

Alhambra Freedom/Sales/Self-Amusement

Friday, October 26, 2018

The Nobody Cares Cure

I've been suffering from my own kind of music and technique disease. I'll call it the Alhambra Disease.

But after Spain, and seeing these incredible flamenco guitarists (I'll never even get close them), perhaps I'm ready to accept my slow "Alhambra." And my slow guitar playing, in general.

Such acceptance would be my first real step toward the Alhambra cure.

I always sensed that my six weeks of left shoulder pain (I never had it before!) was due to the new relationship I need to develop with this "Alhambra." And after forty years of trying to play it fast, too move beyond the "you're stupid, you're slow" accusation I've created to hold me back and have lived with all my life.

Now I'm wondering what, deep down, this Spain trip was all about. Was the difficulty and confusion (from our guide) of running it symbolically due to my unconscious working out of a new Alhambra relationship? Somehow I sense a Yes.

I may have subtly and unconsciously worked out many of my negative "Alhambra" emotions on that trip.

I wonder what negative emotions are hiding in my knees.

I just played my first fast and sloppy nobody cares "Alhambra." This is definitely the

“free my shoulder/free my mind” direction I want to go.

It’s too good to be true.

On the other hand, it may be true.

Since acceptance is the new way to go, then I could not only accept that I can play Alhambra (and others) “slow and exact,” but also “fast and sloppy.”

Either way, nobody cares.

Saturday, October 27, 2018

Finishing Spain

Down, Over, And Up Again

This afternoon I finished my Spain videos.

Everything I needed to do after Spain is now done. I finished Spain. A momentary wahoo lasting about fifteen minutes.

Free, free, I’m free at last!

Then came the usual post-success emptiness. The down, hollowed-out feeling—depression, no goals, nothing. I want to celebrate more, but I don’t know how to.

Perhaps those fifteen minutes are all I need. Now celebration is over. Spent and done. Time to move on.

Yes, that feels right. The post-success, post-fifteen minute celebration, followed by the usual emptiness came swiftly with a rapid descent into the abyss of nothingness.

Well, I’ve been here many times before. I know where it leads. Truly, there is no need

to stay here any longer.

Give up the emptiness.

Time to move to the next project. Yes!

Monday, October 29, 2018

Benefits of a Positive Attitude Decision

How to keep a positive attitude when everything looks unfavorable?

Make a decision: Decide that when things look unfavorable, they are actually getting better!

This is an attitude decision. Some might say it has little or nothing to do with “reality.” But they could be wrong. Maybe it does. Why? It immediately changes the way you see your situation, the world around you, which means your “reality.” Thus, it changes reality itself!

Attitude is the only thing in life that you can control.

Also an upbeat positive attitude has benefits such as releasing endorphins and dopamine, which helps your spirit rise. All good things. And it happens despite the bad and unfavorable.

Goals and Emptiness

I see emptiness as “bad.” Nothingness has a dark, hurtful, even evil quality. “You’re nothing, a no-goodnik, a lazy bum.” Where these voices come from. I’m not sure. But they are definitely part of my brain. And I usually keep very busy to avoid them.

But today is different.

Today I will confront these fuckers.

What will I say to them?

I'll begin with I'll never play guitar or sing for anyone again. Socially or business-wise, I have absolutely no need to play or perform in public. So what's the big deal?

Yet I need something to study, to improve on, to get good at, a dynamic path on which to hang my mind. Otherwise, as the folk tale says, it will eat me up.

It used to be language study. But I know that, socially or business-wise, I don't need language. So what's the big deal?

But without these former goals, or any goals, I dwell in emptiness. This may be a happy home for a day or so, but as a lifetime state, it sucks. Plus, it could be dangerous, since an idle, empty mind can eat one up.

So truth is, for my own personal safety, I'd better find something to do, invent a higher purpose, or even a lower purpose, but a purpose.

It's a necessary Jacob's ladder to help me climb to the roof of life. (My name James, after all, is a form or Jacob.)

So, truth is, after a day or so of "rest," I need to grab onto a new goal. It is simply good for my health!

What could that goal be?

Nothing I Have To Do

I can't think of a thing that I have to do—only to complain I have nothing to do.

What should I do about nothing to do?

I don't know how to live in this state.

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Tours are not about the money anymore.

I lost so much in the stock market, so what's the difference?

Tours have become like folk dance teaching. I need some money to justify this pleasant activity, but still, like folk dance teaching, but that's it.

