3 Things to **Remember**

**To Create a Quality Judging Experience in 4-H**

1. **WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

When the youth first meets the judge, he/she is full of a mixture of emotions such as stress, excitement, anxiety, and/or anticipation. At that moment, it is crucial to create a welcoming atmosphere in your judging space.

- Greet youth immediately upon their arrival to your area.
- Use welcoming non-verbal communication such as a warm tone of voice, a smile, eye contact and relaxed posture.
- Lean forward as youth are speaking to show you are actively listening. Use silence, hearing, observing, self-control, encouragement, and remembering in your communication.
- Arrange your judging area in a way that supports the items listed above.

2. **REFLECTION**

Reflection is the process of the youth reviewing, summarizing, and/or evaluating their project while talking with the judge.

- As a judge, think of being like a mirror, reflecting back to the youth information to help he/she discover ways to see accomplishments and to improve. A respectful judging relationship includes celebrating the youth's strengths and connecting with the individual.
- Ask questions in a way that helps the youth reflect on strengths and weaknesses in their project learning. (Examples: “Tell me about what was most difficult.” “What did you learn the most about doing this project?”)

3. **ENCOURAGEMENT**

This is a teachable moment where youth are encouraged to take their project learning to a higher level.

- Use open-ended questions to help youth process how to reach higher levels of project learning. (Examples: “How could you expand on your project?” “What could you do next with what you have learned by doing this project?” “What goals can you set to take your project to the next level?”
- Support all project work by using non-evaluative language. (Examples: “Yes, the cleanup project you worked on is a way to give back to the community.” “I can tell from your work on this project that...”) Use phrases such as “Good job”, “Way to go”, and “Nice work” a minimal amount.
- Discuss what he/she may do differently if a similar project is attempted. Talk about what was learned and enjoyed through the project.

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