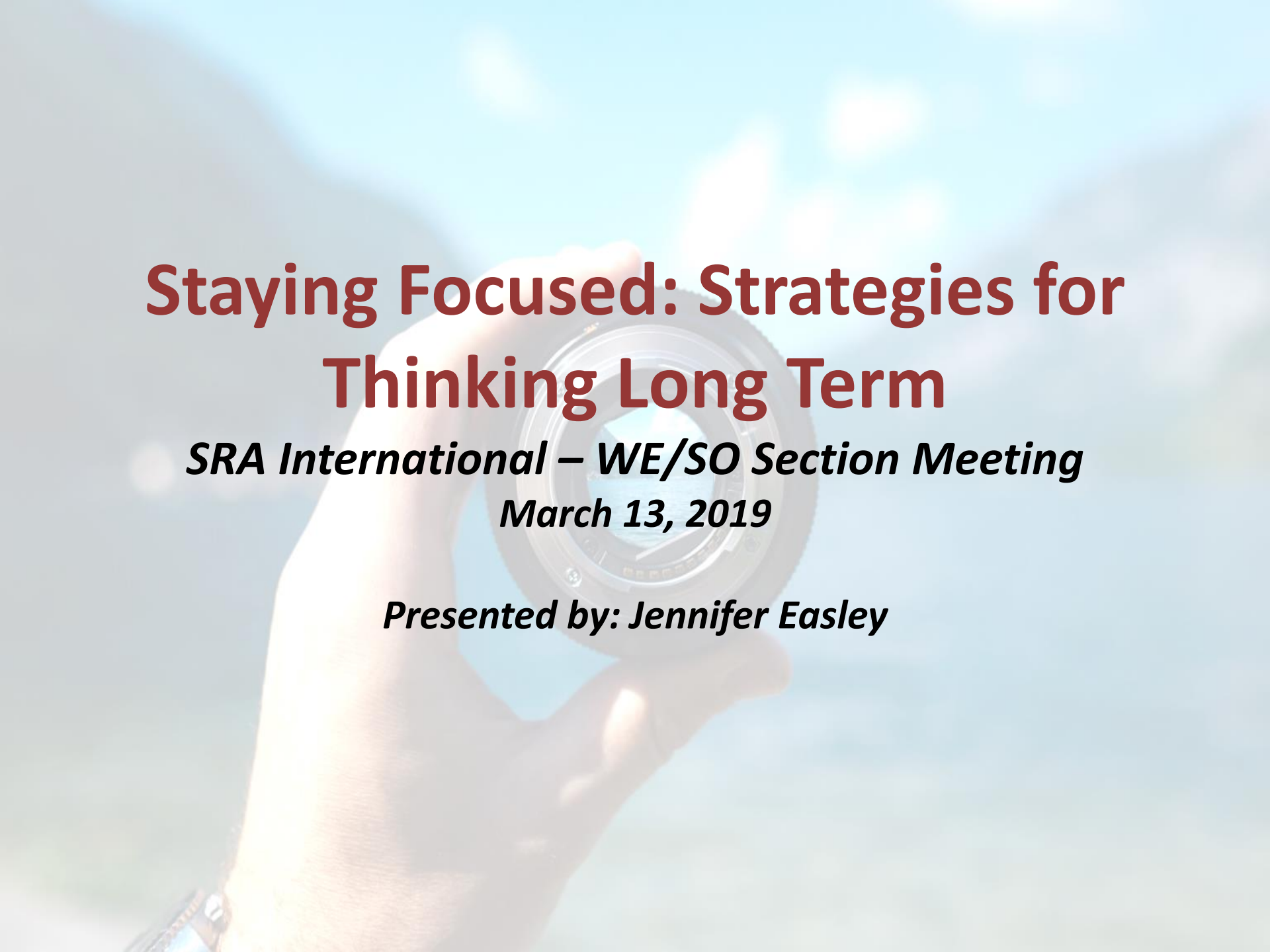




Staying Focused: Strategies for Thinking Long Term

***SRA International – WE/SO Section Meeting
March 13, 2019***

Presented by: Jennifer Easley

Why think long term?

DISTRACTIONS TO LONG TERM THINKING

Distractions to Long-Term Thinking

- Uncertainty
- Paralysis by Analysis
- Fighting Fires
- Too Busy!
- Noise – emails, interruptions, data overload
- Fear – will you make the wrong decision??
- Dealing with the mundane



Got a Minute?



- The average office worker gets interrupted every **11 minutes**.
- It can take up to **25 minutes** to get re-focused on the task at hand.