So if tours are not only about money anymore, then what are they about? Why should I bother doing them? At this point, is there any other benefit.

I enjoy folk dance teaching: It's energizing and fun.

What about tours? So far, I can't think of much.

The big question is: Is there anything better I can do with my time?

Faith, Attitude, Action

Note: I am giving up in my fingers because I am “too old, too experienced, too everything” to learn something new. I refuse to change, grow, and develop because I now am so old and experienced that “I know everything.”

Thus, why change my “lhambra” practice? After all, I've been doing it for 40-50 years, and now “know everything I need to know.”

What a terrible attitude!

Basically, these “too old, too experienced” excuses are subtle new ways of giving up on myself.

Attitude is everything, and I need a new one.

I need to invent the idea of continual progress, even into old age, and even after death!

Deep Muscular Relaxation

Developing a New Skill

Not only in “Alhambra” and guitar, but in physical exercises, yoga, dancing, and running as well, focus on deep muscular relaxation helps the spirit flood the human body with light.

Raging Legs!

Late afternoon. My legs ache, so tired. . . Slept. But suddenly I awoke: I know why legs ached during the Spain trip, and even now. Anger! Rage! Mad!

I’m mad at the tour, mad that I’ve finished and immediately have another one coming up, mad about all the details, mad at the responsibility, mad, mad, mad!

And mad at the stock market. Losing so much money, Ugh, ugh, ugh. I hate it! Punched in the stomach, the gut by my stock market, my lover. Mad, mad, mad!

But admit it, never! Anger over my tours, folk dance, stock market losses, whatever,

admit it? Never! Face it, never!

Evidently, I'd rather suppress it all and take it out on my body! Yes! Smash my knees, kill my thighs, wobble my kidney and mind. Sarno was totally right. I don't have an energy or fatigue or aching bones or muscles problem. I have an anger issue! A total TMS.

Yet although I'm bursting at the seams, my seams won't budge. So I'm stuck in hell heart-ache.

Well, I know it now!

Friday, November 2, 2018

The Alhambra Life

After years and years, I've finally gotten rid of the audience. Both inner and outer.

"Gotten rid of" is somewhat hostile. Better to say the (inner and outer) audience has drifted off, fallen away, like a leaf ready to fall from the tree in autumn.

I play guitar now "for myself and strangers."

I'll like to write "for myself and strangers," too.

Run Wild Alhambra Style!

That's what my left shoulder "injury" was all about. I had to destroy the old shoulder before I could replace it with a new one. Destroy the old attitude.

Once my new life is in place, my left shoulder "pain" problem will go away.

And truth is, that new life is now in place!

So left shoulder pain will face and disappear. Only a few remnants left, stray dried up autumn leaves. The wind is beginning to blow them away.

In fact, the process is now done.

Running Wild Grows into Alhambra Running Wild

The former running wild on the lawn was ecstatic, but it was always chased, haunted by the dragon of potential put down. Anybody could come along and say, No, stop, that is wrong. Stop being wild. And it could and would immediately dampen my enthusiasm.

The new Alhambra running wild is different. Since it exists “for myself and strangers” it cannot, can no longer, be put down by others, or even me. It exists beyond put down, independent for itself (and strangers), alone is the best sense, and happy.

Sitting on Excitement

For the past two months, I've been sitting on excitement. The symbol and symptom of this sitting, holding, suppressing tension, has been first my aching shoulder followed by my new aching “pains” behind both knees. Note: I've never had the shoulder pain before, or the pain behind my right knee. These are “new.” And I believe, symptoms of standing before the Gate of Excitement. I stand before it in awe and wonder, and total surprise, and am reticent, hesitant, and thus holding back. The holding back, “suppression,” of all this excitement energy is what, I believe, is creating my new shoulder (now almost gone, and back of the knee

“pains.”

Sunday, November 4, 2018

Self-Love and the Alhambra

Maybe it is a question of self-love.

Maybe I really don't love myself enough to give myself the pleasure, privilege, and time to simply luxuriate in each beautiful note I play on the guitar. Instead, I've always been in a rush to improve, get better, and ultimately play in performance before others, so I can ultimately get their approval and blessing.

So I “punish” myself by rushing from note to note, never letting myself sink into the Beauty. Well, I let myself sink in briefly, very briefly, enough to remind myself that such beauty exists, but not for too long.

Is it time to change all that? Isn't it time?

