

Having Fun

Thursday, August 23, 2018

The Crash

Big deposit asked by Martha for Argentina airlines. More for land deposit coming up.

Big sudden panic. Total breakdown of the inner life.

Big panic over money. Sudden drop off the cliff, fall into chasm of chaos filling with wild turtles snapping at me and snakes slithering around my body. Lightning return to the old neighborhood. Inner life, perspective, and values falling apart.

The money hammer of reality smashing me on the head. Is this the post-tour down, crashing back to earth after the high of the Balkan Adventure tour?

What else could it be? Totally unrealistic, wild, unpredictable, loss of all perspective and reality. Back to childhood, abandonment, and loss. Wow, what a crash and downer.

Tuesday, August 28, 2018

Ideas on Publishing

Do people want a human being, a humanized human being to lead them? On a tour, folk dance, or otherwise? Maybe. Of course, I can always drop those who don't want one, don't want me, from my mailing list. But they will delete themselves anyway. So who cares about them, and what's the point? My fear of their judgement is hindering me, preventing me

from revealing myself through publishing of my New Leaf explorations. Do I want to keep living in such fear? Or should I just go for it while, in the background, I heard my old and formerly fearful voice shouting “Fuck them!”? I’m older, wiser, more experienced, and perhaps more courageous now, so I’d say, at my present age, that publishing my complete New Leaf on my website, along with a soft, subtle, even unheard “Fuck you” in the background, is a good approach.

Do I dare? I’ve asked this question for years and so often.

Maybe now the answer is YES!

James Joyce said YES! at the end of Ulysses. Yes to life, yes to daring. How long should or can I wait?

Cross the River of Fear into the Land of Daring.

Maybe the time is now.

Fatigue Before a Big Decision

I’m crossing the river.

Do I really have a choice?

Such a publishing decision has been many years in the making.

Maybe that’s why I’ve been so tired the last few days.

My entire body, along with my conscious and unconscious mind, is preparing to make and execute a momentous task: Publish my New Leaf Journal on my website. Let it all hang out.

Publishing it on my website in a new blog-type (but not a blog) New Leaf Journal page, with possible links to other pages, may be the easiest, simplest, and certainly cheapest way to go.

Would I call it New Leaf Journal Blog?

Or New Leaf Blog?

Or New Leaf Journal?

I'm leaning toward New Leaf Journal. After all, that's what I've always called it. Why not "stay real?"

As I say, the only threat is the destruction of my business.

Maybe it is time to destroy my business, anyway.

Starting fresh may we be an excellent idea.

Wednesday, August 29, 2018

Post-Tour Sadness

I need to deeply feel my post-tour sadness; I need the relief crying bout in order to release the tour-imprisoned soul. I need to free myself from the high emotional attachment to the Balkan Adventure with its glory, wonder, wahoo joyful victory of accomplishment.

Yes, I always fear losing, but instead, I won.

Yes, in order to move on I need to feel the deep relief that my tour is over, and the release of gratefulness that, through the wonder of work, luck, and the Lord, I touched the hearts and minds of so many travelers.

Free or Charge

Should I charge for my “artistic” creations?

Or give them away free?

On my website, I now charge for my writings, choreographies, (and songs).

But again: Should they be free?

My old philosophy is: If people really want something, they will pay for it. If they don't want it, they will not get it, whether it is free or not. Desire runs the world; cost is a distant secondary.

But, commercially, there is no good answer to this question. In order to answer it on a deeper level, I should ask: What does charging for my creations, putting a price or value on them, do for my brain?

On the one hand, since I love money, putting a price on them gives them a “value” which also pushes me to make them even better, to perfect them, the best I can.

Bottom line, since business, dealing, and doing for people push me to be my best, making something part of my business will do the same.

If this is the case, why would I make my creations free?

Would I still work so hard, push and struggle to make them my best?

If people don't value a thing in their heart, which to me means means pay for it, why would I bother push so hard to give it away free?

That is if people don't value it, why should I?

How about: If customers don't value it, why should I?

Truth is, if customers don't value it, they won't buy it.

And, if non-customers don't value it, they won't take it even if it's free.

But I am now questioning this bottom-line philosophy.

I could look at my choreos, writing, and songs as advertisements, marketing devices to push my brand.

Are they that?

Maybe.

And truth is, I make my living selling folk dancing and tours. I don't financially "need" to sell my artistic creations. (As opposed to my organizational creations, tours and folk dance classes, which I do need to sell.)

So why do I sell my these creations?

Partly to "prove" to myself that others want them, "value" them.

Also, I'm angry that some might want my labor for free. I want to "force them" to value me, to thus buy, pay for my labor. This will prove they value it.

No question I feel that way.

But am I "right?"

Maybe.

On the other hand, all businesses need advertisements, announcements, promotions. Thus seeing my choreos, writing, even songs, as advertisements, announcements, and promotions is part of business. I do, after all, pay for ads in folk dance magazines. How about the "free" advertising I might get if others "take" my choreos and writing for free?

Leaving out songs for now, should my choreos and writing be seen as promotions?
Or products to sell?

Can they be both?

Somehow “both” is not a clear way to go.

Could this be an “either/or” situation?

The entire question arises because Megan, who wanted to have the music and choreo to my “Layla, Layla,” did not download and pay for it on my website. She said, “I don’t want to do it yet.”

Yet? What did that mean?

That she will never do it? If yes, was it because it costs money?

Or will she do it in the future? Did the cost, the idea of paying for it, distract her?

Best is to directly ask her. But would I make her uncomfortable if I do? I’d be putting her on the spot, and she might therefore not answer me honestly. Is this a question, and basically an approach to my creations, that I must decide alone?

Maybe consult with my guides and counselors.

Monday, September 3, 2018

On Publishing New Leaf Journal

Putting It Out There

Is my left shoulder, with the sudden possibility of “coming out” on my guitar, freeing my vulnerabilities on “Alhambra,” also related to coming out, freeing my vulnerabilities, by

publishing all of New Leaf?

It would be an unexpurgated version—call it raw and hardly edited, mistakes and all. I'm too tired, and it's too hard to edit. Plus, I'm publishing it to give my life meaning, to free myself from its clutches, free myself from something, I don't yet know what. Perhaps I just have to do it first before I find out.

This left shoulder pain comes along with the meaninglessness of my miracle schedule. Why bother to do or learn anything? I'm old and I'll soon die.

Yes, "Why bother?" is back in a new age-and-death form.

What did I learn in therapy and have been feeding off ever since?

Well, note that one thing is, as I write this journal, I'm feeling better! In other words, the journal-writing process is somehow giving me hope and curing me!

Why was I depressed in the first place? I had "given up" writing, especially the daily morning journal-writing process.

My not writing has always been followed by cosmic depression and meaninglessness.

Is that what I am feeling now? It's a "new" excuse, but really the same put downs and self-sabotage by this time by saying I am "old and worthless?"

Is this possible?

Again the question boils down to the old one: How to find meaning in my life?

In the past, the process of writing always created release and gave me meaning. And by writing, I don't mean editing, rewriting and collecting old stuff. I mean fresh, new, daily writing, the kind I do in my journal and even fiction.

If this kind of self expression is so important to me personally, how about the idea of publishing my journal? If my life journey is so important to me, no doubt will be important to others.