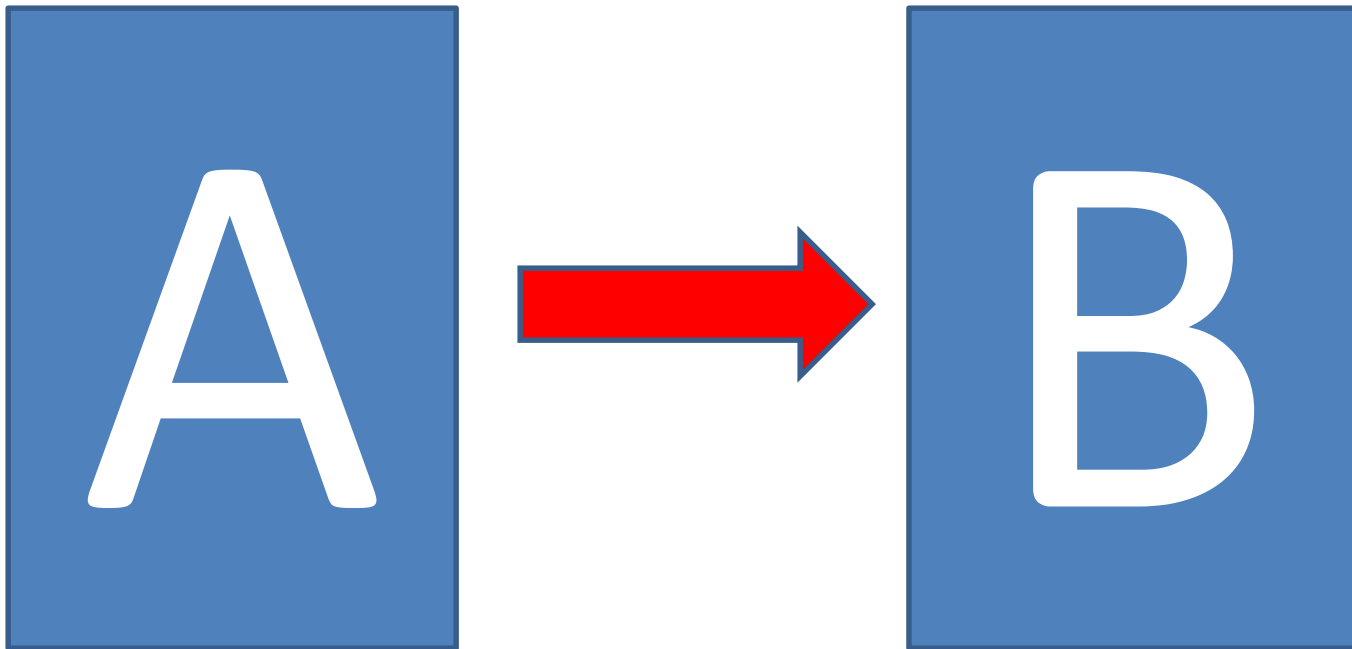
Combating Distractions

- Embrace uncertainty.
- “85% and move out”.
- Reclassify your “fires” – are they really fires that must be dealt with right then?
- Delegate / Maximize your team’s potential.
 - *Book: “Multipliers” by Liz Wiseman*
- Make time for focused thinking.

DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR FOCUSED THINKING

The Multitasking Myth

“Attention Residue”

