

Invest In Yourself!

What does it mean to invest in ourselves? We usually think of an investment in financial terms but making an investment in ourselves is important for continued improvement.

Investing in yourself can be picking up a book – or checking it out from the library. I have a shelf of books that I pick up from time to time. Some challenge my way of thinking, some provide ideas, some remind me to be kind to myself and to others.

Investing in yourself can be a commitment to taking a walk every day for exercise and to enjoy the beauty of the world around us. Investing in yourself can be making a commitment to stopping for 15 minutes in your day to listen – really listen – to your family, especially your children.

I spent several days last week at a professional development workshop. While it is hard to be out of the office for three days, making time to connect with colleagues, learn new skills and resources, and to have speakers provide thought-provoking information is invaluable!

I can't take care of others if I don't take care of myself. Sharing in the excitement of new resources and ideas is motivating. Sharing stories and fun over meals with fellow 4-H agents builds networks and reinforces our commitment to youth development.

Serving as both a formal and informal mentor for other agents relies on my investing in myself and encouraging those around me.

Working to understand, provide direction, and teach young people requires me to be the best version of myself and that only happens through investment in myself. In the same way, I challenge the youth I work with to stretch their skills and abilities by investing in themselves. 4-H project learning doesn't happen by accident and it doesn't happen in a formal classroom setting so a 4-H youth learns based on their willingness to invest in themselves. This can happen by going to camp, serving as a club officer, teaching others about a project, trying a new

project and researching what it will take to learn about that area. Many project areas rely on the 4-H youth, and their parents, to check out resources, ask others to help and mentor, and practice on their own.

That investment will pay off in patience, resilience, teamwork, and leadership skills! As we work to develop the next group of leaders, these experiences and the investment is invaluable!

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