Here's the question: Do I have to write and publish my journal to give myself meaning?

True, if it is published, no one may read it. Well, I can't control what others do, what they decide to read. But I can control what I do. And I can decide to "get it out there." And in the process, give my existence more meaning.

So the main reason to publish is to give my life more meaning. This will happen because I have done everything within my power to give my deepest thoughts and essences to others.

Second reason to publish: I hope others will read it, be affected positively, and be helped.

"Why bother?" feeling has flooded my being because I'm still paralyzed by the question of whether to publish NLJ or not.

Therefore, for my own good I should publish it. Take a chance, jump right in, do it, . . .and then move on to new writing, and something new. This journal is sticking in my craw. I have to get it out before I can move on. And until I do, I will remain under the "Why bother?" cloud, stuck in cosmic depression and meaninglessness.

Okay.

How to publish it?

Easiest and faster, cheapest and simplest, best way to “do it, and get it over with is the put all 3000 or so pages in chronological order on my website. “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.”

What will Barry say?

Note how I assume his response will be negative.

If it isn't, all is well. I shall simply do it.

But suppose it is? His response then would go along with all the other past negative responses, mainly that publishing it will destroy my business.

On hearing these warnings of possible doom, my old cowardly frightened self keeps my deepest thoughts, fears, emotions, and vulnerabilities in the closet.

Publishing my journal, putting my mind and soul out there so others can know it, humanizes me, makes me vulnerable.

Evidently, I am now ready and willing to take that chance.

And take the chance my business will be destroyed.

What will I do if my business is destroyed?

What new adventures will it lead to?

In fact, I'll assume my business is destroyed.

What now?

A bit later: As I consider losing my entire business because I dared to put my entire

New Leaf on my website and reveal my flawed soul to others, I realized losing my entire business, although awful, it not really the worst thing in the world, or even the worst thing I fear.

No, the worst is humiliation. I fear that if others read what's "really" in my heart, they will think less of me.

So, next step is a biggie: To deal with my sensitivity and fear of humiliation.

Tuesday, September 4, 2018

Warming Up: A Wild Ride Across New Leaf

Sloppy day in Santa Fe while the clock marches on.

Possible Parkinson's. What's going on? Not a good day. But the wild wind is still blowing. So that's a good sunny sign.

But does it concern self or other? Obviously, the Self is okay with all. But what is Parkinson's anyway? And what does it have to do with parking, placing our car in the proper lot, or even renting a car, for that matter? One does not know.

At least this morning, that is true.

However, to find our only sun is such a sad predicament, is no sad feat. And sad feet indeed they are, as his walking is stiff and straight.

Does the sun ever walk straight? I thought it went in circles. Or is that merely an old heliocentric view?

On the side, perhaps this opening gambit, early morning, first thing in the am writing

is the wild release writing I need to start the day, and any day. The Joycean, halocentric, photometric, Finnegan's Wakian, babblecentric cantering I need to let my crazy horse charge, wild and running out of its stable.

It means start to morning immediately with new New Leaf writing. And here, let my horse run wild.

The horse may even be out of the barn. Beginning my morning with a wild ride across my New Leaf pages may indeed be my best and brightest way to warm up my day!

Gaida

I realized this morning, as I played gaida in our vacation Santa Fe headquarters, that if I actually practiced, I could become good! The gaida would no longer be a joke but a serious instrument. I would become a committed student of the wild goat-screamer.

Same with calligraphy. If I practiced, I'd become good.

That's two new added art forms.

So I froze. Should I actually pursue these tasks? Should I try? Or should I simply give up and continue last year's route trying to perfect my old forms of guitar, dance, etc.

On the one hand, by adding two new forms, I would not only feel overwhelmed, but the "Jack of All Trades and Master of None" syndrome would also set in.

The latter, of course, is a put-down. At this point in my life, I don't care about the put down or even the Jack of All label. However, the overwhelmed feeling does bother me

mucho. Do I want or need such discomfort?

Of course, want is different from need. Want is mere flitting to and fro. But need is serious business.

Whether by inside or outside forces, do I need to be pushed? I know making an effort is good for me. But must I be forced to make one? Does it, will it ever happen “naturally?”

It may. Or it may not. I can't count on it.

That's the beauty of a job. You have to do it whether you like it or not. It forces a discipline (from the outside) to create, to perform, and in the process you not only get better, but when you finish, you achieve a feeling of satisfaction.

Truth is, what's the big deal? Why not add calligraphy and gaida practice to my day and life? In terms of time, it really would only take a few minutes.

Practice gaida for 10 minutes.

Then move to calligraphy for 10 minutes.

Add this after my early a.m. writing. Then there is guitar and exercise. And perhaps a bit of study. But really that's it. That's my miracle schedule in a nutshell. If I do it all, it doesn't even take that long. What's the big deal.

Do it.

To memorialize our Santa Fe visit, add gaida and calligraphy practice to my life. See what happens.

Accepting the Calligraphy Challenge

Zane gave me his hand-made, leather-bound book filled with blank pages. I could have refused the offer. But I decided to accept it. Deep down I knew that by accepting it, I was also accepting the challenge to fill its blank pages with something. What better to fill it with than calligraphy.

Why gaida?

Was a gaida challenge also thrown down before me? Is there a gaida challenge as well? Do I need one? Possibly.

If yes, why now? And what is the challenge? To improve, to play better? But I don't necessarily care whether I play better or not. It's still fun and funny. Of course "serious player" doesn't mean I won't continue to joke.

Can I compare gaida to "Alhambra?" I simply get tremendous pleasure, satisfaction and happiness by playing the "Alhambra." When it flows, I feel glorious.

Is repetition of that feeling enough to push me into improving on the gaida? Is that enough of a reason to practice? I'd like to, and even have to answer yes.

Private or Public

How about the potential happiness and glory, and the glorious feeling, I might give to others if I play well? Is that enough of a motivation and challenge?

It's good, and can be considered an added plus. But it would postpone the satisfaction. I need here-and-now happiness, immediate reasons. The happy fruits of practice have to happen now, today.

What about playing for the public, giving concerts?

Playing for the public is merely playing for yourself in front of others. Playing for self and for the public go together. Two sides of the same coin.

That settles that. It's not an issue anymore.

Why Do It?

J.S. Bach gave a lovely reason. He said he composed music for the glory of God. I like that. Now there is a reason!

Why do it?

For the glory of God.

Playing in the Public Square

Play classical guitar in the park, or sidewalk, with a microphone, or not, and all for free.

Or with busking. More daring.

Would I dare?

How about practicing for it? Put together a one hour free park program.

Let it include gaida.

Even singing.

Come with tour fliers, etc.

Knowing myself, and my latest dis-eases, could my left arm meltdown be my latest form of Sarnoian MTS syndrome? Distracting myself by creating a physical pain in order to avoid facing a much larger threat, a greater terror, in the case, the real possibility of a return to performing? Ugh, ugh, the very idea makes me sick and terrifies me. (Note the similarity to facing an editing of my New Leaf Journal. I hate, hate the idea of even reading it again. So much “work.” I hate work. Where did this hatred and resistance to “work” come from? It is holding me back. (Check this out with my therapy childhood.)

Performing again is a trauma. Editing my New Leaf is a trauma. Are these traumas related? Can I deal with, nay, dive into them? Can I free myself from their clutches?