Luxuriating in the free, warm, loose, easy beauty of the happy blood coursing through my index finger, the wafting fragrance of my index fingertip touching and feeling the receptive guitar string, allowing myself the sensuous pleasure of pleasure.

That's true self love. And from self love it's a simple, easy, and natural step expand warm flow onto loving others.

Is A Balanced Life Enough?

Self-love also allows me to start my day by following, acting on, and fulfilling the

beautiful dictates of my miracle schedule. I know from life experience that my four pillars of happiness are: Writing, music, exercise, and study.

Of course, I may also need a little business after that, but, although miracles may take place in business, business is somehow not, and never has been, part of the miracle schedule.

Business, although it can be exciting, is part of the money and material world. And although money excites me, I cannot say it brings me the happiness and fulfillment of New Leaf, miracle schedule day. Why is that?

I'm not sure. Perhaps it is that my miracle schedule deals with the spiritual world, the land of creation and daily new vision. The business world is more fixed, down to earth, offers less freedom and malleability, is prone to and pressured by the demands, commands, and dictates of others. Maybe that's it. The commands of others in business force me always, on some level, into the prison of their demand fulfillment. Thus I cannot run wild and free.

But I can on my miracle schedule. Note: every one of its activities is alone and free, depending on no one but me.

That's the difference between business and miracle schedule.

Obviously, I need both. But I must never neglect my miracle schedule in favor of business. And probably vice versa, too.

All this creates a balanced life.

However, a balanced life is happy and mildly satisfying. Will I be satisfied with "mildly satisfying?" Indeed, it is pleasant.

But is tilling your own garden in this way enough?

I would be dropping the highs and lows of the unbalanced life. True, the highs are ecstatic, and the lows quite miserable. But during both, you feel deeply, intensely. Highs make you feel deeply alive, lows make you feel deeply dead.

Legs Not Done

Note: Legs not done. Legs go along with knees.

Give them one month, a la left Alhambra shoulder.

Making peace with my tours, and folk dancing. Tours are (somehow) connected to folk dancing. Tour and folk dance legs,

One thing at a time. I'm not ready for this yet. Now simply relish leading my new Alhambra freedom life.

New Index Finger Power

While playing the "Bach Gavotte en Rondeau in D," I felt a sudden rush of warm power in my index finger.

Could this be true? Am I finding a new power in my hither to-withered, stopped-up, inhibited, chained and imprisoned index finger?

Tuesday, November 6, 2018

New Alhambra Neighborhood

I want to honor my new index finger power.

And my new “Alhambra” neighborhood.

As I practice, I’m staring over the cliff, flirting with a fall, as I walk along the edge of the new and old neighborhood.

I guess I’m testing my new strength.

Do I need to?

Perhaps testing life in the new “Alhambra” neighborhood has to run its course.

Land of Easy, Focused Fast

I hate to say this but perhaps the realization of index power, and the focus on index power, slow and powerful plucking as I play, is only the first step to True Power, Competence, and Guitar Leadership.

Perhaps True Power is a step beyond index power. In other words, index focus and power are “merely” a gateway to True Power.

True Power lies through another passage, the higher gateway of mystical “relaxed” right wrist where fast or slow does not matter.

In fact, it is the land of easy and focused fast.

The Hot Land of Focus Fast

Stepping into the Hot Land of Focus Fast is where I hurt my left shoulder a couple of months ago. It still hurts, only much less. After that episode, I couldn’t even play guitar, and

this for about a month!

Now I can at least function. And I'm re-entering the land of guitar practice. I've stepped into an easy new neighborhood of Index Power. But now I'm crossing the line into the higher powered land of Hot Focused Fast.

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

Hamstrings, TNS, My Chosen Prison

I was doing so well until yesterday, when everything seems to have fallen apart—one of my worst days in awhile. (And just when I thought I had it all together!)

Aside from the miserable three-hour wait at Verizon to unsuccessfully set up email on my new Galaxy tablet, preceded by the plumber working all day in our basement replacing our boiler (an event which I thought would take a couple of hours, but evidently takes all day, even two), plus pouring rain all day, plus voting annoyance, plus tired from Monday night dancing and only four hours sleep, plus other things I can't even think of, basically everything seems to have gone wrong.

