OUR LEARNING STYLES MAY IMPACT THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR CLIENTS
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By Bob Tschannen-Moran

MENTORS IN MEMORIUM: KNOWLTON NASH, DAVE BRUBECK, AND MAYA ANGELOU

PLUS: A BOOK REVIEW; THE LATEST PRN DEMOGRAPHICS; NEWS ABOUT CHAMPIONS; NEW RESOURCES IN COACHING, MENTORING, & PEER ASSISTANCE; SELECTED CONFERENCES; FUNDING; BOOKS NEEDING REVIEWERS; RESEARCH & RESOURCES; AND A TWO-DAY MENTOR TRAINER CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE ARTICLES</th>
<th>NEWS</th>
<th>SHORT &amp; SWEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Our Learning Styles Impact Performance of Our Clients** By Robert J. Sternberg  
Learning or thinking styles may impact both relationship building in and outcomes of coaching and mentoring. | **26** | Mentor Trainer Certification  
Lois Zachary & Lori Fischler offer a Strategies for Success Mentor Trainer Certification Program in Tempe, AZ, Sept. 29-Oct 1, 2014. |
| **The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** By Rosye B. Cloud  
Peer-based support is essential for those grieving the loss of a loved one in the Armed Forces. | **30** | Peer Resources Network Demographics  
Selected statistics about countries where the Peer Bulletin is read, preferred format, number of Emeritus members, and a caution. |
| **Seeing Beyond the Myths About Career Trends** By Barbara Moses  
A career coaching expert exposes seven myths associated with current career trends. | **33** | Mentors in Memorium  
Three mentors, Knowlton Nash, Maya Angelou, and Dave Brubeck inspired millions and left a legacy in broadcasting, music, the ability to rise above life circumstance. |
| **Competency Hypnosis** By Alan Cohen  
Practitioners who wonder about whether they are really skilled or just posing that way will find the answer in this article. | **36** | From the Sourcebook of Coaching History  
By Vikki Brock  
Coaching introduces Russia to a new source of energy. |
| **An Educator Uses Evocative Coaching to Facilitate Change** By Bob Tschannen-Moran  
An interview with a coach who works in a school setting reveals the ways in which coaching has impacted other educators. | **38** | The Latest from the Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring  
Research studies, discussion forums, and resources on youth mentoring abound at this site. |
A book that examines how to coach students and administrators gets a thumbs-up from a coach. | **49** | Tweets from Peer Resources in June  
Tweets sent to Peer Resources Network members with several key links to resources unavailable for the Peer Bulletin. |
| **Copyright** | **51** | Employment Opportunity with MENTOR  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership needs a manager. |
| **Membership Flyer** | **52** | **21** |
FROM THE SOURCEBOOK OF COACHING HISTORY

COACHING INTRODUCES RUSSIA TO A NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY

Vikki Brock

(Editor’s Note: Vikki Brock has graciously prepared a number of brief stories from her book: The Sourcebook of Coaching History. Each month during 2014, the Peer Bulletin will include one of these stories. Note: Links typically are for current work of group or individual.)

Coaching in Russia evolved from large group awareness training (LGAT) through est and Lifespring in the late 1980s. Svetlana Chumakova, a pioneer of coaching in Russia, attended est classes taught by Werner Erhard and was general manager for Lifespring Russia between 1993-1996. In 1996 she and five other trainers formed their own company to bring personal development to business. In 1997 Chumakova hired a coach from California, and enrolled 14 people in Erickson College’s NLP program.

Marilyn Atkinson, founder of Erickson College in Canada, began working in Russia in 1991. She first taught NLP to groups of 200 to 300 people, and later helped develop the coaching discipline itself. Svetlana Chumakova co-founded International Coaching Academy in 1998 in Moscow after she completed “The Art and Science of Coaching” at Erickson College, and was certified by them in 1998.

To expand her perspective, meet coaches and learn new models, Chumakova attended the first ICF European conference in Switzerland in 2001. In 2002 she met Sir John Whitmore at the ICF conference in Spain and invited him to teach Coaching for Performance in Russia. She went on to found the Russian Chapter of the ICF in Moscow in 2002. During the early years, the chapter had few people, yet by 2010 graduates from the International Coaching Academy took over responsibility for the chapter as the successors to Chumakova. Since then, students from the Baltic countries have founded their own ICF chapters.

In November 2002 Russia held its first of four ICF conferences, with 120 attendees in St. Petersburg and 250 in Moscow. Keynote speakers were Zoran Todorovic and Marcia Reynolds, the then-current ICF President. In 2003 Chumakova earned her ICF Professional Certified Coach designation, followed in 2006 by her ICF certification at the Master Certified Coach level.

Chumakova opened up Russia to coaching by starting the conversation, bringing in education, and creating community. She also translated coaching books into the Russian language, including Co-Active Coaching (Whitworth, et. al.), Coaching for Performance (Whitmore), Becoming a Professional Life Coach (Williams & Menendez), and Coaching with Backbone and Heart (O’Neill).

When asked why she started the coaching movement in Russia, Chumakova said: “I saw people with huge potential who didn’t have the opportunity to grow and flower in the authority of the country. Coaching is most useful for Russian people to reach inside. The hearts and minds of Russian people are more than oil and gas.”

(This article is available as a PDF here.)