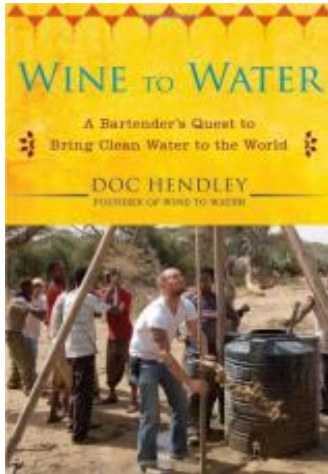

Wine to Water: A Bartender's Quest to Bring Clean Water to the World

by Doc Hendley



About the Book

The captivating story of an ordinary bartender who's changing the world through clean water.

Doc Hendley never set out to be a hero. In 2004, Hendley --- a small-town bartender --- launched a series of wine-tasting events to raise funds for clean-water projects and to bring awareness to the world's freshwater crisis. He planned to donate the proceeds through traditional channels, but instead found himself traveling to one of the world's most dangerous hot spots: Darfur, Sudan.

There, Doc witnessed a government-sponsored genocide where the number-one weapon wasn't bullets --- it was water. The Janjaweed terrorists had figured out that shooting up a bladder containing 10,000 liters of water, or dumping rotting corpses into a primary water source is remarkably efficient for the purposes of mass extermination. With limited funds, Doc realized that he couldn't build new wells costing \$10,000 a pop, but he could hire local workers to restore a damaged well for a mere \$50 each. He'd found his mission. Today, Doc and Wine to Water continue to help stricken peoples repair and maintain water- containment systems in places like Darfur, Cambodia, Uganda and Haiti.

Doc is a regular, rough-and-tumble guy who loves booze, music, and his Harley --- but he also wanted to help. **Wine to Water** is a gripping story about braving tribal warfare and natural disasters and encountering fascinating characters in far-flung regions of the world. It is also an authoritative account of a global crisis and an inspirational tale that proves how ordinary people can improve the world.

An Introduction to Wine to Water by Doc Hendley:

In 2003, Dickson ?Doc? Hendley was like most American college students and just having fun. Yet, he remembers ?a sinking feeling in my stomach, like I should be doing something better with my life? (p. 27). Within months, the college

senior and popular bartender launched an organization that has already improved --- and saved --- thousands of lives in more than nine countries around the globe.

Despite being the son of a preacher, Doc doesn't fit the Good Samaritan stereotype. Self-described as 'rough around the edges' and tattooed, Doc took an early dislike to rules and developed a taste for whiskey and Harleys while still a teen. As his college graduation neared, Doc began to dread the prospect of life 'in a cubicle' (p. 27).

By chance, Doc learned about an international aid organization named Samaritan's Purse and began brainstorming ways that he could help the world's needy. That night he woke up from his sleep with the words 'wine to water' spinning around in his head.

Doc hit the Internet and learned that 'unclean water kills a child every twenty seconds --- it's more lethal than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined' (p. 30). He immediately began drawing on his connections to host a party benefiting clean water initiatives. Within a month, he'd raised twelve thousand dollars.

Suddenly, Doc had to decide where it should go. 'I never wanted Wine to Water to be like one of those bullshit nonprofits ' that used the majority of the donations to pay staff' (p. 37). After talking to a Samaritan's Purse director, he unexpectedly walked out with a twelve-month job assignment in Darfur --- and the authority to distribute the money where he felt it was needed most.

Nothing could prepare Doc for what awaited him. He had flown from verdant North Carolina into a barren desert landscape where average daytime temperatures hit 120-degrees and government-sponsored Janjaweed soldiers had already killed a hundred thousand civilians and displaced more than a million more.

While Doc had fantasized about 'instantly morphing into some superhero water savior' (p. 55), the reality was infinitely more complex. But as inexperienced as he was in some ways, Doc knew a lot about human nature: 'It's not so much about how good and fast you are at making a Fuzzy Navel; it's about developing a good relationship with the people sitting in front of you at the bar' (p. 111).

So whether he was hiring staff, placating soldiers, or declining proffered brides, Doc tactfully negotiated an unfamiliar culture to do his real work. Slowly, Doc began repairing wells, installing water bladders, and teaching the locals how to maintain them --- sometimes while the bullets were being aimed at him.

In plainspoken and impassioned prose, *Wine to Water* shares the story of Doc's unlikely transformation from a rough-and-tumble bartender to CNN Hero. As informative as it is harrowing and inspiring, Doc's account of our global water crisis and his continuing quest to provide stricken peoples with clean water resoundingly proves that one man is capable of changing the world.

Discussion Guide

1. How much did you know about the global water crisis before reading **Wine to Water**? Do you agree with Doc's assessment of the situation? Why doesn't it receive more media attention?
2. Doc lets the reader decide what lay behind his inspiration to found Wine to Water, saying only 'it could've simply

been the whiskey, or the conversation I had earlier that day, or divine inspiration, or all of it mashed together? (p. 29). What do you think?

3. Against his mother's objections, Doc dropped out of college after his first semester because, "there was a big world out there waiting to be explored beyond those classroom walls, and I wanted to taste it" (p. 100). Would a break between high school and college benefit most young adults, or is Doc's experience unusual?

4. On the flight out to Africa, Doc felt uncomfortable --- ironically, because he was wearing clothes that he thought would make him fit in better. He later wrote, "There's a time and a place for trying to blend in" [but] it's key to stay true to your own personality or you'll risk looking like a kook every time." (p. 56). Have you ever had a similar revelation?

5. When Doc returns to North Carolina after his first trip to Darfur, he found it difficult to tell his friends and family about his experiences because "at the end of the day, they were simply too far removed from the world that had become my life to understand" (p. 132). Has the divide between the world's haves and have-nots always been this stark, or has the disparity increased in recent years?

6. After the Janjaweed destroyed Marla Camp and the water systems that Wine to Water had put in place, Doc decided to travel to Melem --- a Janjaweed stronghold --- to repair their wells as both a "bribe" and a way to demonstrate "my belief that every human being in this world, regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation, deserves unconditional access to clean water" (p. 139). Since the Janjaweed later attacked Doc's convoy, was his good-will gesture all for nothing?

7. Living under the constant threat of danger, both Doc and Coy "were in serious need of therapy, and fisticuffs were "a serviceable substitute for a shrink" (p. 151). Can you relate to their need to release violent feelings with actual violence? Is it a form of "therapy" that only men would find helpful?

8. In a place like Darfur --- where death is always an imminent threat, young girls are frequently raped, and a boy of twelve can be a hardened killer --- does childhood lose all its innocence?

9. Doc's prose is very frank and casual --- just like he is. Did you like his narrative voice? How did it add --- or detract --- from the story he told?

10. Now married with two young children of his own, Doc continues to work in the field with Wine to Water. Is philanthropy like Doc's something innate, or something that we can learn?

Author Bio

Doc Hendley is the Founder and President of Wine to Water, a non-profit organization focused on providing clean water to people in need around the world. In 2009, Hendley was named a CNN Hero. When he isn't traveling to underdeveloped nations or raising awareness for the world's water crisis, Hendley spends his time in Boone, North Carolina with his wife and two children. For more information, visit www.winetowater.org.

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