

Leading the New Leaf Life

Sunday, April 29, 2018

Happy Chains Are Chosen Goals

Total freedom is a temporary state. No one can last long in total freedom—too chaotic, and ultimately too sad.

One needs the chains of a goal to be happy.

Jean Paul Sartre said: “The difference between a free man and a slave is that the free man can choose his form of slavery.”

Happy chains are chains of discipline and commitment chosen by free men or woman.

Sad chains are, however, those imposed by others, or even by the self from within. They are freighted with negative elements—coercion, dullness, routine, discouragement, and slavery.

Now that I am free, I need some new chains to hold me in place, to anchor my wild self in stability.

Monday, April 23, 2018 (Language)

Slow and Deep in the Hebrew Moment

Where is my mind going with my new freedom?

Slow and deep.

Witness my morning Hebrew study: I dwell in the origins and etymologies of a few

Hebrew words. Slow and deep I travel with no desire to conquer quantity. Rather stay calmly, peacefully, happily in place, relish the linguistic Hebrew moment, while I savor my descent into etymological depth.

Will dwelling in the Hebrew moment, diving into the present, extend to other things I do?

Monday, April 30, 2018 (Folk Dancing)

Dwell In The Clouds Of Glory. . . , And Then Move On

How To Deal With Success, Victory, and Glory

Why the sadness after the National Folk Organization (NFO) meeting?

Perhaps it distracted me.

Cricket Rayburn asked me: “Why are you hiding? Why don’t you get more involved with NFO, be on the board, take a more active role? We need you here.”

Why did her questions put my stomach in a knot?

In retrospect, part of me may have felt guilty, or angry. I saw the word “hiding” as a subtle accusation, and not the most diplomatic word to use. I have never hidden. Rather, I have a subtle contempt for the folk dance world because many dancers are cheap and, with their desire for low prices and low payments to guest instructors, folk dance classes, and tours, make it difficult for folk dance teachers to make a living. So, on the one hand, I hate this unprofessional attitude; on the other, I love the dancing, music, and folk dance scene the NFO supports.

Okay, so the churning in my stomach was anger at the subtle accusation, which I immediately turned on myself in the form of feeling somewhat guilty I wasn't doing enough for the NFO.

But I also interpreted Cricket's invitation as a subtle put down, and it threw me off for the weekend.

I finally came up with offering NFO members a tour reduction if they registered for one of my tours. Now that's a good business idea and one I can easily offer. Beyond that, I see nothing else I would want to do.

In the end, Cricket's question split me down the middle with anger at accusation on one side, and desire to increase my business on the other.

That's why the short conversation with Ed Austen about leading a cruise or a land tour for Brigham Young dancers was the only good possibility coming out of the NFO weekend.

Truth is, going into the conference, I had absolutely no thoughts about joining NFO's board. I had only the desire to explore this new world and meet the people I've been dealing with for years.

I also like Cricket and want to make her happy. So I felt bad because I couldn't accede to her request.

But, on the other hand, I could be celebrating.

Why? Partly, because the NFO conference and New Jersey folk Festival are over.

More than that: I did a great job leading dancing at the Festival!

Am I pushing myself down from that high? After all, such push downs after a high are

part of my psychological pattern. And after all, those fifteen minutes of dance leading were the highlight of my weekend!

Yes, that's why I'm down. Ha! It has little to do with the NFO or Cricket, or anger about some minor "accusation." Rather, it has to do with how to handle a personal triumph! The absolutely wonderful high of successfully performing, beautifully leading the folk dancers in a wonderful kick-off the NJ Folk Dance Festival.

How to deal with such glory!

Shout "Wahoo!"

Shine in the afterglow! Then add the wonder of meeting so many old friends, followers, customers, people.

Sometimes, it is hard to relish in it. I used to get headaches over grand successes. This time, I am merely, drained, down, depressed a bit, and thrown off my path.

Is that progress? Maybe.

So, it was really a weekend of success.

Now I shall try diving into the feelings of personal success. We'll see where that leads.

But knowing this changes everything. I am no longer thrown off my path. I am diving through a cloud of bliss and glory, drinking in all the ambrosia around me.

And of course, success is "merely" a wonderful, happy cloud, and is thus transient. A few grand and heart-felt "Wahoos!" will bring release and free me from the grip of this happy high.

Glory is wonderful, but freedom is better.

Freedom also gives you the time and space to travel beyond the clouds, and move on to the next glory.

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

Upbeat Guitar

Playing It My Way

I'm playing Fernando Sor's "Estudio No. 12 in A major." It's in 3/8 time and I'm emphasizing the third beat, the up-beat. I'm also looking at the black notes in the original score edited by Segovia, with renewed interest in the dynamic marks he no doubt added.

This is indeed new for me. I haven't looked at the music for years, relying solely on my memory to play it. How, however, I am ready to revisit the piece.

I used to admire the speed and virtuosity of Julian Bream when he raced through this study. I still do. But I can't play it that way. I'm not a virtuoso. My fingers and mind can't move that fast. And when they do, I end up sloppy as my fingers catapult uncomfortably through intense speed. Then I end up feeling inferior, that I'll never play as well as Julian, and I keep practicing in a fruitless search to be and play like someone else.

But today is different. I'm playing Study Number 12 with slow to moderate speed, emphasizing the up-beat. Certainly this way of playing, even performing, is new, interesting, easy. And different. But it is me. My own interpretation. No one else does it like that.

I am stepping into a new way, my way of playing classical guitar! Finally.

Notice my way is “up beat.” I highlight and emphasize the upbeat. Just like my tours and folk dancing.

Thursday, May 3, 2018

He's A Good Listener

I sometimes feel alone, abandoned, isolated when aiming for personal happiness. I lose my connection to the audience, and to others.

Yes. I feel that only God will hear me.

But that's not too bad.

After all, I've always wanted a good listener, one who truly understand what I say, need, and do.

And He's a good listener.

Sunday, May 6, 2018

Imagining a Purpose

Drop guitar for awhile. (How sad.) See what happens.

I can't find a reason to play the guitar.

No one is going to give me one either.

I don't like the life of a slug, a life without purpose. So I'll have to invent my own purpose.

Since I live by invention and through imagination, perhaps imagining a purpose into

existence is actually the way to go.

Although one needs a bit of slug life in order to rest, gestate, and grow, creative thinking is the opposite of such a dismal existence. And so?

Drop guitar for awhile. See what happens.

Monday, May 7, 2018

Slow

Slow Classical Guitar

If I could accept playing some guitar pieces slowly, then I'd have no problem playing classical guitar in public.

Playing a slow "Alhambra," slow "Leyenda," slow flamenco, a slow anything, is simply the way I play.

Accept that, and I am free! Free before myself, God, the audience, anyone and anything.

The ability to accept it means that I am no longer dumb. I have dignity and worth as a slow player and slow person, no longer running from the accusation that I am stupid, that I must rush to escape humiliation from the poison arrows that an unfriendly audience might shoot at me.

I have been trying to solve this dilemma for years.

Am I now at the point of doing so.

Dare I play a slow "Alhambra" in public? How about a slow Leyenda, apuyando

scales, flamenco, a slow anything and everything?

I am ready.

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

Leadership

I was born a leader, and without leading a group or performing for an audience—performance being a form of leadership—I feel lost.

I need followers to give my life a purpose.

This means that searching for customers or followers is forever. In the battle within my soul between monasticism and the outgoing, gone-public self, gone-public wins.

That doesn't mean that the monastic disappears. Obviously, you need both. But my monastic retreat is expended in preparing for the grand upcoming gone-public event—which, in my case, is leading a tour, or a folk dance class, and promoting and selling (“leading”) these services.

Yes, although it may sound egotistical, I was born to lead.

This self-knowledge will redefine the meaning and purpose of everything I do.

It also lifts me out of my ego, beyond my self, and into the world.

Writing is part of leadership; sales are part of leadership; my books are part of leadership. That's why my New Leaf and my fiction must be published and disseminated. To get the message out there, to sell and lead. That's why I could lead the “boys against the girls” in Barnard School when I was six years old, conduct the orchestra in Music and Art, and even

be chosen by Max Finestone to be social director at Chait's Hotel even though I had no experience. Like Moses, leadership qualities are mine, even though part of me doesn't want them.

Well, whether I want them or not, I have them, and my leadership needs must be met in order to fulfill a grander cosmic purpose.

This is where sales come in. Evidently, I must always sell. Selling is a vital part of leadership.

Why?

Without sales, I remain a monastic being, removed from society, closeted in my imagination, ever practicing to become. . .something.

But what, and why am I practicing? To develop my talents and eventually use my skills to affect the outside world.

Evidently, my recent idea to "give up tours" was a bad one. By giving them up I was relinquishing my sales and leadership positions, dissolving a vital part of my essence, rejecting the aggressive dynamism of selling something.

Sales as a form of leadership push me beyond my narrow ego, and force me to be better than myself.

That's why I have to constantly search for lovers of what I can offer.

And my search for customers will therefore never end!

Plus, it is better to feel the frustration and abandonment of having no tour registering than the cosmic emptiness and depression of no purpose.

Leadership, Responsibility, and Freedom

By leadership, I mean all aspects of performing.

At age 19, Max Finestone, owner of Chaits Hotel, asked me to become its social director. I turned down the offer. Instead I went to France and spent the year studying in Aix-en-Provence.

Five years later, after graduating from the University of Chicago, I took the job.

Organizing and leading programs as a social director at Chaits came easily and naturally.

Yet playing classical guitar in public is so difficult. Is it because I am camouflaging my leadership calling?

Today, in any case, I can no longer avoid it. I will now face the scary narrow passageway of diving into and fulfilling this potential.

Leadership is both a talent and a calling. Frightening and burdensome as it is, when I avoid listening to its voice, I get depressed and a cosmic emptiness fills my being.

That's why I cannot give up the fight even when there are no tour registrants, folk dance followers, calls for concerts, or club date bookings, and I am at the bottom.

That I am a leader type is obvious to friends and followers; it's even obvious to me when I dare admit it.

So what is the big deal?

Why does calling myself a leader bring up negative words like "egotistical," "arrogant," and "self-serving"?

Why so hesitant, so shy about leadership?

Maybe I'm just afraid of assuming the burden of responsibility. Oh, no, no, no!. No responsibilities for me! I want to run wild on the lawn, I want to be free!. . .

Can I be a leader, and still run wild, and be free?

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Writing

It feels like the end of the road, or at least the end of a road. In regard to writing, I may have reached a place where I have nothing left to say.

How sad, and how scary.