And does this next step into freedom entail facing these dual traumas of editing and performing and somehow, in the name of fun and running wild, move past them?

Can I turn my editing and performing traumas into a joyful romp on the lawn?

Can I become the Bach of my time?

Can I perform and edit for the glory of God?

Friday, September 7, 2018

On Retirement

I'm wondering about Joe Liftik, and especially about how he loves retirement.

I hate the idea of retirement. In fact, I hate it so much, I suspect I might secretly love it.

If this is true, how frighteningly wonderful.

What would “retirement” mean to me and for me? How could I do it? And what would I do?

What about self-definition, meaning, function, and purpose?

Could I stand being totally ignored and forgotten?

Or would I secretly love it?

Imagine a life of no pressure. That’s how I see retirement.

But is retirement a life of less or no pressure?

Or is it something else?

I know I believe in a life of having maximum fun. And I believe I “retired” at 26 to lead that kind of a life, a “do what I want” life, and damn the consequences.

Well, I am doing what I want, and I’ve chosen a maximum-fun life style, but there sure are lots of pressures that come with it. Teaching folk dancing and running tours is not a low-pressure life.

Could it be that parts of me enjoy and even need the pressure?

Or could I simply give up the whole thing?

Is nothingness bliss? Or is such a vacuum filled with terror?

And whether you retire or not, there is always death and decay to contend with.

Lots of questions on this beautiful Santa Fe morning.

I like earning money and the dynamism of trying to earn it, And the wonderful feeling of greater security when the money I earn arrives.

But suppose I was financially secure? I am close to that possibility. In fact, if we were

really careful with our finances, we might even right now be able to achieve this.

Okay, if I did, then what?

Would I do anything differently? Would I subtract or add anything new to my life?

Or should I simply accept that I am in the best place I can be for right now, and leave it at that?

Maybe a present “solution” my retirement question would be to simply give myself permission to take more days off.

Maybe one day a week only for myself,” a personal shabbat.

Could I even do such a thing?

A day off, a vacation, sounds so good as I sit in this heavenly, relaxing Santa Fe home.

But is such a life in my personality? Do I need the dynamism of money, and drive, and business to constantly stimulate my energies and imagination?

Maybe I do.

Sunday, September 9, 2018

Morning Routines

We flew home from Santa Fe on the midnight flight. I’d like this return to be different.

So why a feeling of disgust last night? I didn’t want to return to the same routine I followed during past years.

But what will be?

On tour in the Balkans, I thought a “different” morning routine would now be: begin

my morning by answering wake-up worldly emails. They would startle me, prick my mind, and throw me immediately into the stream of material life.

Then in Santa Fe I thought the best beginning is loose babble-writing in my New Leaf Journal.

Now I'm home and the "real" beginning begins. And I sense this beginning routine is the one I'll be using all year.

So I began with Hebrew. The old morning routine. Somehow it felt right.

If such opening morning study is right, then what will be different? Will the hopes and dreams of my studies be different?

I'm not sure yet.

Today at least, after Hebrew comes a peck on the guitar.

Left arm and guitar. My left arm is only comfortable in folk singing guitar position. Classical guitar position hurts it mucho.

Any meaning here in terms of new routine? Is the Lord telling me to start by singing?

No, I have to learn to play classical guitar in totally relaxed fashion! Never mind old concerns about tremolo, how to play "Alhambra" or anything else.

As a start, try to make it impersonal and connect to the Atman in the process. Combine the playing with a meditation on immortality and eternity of the soul.)

Relax the left arm instead of my left arm.

This indeed would be different!

Monday, September 10, 2018

Thoughts on Publishing My Entire New Leaf

What Do I Want To Do?

Maybe chronologically is the only way to go.

Maybe this is my Finnegan's Wake way to go.

Yes, no one may ever read it. . . like Finnegan's Wake.

Yes, it's way too long. . . like Finnegan's Wake.

Yes, I can improve or tighten it through some minor, or even major editing, but I can't detract or change the entire framework, the branches can be trimmed, and even the tree sliced a bit, but the trunk itself, the basic structure, cannot.

And the basic structure is, seems to be, chronologic.

Yes, it seems to hang together as an organic whole, but only chronologically. All the separate branches, the readings on their various topics, are interesting in themselves; they hold me: their writing style grabs my attention. So maybe the "clear and grabbing" writing style itself is enough to make it work.

Of course, I might be able to do both:

1. Publish all chronologically.
2. Publish all in categories
3. Publish bits as a "Wisdom Book."

Yes, I might be able to do all three. But will I? Maybe instead I should ask, nay "demand," something from the reader. That they (not I) put in the necessary reading effort.

After all, I wrote it. Isn't that enough? It's after all up to them to enjoy it, disregard it, ignore it, whatever.

In fact, why should I even worry about them? Sure, it's nice to be read and understood, but in the long run, does it really matter? I am, after all, writing for myself, to explain myself to myself, to understand myself, and the intersection between self and Self. That is really the sole purpose of my New Leaf Journal. The popularity, readership, even readability, is really secondary. I want it to be clear, I want to write clearly, forcefully, and dynamically grab the reader because I want to clearly, forcefully, and dynamically understand and grab myself. It's nice, even wonderful when the reader comes along. But who can control that? The reader's reaction is totally beyond my control.

So perhaps the best way to decide what to do is to leave it totally up to me. Only I can know. And only I will ultimately know. I may be going against every grain I can think of, ignoring the advice and requests of all my respected friends, knowledgeable teachers, avid readers, blank-eyed non-readers, distant intelligentsia, or unblemished ignoramuses.

It'S nice to be praise, liked, respected, admired, and hear good things others say. It's also miserable to be criticized. But ultimately and in the long run, "they," the public, do not know. With a new untested work like my New Leaf Journal, no one knows. Only I can.

Only I can know the risk and the leap off the cliff into the chasm of taking a chance.

It boils down to what I like, want to risk, and want to do.

Period.

So what do I want to do?

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

New Confidence in Performing

I'm interpreting my left shoulder problem as a sign from above to stop playing guitar for awhile. And it is "reasonable" to stop. I have succeeded in my long-time wish: to finally be able to play "Alhambra!" Adequately, satisfactorily, and with the deeper meaning that I can finally play classical guitar. This meaning also frees me to perform in public—not only classical guitar, but anything and everything, to give my one-man show! (What "my one-man show" means and is, is another good question for the future.)

My playing is finally okay, even good!

What a victory, personal and otherwise.

Once on top of the mountain, one must stop, look around, and reassess. Since my personality does not often allow me to rest, the Lord "forced" a rest stop on me by destroying my left shoulder and thus making it "impossible" for me to play guitar. At least until I am "healed."

Evidently, it ushers in a new era of self-confidence. This is also manifested in my new self-confidence in my writing! In rereading my New Leaf Journal from 20 or so years ago, I'm finding it very good. And I'm so far away from the time I wrote it, I can look at it more objectively. It even feels like another person wrote it!

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Lifting the Blocks

My stock market trading has been blocked. It may be connected to my strong desire to make money and succeed.

I used to consider my trading as part of my “investment” strategy. And I expected to make money at it.

Now I see my trading not as investment, but as gambling. And finally, I admit: I like to gamble! My gambling form is trading penny stocks! Period.

