

## Enjoyment

Friday, July 5, 2019

### The Castle has a New Master

I used to see improvement and enjoyment as part of each other, as twins, as two sides of the same coin. The process of self-improvement was enjoyable, and I enjoyed improving.

However, today I'm wondering about that division.

Self-improvement is part of the journey to get there. But enjoyment is the end of the road. It occurs, happened, is felt when you are there.

Seen in this way, the two are quite separate. different mental states.

Now my aim is for enjoyment. If I improve along the way, that's fine. If I don't, that's fine too. In this scheme, improvement is beside the point.

Sunday, July 7, 2019

### Nes Gadol: A Miracle

Today another miraculous new beginning. For the first time in 40 or 50 years, perhaps even the first time ever, this morning I began my guitar playing, not with legato or scale warm-ups, or even a classical guitar piece warm-up, but instead, started with, nay dove right away into singing "Dark as a Dungeon."

I never started guitar practice, with a song and, of course, in my old concert life, I never did either. I always needed to "prove myself" by starting with a classical guitar piece. Then, once I showed the audience I could actually "do something," was sophisticated,

worthy, not just “another folk singer,” but could play something classical, once I proved I was okay, then I could relax, lie back, do easy stuff like folk singing, humor, stories, and especially lead group singing (which was a real gas, a riot of fun), and have a great time.

But evidently, I’ve somehow freed myself to run wild on the lawn with my new focus on enjoyment—or, rather, on how to enjoy what I’m doing.

This morning I followed “Dungeon” with “Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gave To Me,” focusing on diction.

Then, to my amazement, I dropped down to playing Bach’s “Gavotte in D,” followed by his “Gavotte en Rondeau.” And it felt loose, easy, comfortable, and fine. I was totally at ease with my “audience,” although of course there was no audience, only the one in my imagination. But those imaginary people were just fine, part of the family.

Then I sang a few bars of “This Little Light of Mine.”

Then I played “Alhambra,” slow, easy, comfortable. No problem. The “audience” just sat there accepting it, loving every sensual stroke I plucked on each string. And especially enjoying the pleasure in my index finger as it plucked along in friendly, fun, joy-filled fashion.

As Moses said, “This is my first exodus. I’ve never done one before.” It has never happened in my lifetime. I’m at a new place. It’s a miracle, a nes gadol. Even my mother would like it.”

Sunday, July 14, 2019

Is Fun Enough?

Are fun and excitement enough?

I need a new reason to run tours.

I felt excitement before meeting my group in the lobby.

Could the mere existence of people excite me?

Maybe. I've suppressed people excitement for so long.

Am I transitioning from fear of people to enjoying them?

Is enjoying people my natural inclination?

Maybe yes. I discovered it as social director at Chait's.

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

Successful Suffering: Push to the Limit

Got up 4:30 a.m. Nice.

Strangely, believing I want, need, even like suffering is a good way to think. It helps me face painful situations. And of these, in life, there are many. Instead of feeling like a failure because I am not "enjoying" my tours, or exercises, or whatever I'm doing, I now feel things are right and in place because I am appropriately suffering. This is what is supposed to happen. It is right and true. I am a success at it.

Yes, there is suffering, pain, and some self-torture in pushing oneself to one's limits. But, of course, when it is over, there is also tremendous satisfaction, even joy, in realizing that you have done so!

So perhaps suffering and joy do go together. But the suffering comes first. The

appropriate self-torture and pain must be inflicted first in order to reap the post-event reward of confidence, victory, joy (and perhaps the word is salvation). And what is salvation but redemption? It is shining, for a few glorious moments, in the radiance of joy, in joy, en-joy, or even “en-joy-ment.”

Thus the ultimate reward of pushing oneself to the limit is joy. Successful suffering results in it.

But you can’t consciously look or hope for joy. It is really the gift of grace, given by the higher forces as a present, a mysterious, freely bestowed reward for faithful service on the cross.

So begin each day by figuring how you can push yourself to the limit. Everything else will take care of itself.

How can I push myself to the limit this morning? I can start with my exercises. In fact, even last night as I was doing a stretch, I thought, for the first time in a long time, perhaps I could even improve! I could, carefully and consciously, push this stretch to the limit. And see what happens.