Or perhaps I've reached a place "beyond Barry." Aside from editing my works, he can no longer direct or inspire me to create new works. His idea of the Seven Deadly Sins as a new direction for me, so far, brings nothing to my mind.

Perhaps I have gone "beyond him." I'm in such a new and different place, perhaps no one can help me but myself. This is scary and sad. But it is certainly different.

It feels like I am at a juncture, a turning point, on the border of a new transformation. Where will it bring me? To what new places and even adventures?

Of course I don't know. But right now, today, I feel I'm falling off a cliff. Or am I jumping?

In any case, at this juncture, today, what do I see as my options?

1. Stop writing altogether. I'm out of gas, written all I can write.

2. Start on a totally new and different writing path, somewhat based on babble writing and James Joyce stream-of-conscious and Finnegan's Wake crazy style. (Why do I keep thinking of Finnegan's Wake, a crazy unreadable book? Maybe because it opens the door to crazy unreadable thinking, a wild and wooly place where I can totally run wild and free on my lawn.)

Is this the new leadership/responsibility/running wild on the lawn place I spoke about yesterday?

It means keeping an eye on the audience while I follow my crazy and wild new path.

The eye on the audience is my partial chain, an earthly tie; the eye on my wild and crazy path is my gateway to freedom; a celestial jolt.

Obviously, I need both. Without my earthly tie, I'll definitely fall off the earth and go negatively insane (crazy in a bad way). Without the celestial connection, there will be no life in my earthly connection, no inspirational and angelic bonds.

I need both.

Heaven and earth must co-exist in my brain.

And although there may be rest, there will never be peace between these opposing elements.

Such is the life of the artist.

Okay, now what?

Get to work.

On what? I don't know yet.

Friday, May 11, 2018

Embrace of my Sales Self

Have I collapsed internally because I am missing my sales?

I always thought I hated sales, and that I only did them because I had to make a living, that I was forced to sell in order to survive, and that once I made enough money, I would no longer have to sell. I would then be free to retreat and stay in my meditation chamber, my attic study room, a scholar under the lamp, studying the secrets and wisdom of the world, a la Einstein. Or I could play violin or guitar all day, read novels, totally relive my childhood, or at least my teenage years, and thus be “happy.”

But perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps I have been living under a cloud of illusion, and this for years, or at least since I’ve been married.

Marriage “forced” me to figure out how to make a living. Not only did I choose a performance career as a means of doing so, but in order to, I had to learn how to sell my performance product, my performing service. Such pressure, and so much rejection, in that process—but I ploughed through and eventually succeeded at what I thought was a great psychic cost, and loss of my innocence, creative abilities, and love of violin retreat music played in the inner chamber of both my imagination and in the actual Riverdale chamber where I used to practice.

That attempt to extract money from the outside world was a herculean effort waged against what I thought was my artistic, freedom-loving essence.

But suppose I was wrong? In fact, now, I know I was.

Evidently, I not only have but have always needed this aggressive outlet, a place where I can meet, deal with, and fulfill my killer instinct. The outlet is called the sales world.

Perhaps, and indeed, and I must finally say, in a gigantic leap of self-knowledge, that sales are a vital and integral part of who I am, and without their forward-gone-public thrust, I am lost.

Evidently, I need them. And they need me.

Selling Classical Guitar

Where does classic guitar fit in? If at all? Well, it must fit in somewhere, as another form of sales.

Classical guitar as sales. Drop the ugh and move to wow.

What else could it be?

From now on, classic guitar belongs in the sales category, the sales mode. What form it will take, we shall see. But from today on, there is no other way of looking at it.

So, as I play classic guitar this morning, think in sales mode. How and where will my playing of this piece sell?

Phil, playing every Friday night at the Bicycle House comes to mind.

Selling and All-Is-One

Always Selling

When I'm playing guitar alone, or doing anything alone, am I still selling?

Yes. My sales self is ever-present. Therefore, I am always selling. Even when theoretically alone.

I am never really alone.

Exercise

Pain makes you focus on yourself.

Therefore, the absence of pain is when you no longer focus on your “self” but on something else.

Focus on the higher powers is a good place to start (and finish).

The universal energy of All-Is-One is the place to focus.

A good All-Is-One energy focus location is navel-to-spine area of the abdomen.

Saturday, May 12, 2018

Guitar: Right index is the wisdom finger. It must be applied slowly, consciously, and with focus and concentration.

Monday, May 14, 2018

Thinking of Others

A Win-Win Situation

Why is it good to think of others?

Because it takes your mind off yourself.

Thinking of others, like focusing on navel to spine, and energy in the abdomen, the solar plexus, puts you in touch with a higher and greater source of energy. Like connecting to the sun, it energizes you.

That's why teaching folk dancing, giving a performance, running a tour, even going to a training session with Rick, energizes me. I'm focusing on others, connecting my energy with theirs, and thus increasing it. And they are doing the same with me. A win-win situation.

That's why performing on the guitar is a win-win situation for me—if I can ever get there.

The index finger points simultaneously both to the audience and my heart, and to the grand connection between us.

I am certainly looking for, searching for, an “excuse.” a reason to get back (go forward) to performing.

Index finger as Powerhouse of Energy and Connection

If I ever return to performing, which to me means playing classical guitar in public, I have to return with a completely different attitude. Certainly, the attitude expressed above is totally different. Whether I can ever achieve it is a question only the HP will be able to answer. Certainly, performing classical guitar with confidence, ease, and dignity in public qualifies as a lifelong dream. It could be achieved with the above attitude.

However, will I ever reach that point? I've been searching for forty years.

True, Moses didn't get there until he was eighty.

Will it be the same for me?

Seems like it's no longer up to personal me to find out, know, or discover.

Seems like its only up to HP, the Higher Power.

Only HP knows.

Thursday, May 17, 2018

Acceptance and Power

I can actually feel power returning to my legs after a terrible recovery-from-80 year.

Maybe the transition is ending, and I'm preparing to move to the next stage.

Acceptance and power.

The Courage to Try

"Come on, let's go!"

Do I have a low opinion of myself?

Yes.

But that's not so bad. It gives me lots of room to move up.

What can I offer the world, if I have a low opinion of myself?

For example, what can I offer others if I can only play Alhambra slowly, poorly, inadequately, at incorrect tempo, inappropriately? If I feel I can never and will never get it right no matter how hard I try, what can I offer?

Perhaps I can offer the courage to try.

I can offer the beauty of imperfection in the form of effort, to give it my best even though the consequences may be humiliation and embarrassment.

I can even offer them glory in the supreme effort they made in giving it their absolute best.

By playing my slow, poor, incorrect and inadequate Alhambra in public, I can encourage others to do the same, to play their own music, no matter how badly it may come out, no matter how much others may laugh, no matter the potential humiliation and embarrassment.

As a folk dance teacher, for example, if my dancers dance poorly, make countless mistakes, move in awkward, stiff and poor style, I can encourage them to nevertheless make the effort, give it their best.

Perhaps my greatest contribution to this world, whether it be as a tour leader, dance leader, teacher, or whatever, is when I say, with mucho enthusiasm, “Come on, let’s go!”

I say those words pretty easily. Perhaps that is my talent.

Saturday, May 19, 2018

“Alhambra” Problem Solved!

And thus. Tremolo/Arpeggio Problem Also Solved

Amazing and hard to believe, but I believe that this morning I have solved my “Alhambra” problem.

I've somehow settled on accepting, deciding that my playing "slow and focused" method of playing "Alhambra," and all other tremolo/arpeggios pieces, is the way to go!

Actually, this is a whole new way of playing, and approach to the guitar: the "slow and focused" approach.

Somehow the pressure is off. Years of strain and struggle have simply dribbled away.

And note: How relaxed and fun it is!

I've also found a totally new folk dance direction: choreographing (and selling) simple dances.

What's the market? Nursing homes, assisted living places, simple people who like simple things, etc.

Open up, explore, and sell through Youtube/Paypal, etc.

An entire new market, and business.

What about I Feel Guilty Selling Them and the "Is it impolite?" feeling? Where does this come from? Fear that the folk dancers will hate me, reject me, shun me, etc.

Is this true? Or will they admire me for starting a whole new business and service. And offering the idea that folk dance teachers can maybe, actually make a living!

But I need to look at and deal with this hesitation, concern, and fear.

This means for the first time ever, I can now play slow and focused guitar in public.

Should I practice for my next performance? A house concert. Oh! I'm getting nervous already! But I need my nervousness, my pre-performance anxiety. It energizes me and makes me better.

Even this energy acceptance and realization is new.

I'm not fighting my nervous pre-performance anxiety anymore, not denying it, not trying to cure myself of it. Rather, I'm beyond accepting it: I'm welcoming and using it.

I should practice and prepare my nervousness. It's part of any performance, and certainly classical guitar. (I don't dare say "performance" yet.)

Monday, May 21, 2018

Selling the Jim Gold Brand

Jim Gold folk dance brand. This would naturally include special events, weddings, bar mitzvahs, etc.

Would it also include what's in Jim' Store?

Personally, I want and need to sell all my services. (Otherwise, why both creating them? And I need to bother! It is vital to my meaning and existence. Maybe on that basis alone it is worth doing.) But that is a personal desire. Is it a good and right business plan?

This means I'm going back to where I was. Well, maybe that's okay and what I need. I've now put it all together.

Does that mean I'm going back square one?

No. I resolved the "Alhambra" syndrome, and now, personally transformed, I can finally (after forty years of trying) play classical guitar my way!

So, having moved ahead through rebirth/renaissance mode, I'm not going back to square one. Instead, I'm now moving on to square two!

Sales My Way!

Where am I now? For the first time, I feel somewhat financially secure, and am even vaguely interested to see if I could survive (financially) working working. That would be its own type of challenge.

However, the fact that I am even thinking about such a challenge means that is might be(would be, is) possible.

So I am free to not make sales. I am free from selling. In fact, a new (non-financial) reason emerging is that I want more people on my tours is so I won't be embarrassed showing up with a small number of registrants. (Note, it's not for financial reasons, but rather humiliation reasons! And ultimately, there is no reason to be embarrassed, but that is another issue I can deal with later.)

Confidence and Vulnerability

Maybe I've always had it right but never had the confidence to say so.

Maybe that's also why my left knee is hurting so: because I'm facing this realization,

the realization that only I know!

Only I know what's best for me. (That means I'm all alone in my decisions, I am totally responsible for them, and their results. Although others may try to be helpful by telling or suggesting things I might do, in truth, no one else knows.

Much of the time, neither do I. But at least I can get closest to my truth.