In any case, in the early afternoon when I decided to take a rest and watch the beginning of the election returns, I turned on the TV set and it didn't work! An hour later I got to my computer, and the internet did not work, did not connect! Without the internet, I'm out of business. It was the final grand frustration of the day. Finally, by calling Verizon to fix our internet, I found out we need a whole Verizon Fios battery replacement, which means a call from a Verizon service man. We arrange one. He is supposed to come today between

10:00 and 12:00 a.m.

Let's hope he shows up, and let's hope at least the internet, along with our TV will be fixed. Again, this was the final frustration on a miserable day.

Even worse, and hidden behind all these frustrations, is a grand pain and worry. Something "new": a stiffness, and even strange pains, twitches, and incipient cramps in both my hamstrings.

This has been happening since my return from Spain. I'm "used to" pains in my left knee. I never had them in my right knee, and certainly never had such stiffness in both hamstrings.

Rick says it is only stiffness, and I need to stretch mucho. He may well be right.

But I am first just amazed by my quick descent. From good shape, good athlete, good dancing, good body parts, good to all the opposites.

Why is all this happening? And why now?

I return once again to my guru Sarno. I start once again exploring the hidden aspects of anger, rage, and their manifestations in TNS. I can't fool my brain anymore with left knee pains. So I've extended my pains, shifted them from my left knee to both knees, or rather to the hamstrings behind both knees, something I've never had before.

And once again I ask in semi-surprise: "Could Sarno be right? Could these new hamstring twitches, stiffness, even pains be merely physical manifestations of anger?"

Possibly.

What am I angry at? Obviously, my tour business. Most specifically, my

imprisonment in my upcoming Argentina/Chile tour. I had hoped not enough folks would register and I could cancel it. Now, unfortunately, I have just enough to run it but not enough to make any real or worthwhile money. So I'm "stuck" once again. Since I now have the minimum number of registrants, I "have to" run it. I'm "forced" into leading another small money-making tour. I can't (or won't) back out of it.

So basically, I'm stuck, submerged in a new sea of Argentina/Chile tour detail fulfillment.

I feel I'm wasting my time.

What should I be doing with it?

Putting all my efforts into writing! And publishing!

So I am being annoyed (angered, enraged) by the demands of my tour business. That is my major anger and frustration.

I was also angered by the fact I had to lead my Spain tour. Result: My hamstrings began a new hurt program, and, now that I'm home, they continue to hurt. In Sarnoian and TMS fashion, I relate it all to the pressures of my tour business.

So what, if anything, to do?

First question: Is my analysis of my hamstring situation correct? Is it really TMS? Or something more serious?

Thus my first wall and form of denial is doubt!

Sarno says the mind creates doubt as a first line of defense, the first distraction in order to avoid facing anger.

Suppose I eliminate doubt. Suppose I say, I am, without doubt, enraged by the loads of pressure dumped on me by my tour business. (And I know I am!)

Okay, I admit it. Now what?

Is there anything I can, or will do about it? Will I cancel my Argentina/Chile tour? My Ireland and Romania tours? All my tours? Give up my entire tour business? I doubt it.

In fact, I sense I'll do absolutely nothing different. Only stew in my misery.

If this is the case, simple awareness may be all I have, all I am given.

Will simple awareness be enough? Will it dispel my anger, or more important, will it dispel my new hamstring tightness?

“Sadly,” I must admit that awareness is all I've got, and all I will accept. I will do nothing physically to change my situation. I am stuck, imprisoned, and, although I rage and scream, I refuse to leave my prison!

What a weird and miserable contraction. But it is true, nevertheless.

Since I believe in free choice, evidently, I have created my own prison and chosen to stay in it.

Benefits of Tour Suffering

Sufferers as Winners!

My do I want to keep suffering by choosing to remain in self-created prison?

Is there a hidden benefit that in my frustration and pain, I am not seeing or considering?

What about the usual suffering benefit of physical, mental, and spiritual growth? I'd like it be true. I'd like to benefit from the mental and physico-hamstring suffering I am imposing on myself.

And seeing some benefits will feed my dopomine release program, help me relax, and even enjoy my suffering!

Yes, a positive approach to suffering is the best approach.

So since I am giving up nothing, not changing a thing, my next question, exploration, and search is: What benefits can and will I get from tour suffering?

I have no idea where to start.

But I am starting now.

Begin with my upcoming Argentina/Chile tour.

How?

Connect my hamstrings stiffness to tour suffering in general, and to my Argentina/Chile in particular. (Maybe throw in Ireland and Romania.)

What are the particular benefits of A/C suffering?

