

BEING AN FFA OFFICER



Competency 8 - Critical Thinking

Demonstrates the ability to seek out solutions and resourcefulness in finding information.

Competency Builders and Indicators:

8.1 - Demonstrates ability to solve problems

8.2 - Demonstrates ability to think critically and conduct research

Critical thinking is an important ability for national officers to possess as they will often need to be resourceful in finding information and seeking solutions to problems.

In his own words...

Elio Chiarelli, National FFA Eastern Region Vice President 2000-2001

Be, do have is a concept I like to utilize. Become more in order to do more so you can have more. Often our thought process is opposite of that; we think if we have more we will be able to do more and then become more. Absolutely, we will work harder on ourselves than our jobs. Always ask for resources. Contact your coaches and mentors. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Connect with Bill Stagg if you have a question about media—he'll be delighted to assist you. Always work on yourself and have a personal development plan in place. Focus on what you need whether it is leadership development, spiritual nurturing or otherwise. Think outside of the norm. Read the *One-Minute Manager* by Blanchard. Go to Stephen Covey resources for more information.

Some of my challenges as a national officer involved travel. When I traveled to a state and did not find anyone to meet me at the airport, my challenge was: "how do I get to my event when none of my contacts answer the phone?" During our NLCSO, Dane and I were partners and our supplies did not arrive in time for our training. In these situations, flexibility and resourcefulness are key. Think before you speak. Listen to what people are actually saying instead of the words that are coming out of their mouths. Remember, people are not always listening to you but instead they may be thinking of their next words. At the board meeting, you will share the thoughts of the delegation and the members. One particular instance, I recall when my thoughts were very different from what I had to present. I had to practice the virtue of detachment in order to be effective.

In terms of considering multiple factors to address a problem, I use Stephen Covey's four quadrants:

- Unimportant and not urgent
- Important but not urgent
- Urgent and not important
- Urgent and important.



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When you consider multiple factors, tons of variables impact our decision making process. You might be thinking that what is immediate: a phone call, an e-mail or the next event is most important but if you stop to consider what is really happening, something else may take priority. I take all the information in and synthesize it. Then I make a decision based upon these four Covey quadrants.

A personal journal is wonderful way to record your thoughts and reflections. Or use your Covey planner, I listed everything based upon the event and then wrote detailed information that related to my conversations.