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

Facing Vulnerability

A Step Toward Enjoy

How strange psychologically are these knees: How deeply they reflect my emotions. Perhaps their pain is a reflection of a subtle return to the old “cloud of impending doom”

neighborhood that used to periodically hang over me. In other words, Sarnoian knees. Sure, they may hurt a bit. After all, I am pushing them with lots of unaccustomed extra tour walking and additional yogic stretching. Such post use stiffness is normal. But my psychological addictions are crippling! Also, I must admit, these pains fluctuate, come and go, appear and disappear. To a certain extent, I can “control” them with my mind.

If all of the above is true, and I believe it is, then indeed I should look at my knees as my psychological reaction to leading my tour with all its subtle and unsubtle responsibilities. And in doing so, I must admit to myself how important it is that my travelers be happy!

Although I am not responsible for their happiness (I am only responsible for my effort to run the best tour I can run), still, when they are unhappy, it makes me unhappy. In fact, their unhappiness totally destroys my happiness! (I hate to admit it, but it’s true!)

So, truth is, even though I am not responsible for their happiness, I want to make them happy. So I do it partly, mostly, by focusing completely on every traveler and the unity of my group, for the entire tour. And I suppose it is a big weight on my head. Or, since I don’t want to face it or put it in my head, I instead distract it, turn it away, and put it in my knees!

Anyway, all this is nothing new. But, on the other hand, since every day is different and I turn over a new leaf, this weight of responsibility is always new. So I must face it again and fresh each day.

So what have I learned this morning? Hopefully, to think of my knees differently. Also, to face the fact of how important it is to me personally that my travelers be happy, that

a bottom-line desire of mine is that I want my travelers to be happy, and I will do almost anything to make them so!

It is a personal desire! Yes, my tours are very personal. I take my travelers' complaints and loves very personally! I think I have never really wanted to face or realize this. I disguise it with humor, distract it with knees pains or whatever. And indeed, if making my travelers happy is so important and personal to me, then indeed, with each tour, I am vulnerable. I am putting my happiness and soul on the line, open to the barbs and criticism of the public, the audience, my travelers—much like, actually the same as, giving a concert!

So basically, nothing has changed. Only perhaps I am now more aware, more open to facing my own vulnerability, the chances I am taking, putting my teenage soaring, reaching, for the Beethovenian Magnificence-violin-playing soul on the line.

My escape days are over. I am diving straight into the fire! (Note my nightmare!) I am facing my (forever) vulnerability. And maybe for the first time. (Could this be so? For the first time? But what else could the eighties be all about?)

Truth is, I have the ability, desire, and control over my personal efforts, and can choose to work really hard to fulfill this task, And I do! And most of the time, I am successful.

Why? Due to my God-given personality and the serendipitous gifts He is bestowing on my tour. Part of my daily routine should be to thank God. A good idea.

(I sense, in this last paragraph, I am once again trying to escape the positive results of

my responsibilities and vulnerabilities, which include successes, by handing them to God. Yes, it's true. I also hate to face the grand feeling of personal triumph that comes with my successes. Of course, ultimately God is responsible for everything. That is a known and a given. Still, He doesn't need the credit, but I do! I need to learn how to accept it, love it, and take it. This is definitely so hard for me to do. Yes, it belongs in the glory to God category. But again, we all know this.

But glory to Jim is really hard to take. And since God and man work together, which means that God and Jim work together, God cannot receive his proper glory until Jim can accept and take his own.

Friday, July 19, 2019

End of Tour and Business TMS

My Aches and Pains Are Over!

Strangely, when I stood on the Galway dock and understood the Sarnoian nature of the pains in my legs, knee, and ankles, it felt like a turning point.

I realized these "worry freezes" were TMS pains. All of them!

Then doubt stepped in as "hard to believe."

As Sarno says, doubt is one of the mind's last TMS strongholds.

So I decided to drop my doubt and absolutely believe it was TMS pain. Which means, as pockets of oxygen deprivation, my body parts still hurt, but the hurting does no damage. And although it may sometimes hurt on an excruciating level, it "means nothing,"

does no damage to my body, and will eventually, suddenly and mysteriously disappear!

Which it does. I've experienced the sudden disappearance countless times.

In any case, I understood I was suffering from Ireland tour TMS. Which basically meant: Pay no attention to my transient pains. Just "walk through them." Which I did.

And today, most, if not all of them are gone!

I still have a bit of morning stiffness, But that is an entirely different thing and easily handleable.