I do it with a small amount of money. Whether I win or lose, it will not affect my life financially. Stock market gambling takes me out of my world quickly, forcefully, and suddenly. As a strong form of enjoyment, it relaxes me.

I wonder if this new understanding and acceptance of my gambling self will help change “gambling luck.”

Somehow, it feels like it will. (I have no idea why I have such a feeling, but I do. Perhaps it’s because I don’t “care” in the same way I used to. It’s just fun, and that’s it. Results are not as important, or rather, they are “important” but in a play way.

Resolution

What will the form of my new performance be?

I’ll throw all I know and can do into a one-man show.

But I don’t like the term “One-Man Show.” Too egotistic, too reminding me of myself.

(I’m giving birth to a new “show.” In this sense, my left shoulder pain is like a birth

pain. But I don't like names like "show, performance, concert."

I need an impersonal funny title.

Higher Calling

What else could it be but a higher calling?

I really don't want to perform again. There is no reason no financial reason for me to perform again. I don't have to make money from it, nor will I.

There is also no egoistical reason to do it.

I won't get any fame or fortune. And even if I did, I don't need them.

How about satisfaction? I doubt I'll get much of that either. Besides, I have enough satisfaction.

So why perform? Why even think about it?

Truth is, I don't want to perform anymore. But yet the call, what I now call the "higher calling," keeps coming at me. It feels like someone else is asking me to perform. Is there a grander purpose to my life, something I must somehow fulfill? Why am I being annoyed, nay pursued with a vengeance, by this performing fury?

Am I fooling myself with all these questions and words?

Is the question itself an example of doubt stepping in to deny the deeper causes of my left shoulder pain?

Saturday, September 15, 2018

My Yom Kippur War

Yom Kippur is coming up.

I couldn't repent since I couldn't think of one sin I committed. How can that be? I thought. Every human being commits sins. Where are mine? Maybe I need to broaden my concept of sin.

That's when I realized I commit two big ones.

1. The sin of "not giving my best, not giving my all to the task or job at hand.
2. The sin of "Why bother?"

These are "evil" attitudes, evil thoughts. And they result in "evil" actions that both hurt me and others. They are bad for me, and thus bad for the world.

To be "more Jewish," I'll need to extirpate these thoughts from my mind. However, since these demons are part of the human condition they return every day to pursue me. Dispelling them in my quest for redemption will be a daily and life long task.

As a soldier in the Yom Kippur army, I'm ready to fight the demons; attack the poisons, wash away the sharp-clawed blemishes that create my Yom Kippur war.

Friday, September 21, 2018

New Place of Freedom

Reassessment

We looked at our assets yesterday. Not bad at all. In fact, quite good. So I must

reassess.

Having dinero definitely destroys much, if not most of my old form of motivation. I've been working mainly, mostly, and almost completely for money. And for the supposed security behind the possession of money. Now, with the reassessment of our assets, I see we have more than I ever could have imagined. I could actually "retire" if I wanted to. I have never been in such a position in my entire life!

So once again I face the question—what will motivate me? After fifty-plus years of worrying about money, if somehow that prickly burden is lifted? Do I even know how to live without the worry of money hanging over me, pricking and punching me every morning to get up and find sources of income?

What does such new freedom do to my mind?

Let's start with tours? Why should I run them?

When I started leading tours, I had two purposes in mind:

1. To learn how people in my favorite cultures folk danced.
2. To make money.

Well, number one was long ago resolved.

That leaves me with two. Evidently, two has now been solved as well.

Now what?

If I am to continue running them, I need a new source of motivation.

What about teaching folk dancing? Its purpose was never to make money. In fact, I'd

have to say that teaching folk dancing is the closest thing to pure fun that I do. So no problem here.

As for my other interests, all found in miracle schedule, money has never been involved. Therefore, no problem there as well.

So, the only problem now is: Why run tours?

Tours are my biggest headache, and my main source of income. Tours are my true job.

And I'm in the position to remove some, maybe even most, headaches from my tours.

The worst is the constant inner pressure I feel to sell, sell, sell. I never have enough clients, never enough registrants.

With this new economic freedom, I don't have to fill my tours anymore. I can even travel with a small group. As long as I don't lose money on a tour (that is definitely a no-no), I can lead small groups. I can make a little money, and that's okay. (Could I even make no money, break-even? I think that is also a no-no.)

So if the sales pressure is now off, and I don't have to run tours to make a living, I can ask the final question: Do I still want to run them? I'll have to find something satisfying in them in order to. At the moment, I can't find a thing.

So maybe I should think about how to wrap up the tour business. I see three years ahead, three years of running new and old itineraries. Up to 2021. After that, will my tour business end? Am I now in wrap-up mode as I sail through my final three years?

Can I find any kind of fun in running them? I'm really pushing, but so far I can't. It's

mostly “been there, done that.”

Endings are sad. But they open the door to new adventures.

If I wrap up my tour business, or even cut it back, the next question is: What will I do then? How will I occupy my mind and soul?

Okay, so far the way I see it is: the next three years are rich and full with tours. Maybe without the constant sales pressure, and here is a miracle thought, I might even discover that I like selling!

That would be amazing.

But first I need freedom. Well, I now have it.

Would, could I really like selling?

Or is it simply a search for an excuse, a subtle way of avoiding the pain of giving up my tour business, what I’ve worked to build for so many years?

In the beginning, I also loved the study portion of it. I used to spend the year studying everything about the country I was visiting: Reading its history, studying its languages, etc. In other words, study was indeed a pleasure and fun aspect of my tours. Study is one of my miracle schedule values.

Could I go back to that, and use my tours once again as “inspiration” and motivation to study more?

Sunday, September 23, 2018

“Why Bother?”

Creating A Purpose for Hebrew Study

I'm starting my morning studying Hebrew.

Here it comes: Why bother studying Hebrew? I'm not visiting Israel, I don't have to read the Torah in its original, no one else will share my knowledge of Hebrew. I'm studying it only for myself.

This question comes periodically from the devil himself. Fighting it is one of my life challenges.

Monday, September 24, 2018

Writing Ideas

I've had two great writing ideas:

1. During my Balkan Adventure tour the newest iteration, idea, and manipulation of Posthumous Tours was born.

2. Yesterday while running, the new idea of "My Life Chronology" as an introduction to New Leaf Journal was born. It started out as merely a paragraph or so, but ended up as a chronological biography, in other words, my life story, memoir, biography. Starting with my birth (or even in the womb), moving on through my entire life right up to the present. A big, new, never-before-done work. A non-fiction fiction story about my life.

I thought it was a great idea.

I thought the Posthumous Tours story was a great idea.

That makes two great ideas.

And I haven't written a word on or about either of them!

Will I every write them? Have these ideas no energy behind them? No worry-energy, fear, or drive?

Why do they just sit in my mind and not get created? Could be they are still cooking, gestating, and not ready to be born? Or are they merely good ideas, but with no vitality, no spirit energy behind them, and thus will never be created?

I feel bad that I'm not creating them. . . but not too bad. Not bad enough. So instead, they just sit there in my mind wondering whether to leave or not.

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

Giving Myself the Gift of Fun and Joy

("Obligations" Versus Fun and Joy)

Once I start writing, it's fun, even joyful.