On the one hand, knowing this gives me grand confidence.

On the other hand, it makes me feel all alone, weak, and vulnerable.

Maybe that's why my left knee is hurting, hurting with the weight of responsibility, vulnerability, and the fears that go with them.

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

I Need A Purpose

Why am I so unhappy this morning? And for that matter, most mornings?

It's because I wake up with no purpose in mind.

Do I have no purpose? Or have I simply forgotten my purpose?

Do I have a purpose? Well, whether I have one or not, I need a purpose.

So if I don't have one, I must make one up. Life without a purpose is meaningless, and meaninglessness is a drain on my energy and happiness.

Therefore, since I am a creative person, I must create a purpose, make one up.

(Perhaps the Higher Forces will agree with the purpose I create, maybe not. But since the Creator is also creative, I'm sure there will be agreement.)

I any case, as I move into today, what is my purpose?

Yesterday, I found shadows of new purposes in Hebrew and guitar.

Today, I ask: “Could care of my body be a good cause and worthy purpose? After all, the body is the temple of the soul. And, since All-is-One, the care of my body automatically extends to the care of other bodies, and thus to every body.

Pain, Focus, Others

The greater purpose of pain in my body is to remind me of pains in the bodies of others.

The exit door for pain is to focus on something else.

Focus on the solar plexus or navel-to-spine works.

Could the solar plexus focus be a gateway to focus on others?

Why not?

Solar, after all, related to the sun which is the symbol of oneness, gateway to unity, and the Sun god.

Interesting.

Self-Image and Running Wild on the Lawn

I am so tied to my self image, my looks, what others think of me, etc.

Why is this not good for me?

I become a prisoner of my self-image.

Thus it inhibits my freedom. And the shackles of my fear prevent me from running more wildly on the lawn.

Guitar: A New Freedom

Underneath my new guitar sprinting is “It doesn’t matter.”

No performance anymore. Thus, “It doesn’t matter.”

“It doesn’t matter” frees me to sprint, frees me to try anything.

I like that.

What does this signify as an attitude and philosophy for the rest of my life.

Giving Up Folk Dancing

If I gave up folk dancing, would my knees hurt less? Certainly, I would worry less. In fact, maybe I wouldn’t worry at all!

Indeed, giving up folk dancing, reaching the state where “It doesn’t matter,” would free me greatly. No economic dependence, no need to performance, no need for self-definition through my work, my “profession.”

Thus, in philosophy and attitude, I certainly should give up folk dancing! Go for “It doesn’t matter.”

But then, how and in what way, will I make a living?

What else is out there?

Road to Somewhere Else

Is this the first grazing and opening of the post-eighty renaissance, the first rays of guitar light spilling through from the post-eighty sun?

Suddenly, it feels like I can play everything!

I played Bach's "Gavotte in D." Best ever!

Then "Gavotte en Rondeau." Again, with slows and stops, rubato playing, it felt "easy."

Then played a few measures of Bach's "Bourree in Bm." Again "easy."

Then, in awe and amazement, I stopped playing. The sentence hit me: "Could this be the first rays of the post-eighty sun?"

With the final dropping of the tremolo and Alhambra problem, am I starting a new guitar playing life, in which I can actually play all my pieces with ease and dignity?

What a miracle it would be. Am I there?

All signs point to it. The first glimmer of sunlight broke through the many-year dark sky. Perhaps I'm on the road to somewhere else.

And Somewhere Else is the place I want to be!

Sunday, May 27, 2018

Are There Wonders Up Ahead?

Beauty of the Next Level

Could I even reach a higher level of relaxation?

Is there a next level, one I have rarely, if ever felt?

A new level of guitar practice, encompassing “Alhambra” and more? A completely different level where relaxation and speed both meet. Where speed (sprints), relaxation, flow, and focus all combine.

In other words, are there wonders up ahead?

Could be.

(Actually, I know there are. There always are. But I hesitate to concretize it with declarative words. That would be jumping the gun.)

All the above is not that hard. I’m ready.

Just do it.

It’s not hard,

In fact, the amazing thing is, it’s so easy.

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

My Birthday Discovery

I like stories.

I am also very sensitive to sound.

I like the sound of words.

The story within the word fascinates me. The sound of the word leads me to etymology.

Yes, etymology is my thing.

Etymology is the story within the word.

That's why I love languages, and why I go so slowly when I read or study them. I relish each word, its sound, touch, feel, inner story, and meaning.

Monday, June 4, 2018

Calm and Ready to Roll

The Next Level

Scary, scary.

But is it really scary?

It means I can play everything. I'm ready to go public, play my classic guitar pieces before others, before and audience.

New Leaf Guitar Playing

After years and years, the barriers fell so quickly.

Like a leaf falling off a tree.

And, like a leaf that has fallen, there is no returning to the old tree. Only a new leaf can emerge.

The whole structure is collapsing, and a new world is opening. Very fast. It actually happening in a few days! (Maybe weeks?)

Collapse of the old, and a new world opening.

Friday, June 8, 2018

Pain and Discouragement

Hidden and Twisted Bundle Forms of Energy

Yesterday I had a great run.

True, my left knee hurt. But this time, instead of favoring or worrying about it, and trying to avoid the pain, I looked straight at it and into it; I saw it as a “new form of energy, a twisted force, a bundled and different kind of power.” Then I focused on it, and used the “pain” as an incentive, even an inspiration, to drive and push me on!

And it worked!

By looking straight into the cyclone, and using its energy, I ended up having a great run. When my knee hurt, instead of going slower, I went faster! The feelings in my left knee fluctuated between pain, more pain, less pain, and no pain. In other words, the so-called “pain” appeared, disappeared, and reappeared only to disappear again. Like a passing cloud.

Basically, I watched it change forms and used its often hidden energy.

Why not do the same thing with morning Hebrew. Often, nay usually, I end up feeling

miserable when, after spending so much time studying, I still can't read it well, or remember the words I supposedly learned yesterday, or last week. Yes, its frustrating, and downright discouraging.

But if, like my knee pain, I see the pain of discouragement as a new and different form of energy, I could use it as a new form of incentive to inspire me to move forward!

Why not? Pain and discouragement are “only” attitudes. I can change my attitude by looking at them as new, hidden, twisted forms of energy—mysteries wrapped in a pain-puzzle bundle.

Physical and mental are tied together. Knee stiffness is a physical pain; discouragement is a psychological pain. Thus are both related.

Saturday, June 9, 2018

“Retirement”

We checked our money, and it seems we have enough money almost to “retire.”

It sure takes the pressure off.

But what does it mean?

It makes it somewhat “realistic” that I don't have to do anything. In one sense, removing the “have to” from my life is a life-long dream.

Okay, with the possibility “retirement” staring me in the face, what does it actually mean? And how would I implement it?

Under the “retirement” star, how would I play guitar? Certainly, first thing is a slow “Alhambra” would be fine. Actually, slow or fast would no longer matter (since I am now, would be, “retired,” if anyone wants to listen to me there will no longer be a financial reward, so it doesn’t matter anymore. No more pressures of being a “professional.”)

Anything else?

I imagine I would always teach folk dancing.

What about tours? Would I still run them? As a “retired” with no financial considerations, would I still want to run tours?

Would I find other reasons run them?

Or would I just give them up?

Too early to tell. But lots to consider here.

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

I made my commitments.

I broke my commitments.

I feel bad.

Therefore, better to keep my commitments than break them. This no matter how difficult it may be. (Of course, use good judgement.)

After that, be proud that I kept them (along with the added benefit of feeling good)

Thursday, June 14, 2018

On Making a Mistake

I sent out the wrong attachment to my travelers. Now all their passport information, addresses, and emails have been shared with all the other travelers. (It's like an illegal hacking of computer records.) I feel very sorry and embarrassed. But what can I do? The mistake has already been made and can't be "taken back."

Live in the mistake. Feel the pain . . . before I send out the email again.

What, if anything, can I learn?

Reread every email and attachment before I send them out.

Well, I usually do. Thus, the second question is: How can I accept and deal with the fact that, no matter and how much I try, I will always make some mistakes, even big ones?

Imperfection reigns no matter how much I try.

Still, that is no excuse not to keep trying. That's why a good answer to a compliment is, "Thanks for the compliment. I'll keep trying."

Yet even with these good explanations above, I still feel bad about my mistake. I guess best is to keep feeling the pain, of the lesson drilled in.

Friday, June 15, 2018

Freedom and Love

The "burden" of having to practice and play guitar has been lifted.

I never considered it a burden. But perhaps it was. And perhaps, eventually, I'll be

able to return to practicing and playing the guitar, unburdened and free!

But with this new feeling, lighter and freer, I can concentrate more fully, and with love, on my tours, tourists, and tour business. (Am I loving them more because people are registering more, reacting and answering more? Maybe. Such success is filling me with love and making me happy. Nevertheless, something is different. I've been successful in the past, but it has made me more frantic or "wildly happy." Somehow the wildness has been softened in love and satisfaction.

Is the commitment and acceptance of better teeth and the large dental expense of having them contributing to this love and happiness feeling? Somehow I doubt it. But who knows?

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

Is this weakness, dizziness, and touch of nausea I feel, a reaction to taking a vacation? All my supports and interests have been ripped away by my "need" to take a vacation. It means leaving my wonderful home with my wonderful interests and routines.

Is my so-called weakness, dizziness, nausea be a hidden form of anger?

What else could it be?

Note how well I was doing before we left. I was powerful, running strong, dealing with my knee tight-pains as a hidden bundle of energy and even looking forward to feeling their sting!

My Hebrew was flying, my business in order; all seemed on the up and up, especially

physically.

Then suddenly came our vacation.

First day, I lay in the sun, tanning and ended up feeling weak, dizzy, nauseous and “touched by so-called sun stroke.”

But was it really “sun stroke?” Truth is, I don’t like beaches, and especially hate lying on the beach. And I did it anyway, muchly (mostly?) to please my wife.

Well, she was pleased, but I got “sick.” And this “sickness” has followed my all vacation, Until today, really, when I am suddenly aware of what the cause of this “sickness” is.

So basically, I am not sick. I was suffering the “usual” hidden-anger syndrome, unaware of it and taking it out on myself by creating “symptoms.”

Writing My Books As My Sales Force

If I am a walking sales plan and sales force, then writing should definitely be part of my sales!

Dare I use the word “force”? Very gutsy and strong. Can I accept that I am that strong? Can I, should I, write a different story? I’d like to.

Therefore, my question should be first, How can I be a new writing sales force, and then, What to do to be a writing sales force. Or a sales force in general?