### Stock Market Trading Money Versus Business Money

The money I make (and lose) in stock market trading is scurry-and-worry money. It is anxiety money.

But the money I make in business is firm and steady, and brings me confidence and happiness.

Trading in the stock market keeps me on edge and anxious. Truth is, on edge and anxious is where I have been all my business life. Thus trading has reflected my business life.

And of course, all this comes with (came with) the aches and pains of business TMS life,

But now, times are changing.

### Putting my Money in a Bank

Wow, would this mean putting my money in a bank and watching it grow at a mere earnings rate? Depending on how much I earn?

The way I used to do it in my Greenwich Village days at the St, Marks Place bank. I was so happy to watch it increase, slow and steady, with only my earnings added.

It means coming home full circle.

Back to life as an artist.

Back to my roots. But with greater knowledge, wisdom, and freedom. And the ability to run wild on the lawn of reality, the lawn of business and artistic life.

So what have I been doing all my life?

Figuring out how to combine business and art, and in the process, building a framework.

Sunday, July 21, 2019

### Business Enters My Miracle Schedule

Business now belonging in my miracle schedule? An amazing birth, totally wonderful, if true. And it feels like it could be true.

And a long time coming—an entire lifetime! It means my going-public self has totally come out of its violin- playing teenage years, chamber-of-imagination closet.

Wow, what an idea, what a breakthrough.

What does it mean?

First thing that comes to mind is that my writing, my publications are important. And that therefore, I must not only publish more but aim to spend time and effort disseminating my works.

Note: with the advent and entrance of business into my miracle schedule, the first thing that comes up is publishing and spreading my message, my publications, my books--not tours or folk dancing, which are now my real and only business.

Yes, I have to somehow add tours and folk dancing to the “entrance of business into my miracle schedule” idea, but somehow, not only is that already being done, but more than that, it means that my message is not being completely delivered to the public. Somehow, my message resides in my books, and these have remained hidden most, if not all, of my life.

So going public means taking the risk of “exposing my mind and soul,” which really means exposing my writing, my most loved creations.

It means tours and folk dancing are secondary. My books come first.

The very thought of this gets me sick. I am starting over, from the beginning, and again as a failure. My books have gone nowhere. Also I’m feeling a bit scared, vulnerable.

Do I really dare expose myself in such a manner?

Monday, July 22, 2019

Suffering is the Human Condition, and Mine, Too

Great night of dancing last night in Kilarney. When I finished I even felt a

glimmering of a glimmer of I-like-leading- a-tour. But, of course, in the morning, now, that glimmer is gone. Back to the heavy weight.

But what's the big deal? Why, after all, should I enjoy my tours? Period. That's just the way it is. And nothing wrong with it.

I know this is an "Enjoy" leaf, and it's about enjoyment. But there is no enjoyment in running tours. And that's just fine. If anything, I can say that suffering, as and when I lead a tour, is my mode of "enjoyment."

Tuesday, July 23, 2019

### Suffering is Responsibility and Vice Versa

A new concept of myself is being born on this tour, thanks to my conversation with Miriam. She said it is impossible to enjoy your job as a tour leader. Joy may come later, but not during the job. Too much responsibility.

My new concept of myself may become that I am a responsible person. And this, indeed, is my nature,

Why do I now know this? Because I now know I like to suffer. And what does suffering mean but to bear a burden, to carry my cross. (Sub- 'from below' + ferre 'to bear'.) In my case, the burden of tour responsibility.

When I teach folk dancing or give a performance, all are under the rubric of responsibility of pleasing my audience. That's why I was nervous years ago and am continually nervous now before a performance of any kind, whether it be teaching, leading, or

whatever. Responsibility is responsibility, burden is burden. Period. That's just the way it is.

But I see, saw myself, my essential nature, as one of being an artist. An artist "runs wild on the lawn," is free, childlike, uncaring of others, and essentially irresponsible. (Or was that my mother talking?) In any case, that notion of myself is over.

I now see myself as a long time responsible person, one who takes on and accepts burdens, and the fears and concerns that go with them. That's just the way I am. Therefore, all my pre-performance anxieties are real and necessary, good and proper, healthy and wise, and totally fitting for a responsible man but, of course, not for the irresponsible child.

Thus I can "happily" accept my burdens, my pre-tour and during tour suffering as indeed the way to go. And the only way to go! It is simply my nature.

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

A New Nation is Born

We're in Dublin. Last full day in Ireland.