But when I wake up in the morning, before I start, and even continuing during the day, I feel an obligation to write. Somehow, I must.

This obligation is not fun.

Is this obligation to write, the "it's so hard to start," just a writing problem, or a life problem? True for all events, found in everything I do? Or just in writing?

I also used to feel an obligation to practice guitar, and even sing, which my left arm muscle problem has somehow eliminated. Part of me even likes the fact that I can't play guitar. One less obligation, one less thing I "have to do."

But of course, there is no financial reason I have to do these things. No money is now attached to writing or guitar. For my survival, I'm not obliged to fulfill these inner demands.

Is there any way I can drop, lose, give up my feeling of "obligation" feeling, and be left with the remainder, the fun and joy?

Practicing guitar every morning is a dynamic daily habit I've had for years. When my left shoulder stiffness (due to gaida playing overuse) forced me to stop practicing guitar and rest my muscles for a few weeks, I started a new habit, namely, after morning coffee and study, to warm-up and go for a short run. I like this new habit and would like to somehow continue it.

But developing new habits may not be the answer.

Aha! The answer suddenly hit me! Mine is the usual jumping- mind problem. Monkey mind in action, jumping daily, even momentarily, from branch to branch, leaping from writing to guitar to exercise to language study to business to phone calls to emails, and on and on. That's the nature of monkey mind, and it's not going to change.

How to chain it down, control and direct its energy, deal with it?

Maybe the best way to start is by accepting, and plunging into my fun when and where it comes along, not kill it by jumping to the next branch.

A difficult task, but very necessary.

Friday, September 28, 2018

The rituals and symbols of Judaism, kippah, tzitzit, four species of sukkot (lulav, etrog,

hadas, araba: palm fronds, citron (lemon), myrrh, and willow) are so many ways of remembering God.

And why remember Him?

Spirit is eternal. God is the only part of you that lasts, the piece of you that never dies.

He is a reminder that, though your body dies, your spirit lasts forever.

Monday, October 1, 2018

Mad, Alhambra, Sarno, Left Shoulder

Once I “solved” my many year Alhambra problem my “Alhambra problem” (a subtle, disguised form of performance anxiety/terror) with the new belief that I could now finally play it, I replaced “Alhambra” with another, a shoulder problem, which now meant I couldn’t play guitar at all! I’d have to give it up.

And I have done that: given up guitar for awhile until my left shoulder is cured.

But why the left shoulder problem in the first place? The “obvious” connection was overuse, which occurred during the week of glory when I realized I could play “Alhambra,” and all tremolos, and played it over and over again to “prove” to myself I could do it, and to drill my newfound ability into my brain so I would never forget it. “Drill it” was also fear-based, yes.

Okay, so where am I today?

I’ve rested and “healed” my left shoulder appropriately. Can I now go back to playing?

And what is this constant shit of never being able to play? (Note “shit” as a total expression of rage!) Am I finally sick of this attitude? Yes, I am sick of it. And mad, too? Yes, very mad.

Mad. Have I been mad all these years, angry because my ability and even desire to perform has been cut off by this never-ending fear?

Well, why not? Why wouldn't I be mad? And if mad, the Sarnoian reaction and resistance is TMS in my left shoulder.

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Writing the Clouds Away

Feeling awful this morning, down, bottomed-out, hopeless, no energy. So many negatives. And once I spill these words from my awkward and beak-like mouth, I feel a bit better, and in looking deeply into myself and all the other people who lie in my wayward mind, cannot find one good reason to feel as bad as I do.

What a comedy is my mind. I'm feeling bad. But once I write or talk about it, I feel better. Or at least a bit better.

Yes, the more lousy, bitter, piss-pounding, stream of misery verbiage I pour onto the page, the better I feel. How strange is the dumbbell power of the mind.

So, I'm slowly running out of gas. The heavy gray cloud of empty, hopeless, directionless misery I woke up under is slowly dissipating. In fact, I'd say, it's gone!

I wrote the cloud away.

Giving Up My Guitar Performing Dream

Suppose I now really chose never to perform again! This would be the end of a multi-year dream. I always thought that “some day” I would return to performing. When? Once I conquered “Alhambra.” This was a great postponement, and it lasted while I built up my folk dance and tour business. Now the business is built up; now, symbolically and otherwise, I can play the “Alhambra.” Now what?

Shall I face the horrible “fact” that my dreams are over? Ended? Cooked and done? I can play “Alhambra” but if I never perform again, “So what?”

Plus, do I really want to put energy into finding performance jobs? You don’t just decide to perform and jobs come in. One must chase jobs, put time and energy into the search. On a practical level, do I really want to do that? And while I am putting all my energies into selling my tours?

Yes, on a “spiritual” level, I can play guitar, and my tremolo is good, or good enough to perform for others. But on a practical level, although I now have and could develop a one-man Jim Gold show, do I want to spend the necessary time and effort selling and promoting it?

Somehow I doubt it.

If my doubting turns into a definite “No”, it means my performing days are done. How sad. What a tragedy. I remember my mother saying, “After all that practicing and you now play so well what a shame to give up the violin!”

I also feel what a shame after all those years of practicing “Alhambra” and more, to

give up guitar performing. And I was, and am presently, so good! And without my “Alhambra” problems hanging over me, I could be even better! What a shame to give all that up.

But in truth, and practically speaking, I am in another place.

Still, what a blow to face the shame, pity, and sorrow of finally giving up that dream.

Perhaps the horror of facing the dissolution is what created or froze my left shoulder. After all, this has never happened before, at least on such a deep level. I was actually unable to play guitar! I couldn't twist my left arm enough to play at all. It hurt too much.

But actually, what hurt too much? My left shoulder? Or the deeper idea of giving up my long-cherished dream of performing again? I truly sense, in Sarnoian manner, that it was the latter.

How sad. The dying of a long cherished dream. Extinguishing one of the largest stars in my mental and even spiritual constellation. The end of my guitar playing performing purpose.

Perhaps now that my shoulder is getting better—in fact, after blocking this trauma for a month—maybe now I can finally face the death of my “some day I'll perform again” dream. In fact, maybe that's why my shoulder is getting better!

Perhaps I need a period of mourning. The shoulder pain blocked my mourning. My mind was distracted by it. This pain “protected me” from the greater threat and fear: the death of my dream.

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

Blow the Clouds

Why do I complain about so many things?

Truth is, I'm very lucky, lucky to have so much work, and so much to do.

The reason I complain is that I'm sandwiched between overwhelmed (with its flip side, glorious) and underwhelmed (with its flip side, boredom.)

When I'm overwhelmed, I want to retreat into so-called retirement; and when I'm underwhelmed, I invent new projects and work to do so that I'll soon and eventually be overwhelmed.

What a paradox. Yet that is my mind in action, and my life.

Let's look at present tours: All the work involved in organizing, selling, and running them often overwhelms me. But when I succeed and registrations come in, I feel glorious! Why? I succeeded in a difficult venture. I doubt I could get such a "glorious" feeling any other way.

Without my challenges, I get bored. With my challenges I take the chance of feeling uncomfortable, which, in this case, means overwhelmed.

Maybe this is simply the nature of meeting and dealing with any challenge. When I accept it, it is no longer either overwhelmed or underwhelmed, one or the other.

Rather, it's both.

