curious to know what happened since Oct. 2009.

It's too bad I read this book on the first day of 2011 because it'll be hard to top! This kind of book is just my cup of tea ;)

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### **Eileen Souza says**

It's rare that a second book about the same topic can be even better than the first, but I have to say that I enjoyed Stones into Schools even more than Three Cups of Tea. I thought that this book was excellent! It was a great way to learn more about what has been going on in Pakistan and Afghanistan since 2001, and even more it continues to be an inspiration to see how much this man, and his dirty dozen friends, can impact the lives of girls in the most remote places on earth. We hear so much negativity these days - this story gives you hope that hard (HARD) work does pay off.

As for why I think this book was better - the first book told a great story, but it was done in a way that was a bit frazzled and scatterbrained, which as Mr. Mortenson declares himself is exactly how he is. Someone took the editing reigns on this one, and the story line was much more linear (as linear as you can get when you're building dozens of schools throughout two countries at one time) more human (he actually told it from his own perspective, which was nice) and the stories and the hard work of the people who are making these changes were highlighted just as much as the people who have been positively impacted. I also liked the addition of maps of not only the locations of the schools, but also of the ethnic distribution, and topography. He also wrote 8 pages of acknowledgements - and that has to win your heart over.

Great book, and once I make sure it gets passed around to everyone I know who wants to read it, I will be gifting it to the library, so that it can impact others as well.

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## Marisa says

Oh my gosh... Stunning. Those are four words that sum up my feelings about this incredible book... basically. The ending is dramatic and sad, while simultaneously showing us that even while it seems that everything that could possibly go bad in Afghanistan is, there are also those who are trying to defy it. Those who are trying to help others, and those who are trying to offer education, health, and necessities to people who deserve it.

I finished this book upstairs, while downstairs my parents watched *Kite Runner* (the only story where I can say with reasonable confidence that the movie was better than the book) which was yet another horrifying story based on terrifying truths of racism and non-acceptance. Even more so than with Mortenson's first book, I was revolted by what the kids at school- myself included -complain about. The fact that there are kids in Central Asia who want so badly to go to school and then don't get the chance to even learn how to read or add because their whole world is war-torn and covered with land mines that end their lives before they have even gotten the opportunity to live. And here we are complaining because everyday we are served home-made whole-wheat pizza at lunch and some of us get it at free or reduced prices, or that we have to much homework, not even noticing that without school we wouldn't be able to read text messages or change our Facebook statuses. It is really sad.

It was Mortenson's work that made me realize the importance of education. So, I guess in the end, the underlying feeling I have is gratitude. For both school as well as Greg Mortenson's and the CAI's work.

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## Suzanne says

Following where *Three Cups of Tea* left off, *Stones into Schools* is Greg Mortenson's account of his nonprofit Central Asia Institute's endeavors to build schools for girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Early on in the book, Mortenson tells of meeting a band of Kirghiz horsemen, who extract a promise from him to build a school in a remote region of Afghanistan. This was 1999, and the promise came with a multitude of difficulties, not the least of which was the conflict between the increasing power of the Taliban and the locals who desired the hope of education for their youth. Of course a full out war with the United States and it's allies was only a few years away and that presented it's own kind of opportunities and roadblocks.

I have to say, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. There is a bit of a recap of *Three Cups of Tea*, but the stories of Mortenson and his colleagues attempts to build schools in these secluded areas were gripping. Especially touching were the harrowing accounts of the earthquake that shattered the region in 2005, and the helplessness felt by Mortenson as he sat halfway around the world.

In the spring of 2011, a 60 Minutes piece accused Mortenson of lies and fraud regarding the story he told in his books and the handling of funds for the Central Asia Institute. I read some articles about the accusations and watched the 60 Minutes piece. What first struck me is that the main accuser was vagabond writer Jon Krakauer. I had recently watched a movie about his life called *Into the Wild*. My thoughts about Krakauer were that he was at best, a selfish, soulless individual, and at worst, someone who is mentally imbalanced. Krakauer visited with Mortenson's fellow K-2 traveller, who questioned whether Mortenson did, in fact, actually visit Korphe. Krakauer, then accused Mortenson of making up the whole story of walking into Korphe, disoriented and sick, being taken care of there, and promising a young girl he would build a school

there. I found it interesting that 60 Minutes didn't bother to go to Korphe in their story, and I found a blogger online who recently visited the school and related how all the locals loved Mortenson, and told her that his story was absolutely true. The nurse who cared for him even shared her story with the blogger.

As for the abuse of charitable funds, I don't have firsthand knowledge of these accounts, but I do know using common sense, is definitely not enough to avoid mishandling funds. I used to work for a lecture agency. If a client was asked to speak at a college while in the midst of a book tour, it would not be unusual to "piggyback" off the tour, and have the college pay only the fee, and not the travel expenses. The wording of the contract would read "inclusive of travel expenses." So, if Greg Mortenson charged his travel expenses to CAI to promote the book in order to promote the charity, but took money for the college speaking engagement, fingers could easily be pointed accusing him of charging the charity for travel what was already paid for by the college lecture.

The wives of many Presidents have complained that taking family vacations on Air Force One requires the family to reimburse the government for the equivalent of first class commercial airfare, with the exception of the President. If Mortenson's family accompanied him to a CAI related event on board a private plane, the same reimbursement would apply, even though it does seem ridiculous.