I'm letting the group go to Glendalough with Lee and Kay, but without me. I'm taking a free day.

Yesterday I sold all my small trading stocks. I stand naked not only before the stock market, but before God, family, and self.

Through deeper understanding of self, I've fulfilled my Galway "promise." I no longer need the magic freedom bullet that somehow my small stocks will rocket to incredible

heights, I'll become incredibly rich, and will be suddenly free not only of financial insecurity, but more important, of dealing with others and doing business with them. Now I somehow realize I love dealing with others, and can handle all the stress, pressure, and "suffering" that comes as I deal with them.

I like and need to deal with people. And even when I don't, I can handle the unpleasant, negative situations, figure out solutions, ride the waves, and most important, remain free in my chosen form of tour, folk dance, performing, and business slavery.

### Emptiness and the Abyss

I'm wondering whether my knees are filling the emptiness.

And whether the emptiness itself is the next adventure.

What is emptiness but an abyss.

As one is hovering over the abyss, terror strikes in the flight of freedom,

I'm headed for there, ready to dive in.

Perhaps I have already done so.

I just found a source of true fun: Piling up money.

And this just for the hell of it. Not to use, but piling it up for its own sake.

Buying good stocks, at low prices, might be a new fun way to go. I say good stocks of substantial companies. Not penny stocks. Not aiming for wild swings, but for a long and decent ride. Not day trading. In fact, not trading at all but holding them for awhile, even a

long while.

Watching them go up. That's fun!

(Of course, down is a miserable ride.)

Sunday, July 28, 2019

Guitar, singing:

The slower I go, the deeper I go, and the more I cry.

I must be going somewhere, getting somewhere. But where?

I'm touching new emotional places I never dared go before. Why? Because I never dared to move, to play this slowly. I've always been under the self-pressure to play fast, move fast, do things quickly. Why? Perhaps to get them over with so I could once again be "free."

But free from what? And what would I do with my new freedom?

Perhaps freedom from the pressure to move fast. To be free from the probing and critical eyes of the so-called public (which must, in essence, be my mother. Who or what else could it be?)

What to do?

Perhaps feel the depths of my pain and pleasure.

Would I dare move so slowly in public, play guitar or even sing so slowly, and, in the process, expose my deepest feelings? Would I lose my audience by playing with such

unfettered exploration? Would they simply get up and go away?

I need them to earn a living.

If I lost them, I would end up penniless and die. Thus do I dare expose my so-called true, deeper, hidden self, so open and raw? Is it smart, wise, dangerous to reveal my vulnerable, adventurous, dreamer, and exploratory self?

Monday, July 29, 2019

I woke up with almost excruciating lower back pain. Thus this morning's obstacle.

Why lower back pain? Was it too much yoga yesterday? I doubt it. The Sarnioian aspect that I finally finished my Ireland tour videos, and am "free," and the so-called trauma of emptiness and getting ready to move on? Thus my lower back pain would be a way of keeping me in the old neighborhood of worry, fear, depression, and emptiness as forms of self-motivation.

Maybe.

But maybe, at this point, it no longer matters why. It's "just another obstacle." Every day I wake up there is another obstacle. It may be time to say "So what?"

Truth is, I've had these complaints and excuses all my life. Only their "reasons" change. Now I have merely invented, created a new obstacle.

But there is an advantage that comes with age and aging, and in a sense getting wiser. Basically, in life I've "gotten somewhere." In fact, at this point, I've "gotten everywhere." I've accomplished most of the things I wanted to do. I've nowhere else to go. I want and

need little.

So what does one do in this exalted depressing, empty state?

It may be the mindful “good-in-itself” stage.

What does that mean?

It means doing things with no other purpose than diving straight into them, squeezing all the juices out of them, and this for no other reason than enjoying their being.

### Pain Free Existence

#### The No-Pains “Reality”

I started my yoga practice around 8 a.m. this morning, and to my amazement, no pains! I can’t believe it. I’m so used to aches and pains when I start that this beginning felt unreal.

I searched for pains, even tried to create some in order to make it “real” again.

Maybe better is to accept this new “reality,” that sometimes, for many Sarmioian reasons, and even non-Sarmioian that I don’t and never will understand, I will have no pains!