Most of the time, which means today I'm dealing with overwhelmed.

Take my tour game: Overwhelmed and/or underwhelmed are simply feelings that rise

and fall in the way the game is played. I can choose to either play or not.

I chose to play.

Thus, next step is to deal with the cloud of overwhelmed hanging above my head. But note, it is merely a cloud.

What is the wind that can blow away such a cloud?

The wind of attitude.

And with a “simple” change of attitude, most clouds are easily blown away.

Friday, October 5, 2018

Making New Leaf Vital Again: Steps to Recovery

The Howard Shifke book is giving me some very good ideas. His method of self-cure is fascinating and can definitely be applied to my life.

First is the incredible positivism of his approach. It has pushed me to think: My New Leaf daily journal writing is very important. This is obvious to me. But it is also important that others read it. In fact, creating this importance, making my New Leaf vital, is a very important part of my recovery!

Recovery from what? Low self-image, put downs, bad shoulder, hurting left knee, negative morning directionless feelings, and “Why bother publishing or putting it before others.” I could go on and on, but I won’t.

Writing helps cure me every morning. But is that important for others? So important that others would benefit from reading it, that others even should read it, which means I

should, even must, in some form publish it, make it available: Up to now, that idea has been inconceivable.

This morning, it was conceived.

Thursday, October 11, 2018

Transforming “Have To” to “Want To”

Am I doing my tours because I have to?

Or because I want to?

“Have to” is fear-based.

“Want to” is love based, It belongs to the dopamine release program.

I want a life of want to, not have to. But presently, my mind is polluted with “have to.”

You can’t get rid of “have to.” You can only change your attitude toward it.

Let the cleansing process begin. The goal and purpose of my future is to rid my life of “have to,” and fill it with “want to.”

So here’s the situation. I’m waiting for our guide Lola. She hasn’t shown up yet. She’s either mucho lost, disappeared, or who knows what?

I’m mucho pissed off. But beyond that, I’m worried. Lots of giant possibilities leap into my mind. Is she incompetent? Will we have no guide at all? Suppose that happens? What do I do then? Plus and more, on and on. A string of possibilities, all miserable and potentially disastrous.

So, with my new attitude of wanting to turn everything into a dopamine-churning positive, how do I look at this? Is there anything good that can come out of it? Especially right now, in the thick of it?

Let's start by analyzing it. For the moment, there is nothing I can do but wait. No disaster. . . yet.

What dopamine producing thing can I learn? Perhaps how to wait not only patiently, but happily! Wow! Now there is a challenge!

How do I do it?

Start by giving myself an hour to focus on something else. Then after an hour, I'll call Isabel again at 4:00 p.m. Then another decision will have to be made. But not now. Not for this hour.

This is my free hour. On to whatever I want.

Ten minutes after I wrote this, Lola called. Our agency had given her the wrong date. She thought we were meeting tomorrow, which now we will do. All is well.

Friday, October 12, 2018

Can I exhibit a wild imagination in public, let it run wild? Others may not get it, understand it, or may even reject it. But is that so bad?

Will I lose customers, alienate them? That is a worry if I let my imagination loose in public, or when I'm working.

But at this late life point, I really don't care. Whether they get it or not is besides the

point.

The only question is: Am I enjoying it? And how to enjoy it. . .even more?

Saturday, October 13, 2018

Forgiveness

How about my new practice of forgiveness? I started with Enid, by forgiving her criticism of the slow and disorganized pace of our tour. First, I agreed with her. But how to forgive her for stating what I thought was the obvious, and complaining about it? How to start by forgiving myself by giving up the chains of anger that hold me prisoner? My anger against her held me in place, and this, even though she probably totally forgot about it.

What do we know? I was the only one suffering, dripping with rage against her valid criticism. Her brain had probably moved on to other things. Or maybe not. Really besides the point.

How to forgive and thus free myself? This is to be the next, and perhaps new, skill I am developing.

Forgiveness is a gift to myself. I usually achieve it by asking myself, What have I learned from this incident? Once I figure that out, I can inwardly thank the critic, and feel both forgiveness, gratitude, and thankfulness that this new reality is the way it is and should be, and that, even though I may feel a bit miserable, all is right in the world.

In this important sense, learning how to forgive, along with its subsequent panoply of

gratitude and thankfulness, are part of my new dopamine-release tour program.

Tours as Art

Tours as a Art Work in Progress

A tour is a transient art work in progress. As such it is in constant flux and created and recreated ever moment.

I am an artist and have an artistic bent, nature, and personality. Perhaps the art of creating and re-creating a tour daily, this work in progress, is my artistic connection to tours, and even the reason I do them! They are a constant artistic challenge, using a moment to moment paint brush.

I wonder why, even as I plunge into creating them in their momentary, transient reality, I do resist it so.

Monday, October 15, 2018

Etymology and Teaching History

Our guide, Lola said the name “Malaga” comes from the Phoenician word “Melecha” meaning queen. Fascinating and wonderful. Of course, Phoenician, being a Semitic language, has Hebrew in its family. I love etymology, and I like history. This “allows” me to teach history through etymology.

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

DSS: Denial of Success Syndrome

Lee and I taught folk dancing last night. Great night. People loved it. We did a great job!

Yet this morning, when I bent slightly to brush my teeth, I got a sudden pain my lower back.

Back pain? I haven't had that for years. Why now? Well, of course, I know it is a signal for suppressed anger.

So why would I be angry, especially after such a grand success as last night?

First thing that comes to mind is the usual: I'm angry at my tour, that I have to lead it, get up early in the morning, put in so much energy and effort, all to make money and save my name, etc. The usual pre-tour, tour, and post-tour reasons.

But of course, the questions also arises: Why now? Why today? Could it also be for the "usual" reasons, that I had a grand success but want to deny it, not face it, recognize it, deal with it? Probably.

In fact, as I think more about it, that must definitely be the reason. Truth is, although this is a difficult tour, with our guide a bit disorganized and difficult to understand, I am, (as usual) doing an excellent job. I am holding this group together in my skilled hands. As usual, every moment I am focusing on its unity and succeeding in moving it along to a "higher" level. And the culmination so far, was our great folk dance class last night.

So why the sudden burst of anger this morning along with its "broken back" warning? Obviously, DSS: Denial of Success. Syndrome.

Add to this I'm still mad at Enid for her negative comments on the first day. Much to my chagrin, I haven't been able to forgive her, even though perhaps she has gone way past that. Also, I'm ever waiting for her next axe to fall, her next negative comment, which I know will stab me to the heart. Truth is, much as I want feedback, I hate complaints.

Well, perhaps I really don't want feedback. Unless, of course, it is wonderful praise. In fact, all I want to hear from other really is wonderful praise. Usually, if something is going wrong, I can figure it out. I don't need negative comments. I doubt then even "help" me.

Interesting. Maybe I should simply aim to know myself better and leave it at that.

And it comes down to the usual basic question: Why am I running my tours in the first place? My original reasons, to learn how other countries folk dance, has long since gone. I needed to know this to increase my folk dance teaching and choreography knowledge and courage.

I wanted to learn how to run and lead a tour. That too, has been accomplished.

I also wanted to make mucho money. That too has been accomplished, although the mucho has often been a bit lacking.

Truth is, all my original tour goals have been achieved. If this is so, and it is, why am I still running tours?

