

**Conversations that Matter Concerning the Career Success of
Young Adult African American Women**

by

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Abstract

The intent of this exploratory qualitative study, using large-group process as action research, was to introduce young adult African American women to concepts related to career success through the process of a facilitated learning conversation.

The dialogue process chosen was that of The World Café. It was used to discuss the following research question: “*What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do young adult African American women need in order to prepare themselves for career success?*”

Young adult African American women between the ages of 26 to 35 and African American women ages 46 and older participated in the study together. By co-creating knowledge about what constituted career success, the group collectively determined that the most important element to career success is a career-oriented attitude in young adult African American women.

This study demonstrated that people who feel connected through joint dialogue are more willing to embark on a path of joint discovery that facilitates the revelation of deep patterns, beliefs, and perhaps action. The uniqueness of The World Café method is that it is designed to build relationships at the table. This notion underscores the importance of inviting young adult African American women to cultivate transformative relationships situated within the safety of a mentoring community. Such an environment encourages

freedom of thought and experimentation with the developmental process of meaning making crucial for young adults.

These results have shown that engaging different generations of African American women to discuss elements of career success can provide insights for all participants.

Keywords:

African American Women, Young Adult Development, Mentoring Communities, Transformative Relationships, Large-Group Process as Action Research, The World Café, Career Success Factors, Career-Oriented Knowledge, Career-Oriented Skills, Career-Oriented Attitudes