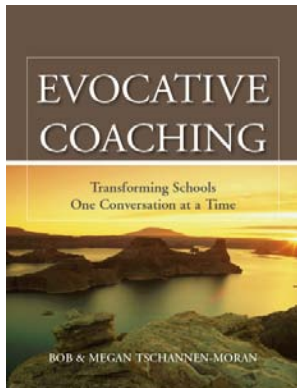


Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time

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This book grew out of our passion for human learning and our confidence that all schools can be catalysts for that learning. Not just some schools, but all schools. Not just schools with favorable demographics and resources, but schools with the right attitude, culture, and approach. That approach, the coach approach, has served us well throughout our personal and professional lives. Our best experiences in education have

motivated us to develop our skills and to pursue our aspirations. Such experiences have opened doors to spirals of creativity, innovation, and accomplishment. They have made us what we are today.

Yet that is not the way education works for many people. The discourse regarding school failure has become all too familiar. Unfortunately, such discourse tends to shift educators into a defensive crouch that limits or even prevents them from making progress. They become so concerned about the consequences of failure and so focused on fixing what's wrong that they lose confidence in their abilities and awareness of their strengths. Once that happens, the prospects for performance improvements dim and the politics of individual and collective resistance grow.

Although many books have been written and many speeches have been given on the subject of how to turn around this dynamic, we prefer to start with the most basic of building blocks when it comes to school performance and culture: how teachers talk to themselves and to others about their classroom experiences. When those conversations value teachers as collaborators and partners, who need not fear the consequences of sharing their stories, expressing their feelings and needs, exploring strengths, imagining new possibilities, and experimenting with how best to meet the educational needs of students, then resistance diminishes and energy grows for the teaching task.

That is our hope for those who learn and practice evocative coaching. We hope it will transform schools, one conversation at a time. This happens when teachers, coaches, instructional resources, staff developers, and other educational leaders make two significant conversational shifts: from evaluation to valuation and from problem-solving to strengths-building. These shifts are not easy, especially for educators who are so accustomed to grading performance and providing guidance, but when it comes to adult learning these shifts have proven their worth. Adults like to figure things out for themselves, building on what they already know and do well, without receiving judgmental feedback that calls into question either their intentions or their abilities.

To facilitate that kind of learning, we have to turn the tables on the questions we ask, the listening we do, and the reflections we make in our thinking and in our conversations. We have to move beyond old methods of supervision and professional development in order to dance with

teachers in ways that generate openness, awareness, understanding, and change. In *Evocative Coaching* we choreograph that dance as having two turns (The No-Fault Turn and The Strengths-Building Turn) and four steps (Story Listening, Expressing Empathy, Appreciative Inquiry, and Design Thinking). We provide the research base as well as practical, hands-on descriptions for each step. By the end of the book, we hope readers will have a good idea as to how to facilitate an evocative coaching conversation.

To that end, we have launched the Center for School Transformation and a companion website with additional resources, www.SchoolTransformation.com. The Center offers a training program in Evocative Coaching that takes place in a convenient virtual classroom created by advanced telephone conference technologies. Anyone who can make a long-distance telephone call can participate in the training program. This 20-hour program across 13 sessions provides critical opportunities for people to practice and become more familiar with the techniques. The program has already been well received by trainees in 9 states and 6 countries. The Center also offers on-site training workshops, leadership coaching, and whole-system transformation initiatives.

Drawing upon the best in adult learning theories, growth-fostering psychologies, and organizational development, the Center aims to evoke excellence in education and school transformation — one conversation at a time.

Bob Tschannen-Moran is CEO & Co-Founder of the Center for School Transformation (www.SchoolTransformation.com), President of LifeTrek Coaching International (www.LifeTrekCoaching.com), and 2010 President of the International Association of Coaching (www.CertifiedCoach.org). Bob is certified as a coach by both the International Association of Coaching and Wellcoaches Corporation. He serves on the faculty of the Wellcoaches Coach Training School and has co-authored the curriculum for that program, *Coaching Psychology Manual* (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2009) as well as the Center's core curriculum: *Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time* (Jossey-Bass, 2010). Using a variety of strengths-based approaches, Bob has assisted many individuals and organizations, including schools and corporations, to build positive relationships and achieve positive results. A prolific and popular author, Bob writes and edits LifeTrek Provisions, a weekly electronic newsletter with almost 20,000 subscribers in 152 countries.

Megan Tschannen-Moran is an Associate Professor in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership in the School of Education at the College of William and Mary (www.MeganTM.com) and Co-Founder of the Center for School Transformation (www.SchoolTransformation.com). She is the co-author of *Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time* (Jossey-Bass, 2010), the author of *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools* (Jossey-Bass, 2004), and has published over 40 scholarly articles and book chapters. Megan's research interests focus on coaching and the social psychology of schools, examining the quality of interpersonal relationships and how these impact the outcomes a school can achieve. Her work has appeared in journals such as the *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the *Journal of Educational Administration*, and *Teachers College Record*.