Maybe I simply am a sales force. But until now, I never wanted to face or admit it.

Sales force give it a powerful new flowing stream color.

Two Limiting Stories^
—Writer and Classical Guitarist

One limiting story I have been telling myself is that I am not a writer. But I have been writing for over 50 years. So how could this be true? It is not.

Time for a different writer story.

Another limiting story I have been telling myself is that I am not a classical guitarist. But I have been playing and practicing for over 50 years. Thus, how could this be true? It is not.

Time for a different classical guitar story.

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

Vacation, Completion, Learning, and Moving On

I'm nervous this morning. I have no idea why.

Everything is under control. I know exactly what to do about my upcoming Balkan Adventure tour. Plus other business and personal goals and aspects have fallen into place.

My purpose and direction seem to be in order.

So why am I nervous?

Maybe “everything is in order” really means that nothing is in order. The “ordering” stage has been completed.

Everything I learned on vacation, especially my new public gaida and guitar performance, along with the 5 Degree Principle: How Small Changes Lead To Big Results by

Shannon Cassidy, and the new story lines I'm telling myself, are in place; they have gone as far as they can go. For now.

And completion makes me nervous.

Completion is an ending in disguise. As such, I face the emptiness of a future without purpose or direction.

Our beautiful Niantic and Hull vacation is over. The life-changing lessons I learned during its quiet, meditative period have been learned, absorbed, put in place—at least for now.

I'm ready to drop the past and move on.

To what?

That is the question.

But now at least I know the question.

As my new question emerges, my nervousness diminishes.

And now, rising from journal writing, nervousness has disappeared. I'm at the edge of refreshment and renaissance.

New goals and purposes are on the horizon.

Drop the past. Dive into the future.

I can't wait to find my next goals and purposes, and start anew.

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

The Knees PuzzleKnees and Old Neighborhood as Refuge

My place of fear is also my place of refuge.

The old neighborhood “vacation spot” I create in my mind is soothing and relaxing. I’m injured (bad knees) and helpless there. I have no responsibilities!

But then reality kicks in. I return to work. Fears and pressures step in. And sometimes there is a displacement reaction.

Here is the chronology:

1. Knees were great on Monday.
2. Tuesday both knees were killing me.
3. Wednesday (and Friday) I start folk dance teaching,

It is so obvious that my nervousness about returning to folk dance teaching work, where legs and knees are deeply involved, is the Sarnoian reason for my “knee pain.”)

What to do? How to deal with it?

I will always be afraid of something. The only answer to these fears is awareness, self-awareness.

Then ask good questions:

Why do I have it?

Then come what and how questions.

What can I learn from this?

How will this new knowledge make me a better leader?

Great questions!

Guitar

Facts and Feelings

The facts: I played in public slow and focused state—so soft, beautiful, and with exquisite tone. It opened the soul.

The feeling: After half an hour of playing, I got up feeling stiff and crippled.

What kind of story is this?

Crippled not positive. (Stiff is better, but not great.)

Slow and focused is.

My feelings are not objective facts; they are subjective.

But facts and feelings are both important, even if they are totally different.

Often I feel I gave a terrible performance or folk dance teaching. Then someone in my audience tells me how great and brilliantly I played. Or taught.

Or sometimes I give what I feel or think is a terrific performance. Or teaching. And folks tell me how bored they were.

So my feelings don't live up to the facts. And vice versa.

What does all this mean?

I'm not sure yet. Certainly, feelings and facts are different. But how does or should this knowledge affect my public performance, and my life?

Objectively, I played beautifully.

Subjectively, I ended up feeling crippled.

I can't change the facts of the story. But I can change the interpretation.

So ends a New Leaf

New Leaf Journal. Edited by Barry

Starting Over as a Wild Man

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Nine-Month Return to the Old Neighborhood

Am I being punished for my arrogance?

Somehow I like that thought.

However, it could also be an excuse to slip back into the old neighborhood.

Yet since I turned 80, I have been besieged by a catalogue of miseries, or at least annoyances—all, I believe, created in my own imagination. But nevertheless, they are “imagined,” they are all happening, or at least I am making them come true. I am brining my artistic creations into being, into fruition, even though all of them are a bunch of miseries.

Can I be thankful that my artistic brain creates such miseries “in order to protect me from greater fears” as Sarno would explain?

I don't know.

In any case, I feel I was at the top of my game before I turned 80. Suddenly, 80 hit and all the fears of getting old, abandonment by my clients, and the slow abandonment of my body from myself, through knee, shoulder, and now stomach pain. Softer, slower, tours. Abandonment by my clients coupled with the thought that now I've got the stock market, and can actually make money in

it, I am or will be rich, etc.

One positive or negative fantasy after another, and I fell for them all!

Was I protecting myself from falling? Or was I simply a fool? Or both?

I don't know. Maybe I'll never know.

But that is where I stand this morning.

What to do, or think, if anything, as I move forward?

And will I move forward? Well, whether up or down there is no other direction.

But now that I have been sufficiently chastised for my arrogance, or beaten myself back into the old neighborhood (knowing myself, this is probably what I have done), what's next?

Wow, I think I've discovered it. Age 80 is a great gateway, a new disguise and fresh, exciting, dynamic, new excuse to retreat and return to the old neighborhood!

80 is my excuse; 80 is my reason! 80 is my disguise to return to the old neighborhood. Pile on top of that low client registration and I'm on my way backward, floating, nay flying through the gates into the familiar old put-down past with its blocked streets and closed windows. I'm home again! Yes, I can now complain, wallow, feel sorry for myself, push myself down into a corner. How restful it is to retire at home with Mamma, to give up all dreams, and be taken care of like a child again.

How did I give up my dreams? One way was by believing I had accomplished them! And note, my last New Leaf journal was called Running Wild on the Lawn. And I finished writing it. Therefore, in my mind, I "accomplished" it. I finally reached the "running wild on the lawn" spot. Now I would rest on my laurels, do nothing, and "retire." I even have almost enough money to do it.

But does my true body, mind, and soul really want that? Just because I fulfilled some dreams, do I want to give up dreaming? Would I want to invent new dreams, even if they are short-term

(after all, at 80 things become more short-term)? This way I could keep dreaming and be motivated to work toward fulfillment of my new dreams. Certainly, that kind of life is healthier and more inspiring than drifting back into the old neighborhood.

Maybe that explains the post-80 life I've been living or imagining so far. It's been fear-filled, driven by so-called fulfillment, accomplishment, and "success" cliches, and ultimately fear of death and abandonment. And thus, did I, once again, retreat into childhood safety.

It's been a long retreat. Almost a year. Nine months, actually. Does that symbolize something? Maybe this realization has prepared me for a birth. My own. A rebirth, even a renaissance.

Wild Guitar

A Path to Self-Knowledge

In order to play wild guitar, you must give up audience love or even interest in your playing.

Yet and thus could one call wild guitar playing a performing art? Well, maybe. But you can't expect people to pay for it (although they might. Well, maybe you can't ask them to pay, but they could voluntarily pay, make a voluntary contribution to the Wild Guitar Fund or something to that effect.

Truth is, anything, wild or not, can be playing in public. Asking others to pay for it, like or love it, or even be interested, is another story.

Wild guitar is really a way of life. Others may take it or leave it. It has nothing to do with pleasing or displeasing them. In fact, it may have nothing to do with them. (Although I wish it had.

I hate “rejecting” others.)

However, it is a path to self-knowledge, exploration, expression, and truth. And as such, might interest others.

I can only think of performing, of ultimately sharing my stuff with an audience. Maybe that is just my nature.

So where then, if anywhere, does wild guitar fit in?

Is there such a thing as wild guitar performing?

If not, is that a “new art form” to develop?

Is there a venue for wild guitar playing?

Where would one develop such a new performing art?

Play for nothing. Or management might pay the wild guitarist a small amount. Just sit and doodle in public at a mall or restaurant, playing wild guitar as folks pass by or sit talking to one other, or quietly thinking, letting their minds wander. That way they are free to listen or not.

Getting paid for something, getting paid for wild guitar playing, getting paid for performing of wild guitar playing or anything else is very important to me.

Because I feel if they don’t pay for it, it means it’s not worth anything.

But is this true? No. Many free things have mucho value. Such as some good advice or teaching one gives. And that’s only one example.

If is true, and it is, why then must I always be paid in order to feel what I do is worthwhile and worthy?

Maybe it is simply conditioning. Also payment is one of the signs of recognition. But I think it is mostly conditioning. I have feared poverty so long that it has become a permanent set of mind. The “I need money and without it I will soon become a Bowery bum” has permeated my mind for so many years, I don’t know another way of thinking.

Does artistic recognition require financial recognition? I doubt it. Look at my Wednesday Senior folk dance class, They love it and they love me. And yet they personally and directly pay me nothing. (The town pays me instead.) But they feel they are getting it free. Monday night pays, but they love it and love me as well.

So money, although an aspect, is not the rule for recognition and audience love.

Will knowing this help me perform wild guitar? Maybe.

I could not imagine an artist creating, and then not thinking of money. But speaking to David Strauss made me rethink this. Plus I cannot play wild guitar and think of money, too

They are separate categories.

If I want to play wild guitar, if I even want to “perform” wild guitar, it would have to be for free. In fact, money itself would be besides the point.

I have to make money somewhere. But perhaps I should consider making it somewhere else. As many artists do.

Way of the Wild Man

Bored and Disinterested Audience

First feeling with bone public “silent” legato warm-up: I am totally boring my audience. I can see them closing their eyes, sighing, losing interest, complaining about how boring this is, then

abandoning me and walking away. But that's okay.

Acceptance: It's not a fear but a reality. Should I simply accept this as one of the trade-offs and realities of the wild game? Yes.

Impossible to Lose my Audience

But note: I still have an audience, even though they are all bored and disinterested. I think in my heart, mind, and being, my audience, whether internal or external, will never go away! Evidently, I am inextricably tied to them. They are part of my being, part of me. Thus, evidently, even if bored, disinterested, and walking away, it is impossible to permanently lose my audience. For no matter how many times I perform and they walk away, they always reappear the next time I play.

Is it important I realize I will always have an audience?

Yes, because in the past, I have always feared them, feared their potential criticism.

But now, no more. At least, I am working on it.

Evidently, guitar will always be my "profession." Seeing and playing for an audience, whether imaginary or real, internal or external, is simply an unbreakable habit. (And maybe it is also a talent and celestial calling given or "imposed" on me.) Therefore, I will always have an audience and there will always be an audience.

Another Side of Wild

The "Let 'Er Rip" Side of Wild

Many faces of wild.