Like I said, I don't know the exact specifics, but I believe that Mortenson probably did not deliberately intend to defraud CAI. He was required by the Montana Attorney General to reimburse a million dollars to the charity and to step down from his board position. I found the 60 Minutes piece to be weak and an abuse of the power wielded by the media. As a result, Mortenson's character was defamed and the charity has suffered. I wonder how many people saw the follow-up article in Forbes Magazine where the K-2 companion retracted his comment to Krakauer, saying that Mortenson definitely had the opportunity to get to Korphe and most likely did so?

Mortenson stated over and over again in his books, that he disliked being in the public eye. He put himself out there for these girls who just wanted to go to school. I hope that there is a silver lining to all of this. Perhaps now, he can just do what he does best: build schools.

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## **Wendy says**

Originally 4 stars

2014 update: After reading some of the controversy surrounding Greg Mortenson, my opinion on him has plummeted. He is accused of fabricating the story of him getting kidnapped by Taliban and the story of getting lost on the way down from K2 and promising the tribe that saved him that he would return to build a school (the whole premise to the book!). He is also accused of gross mismanagement of funds and using donated money for his own purposes, private jets, promoting his book, etc. The jury is still out on what he did do or didn't do, but there is enough evidence that I won't recommend the book anymore...

CAI has accumulated over \$70 Million and built less than 170 schools. How is \$400,000 / school a good return on an investment, when in his book he claimed he could build a school for \$20K or build it and fund it for \$50K? Where did the other \$61 Million go then?

He does admit some financial wrongdoing and stretching the truth on some stories, but not specifics. That sours the whole story for me. I'm glad I never donated to his charity (Central Asia Institute).

No wrong doing has been attributed to the co-author David Oliver Relin. And the attacks on his book and character likely drove Relin to suicide.

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## **Marcy says**

I learned so much about Greg Mortenson, the man, when reading this wonderful book. His sense of humor, his passion, his mission is heard and felt throughout this story. Now I really understand what the CAI is, and who the people are that run it. The Central Asia Institute is run by quirky, brave people who Greg met throughout his travels to Pakistan and Afganistan and found worthy enough to help him fulfill his dream of building schools for girls in the remote regions of Pakistan, and now Afganistan as well. After the major earthquake in Pakistan, the CAI provided tent-schools in Azad Kashmir, the earthquake zone. The CAI set up water-delivery systems, hired teachers, built schools with the guidance from Chinese experts, who knew how to build schools that were earthquake-proof. As time has passed, the CAI's role has continuously emerged. In order to help more girls get a higher education, Greg has arranged for the smartest and the brightest girls to get scholarships so they can go back to their villages and help their families become self-sufficient. Not all families will let their girls leave home for various reasons, and their scholarship awaits these girls for years...

I met Greg Mortenson when I was in Atlanta for the NCSS conference in November. He was the keynote speaker. He spoke without notes. He was brilliant. His passion pervaded the conference room filled with teachers. What this book expresses that he did not express to his audience that day, is that the cost of fame from his book Three Cups of Tea, is a double-edged sword. He wants to be in Asia, working directly with communities, with teachers, with students. In Asia, he lives on bottles of Ibuprophen for the pain of an aching body who lives without sleep, rattling in trucks for endless hours on unpaved roads in the most rural of areas to meet with the heads of tribal communities who want to build a school for the girls. Greg finds this life "energizing and inspiring." Being in the United States, engaged in non-stop promotion, salesmanship, and fund-raising leaves him feeling "drained and debilitated." Greg continues to tour the U.S. to provide the needed money to help build more and more schools for the Pakistan and Afganistan people.

Greg continues to witness the aftermath of war. War continues to be the most costly for the innocent people who live in the countries of Pakistan and Afganistan. In Afganistan, the Taliban continues to gain power by hurtling grenades into schools and terrorizing innocent people. Greg is now working with the United States military to help them rebuild Afganistan. Greg continues to help the leaders of the military in his Pentagon briefings to help them see that the aim of the military "is to enhance security by fostering relationships and building a sense of trust at the grassroots level with community leaders, village elders, and tribal authorities." Knowing the culture, respecting the culture, is most important. Greg receives many letters and e-mails from people who had served in Afganistan who are fully convinced that "providing young men and women with a moderate education was the most potent and cost-effective way to combat the growth of Islamic extremism."

Greg Mortenson continues to be one of my heroes. I am proud that the school I teach in has chosen "Pennies for Peace" as a global commitment to raise money to help build one of Greg's schools in either Pakistan or Afganistan.

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## **Shireen McQuade says**

Absolutely excellent! I couldn't put this book down. Dr. Greg's initial plan to build schools to serve female students in remote villages evolves with the situations he encounters, so that he expands into Taliban strongholds and in the outskirts of Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. He is not a micro manager, and instead uses his gift of perception to hire the smartest, hardest working Afghanis from rural areas with humble backgrounds. He trusts and relies on them to implement his dream of universal female education, and is wise enough to allow his motley crew the latitude to devise creative ways to increase female literacy manyfold. For example, one of his latest recruits decided that a women's center would allow older women an opportunity to gain literacy, but the centers proved exceeding popular, filling to capacity with women interested in learning foreign languages, computer skills, and how to operate cell phones, among many other things. Mortenson begins to develop excellent relations with the top U.S military leaders and we learn that it is Mortenson's belief that the military has the greatest understanding of the importance of education in Afghanistan to combat extremist forces such as Al Qaida and the Taliban.

With the fame of his first book, we learn from this book that Mortenson spends more time in the U.S. accepting invitations to speak about his experiences, and these appearances invariably raise a lot of money for his educational projects. However, he is able to rely on his trusted Dirty Dozen crew to carry on the construction of more schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, speaking to his crew every morning at 5 am by satellite phone.

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