



RIVALING

A STRATEGY FOR BRINGING MORE VOICES TO THE TABLE AND INTO YOUR PLAN

- *How do you find support in your community?*
- *Do certain things keep urban workers from succeeding in the new world of work?*
- *How can you best plan to meet your life goals?*

Open questions call for rival hypotheses

Important questions like the three above don't have single "right" answers. That is why they are called *open* questions. When you are dealing with hard-to-answer questions, it helps to see the problem from different points of view. A traditional hypothesis is an educated guess, a prediction, or a theory about something. A *rival hypothesis* gives you another way of looking at the situation.

It is a complex task to answer the question "*Do certain things keep urban workers from succeeding in the new world of work?*" To answer such a question, one needs first to recognize that there are a number of good rival hypotheses. Secondly, one needs to try to include these good points in the answer to this question.

Coming up with good rivals

The goal of **rivaling** is *not* to beat a rival or win an argument against an opponent. Instead, you are looking for good rival ideas so you can figure out "the whole truth." So how do you come up with good rivals?

One way to gain rivals is to invite different people to the discussion table—such as adults and teenagers—who can talk about the problem from their special perspectives.

A second way is to come up with rivals in your own head. Use your own experience, or try to imagine what different people would say if you asked them about your problem. Try to think about alternative ways you could read a situation, different ways someone could define the problem, or alternative solutions someone might propose. You might try to start a conversation in your own mind and imagine what different people would say.

Remember, you will know that you have become an ace rivaler when you can finally rival your own ideas.

Who would **you** invite to the table to give rivals about the question:

"Do certain things keep urban workers from succeeding in the new world of work?"

- An employer with good or bad experiences
- An employee with good or bad experiences
- A conservative or liberal politician
- A job trainer
- A teenager
- A single mother
- A minister
- Who else?