One thought is, with my post-Ireland videos finished, meaning that the Ireland tour is completely finished, I am living in the afterglow of mental, physical, and emotional freedom. All the “causes” of stress and its expression in physical pain are gone. And after I get used to this, come to terms with this state of mental and emotional liberty, the reasons for posting my pains in my body parts will disappear, and with the reasons gone, my pain will disappear.

If true, this could be wonderful news.

Or maybe it's just a passing state. (Doubt: excuse to return to the old neighborhood.)

Thus the positive future belief could be, should be, is: It is possible to be pain free.

This is all too good to be true. But just because it is too good to be true doesn't mean it isn't.

### Ego Problem and Creativity

#### Fictionalizing Myself

My one-man Jim Gold Show.

Somehow I hate this title.

I'm too shy and too egotistical.

It reminds me of myself and thus makes me self-conscious— like admitting, saying publically when introducing a dance, that I choreographed it.

So using my name may not be the best, most creative, way for me to go to escape my ego, step outside it.

### Just Do It and Shut Up

Don't be so awed by the above revelations.

It may have taken years for the leaf to grow. But now it has finally matured, done what it needed to do, and is finished, over, done with, ready to fall.

This means jump straight into the next life.

Just do it and shut up.

Thursday, August 1, 2019

Going Beyond

I had no idea how important this new exercise and physical regime is for me, how good following it is for me and makes me feel.

Top priority, and this even before music, language (study), writing, and business. First, in the miracle schedule constellation.

Following it simply makes me feel great!

Monday, August 5, 2019

On Running

Responsibility And Love

Drawing Energy from an Audience

Self-Improvement

I'm put off by the hurt and fatigue of the "long" run I took yesterday at the farm.

Slowly, age is draining my speed. (If not age, what else?)

Should I continue to call it running when I do it so slowly? Maybe the term "walking" is better. Evidently, that's what it looks like to outsiders. Otherwise, why would they "compliment and encourage" me by saying, "Have a nice walk."

But I even "run" slower than a walk, especially a normal walk by a younger person.

Along with running slowly yesterday, I also ran a shorter distance. And it took longer. And I didn't go down the big mountain hill partly because I knew I would have to return by coming up it, and I wasn't sure I could make it.

The only good thing about my running at this age is that I continue to do it. Or do "something" which I used to call "running."

Maybe it's time for a new name, a new term for this movement and activity.

What would I call it? (Of course, a new name will not make me run any better or faster.)

The above is definitely a negative view and of "new" running style.

Is there a positive view?

I like to run on the road to self-improvement.

What should I do?

Easy. Even in this new slowed-down, lessened, and diminished state, I could still work to improve.

What about the admiration of others? Could I draw energy from their admiration, attract inspiration from their love? Hmmm.

Is such a use of audience energy even worth considering?

Truth is, at any age or speed, I still love to improve.

Just as the weight of my responsibility in preparing to lead a tour or teach a folk dance class helps me mobilize my energies, so too might the responsibility of pleasing a running audience cheer me on to run better.

Tuesday, August 6, 2019

The Power of Joy

A wave of pre-exercise sleepiness after a breakthrough morning of guitar speed and Hebrew speaking.

Am I really sleepy?

Or is it a suppression of joy? Even ecstasy? After all, it was, and often is, a breakthrough morning.

Is this what joy and en-joy is all about?

Thursday, August 8, 2019

Fifty years ago Alexander Bellow said my tremolo was uneven, and I could improve it by playing is slowly and evenly. I did that. . .for fifty years. I'd say it didn't work. (Plus I could play tremolo fine when I studied with Rolando Valdez-Blaine. He had a different teaching method. He just said , "Do it." And I did.

Time to return. Back to uneven, fast, and finger focus. My way!

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

Call to Writing

I woke up with that sudden down and empty mode. I know the feeling. It is the call to writing.

It comes with a bit of an "ugh."

Why ugh? A bit of fear here.

Why?

I'm not sure.

One thing nice—this new keyboard feels so good! Perhaps replacing the old one symbolizes my return to writing. In any case, there remains a slight fear. I wonder why.

Perhaps its partly remembrance of the old neighborhood and some of the old feelings I had while writing in it.

Old feelings, indeed. Yes, that's it. Panic, dismay escape, psychotic highs and lows, all were part of my old writing experience, especially (and only) while writing fiction.

Fiction was my escape route from business reality.

But I no longer need that escape route. So as I return to writing, it is time to reassess my entire fiction writing experience!