Good question.

Yes, last night was a grand success. And up to now, along with its bumps and difficulties, the total tour has also been a minor wonder.

Am I angry because of "been there, done that." Maybe.

But presently, the sad truth is, I cannot think of a new growth and/or good reason to run my tours. Like the civil rights movement, if all my goals have been accomplished, isn't it time to put it aside and do something else?

Either that, or find a new reason to run them.

I know running my tours is a good thing for others. My travelers have adventures they could never have on their own.

But is that still a good thing for me?

I hate to drop the donkey with the ass. (I don't quite know what this sentence means, but I like it, nevertheless.

If not tours, then what?

I hate facing the vacuum, abyss, and emptiness over, behind, and underneath this question.

After so many years of suffering through so many tours, I've gotten very good at leading, running, and organizing them. I have finally developed skill and confidence.

Is this the end of the road? Or the beginning of a new one?

I hope it is the latter. I hate endings.

Can I find a new hope to fill the emptiness of success?

Good question.

Since I hate endings and know, at least intellectually, that every ending is a new beginning in disguise, why shouldn't I jump to the new, positive, and optimistic question: What is my next step?

Truth is, I need to find a new and personal tour purpose.

Also I may need to, but in my heart of hearts, do I want to?

Or am I running away from my next calling?

What would that be?

Writing?

Well, yes. It sounds right and good.

I hate to face it but writing is, and has always been my calling.

If that is the case, and it is, can I do both? For years, in the past, I did. I managed to write ten books while I was also organizing and leading tours! And at that time, to tours were a major challenge. Now I am in a better position. Although tours have morphed into my total business, they are not the major challenge they were.

So next question: Can I do both? Can I both pursue my writing calling, and still run tours? Is this what I need to do? Is this what I want to do?

So, as “usual,” the answer is one of balance and priorities.

I’m not giving up tours. And, of course, I’m not giving up writing, music, and folk dance teaching. On one level, although my knowledge and confidence has mucho increased, nothing has changed.

Publishing will make my writing a “reality,” give it meat and body and importance. . . and even make it part of my business!

Aha, that is the answer! Writing must now somehow be part of my business!

This means my writing has to be published. And sold, or given away as part of my

advertising campaign.

This means publishing both fiction and New Leaf journal!

It also means writing more fiction daily.

That's what this Spain tour has been all about: Making this writing priority and commitment. That's why I had a back ache this morning. This anger signal meant I was "wasting my time" running tours without a simultaneous commitment to writing. Evidently, tours (folk dancing, folk dance teaching, and music) and writing go together. Only my lifetime love of and need for writing has to now become the top priority.

Victory!

Writing as Top Priority

Tours as Fun

Changing priorities by putting writing (especially fiction) at the top, may make running my tours FUN!

In other words, I can make my tours fun simply by changing priorities! Wow! And it only took thirty five years to figure this out. What a marvelous conclusion!

What a victory!

Also by emphasizing publishing, I am secretly admitting that what I write is important, what I have to say is important, and others should read it.

This publishing step forward has to do with my new confidence.

Thursday, October 18, 2018

Knees (both) hurt so much that this morning I decided to take two pills. Immediately after I took them, I felt badly and defeated. (I even forgot the name of the pills!)

Why not continue trying to heal myself without drugs?

Realize that I can do this. And try it without pills. Use the physical (exercise), mental, and spiritual approach aided by the Howard Shifke Fighting Parkinson's. . .And Winning approach.

What a marvelous and inspiring book!

Beautifully Escorted

Beautifully escorted in our Cordoba hotel, I'm taking the afternoon and evening off. So is much of the group, since it is pouring rain outside, plus many are simply tired.

We all need a good free day. . .and I'm taking one!

Exhilaration, joy, even ecstasy! I'm just so happy to have the afternoon off, I don't know what to do with myself.

Imagine, I'm celebrating by going to sleep!

But also consider the tour distracting joy of stock relaxation. I'm trying to find, plant, grow, and expand my garden of stocks.

I'm no longer day trading penny stocks. . . unless of course they make a sudden, gigantic jump.

Generally, however, I've moved moving into a buy, accumulate, and holding pattern. Slower, a bit more steady, stable, and peaceful, too.

A shift and different from former times.

Saturday, October 20, 2018

Reading My Writing with Appreciation

Amazing that I have such a low opinion of myself as a writer. And I have been writing for over fifty years! Certainly, I should be good in it by now. And even before, long ago.

Maybe it's a good idea to reread my own books. It gives me an appreciate of myself, especially as a writer.

I wonder if I have a low opinion of myself in other fields. I know it's true in classical guitar. Folk dance teaching and tours, not at all. My self-opinion and self-worth are moderate to high in these fields. And most others.

Only writing and classical guitar are low.

And truth is, I don't care so much about classical guitar since the works I play are not my own creations. It's more of a technical lack of confidence. Not great, but not that bad, either.

However, writing is another story. These are my creations (so are my choreographies), and, as such, I love them. They are my own vision, sense of humor, funny, deep, profound, all wrapped up in one. I wanted to be a writer when I graduated from college, and that desire has never changed. Mostly my lack of confidence in myself kept me from promoting and

pushing my work.

So, when I reread my own books, especially those written many years ago—ones I am so far away from that I even forgot I wrote them—I love them so much, want to meet the author, and wish I could write that way, And then, of course, I realize I do—and did—write that way!

I can enjoy and love my own writing, my own sense of humor and compassion, my own off-beat view of the world.

Fun is the Bottom Line

Fun is a reason beyond money.

But is making an effort fun?

Truth is, making an effort can be fun, and making little or no effort can also be fun.

Effort is a by-product of fun.

Fun is the bottom line.

The adult word for fun is “enjoyment.”

The different ascending levels of fun or “en-joy-ment” move from satisfaction, serenity, happiness, joy, and ecstasy.

Sunday, October 21, 2018

Complaints

A Day in Spain

Enid's attitude toward complaints has helped me. (Well, I don't know if that is her real and actual attitude, or simply something she said to Karen, but nevertheless, I understood it very positively.)

She said that some people simply like to complain. It is their way of life. Often there is nothing you can or should do about it! Simply let them complain, offer some sympathy, if possible, and leave it at that.

Can I adopt such an attitude on this tour? After all, I am responsible for the tour program.

However, I haven't had so many complaints in years. About the guide, amount of food, numbers of hours spent eating, and last night, from Lois, even about the food itself! (Note: no complaints about the program, meetings with local groups, performances, and dancing, which I thought were excellent.

Plus the tour will be cheaper!) Which means, I could keep the price the same and actually make some money!

My big discovery came when Lola said that in Spain, breakfast is "not considered a meal." An "aha" moment. This meant that when I ordered two meals a day for this Spain tour from our Spanish agency, they must have interpreted it as meaning lunch and supper. True, no one told me, and thus could not have been avoided. Nevertheless, it was a fatal error (the fatal error) on my part. But now I know. Future Spanish tours, if they happen, will be different.

As for Lois's complaint about the type of food served, again that will disappear with

one meal a day, free lunch choices, and buffet style meals.

That's why breakfast and supper only, called one meal a day in Spain, will eliminate most of our problems.