I knocked off Alhambra slow and soft.

Now that I'm warmed up, I knocked off Alhambra fast, soft, and partially sloppy.

Fast, soft (or hard), and partial sloppy (skimming or missing a few notes) is another side of wild.

It's the "Let 'er rip" side of wild.

Coming Home Again

But "You Can't Go Home Again"

The "Now What?" Stage

Let's take responsibility. I created all these problems with my guitar playing and my right hand, thumb, fingers, wrist, etc because I wanted to prevent myself from performing.

Truly, at the time, and for the next 40 or so years, a good part of me, perhaps all of me, never wanted to perform again!

I created my guitar problem to stop myself. Even with all my blemishes and inferiority complex, I was doing okay-to-fine during my performing career.

Then, in my desire for perfection, or rather my desire to never be nervous again (which I thought was due to my inferior guitar playing) I began the re-practice route, with its goal of playing perfectly, which meant I would forever be immune from criticism and never be nervous again.

Well, never to be nervous again, I have learned is not only unrealistic, it is impossible. I will always be nervous before performance. Period. It will never go away. And perhaps it shouldn't. But that is another issue and question.

Let's face it: I was on a wild goose chase.

Can I blame myself? Of course, in the process of retreat, I created an entire new business that included classes, weekends, and tours, a monumental task, which I could never have done if I had "been able to play guitar." But using the reason or excuse of incompetence, I diverted my mind and energies, and created these new paths.

Is that good? I don't know. And was it really God who was directing me during this time?

Or was God my excuse for this divergence? I will never know that for sure either. Let's say God and I were partners in manufacturing this guitar excuse, with its Alhambra problems, and the new pathways it created.

Today, on guitar, it feels like I have finally come home.

I've come home to my old Greenwich Village starting days, home to Harry Berlow, flamencan guitar, and even Rolando Valdes-Blaine, and the period where I thought I could play just about any classical or flamencan guitar piece. Yes, I thought it then and could do it then. And I did. But after a 10-or-so-year career of playing, I "purposely" threw it away. I redid my technique with the purpose of reaching the state of perfection and fearlessness, and freeing myself from my worries, concerns, performance nervousness. In the process, I "purposely crippled" myself so I could no longer play in public.

And in so doing I created a new career.

But now that I have "come home again," where does that leave me today?

Return to the stage, in spite of my imperfections.

Return to the stage, imperfections and all.

Embrace my imperfections. I've got nothing better to do.

Road to Improvement

Pathway to the Divine

I'll just keep trying to improve, never quite getting there, and that's just the way it is.

I am sometimes right, sometimes wrong. But when I am, it's often just for a day. Next day it's all different, and I have to start all over.

That's just the way it is.

On the other hand, why be down on myself?

I am improving, getting better.

It's just that the road to improvement is so unpredictable, rocky, and strange.

And, of course, it never ends.

Running Wild, Ecstasy, and Freedom

My goal has always been freedom to create and jump for joy in the wild happiness of creation. "Wild" or running wild on the lawn, simply means freedom. Period.

How to achieve freedom? Of course you need discipline and skills to implement it. Otherwise freedom mean chaos, which is totally terrifying. Thus the country of freedom always needs borders, disciplines in which to contain it. Break the borders for a moment, and you often touch ecstasy. But ecstasy itself, although a goal and great feeling cannot (and should not) last.

Ecstasy is a momentary reminder of the Power, the heavenly forces that run the universe. And by experiencing ecstasy. Your conscious mind disintegrates and you, for a moment, become part of the universe. Yes, it is an ecstatic experience. But since you are human and contained in a body, you must come back to earth.

And you come back reminded. You know the magnificence of the heavenly power. Still the elixir is so strong, that, drunk too long, or lingering in its hold too long is dangerous and can kill you.

By connecting you to the Universe, ecstasy is the ultimate high. But when not connected to the higher forces, can also be a drug. I'd call it addicting, self-aggrandizing, false ecstasy because it creates the illusion that that you personally, your ego, is the source of all power.

Meditation

Studying Hebrew (or perhaps even coding) is my meditation/creative/in-the-chamber-of-my-
imagination time.

Eventually, I will bring the mental fluctuations to the public, to the world, but in my own
way, after my own cooking in the cauldron of my imagination, in my own time.

And they may and will come out totally differently, perhaps with not a word of Hebrew or
scrap of evidence that I ever studying or meditated upon anything. They may come out in a dance,
or accident phrase that I drop while teaching or talking to another.

Yes, very often the people and public are just too powerful for me. Talking to others, especially
trying it in a foreign language, Hebrew, etc. is often just too overwhelming; just as movies are too
powerful and overwhelming, drowning out my inner voices, overpowering, shutting out my and
darkening and limiting my crazy imagination with its inner vision of wild freedom.

And my imagination is my most vital tool, a place of curiosity, engagement, dreams, pleasure,
and adventure.

Yet, eventually I want to bring my vision with its creations to the public. Bringing things
public is a vital part of my life.

Solitude and dynamic entry: I need both.

Control/Uncontrolled

Alhambra/Tremolo Technique

I can't cross the line between Alhambra/tremolo control (slow to moderate) and
uncontrolled (fast).

Yet, I can do it easily with rasgueado.

What a puzzled. I wonder why?

I wonder if I can mix controlled and uncontrolled and, in so doing, create an Alhambra/tremolo pathway to a new land.

Does controlled and uncontrolled relate to private and public? Maybe.

If so, then in the same experiment, try to mix private (controlled) and public(uncontrolled).

One Year Sabbatical

A one-year sabbatical.

I can afford a one-year sabbatical. This sabbatical idea takes the pressure off immediate action. Knowing I can afford it also eliminates panic.

I can take the chance. I can think “no pressure.”

Gives me time to reflect, wonder, dream, and change, see where this “new adventure” leads.

Truth is, I don't have to sing either.

Yes, in my sabbatical year, I don't have to do anything! I cannot remember ever having a week or month in my life like this. And now a year! And there is absolutely nothing I have to do. Nothing I am compelled, obligated, forced, pressured, frightened, panicked, railroading into doing!

In my sabbatical year I am totally free to do only what I want to do! Yes. A first for me.

Totally free. Running wild on the lawn. Goal of complete freedom achieved!

Now what?

Maybe nothing. Maybe just live floating in a complete vacuum. Can I do that?

More important is: Do I want to do that? I doubt it. I don't think I can or want to live in a vacuum.

But in my sabbatical year, I have empty space ahead.

Where will they lead?

What will I end up doing, if I don't have to do anything?

No doubt, this will reveal my true desires.

I've been running, like a chicken with its head cut off, for years, not paying attention to my money, always focusing on accumulating, accumulating, trying to get rich so I never have to worry about money again!

Well, evidently I've reached the end of that road. It gives me no security, safety, or stability; and I'm constantly worried and afraid, or ecstatic if the money is coming in. But whichever way, up or down, money is my main focus. And I am no closer to my goal of freedom, and running wild on the lawn (well, I am running wild, but like a chicken with its head cut off.)

In this new version of my life, this new New Leaf chapter which I call "Wild," I've redefined wild as not only including fast, agitated, and ecstatic, but also slow and soft.

Slow and soft are the wise additions. And once realized, I achieved my freedom goal of running wild on the lawn, which I now call simply: "Wild."

Amazing: A Desire to Sell!

Strange—now that I've made my peace with sales and tours, saying I do not want to be pressured into sales and then I'd have a wonderful life, and I decided to follow that philosophy, and take a sabbatical year, I have a stirring, a rumbling, burgeoning, even a desire, to sell!

How did this happen?

First, the pressure had to be totally off. I had to feel free. Thus to discover my most basic needs and desires.

And then the question of what will I do with my free time arose.

And one of the things, in fact, almost the first thing to come up was: a yen to talk to my clients!

What does this mean?

Perhaps that, despite my negative sales upbringing, I am a born salesman. More than that, I may actually love sales!

If this is so, and it appears it is, what is my next step?

Perhaps I might start, for inspiration and ideas, by reading some books on sales. The past is popping into the future, with a vengeance. But this time the forced aspect is over, and it feels totally new.

I no longer have to sell. It is no longer an obligation. No more gnawing voices and worries about poverty and more.

Friday, February 23, 2018

Banish Panic and Despair

I'm feeling panic again. No sales, no customers, no registrants, no money, plus a down market. Suddenly, with a shift of winds, and prospects falling close to zero, I move swiftly from a rosy picture a few months ago, to despair today.

It looked so good, and now it looks so awful.

Well, that's life. What to do?

On the emotional level, I could at least begin with my panic. Is it realistic or not? I don't know. But, realistic or not, I should handle it in the first battle.

Panic and despair: mere emotions, but they sure exist. They are totally influenced by the outside world of shifting reality.

If I give in to them, what happens? I feel miserable, that's what happens. But even though business is awful, do I have to feel miserable? Or can I choose to ignore my misery and its

accompanying despair and continue my life, which isn't so bad, as it is?

And maybe figure out some new sales techniques at the same time.

Truth is, panic and despair have absolutely no effect on outside reality. They are my inner reality over which I have complete control!

So in my reactions to the down business climate, I am choosing to feel miserable.

Isn't there a better way?

Know my feelings, yes. But perhaps I can follow this with replacement.

Once I look into the faces of panic and despair, can I then by-pass them as "feeling ghosts," look through them and move on? On the surface, I'd say yes.

The best rational way to handle them is to step back, look at the situation, analyze it, then do what I can, if anything.

Sometimes there is really nothing to do but wait and watch.

Can I do that while it feels like my world is ending? But what other choice is there? Until a new or better direction comes up, what else can I do?

And maybe I can simply learn to follow my path quietly, calmly, with faith (but without hope), do what I'm supposed to do, and shut up.

Yes, recognize the weather, use an umbrella or raincoat when necessary, but stay on the path no matter what the weather. In other words, just keep doing what I'm doing.

Saturday, February 24, 2018

Return

Somehow I have given up, lost my way, stopped considering or even trying to implement my once grand program of writing, performing, playing guitar, etc. And with the disintegration of these

once noble goals, my desire to fulfill other dictates has also dribbled away.

And all this because my tour business stinks, there are no reactions to my ads, emails and FB posts, no response to my sales efforts.

I am angry and depressed about this, or perhaps depressed and angry, and having a small temper tantrum because things are not going my way, or the way had planned or hoped. And I'm falling back into money and abandonment fears.

In other words, my unsuccessful tour sales efforts are turning my attitude to shit, blocking, nay blowing up all my old time goals.