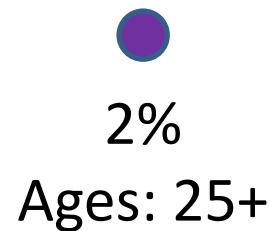
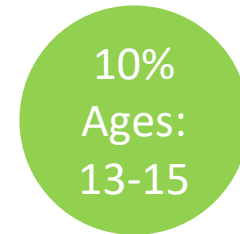
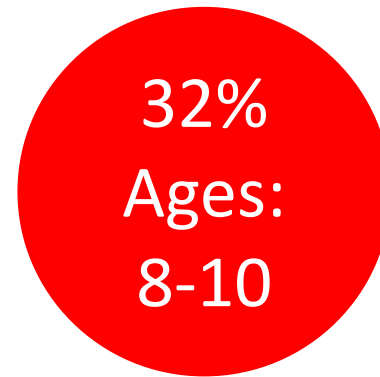
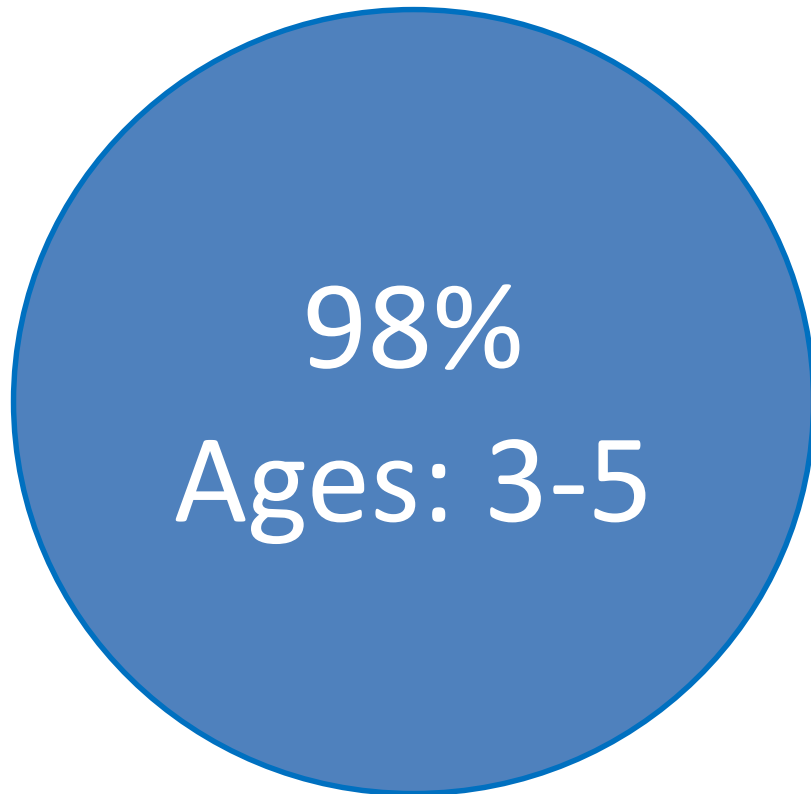


Making Time to Think

- Be intentional.
- Focus on one task at a time – with short breaks in-between.
- Schedule time to think – What gets scheduled gets done.
- Balance productivity zones with energy levels.
- Don't be afraid to unplug every once in a while.
- Go for a walk!

UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

Torrance Scores – The Gold Standard for Creativity



Characteristics of Creative Thinkers*

- Value Ideas
- Explore Options
- Embrace Ambiguity
- Celebrate the Offbeat
- Connect the Unconnected
- Don't Fear Failure



* From John Maxwell book: "Thinking for a Change"

Discovering Joy of Creative Thought*

- Remove Creativity Killers – Self-talk
- Ask the Right Questions – Why *this* way?
- Develop a Creative Environment
- Spend Time with Creative People
- Get Out of Your Box



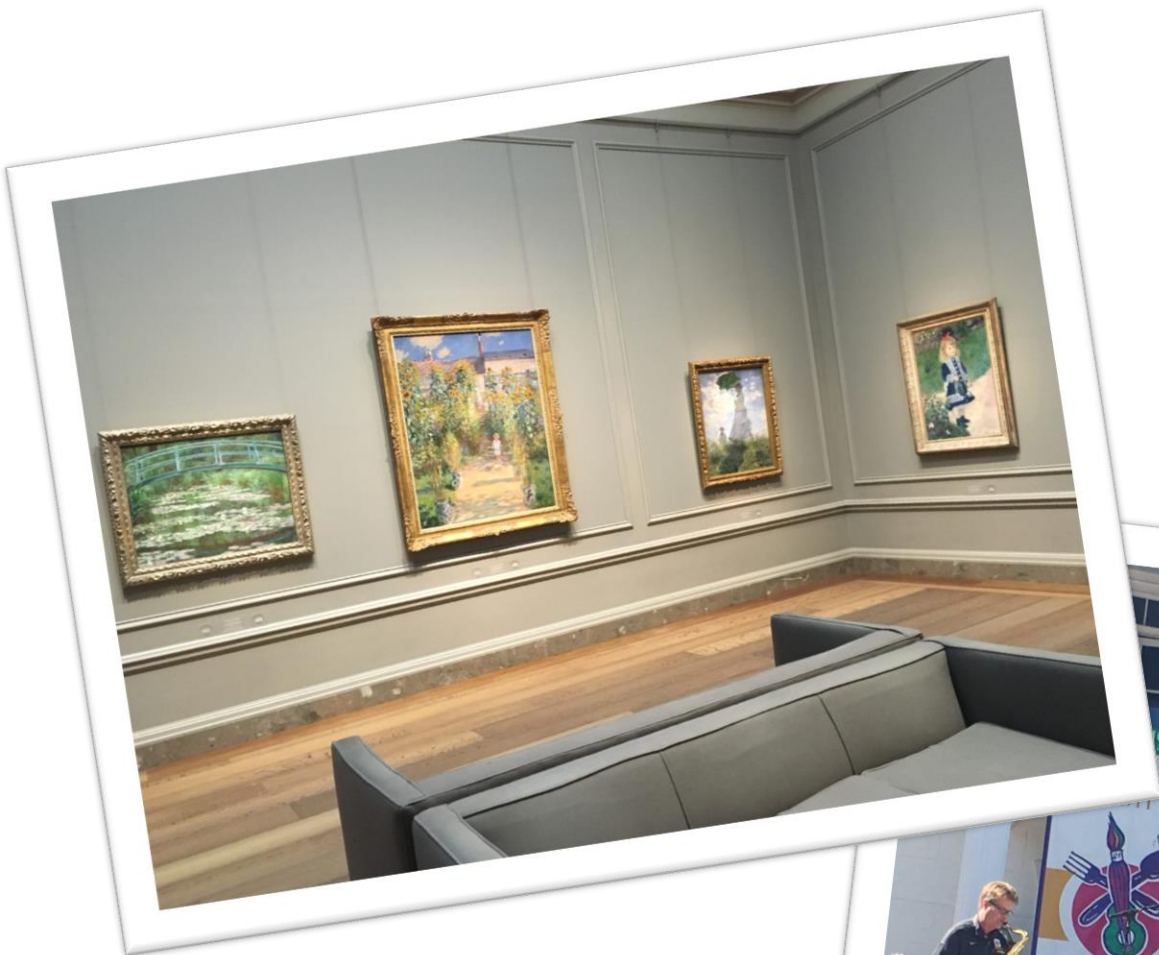
* From John Maxwell book: "Thinking for a Change"