The remaining problem, our guide, might soften, if we change the meal structure. But I doubt she will improve. We'll see where that decision goes. Perhaps I could discuss it face to face, or rather phone to phone, with Isabela and Turismo Vivencial. Maybe even request a male guide. We'll see.

So, can I listen to complaints about my tour with sympathy? Probably.

Can I listen with freedom from the desire and responsibility of fixing them? That depends on the type and nature of the complaint.

Complaints, Compassion, and Suffering

Complaints make me remember how vulnerable I am.

Complaints hurt me.

When I lead a tour and feel responsible, complaints by my travelers hurt me more.

Otherwise, when folks complain in general, it hurts me less.

But no matter, when leading a tour or not, complaints by others hurt me.

Truth is, I want to fix their complaints, solve their problems, even when it is impossible to do so. This is not out of pity or guilt, but out of compassion for their suffering.

We are all human. We all suffer in one way or another. When we see another human being suffer, part of us suffers with them.

Simply as that.

We suffer since we are all vulnerable.

Vulnerability as a Source of Strength

A way to decrease suffering from complaints is to repress and deny your own vulnerability.

I don't want to do that. Vulnerability is a source of strength, weakness, and creativity.

Thus, in a strange twisted way, complaints help bring out people's humanity.

Monday, October 22, 2018

Alhambra: A New Path

During this tour my knees, legs, most of my bottom locomotion parts are aching, stiff, and tired. But also note: during the few days of our tour, I stretched, did yoga, and exercised somewhat religiously. Then, once into the rigorous schedule of my tour, with all its attendant miseries, chaotic guide, complaining travelers, long lunches, overflowing food, etc. I gradually stopped my exercises and exchanged them for sleep. Thus, at the beginning and end of each day, instead of stretching, I simply plopped into bed. And this for about a week. And as I did, slowly the aching and fatigue in my knees and legs got worse. I know it is because my muscles are getting tighter and tighter each day. We're doing lots of walking and this sometimes at slow, exhausting "museum" pace, plus standing around listening to guides are simply viewing sites—add to this the constant low-grade tension of focusing in my travelers,

being aware of all movements of my tour—and I have a perfect recipe for tight muscles. I'm doing nothing positive for these buggers. I'm being mean, totally unkind by not stretching their aching forms.

Last night, as I twitched and ached in bed, I started doing some towel stretches I learned in physical therapy. Then I got out of bed and did a few of my usual standing stretches. After a half hour, I felt better! I knew I was moving in the right direction, once again on the correct healing and healthy path. I then vowed to continue this path, even while on tour!

Thus this morning, as we tour Granada, and this afternoon, as we visit the Alhambra, I shall devote my day to stretching! I shall focus on it and subtly or not subtly stretch wherever and whenever possible.

Perhaps in this manner, I shall give new meaning to the “Alhambra.” Rather than the many year negative of tremolo practice, I shall now give it, let it symbolize, the new and positive stretching path, which, in grander terms, means a devotion to self-healing and self-health. And of course, since All is One, if I can heal myself, I will, in the process, heal the world.

Let this then be the day I create a new symbolism for the “Alhambra.” I shall move from a sick, weak, frail, discouraging, tremolo filled with lack of confidence, to a healthy self, which, of course, means a path to a healthy body (with mucho stretching, weight lifting, cardio running, and dancing), mind (writing), and spirit (ever acting upon, creating miracles, by ever following the basic precepts of my miracle schedule.

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

Spain Tour Ending

I am bordering on total disgust as this Spain tour comes to a close. Why? I dare face the fact, which of course I knew all along, that our guide is totally chaotic, an awful communicator, vaguely disorganized, and basically terrible. Is she the worst guide I've ever had? Maybe.

In fact, I had a nightmare last night about how her poor and disorganized guidance has tortured me throughout this entire tour.

What to do? Basically, at this point, nothing. Today is our last day. It's not horrible enough to say, "Thank God!" but nevertheless, I'd like to thank somebody.

So what now? Where do I go from here?

Can I learn anything from this?

Perhaps it's too early to tell.

In any case, no wonder both knees hurt so much during the tour. Every day has felt insecure. I, and thus the group, never knew quite what to do, when and where to show up. Misunderstandings are followed by no understandings, a foggy garble of directions at best, and no directions at worst. So basically, every day I, as leader and the one responsible for this tour, I have been "cut off at the knees."

No wonder my knees hurt.

However, strangely, this morning, with one day left and the end of my tour in sight,

my knees feel better!

Complaint Lesson

Accepting Ultimate Collapse and Destruction

of my Business

Complaints about my tours are somehow a threat to my being. They threaten to my tour business, and, thus my survival.

That's why I hate tour complaints. And that's why I fear them.

But nevertheless, they are part of any business.

Perhaps the best way of looking at them is to be aware and realize that, like everything in life, someday my lovely business will collapse (only a question of when). Then I'd like to accept it. And move on from there.

if Enid says our guide stinks and is incompetent, and I accept the idea she may never register for another tour and may even spread the word to others not to register for my tours, and that, through such word of mouth spreading, my whole business may be destroyed and collapse. . .if I can accept this, I'll then be free of the personal pain of complaints, and even be able to look at her with compassion.

But first I'll have to accept the ultimate collapse and destruction of my tour business. And indeed, this will some day happen.

This kind of future imagining is not a bad thing and would help create inner peace, In fact, it would free me of many psychological burdens and aching, ever-present responsibility

pains.

Freedom! That is always what I want. And that is perhaps what Enid's "complaint lesson" may bring.

Indeed, it may be best learning from this tour.

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Let My Ego Rise

The main reason I want to publish my New Leaf Journal on my blog, or wherever, it is to enhance my ego.

This is not true of my tours, my folk dance classes, or even my former concert performances. They were promoted and pushed mainly to make money and survive. But not for ego, egotistical reasons. However, my writing, the true displaying of my inner self and soul, has been the only aspect of myself that I considered "ego" or "egoistical." And using the word in this sense has always had a negative slant, always bad, "showing off," unhumble, flaunting.

In fact, enhancing my ego is the only reason I can think of for publishing my work. The secondary "good" reasons for publishing, namely helping others, is definitely not strong. Of course, I am not against helping others. But it is secondary, a by product of book publishing ego enhancement

Am I egotistic? I'd have to say: Yes.

Is that a good thing?

More important, can my egoism and egotism ever be a lofty purpose? Which means, can they ever work to serv and helps others?

Strangely, I'd have to answer: Yes.

Why?

One reason is that my egoism and egotism are a motivator.

But the main reason is egoism/egotism is really a form of self love. And loving of oneself is the first step to wholeness and happiness. It is also the second and third step.

Without self love, you can't love others. If you can't love others, why bother helping them?

So my conclusion is: publishing my New Leaf in blog or whatever form is a noble and healthy pursuit. It will both enhance my ego and benefit others.

I must also admit that it was the negative form of egotism, feeling lack of self worth, worthlessness, which has over a long period inhibited my publishing!

So as of this day, let me break out and even flaunt my ego; let me spread my creations, display my worthiness, d. Dare to let the public see and know me.

(Saying "flaunt my ego" makes me very uncomfortable. Shows how much self curing I need to move ahead.)

Although difficult, it is indeed a worthy goal. And the ego enhancing process itself will make me more worthy, giving, and confident.

So ends a New Leaf.