I used to have "secret" goals of both publishing my books and performing on classical guitar. Those "secret" goals and wishes drove me for years. Tours, stock market (but not folk dancing), were all simply methods of making money, means of survival, so I could support my dreams and artistic goals and habits. I even learned website design so I could eventually "publish" my books online, putting some or all of their content on my website and thus bring them to the public.

But all these former desires and goals have been washed away by (unsuccessful) tours sales efforts.

What is the answer to this dilemma?

Obviously, to return to my roots.

And, I suppose, this means return to writing and publishing new books, and return to performing.

Upon hearing the latter, I go "ugh." Second I hear, "Been there, done that." But I know that is a rationalization. First, I hear. . .what?

Truth is, I must admit, I have finally conquered my Alhambra problem. And this by finally accepting my slow playing, and that I probably will never perform it in public. Or if I ever do, it will

be totally on my own terms.

This victory has taken 40 years. But I must admit, it has finally come. And it releases me to perform again.

Performing again would also mean I have to revive my songs, stories, and pieces and parts of my old program. I have to return to the past to revive and invigorate the future.

No question, I am different now.

But can I make the effort to revive not only my performing career, but my writing as well.

Horrible and Fascinating Thought

Could embarrassment and humiliation about “letting it all out,” “releasing my wailing, crying soul,” be the ultimate reason why I gave up my concerts, along with my easy singing skill?

And gave myself the Alhambra put down for years to prevent me from facing my true pain-filled and hurt emotional self?

What a horrible thought. All that wasted time, those wasted years. But it could be true.

It is the reason I started my New Leaf Journal: to express the true heartaches and joys of my soul. But this was “private” journal. Singing, at least the soulful, hurting side, would be for public consumption and display. (Even Bernice might listen.) Fear and embarrassment on all sides. So I shut it down. For 30 years.

Poverty, Having Nothing, Live By Your Wits

Period of the Sage

Return to the Past with Mew Liberation

Poverty, having nothing, becoming a Bowery bum, these fears have haunted my life, especially my married life.

I hate living in fear. But I do.

The stock market is swooping down today. My money is sinking fast. Who knows, it could all be gone in a flash. Fear rising, bordering on panic. I could lose all my money; I could become totally poor—again.

I was once totally poor during my Greenwich Village days.

How did I survive? I lived by my wits.

Maybe the concrete realization that I could, at any moment, lose all my money is a good thing to know and accept.

The disease of fear is incurable. A difference between curing and healing. I have an incurable disease; but nevertheless, I could be healed. Through self-love and acceptance (in this case of the market or something else wiping out all my money), an acceptance of ultimate poverty situation.

Enlightenment may mean that the burden of your finances or at least worry about finances, has been removed. You are “lighter”, enlightened.

Or maybe it is best to imagine I've lost all my savings, to imagine my life with no money or even a source for it. No support at all, from anywhere.

What would I do? How would I live?

Would I simply die? (That will happen anyway.)

Maybe now that I'm older, I may have to live by my wits again. Is that really so bad?

If I can imagine how to live without money, maybe I can imagine how to live free again.

After all, in the Astrology of Personality it says that eighty-four and up is the period of the

sage.

Thursday, March 1, 2018

Stop Worrying About Money

New Habit and Adventure

I've been worried about money for years. Well, actually and mostly since I got married.

First, I thought that focusing on making money would help. And it does, up to a point.

But during the days that I thought I had enough money (before the market went down, when business was flying), I still worried or at least thought about it, even focused on, money.

What did I learn? That having “enough” money, being at a point where I thought I didn't have to worry about it anymore, did not free me from money worries, or at least focusing on it.

And now that I'm losing my money, my savings are going down and hopes for improved business are sinking, I am once again still worried about it.

Thus, my methods of dealing with money worries, in retrospect, just do not work.

Perhaps the best way not to worry about money is simply to just to stop worrying. Period.

Perhaps worrying about it is just a habit I developed over the years. Yes, it pushed me to earn: but perhaps I'm at a different stage of life now.

What stage?

I'm not sure. But now is the time to develop a new habit: Stop worrying about money. Go about my business, keep doing what I always do, keep promoting and pushing my businesses (through emails, ads, FB, etc), and, in the process, stop worrying.

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

How strange about my left knee. My six-week physical therapy ended yesterday. Dr. Pavell said my knee was much better! And I agree.

And yet, today (and yesterday) my knee feels worse than ever! And this, even though the doctor, and even myself agree that it is better!

How strange is that?

Could this be a strange new Sarnoian reaction? If yes, why?

Well, Dr. Pavell, my physical therapists, and even myself agree that the road has been cleared. There is not nothing (or at least much less) standing in my way for Wild, and running wild.

Could this fear of my new freedom, my new Wild place, be now appearing my left leg? This idea seems strangely possible and right. No other “explanation” holds up. (Of course, I could say I “overdid” it by walking so fast, but somehow that doesn’t feel quite right. A physical excuse for a mental state.)

Time for a conference with myself.

Friday, March 9, 2018

Suppressed Rage in my Left Leg?

Furious Over Tour Rejections

But Freedom and Happiness through my Right Index Finger

The gateway to my true Alhambra self is through my right index finger.

I wonder if the gateway to my true folk dance self is through my left leg. I used to have left “folk dance ankle.” Now I have left folk dance knee. Is there a relationship? My tensions and fears have usually been expressed (suppressed) through my left side, leg, knee, ankle.

Is that happening now?

What are my fears now? Age, incapacity, death. Lack of purpose. Anything new? Yes, since 80.

I have yet to deal with it, accept it. Perhaps my helpless rage against it is being expressed through my left knee.

Note: Helpless rage. Helpless, my left knee is threatening to make me helpless. And indeed, I am angry, raging against such a state.

Could Sarno be right? Well, why not? He's been right in so many other things in my life. Is there suppressed rage in my leg?

It started with low registration for Balkan Splendor. Or perhaps even earlier: low registration for Romania. Then, starting this January, total silence, almost no registration for tours this year. I have been forgotten, pushed aside, shoved down and squashed. Then the fallen stock market was the final blow to my hopes for riches and success.

So basically, it feels like, this year, everything has fallen apart. I rage in helpless frustration.

And paradoxically, the doctor said I was much better! And since he said that, my knee has gotten worse!

Could it be that my body is better, but my mind is worse, that I am creating this left knee pain as a distraction?

Distraction from what? Obviously, a greater fear. Well, I said it: fear of old age, but perhaps even "worse," that my customers are abandoning me.

Childhood terror of abandonment, and the death that comes with it: My existence is being threatened. What to do? I can either flee or face my demons.

Evidently, I have chosen to flee.

Is making myself helpless a form of fleeing? Maybe. Well, it really doesn't matter.

Yes, I don't want to face how angry, nay enraged I am. I'd "rather" turn it on myself. I hate to think it, and even admit it, but that is what I have done. No wonder my knee hurts.

Perhaps even my age fear has been created by my anger at tour rejections. I could, after all, see 80 as another step into wisdom, which it is.

In any case, the truth is I am furious furious I have been forgotten and abandoned.

A Dancing Alhambra and Happy Index Finger!

On guitar I have lost my audience. I have given them up. That's why I'm so free and happy and my Alhambra is opening up with a free, happy, and powerful right index finger! Yes, happiness and freedom reign. I no longer worry about criticism, along with the constant tension, tightness and anxiety.

I am loving my classical guitar, which I play only for myself, with love of my power, and love of God.

Indeed, the right-hand tightness must have been caused by anger at my audience. But that is over. I no longer care or even think about them. So I am not longer angry at them. I can play for myself and as my true self.

Now what about folk dancing, and tours. Is it time to give up my audience as well? No, not yet. But dive into the angry, raging bundle in my left knee.

With Dr. Pavell saying my left leg is much better, my last avenue of escape closed down. I had to finally face it. The pain behind my left knee was excruciating, But rage, anger, fear and pain of abandonment were obviously worse. I tried to deny it. That's why it took months to face it.

Saturday, March 10, 2018

Folk Dancing Healed Me

“The big deal is that my Darien folk dance group cured my left knee! Yes!

“I could hardly walk before the class. Such great pain. Leading and running the class pushed me out of myself and into the realm of higher focus, focusing on both the dance and the dancers, on leading the group, and this focus took my attention off my knee.

Then I drifted back to injury—but now with the knowledge that, for a short time, while I was focused on teaching, my knee pain disappeared.

If the intense focus of that short teaching time could do it, why couldn't I do it when I'm not teaching? In other words, it is a mental state.

And this morning, I feel better.

Tremolo

How does this realization help my guitar? Does it mean I really have to play classic guitar and more for others, give a concert? And this in order to cure (heal) myself?

Wouldn't it be strange, mysterious, and wonderful if most of my “life” problems were, through the strange alchemy of this miserable, suffering, low-to-no business, injury-prone year were solved by sneaking through the back door!

That for example, Alhambra was solved by sneaking through in that way. Of even the desire for great leaps of wealth through stock market gains. Or what else?

Suppose all this suffering has remolded my psyche, and what used to seem difficult now seems easy.

Take this morning: The solution to my Alhambra tremolo seems and feels easy.

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Recriminations

Forty Years of Effort in the Wrong Direction

How could I have been so stupid all those years trying to grow the Alhambra treble when, all the time, its essence was in the base?

Forty years of effort. . . in the wrong direction!

Why did it take forty years? And why am I convinced now?

Will I ever really know? And does it even matter?

The point is, I am finally there. Isn't that all that matters? The Alhambra point.

Notice I have a blinding headache coming on. I wonder why.

A blinding Alhambra headache?

Obviously total anger. But at what? Isn't it too late? Can't make up for those wasted years.

What can I do? Move ahead. A new space.

Of course, destruction clears the way to the new path.

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Sloppy, Imperfect, and Sense of Humor

May Be My (Only) Way to Go

Aiming for perfection while realizing I'll never make it is the paradox, the contradiction, the joke.

I'm a perfectionist.

But I'll never get it perfect.

Therefore, is the moral of the Alhambra that I must give up my quest for perfection. I must accept sloppy and imperfect.

Maybe that is the only conclusion I can draw. Certainly, I've tried the perfection route for enough years and it hasn't worked.

Sad to say, there is nothing more to be gained from trying.

And yet I keep aiming to be better. Is the quest for perfection unquenchable, a never-ending human disease? Or do only certain people have it? Like me?

Yet that quest is partly fun. Maybe the fact that I rarely if ever achieve it is part of the joke. And frustration is what gives me a sense of humor.

