



7 HABITS for Citizen Leaders

The Montgomery Institute, Meridian, Mississippi

August 2002

Third 7 Habits Retreat Receives High Ratings

Jerry Aull once again captured the hearts and minds of participants with his presentation of the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The 28 participants in July represent the third *7 Habits* retreat held at the Pearl River Resort.

These retreats are funded by a grant from The Riley Foundation and co-sponsored by the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation and The Montgomery Institute.

A fourth retreat with Jerry is set for October 22-24 at the Pearl River Resort.

Need Refreshing on the 7 Habits? Come See Jerry!

Need refreshing on your *7 Habits*? Spend an hour with Jerry Aull and bring your *7 Habits* back to life. When: 5:00 p.m. Monday evening, October 21. Where: Union Station. Who: Any *7 Habits* graduate. Followed by a reception sponsored by The Riley Foundation.

At the suggestion of Tommy Galyean and others, this session will be devoted totally to refreshing your *7 Habits*.

We tried to do more at our first reception with Jerry on July 15. Participants from the two initial retreats came together to revisit the *7 Habits* and to work on a matter of interest to the EMBDC.

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Melanie Mitchell makes a point to Dr. Tommy McDonald at the July retreat.

7 Habits Reflections

You're Successful . . .but Are You Happy?

(From *Living the 7 Habits: Stories of Courage and Inspiration* by Stephen R. Covey)

I've often told the story about the person who was climbing the ladder of success and got to the top rung only to find it was leaning against the wrong wall. This story illustrates how Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind essentially defines the wall you want to put your ladder against.

I was sitting at a restaurant with a young guy who had been with our agency for about five years. He had a large home, a parking place

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(**Union Station** continued)

Dr. Billy Riley and his son Gail, both on The Riley Foundation Board, joined in the activities.

Jerry worked with the attendees on a matter of “can we practice the *7 Habits* well enough to develop a consensus ‘story’ for our city/county/region?”

Attendees left the meeting without coming to a conclusion on the question, but with some constructive thoughts. They also left with an understanding that thriving regional communities have great stories they tell about themselves and their successes. The meeting was followed by a reception.

Institute’s First Workshop Receives High Marks

After 27 school teachers and one administrator gave The Montgomery Institute high marks for *7 Habits* training, the Institute received official certification as a *7 Habits* provider. Held in the Dulaney Room at Meridian Community College, the 3-day workshop was sponsored by the college’s School-to-Careers Grant.

Leadership Lauderdale Class Completes 7 Habits

The Leadership Lauderdale class of 2002 completed *7 Habits* training. Their training was interspersed over a 12-month period. Regional MDA director Gerald Mills facilitated training for these 25 participants.

(**Reflections** continued)

close to the front door, and a brass nameplate on his door. Over lunch, we started talking about the definition of success. I mentioned a Personal Mission Statement. He said he hadn’t heard about the concept. To demonstrate to him how to go about creating one, I asked him what was important to him. He started naming all the things he wanted to do. Not one had anything to do with his job.

I was intrigued. “Well, are you happy?” I asked him when he finished.

He said, “Well, no.”

I said, “But, you’re successful, right?” and laughed a little bit. He just sat there thinking.

I didn’t see him again for a couple of months because we were traveling to different parts of the country. One day, I spotted him in the hallway. Wanting to catch up on his life, I thought I’d walk him to where he was going. “Hey, Christian, wait up. Where you going? I’ll walk with you.”

“I’m not going anywhere. This is my last day,” he said with a grin.

I was shocked. “What?”

“Yeah, I was just in to see the boss. He asked me why I was leaving. I told him it was your fault.”

“Oh, no. You’re kidding me. Why’d you tell him that?”

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(Reflections continued)

“Well, I told him about our conversation in El Paso. About how you made me look at my life to see whether I was doing what I wanted to do with my life. And I wasn’t. So I quit this job to start doing the things I really love. Thanks, buddy.”

I haven’t seen him for about two years now. When he quit his job, he and his wife started their own little roofing company. He likes working with wood. He used to be in the telecommunications field; now he’s hammering shingles on roofs and building porches. And guess what? He’s happy.

The Western world is very action-oriented, the Eastern world more reflective. Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind, and Habit 3: Put First things First, attempt to bridge the East and the West – reflect, and then act on your decision. This story beautifully illustrates the power of choice (Habit 1: Be Proactive), thinking carefully about what matters most (Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind), and then acting upon it (Habit 3: Put First Things First). This man made a courageous 180-degree shift by putting his success ladder against the wall of happiness. The best way to predict your future is to create it.



Participants discuss 7 Habits issues at retreat.

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G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery

7 Habits for Citizen Leaders is an information newsletter published by The Montgomery Institute, a charitable, tax-exempt, organization. Initiated by a grant from The Riley Foundation, the Institute was named to honor and sustain the leadership legacy of former Congressman G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery. The Institute serves as a think tank to provide important information to citizen leaders. The Institute also seeks to spur regional cooperation and enhance leadership in an eight county region of East Mississippi and West Alabama.

Your Stories: Have you had real-life experiences or accomplishments using the 7 HABITS? If so, please send us your story. We want to use true local stories in future editions of 7 HABITS for Citizen Leaders.

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