Cultivating Creativity and Reflection

- Break out of your normal environment!
 - Mission work / Volunteering
 - Sports
 - Art museums, concerts
 - Reading
 - Others??
- Professional societies and networking can help you see other ways of doing things.







Releasing Power of Strategic Thinking*

- Break Down the Issue
- Ask *Why* Before *How*
- Identify Real Issues and Objectives
- Review Your Resources
- Develop Your Plan
- Put the Right People in the Right Place
- Keep Repeating the Process

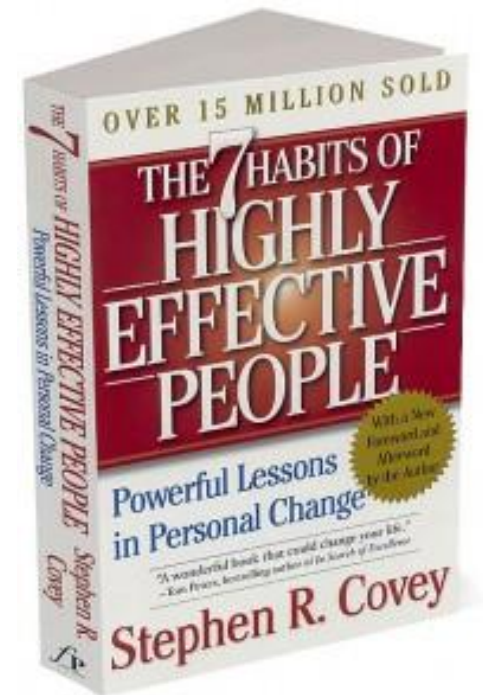
* From John Maxwell book: "Thinking for a Change"



REFLECTIVE THINKING

Learning from Stephen Covey

- Begin with the End in Mind...
- First Things First...
- Where do you want to be?
- What will it take to get there?
- How can you spend more time on Quadrant II activities?
- What kind of paradigm shifts might you make?



	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	• Crises • Pressing problems • Deadline-driven projects, meetings, reports I	• Preparation • Prevention • Planning • Relationship building • Re-creation • Values clarification II
Not Important	• Needless interruptions • Unnecessary reports • Unimportant meetings, phone calls, mail, e-mail • Other people's minor issues III	• Trivia, busywork • Irrelevant phone calls, mail, e-mail • Time wasters • Excessive TV, Internet, relaxation IV

Learning from Failure

- Experience is not the best teacher. Evaluated experience is the best teacher.
- Achievers persevere, understanding that failure is part of life.
- Try to see failure as a journey, much like success, rather than a destination.
- Determine what you can learn from failure and then pick yourself up and move forward!
- *Book: “Failing Forward” by John Maxwell*

Jennifer Easley, CMA, CRA, CFRA

Business Manager II

Bagley College of Engineering

Mississippi State University

662-325-2275

jeasley@bagley.msstate.edu