Playing Guitar "Only for Me" as a Type of Advance,

A Personal Running Wild on the Lawn Victory

Perhaps, for me, playing guitar "only for me, only for myself," free from the prying eyes of the audience, free of "professional" and concert restrictions, free in general, is a type of advance.

Maybe this down and emptiness I feel is the down and emptiness that comes after a victory. I've finally "arrived." How glorious for the first few moments to stand shining on the mountain top! But then comes the "Now what?" And the letdown, lack of purpose and direction, after victory.

Playing classical guitar "only for myself" is indeed a personal victory. Can I accept it or do I now charge on to something else, and remain ever in the whirlwind?

I probably need a bit of both.

Monday, March 19, 2018

Writing

I'm afraid to put my foot in the water again.

After almost a year of crumbling edifices, including my bad knee and tour business, and other things, my slate has been wiped clean and I have been totally humbled. I'm even slipping back into lack of confidence.

It has been a terrible year. I have just about hit the basement and am crawling around at the bottom, listless, directionless, can't get started in anything.

It seems I can't go any lower. And I have been crawling at or near the bottom since January.

But Saturday, after dinner with Barry and Eugenia, I took a step in a "new" direction (actually an old direction restarted): I decided to go back to register for Barry's writing class and return to writing.

A frightening new decision. On one level, it feels so good to be frightened again! And the sudden question emerged: Can I even write anymore? Do I still have an imagination? Can I "compete" with the others? Dare I dream of publishing again, with all its disappointments?

All frightening questions, ones I have avoided, probably for years. Now I am facing the music again, in a new (old) body, and new mind set. What is that mind set? I'm not sure yet. But I am taking the first step, a tip-toe, into the water

Folk Dancing

Another "new" thing: folk dancing with others, in Ginny's Sunday class, as equals. No longer the teacher, or promoter of my tours, or even "on" when I enter the folk dance class. I don't even have to dance well. I can just relax and be myself. (Well, I'm not there yet, but perhaps I took the first step. "Changing (healing) the world one step at a time" is the T-shirt slogan that's come into my

head. Perhaps it applies directly to me. I become “equal,” one with the others, instead of staying “above” them, “beyond” them. I can just enjoy the dancing. I haven’t been in that place for years, certainly since I turned professional, and decided to make my living through folk dancing with its tours, weekends, and so forth.

But I could only take this step after the collapse of my tour business. Can I call this a “positive” emanating from the collapse? Not yet. I hate to lose my source of income. But, on the other hand, acceptance of the loss does free me. I now have “nothing to lose” by simply enjoying myself. Much as I hate to lose the potential money, it indeed does free me.

With nothing more to lose, I can just dive in, have fun, enjoy myself, even run wild a bit. A mixed bag, but leaning to the freedom side.

Acknowledging the Need for Audience

Why do I want Barry’s class? I need the human feedback. Evidently, I need a public, an audience reacting to my work. Acknowledging this need for audience is a giant step for me.

I’ve always acknowledged it financially, as a source of financial support. But this time, it somehow goes even beyond financial. Financial deals with survival. Somehow, I now have “enough” or am able to survive. Thus it seems even more visceral now because I am not doing it for money, or with the hope of future monies in mind.

But maybe I’m fooling myself here. We’ll see where this leads.

Maybe, now here’s a great dream, because of my new commitment to writing, I may even figure out a way to make some money from it! There is a Wow! direction.

Maybe I am changing careers to fulfill an old Greenwich Village writer’s dream! What an idea!

Let's face it. Money is part of recognition, acknowledgment, and value. When someone pays for my work, it truly means they value it. Period. There is no getting around this deep truth.

Thus, if I could get folks to pay for my work, pay for my writing, buy my books, it would indeed "prove" their worth and acknowledge my efforts.

I have, in the past, learned to earn a living, earn money in two "impossible" fields, namely in music as a guitarist and performer, and as a folk dancer, namely through folk dance classes, weekends, and tours.

I wonder if I'm at the border of a new "impossible" business, of fulfilling a new "impossible" dream: making money as a writer.

Such a concept is way beyond my imagination. Impossible, indeed. But therein lies its attraction.

The challenge to organizing, leading, and running a tour has been met. It's mucho work, but I know how to do it. And along with this was the challenge of finding customers. I succeeded in both the folk dance business (tours, weekends dancer) and the performing business (schools, colleges, club dates, etc.)

Is this the time to start a new "business?" Indeed, the pressure to make an instant living through it is off. I don't have to succeed right away, or truly, even succeed at all. I don't have another means of earning a living.

Nevertheless, to sell my books, earn some money through writing, would be such a grand coup. Indeed, something to think about. True, my success could be not at all. Of it could be posthumous. Or it could even be earlier.

We'll see where this road leads. But I am starting on a new "Way of the Wild Man" road.

Saturday, March 24, 2018

The Terror of Financial Ruin

My belief in progress has been shake, certainly financial progress.

As a start, and maybe even as an ending, it has shaken my belief in financial progress. I thought, even deeply believed, that as the future rolled along I would keep making more money. More and more. That was the future. Definitely through higher stock market returns, and this coupled with higher tour money returns. They'd slowly make me richer and richer. True, I had nothing to do with all this fictitious money that I would make, but it gave me deep pleasure and satisfaction, not to say mucho security, to know I was, and would be. making it.

Today, that confidence has collapsed. Suddenly, I see I could easily go backward. And this after years of going forward. And just as I believed I could go forward to infinity, so I now see I could go backward to zero.

Obviously, this is a nightmare picture and it is far from happening. But it can. And it is not that far sway.

Thus this morning, this bleak, down, miserable picture, this apocalyptic, end-of-my-world vision with clawing griffons of fear and terror stare me in the face.

What can I do about it? Really nothing. That is also the problem. I feel helpless before the crush of this juggernaut. My India will never be the same.

I've flipped from a beatitude with angels of hope flying round my head to a vision of hell with devil's pitchforks jabbing forever into my being.

Realistic? I doubt it. But I can't help feeling it.

Gratitude for Customers

Expansion of my Going Public Self

I am so grateful for customers who register for tours, or any events I run. But I've never expressed it before. I wonder if I have ever even felt it.

Expression of gratitude for customers is a first. In the past, I always felt a combination of relief and happiness. But gratitude never came up.

I wonder what it means.

Where, if anywhere, I am going with it?

It is a grand recognition of others and thus an expansion of my going- public self born from this year's miserable feelings of loss, abandonment, and suffering.

It is spring and the time of birth pangs.

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

Go Back (Forward) To Being An Artist

Getting my values straight.

My credo and purpose: Go back to being an artist.

Business is important. . .but secondary.

That's what my stock market money is for. That's what all the money is for! To defend, protect, and sanctify my inner artist.

Now that inner artist is ready, can (and will) go public.

I am now free to become that public and private artist. And I will.

This is the message of New Leaf Journal. The Way of the Wild Man journal. "Wild" means artist.

That's what my left knee is for: to be an artist. My left shoulder and left side, too. That's what I've been searching and working for all my life: To be an artist. Artist has always been the bottom-line, wild, running wild on the lawn part of me, my deepest wish, my fulfillment.

Taking money out of the stock market may well symbolize losing the stock market's magic and miserable hold on me. It may even free me to see the real meaning of money. Which is to support, protect, sanctify, and defend my inner artist.

"Back to being an artist." That's where I am today.

Or shall I say, "Forward to being an artist."

Back or forward really doesn't matter. But being faithful to my essence, being an artist, does.

Thursday, March 29, 2018

I have several goals as I start my new life.

One of them is: I want to live without fear. Or at least lessen my fears substantially.

The main fears that have haunted me since marriage concern themselves with money. And I spend hours of time trying to figure out how to get around them, avoid them, face them, deal with them etc.

In the past, I have been using what I call a romantic accounting "system." This system is based primarily on dreaming, wishing, and hoping my finances will be magically resolved if I keep making more money. I avoid looking at the bottom line. I certainly avoid the beauty and peace of knowing where all my money is, where it is going, what my real expenses and income are. In other words, I avoid the beauty and peace of stability in favor of the romance of financially running wild on the lawn.

I am ready to change all this.

Why? Because I have a better dream in mind: To become the wild artist of my dreams. And I am now in a position, both age-wise and even financially, to do that.

In the process, I no longer want, or need, to be “stimulated” by constant financial instability.

Note: I evidently “needed” this stimulation in the past, because the ups and downs of financial growth (witness past monies coming in through tours, plus the ultimately losing stimulation of stock market trading, the great excitement of money rolling in, and the “thrilling fears and terrors” of down markets or losing money on trades, actually used to stimulate me. Part of my being needed that because I was not ready to grab the wild artist high.

But now I am.

In order to do this, I now need to put my financial house in order.

My realistic dream is now to base my wild artistic dreams and goals on stable, real accounting, a known financial foundation.

Parenthetically, for me, art is situated in my inner world of guitar, writing, and even choreography. Business, money, dealings with the outside world, are everything else.

Also the stock market is becoming “besides the point.”

Long range, I’m okay. Short range, I need to change my life.

My next question is: How and where to start?

Artistic Wild

Running Wild on the Artistic Lawn Cures and Uplifts

I went to emails, answered them, and did some business work, and I note the down I felt after I rose from my desk.

Could this down be because I did no wild artistic thing? Instead I was “forced” to “waste my

time” with business things, important, but secondary to my calling.

I rarely feel that down after I play guitar, write, or choreograph. I may feel other things, but rarely if ever, that incredible down and rife with hopelessness, death, and longing. I wonder if part of it because I’m not being an artist and thus “wasting time” and not fulfilling my purpose on earth.

Could such an abandonment actually cause my grand downs and depression? And would following my true purpose, being tough as steel and sticking to it no matter what, cause these downs and depressions to dissipate, fall away, vanish, or never appear in the first place?

What a question! This means I have found the basis of downs and depressions.

It’s too good to be true. But is it true anyway?

Maybe it is.

Dare to Cally Myself a Choreographer

See my body as a vehicle for dance, a vehicle for choreography.

Dare I do this?

Why have I never thought of it before?

I never dared to, never dared believe that I, with no training, could call myself a choreographer.

Those days are over.

I’ll dare call myself a choreographer in the same way I dare to play “Alhambra” my way.

Friday, March 30, 2018

Tremolo Vision:

On Changing a 40-year-old Habit

The insistence on playing Alhambra with emphasis on treble, in other words, “my way,” and not Segovia’s way, with emphasis on the bass, has cost me 40 years of guitar playing.

On the positive side, this divergence enabled me to build up my folk dance and tour business. On the negative side, I struggled over and over again with the same tremolo problem for 40 years.

A long divergence it was. But is this divergence a negative, a positive, other, or all besides the point?

How to change a 40-year-old habit?

My interpretation of all tremolos has been wrong. It’s always in the bass.

How to change a 40 year old habit?

Private Singing

All the hurt and pain come out in my singing. Maybe that’s why I’ve “never sung.” Maybe that’s why I’ve resisted it, demeaned it, made it lesser, etc. Singing it my bottom-line moan. Do I even dare do it? So far, only in private.

And for some reason, I keep singing “Dark as a Dungeon (way down in the mines.”

I wonder if that’s where I’ve been living all these years, hiding my singing and the hurt and pain in my soul in the dark, dreary mine.

As the first groans of “private” singing come out of me, will I begin to come out of the mine now?

Maybe.

And it only took a life time.

Sing, Speak, and Tremolo

I express myself with another point of view, and I'm called a Nazi. Talk about hurt and pain. That's why I've shut up so much of my life. Especially in politics and "serious" subjects.

Am I coming out of the closet now?

Express your true self and you lose all your following, your friends, even your family. You're all alone, and totally dropped and abandoned.

On the positive side, however, although you stand on top of the mountain all alone, you roar like a lion with the victory of self-expression and the truth.

Is the truth worth being all alone? Accepting the fact that you will be all alone may well be a prerequisite for expressing the truth, and finding the courage to express the truth.

To no longer remain silent and take the heat, whether singing in public or expressing your opinions.

I'm not ready to lose my business over this. But maybe I can do it among "friends" and selected family. It's not a secret among family. They know it anyway. It's just not talked about.

But one of my post-eighty things is I don't want to be afraid.

On that basis alone, I should sing, and speak, and emphasis bass on the tremolos. It's all part of freedom, running wild on the lawn, way of the wild man. It's a new path.

Saturday, March 31, 2018

Old Habits

Is there some kind of "truth" in old habits. Am I partially clinging to them for an important but different reason? Is my clinging informing me that I should I only give up part of them, but not all? A "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water" kind of warning?

Maybe this means I should practice with thumb and bass focus for awhile, and see where it

leads me. Maybe part of the old tremolo thinking are and were important and will, after practicing the new route, drift slowly back, but in a subtle, different way.

Finding Other Reasons to Play Guitar

Could I ever have an Alhambra playing victory and then move on to still play guitar? Could I find other reasons to play it? That would, of course, be lovely.

I have used my “inability” to play Alhambra as an excuse not to ever give concerts, not to face my fear of audience and performance anxiety. Why suffer if I don’t have to?

On the other had, this kind of suffering elevates me and is thus a “good form of suffering.”

I don’t want to give concerts; I don’t need to give concerts. Why do I even have this anvil hanging over me in the first place?

Truth is, I never wanted to give concerts, or even perform for others! How did I fall into this trap? Well, I had to make a living, Okay, that’s a good reason.

But it doesn’t answer the question: What do I really want?

I have to look back into my past to find out, back to the time before I had to make a living, and certainly to the time before I got married. (Marriage really put the pressure on and forced me make a living and deal with the outside world. Yes, I learned a lot. But most of it was being forced to do things I didn’t want to do, or at least didn’t like to do.)

So how was I before all this pressure? What were my dreams prior to making a living?

Playing violin, studying (discovered in college), and writing—a free and improvised combination of music and study. (intellectual things).

I also liked the solo adventures of playing in the park, or wandering the fields at the farm.

Note: the adventures were always alone, never with other people. And they were really adventures of

and in my imagination!

So, putting it all together, I am an adventurer in the music(words/writing) field of imagination.

Okay, now what?

Infant Vision in Folk Dancing

Can this “expression” approach be applied to folk dancing? Can I dance, especially the old and known dances, more carefully(with care), thoughtfully, and wiser? Can one really put more “wisdom” into each step?

How do you folk dance with expression?

Is there a rubato folk dance style? No. Can I develop one?

There must be a way . I don't know what it is. . .yet.

This means old and “known” dances must be unknown and rediscovered each time you dance them; they must be resurrected and danced with a fresh and new, divine and innocent, infant vision each time!

Alchemy at its Best

How to turn the old into the new?

This is alchemy at its best.

Saturday, April 7, 2018

One Purpose of my Balkan Adventure 5-Country Tour

(Self put-downs and self humiliations are good for me)

The linguistic study course symbolized by my 5-Country Balkan Adventure means “breaking up” perfecting Hebrew, and this in favor of “dabbling” in 3 or 4 languages: Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian, and Hebrew.

The unifying factor in all this is the sound of the words.

What is the put-down threat in the word “dabbling?”

I’ll never be good in anything, never really know or master any language. I’ll always be a “dabbler,” which means superficial and bad.

Is such a put-down image of myself useful (as a motivator) or not?

Good question.

Strangely and paradoxically, I think it is. True, the orthodoxy in my family is that I should be “happy.” And if I am not happy, I am doing something wrong, living my life incorrectly.

But truth is, part of me is happy when I put myself down! It humbles and lowers me, and it is my lowered, put-down posture that pushes me to rise and become better!

A life with motivation and goals is not only boring and empty, it is actually “painful” in a disgusting, wasting, and wasteful way. It is obviously more “painful” in that feeling put-down, inadequate. forces me to reach higher.

Yes, such reaching higher because of my inadequacies may feel a bit bad. But not reaching feels much worse.

Thus, in a sense, feeling bad is my way of feeling good.

Note I say “self.” Put downs by others are bad, unnecessary, and should be confronted and destroyed. But, as I say, self put-downs and recognitions of inadequacies serve as personal motivators and thus are good for me.

Sunday, April 8, 2018

Money and the Sales Connection

One reason I like money so much is that earning it connects me to the outside world. And very strongly, too. This goes beyond merely earning a living. Money creates a spiritual connection between me and my customer, or, to put it in concert terms, between me and my audience, between connector and connectee.

That's why sales are so important: They directly connect me to my audience of dancers, travelers, readers, customers.

Sales of my tours, dance classes, books, concerts, readings, even the songs or guitar pieces listed on my Jim's Store website, are so important. And the amount of money, although a factor, is not as important as the fact they are paying something. Even \$1.00 is okay. As long as they are making an effort, giving something of themselves to prove to me that what I created and am offering them is worthy.

Evidently, my tours, folk dancing, concerts, and readings aren't and can never be hobbies. They must be money-makers, even if they too make a small amount.

What can I sell?

Tours: done and doing. Folk dancing: done and doing. Concerts: idea: create, that is record, new classical guitar pieces (even folk songs), and sell them on my website! Wow, now there's a motivation to practice! And record. Start with Milan Pavanese, etc.

I could even sell my stories in pdf form!

I could even turn my New Leaf writings into essays, and sell them as pdfs on my website!
Another great source of motivation.

Website sales: My newest venture. Monetize my website.

Making money, creating a service for others, pushes me to be my best! It concretizes the creations of my imagination; it makes what I create real.

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Goals, Success, and Happiness

It's all going well today. Market is up, tours are filling, legs are hopeful and better, chinning success. All good to better.

And I'm still unhappy.

Why? Through my successes, my worry and motivation have been taken away. Success, after its initial spark of joy, has bred emptiness.

How to handle success?

1. Celebrate: (How to do this, and for how long?)
2. Move to the next goal. In this case, it is 3 chins.

Example: Chinning success: I did one chin. My celebration lasted for one "Wahoo!". But this morning I'm in the after-mood- and-mode glow of realization, in the "Yes, I did it!" mode.

Evidently, celebration must run its course.

The Power of Thoughts

I am improving the world by learning to stand and balance on my right leg. Practicing balance improves the world. (But it only depends on what I am thinking. I must think that I am improving the world, balancing its elements, by balancing on one foot.)

What a powerful belief! It brings vital importance and power to what I am doing.

Thoughts I think while playing guitar, folk dancing, teaching, leading a tour, walking up and

down stairs, doing squats, chinning, whatever: All of them matter.

When I play guitar, think: How can my playing heal the world?

Or think directly outward: This playing heals the world.

When I dance think: How can my dancing of this folk dance heal the world?

Or think directly outward: This dance heals the world.

This way of thinking is not hubris, but rather good practice for vision enlargement of my mind.

Thursday, April 19, 2018

What Do I Want?

In my post-eighty life, what desires do I have? (If any.)

What do I really want to do?

Maybe I don't want to write; maybe I don't want to play guitar anymore; maybe I don't ever want to sing again. Who knows what I want? The future is wide open. It's a fresh beginning and I'm in virgin territory.

I am teaching folk dancing, and running tours. That's obviously still in the cards. And I'll keep doing that, both because I want to (folk dancing) and I somewhat have to (tours). But tours are, I believe, slowly running out of gas. Or at least it feels like my clients are slowly diminishing and will soon (maybe after a year or two) put me out of the tour business. But maybe not. We'll see where all this leads.

In any case, I'm folk dance teaching and tours remain.

Indeed, if I have no desire or need to perform, no need or desire play guitar in public, read

my writing in public, then why bother doing it?

If no one is ever going to hear me play guitar again, why play guitar?

If no one is every going to read my writing, why write?

Is personal pleasure and satisfaction enough? I'm not sure. And will I even get it?

Maybe I should and will simply give the whole thing up and start on a completely different path. Or no path at all.

Can I live a life on no path?

Good question.

Saturday, April 21, 2018

Interesting In Itself

Infant Vision: Focusing on the Good-In-Itself

I am playing and “practicing” to improve because it is interesting-in-itself. And the word “practice” is really the practice of playing, or the playing of practice. Really then now, as I enter the post-audience period, practicing and playing are the same thing! (I am no longer practicing so that one day, some day in the future, I can play better, nay “perfectly” before an audience. Those days and that approach are over. Thank God!)

To never perform again means to never focus on pleasing the audience again. If the audience happens to be pleased, all the better. But the main focus is on the work, practice, playing itself. The audience is always secondary, a pleasant (or unpleasant) outsider looking in. But focus on the good-in-itself is vital. All else is “besides the point.”

Next Step

Okay, so now I stand on the top mountain, with my main dream achieved. This means all my side dreams have been achieved as well.

Happy and glorious, under the sun of victory, I shine on the mountain top and roar my wild cry of victory: “Wahoo!!!!”

And it only took eighty years!

Now, my cry echoes through the valley below, slowly fading in the distance, and, with the sun slowly setting, the next question rises with the moon: “Now what?”

But before I move on, I’ll relish my victory moment a bit more.

So ends a New Leaf.