I also need a different view of suffering.

Somehow, in the past, I have learned to view suffering as a bad and negative thing. Somehow if I suffer, I am a loser. Happy, satisfied people are winners. That's why they are happy. Or vice versa, they are happy because they are winners. Well, whatever the order, the main point is that I see suffers as losing. Thus my view of suffering is warped.

I need to see suffering as a winning strategy.

I need to see sufferers as winners!

How will this work?

(Suffer means to “bear under.”)

The Next Alhambra Stage

I’m not sure if I believe in God.

I’m not sure if I’ve experienced God.

But I have experienced Beauty.

I’ve experience her Magnificence through music.

I know Beauty and love Beauty.

And since Beauty is Truth, and Truth is Beauty, and God has many names, then I must know God as well.

And the expression of Beauty (which is the expression of God) gives me a whole new reason to move my legs, arms, hands, mind, all.

Choreography, guitar, writing, all.

The Next Alhambra Stage.

(Note the importance of my Spain tour to realize this.)

So truth is, just as I didn’t know where our Spain tour would lead until I did it, so I will not know where our Argentina/Chile tour will lead until I do it.

I’m being led, pushed into place, by something beyond me. (Could I say

“imprisoned”). I follow the voice of this path no matter how many headaches it brings to my brain.

Thursday, November 8, 2018

Alhambra Transition Point

During the past two weeks of back hamstring suffering, my faith in exercise and in the miracle schedule itself has not been lost but it has been severely shaken.

How can I get my faith back?

Or rather, what did I miss in its fulfillment? Does it really take longer to recover than I thought?

Or am I at another transition point?

Feels like I possibly am. For some strange reason, I feel better today. And I'm not sure why?

Does one have to lose faith before one regains it? Could I have been worshiping a false god but now see the light, and am in the process of reassessing, re-visioning, re-focusing but on a higher, or at least different level? The Alhambra level. (I don't know what that is yet, or what it means, but I must be saying it for a reason. Perhaps I will discover the reason in the process.)

Friday, November 9, 2018

It is two weeks after I returned from Spain, and I now stand in the exact place I want

to be: finished with everything.

Yes, today, for the first time, I have absolutely nothing to do! So strange, a funny freeing, relaxing. Nothing is pushing me in any direction. Floating free in time. No need or desire to do tour stuff, folk dance stuff, guitar, Hebrew, exercise stuff, study stuff, nothing.

It is a strange feeling. I dwell, nourish, even luxuriate in it. But as I float in space, I sense that not only will this moment not last, but that I also don't want it to last.

I stand partly in wonder before my nothingness and directionless state. But lurking behind the emptiness is: "What will I do next? What's coming up on the horizon? Something different, I hope. But no doubt something.

I can't dwell in nothingness forever. My monkey mind does not work that. So perhaps I'll just roll with this "day off" and see where it leads.

Tweaking my Attitude

Can I really amuse myself through sales?

Quite a shift and challenge.

On one level, the self-amusement sales program is merely a step outside my door. I have simply expanded the known goodness quality and quantity of self-amusement, amusing myself, to now include others. Is that really such a big deal?

After all, I'm still doing the same things I always want and like to do. But now I'm opening the door and including those outside. Is that really so difficult? Or even different?

Rather than a grand shift in my personality, mental structure, and attitude, it may really

be just a tweak.

After months (years) of growth and development, the leaf, after going through all its stages, has finally reached the end point, and simply fallen off the tree. Plop.

Tweaking my attitude.

Saturday, November 10, 2018

Sales as Self-Amusement Part II

I've wondered for awhile why I have such a need, and desire, to trade, day trade, and play the market. I never used to have it. What is the attraction?

Why, sudden riches, of course. I could buy a stock that suddenly shoots to the moon (totally unrealistic, but I want it, nevertheless). Then I would be rich.

What is the need or advantage to being rich? What would I actually do with all that money?

Easy. Money buys protection.

Protection from what?

Why, the constant post-marital pressure I put on myself to forever make sales, make money, support my family, and ultimately, free my wife from anxiety and make her happy. Of course, freeing her from anxiety frees me from anxiety and the constant worry that she will criticize me for being a bum, never working, never wanting to work, and simply being a starving artist living in a mangy loft in Greenwich Village, which was, of course, my original goal.

So the pressure to make money, which began when I got married fifty-five years ago is not only still with me. It constantly lives in the background, haunting almost every moment of my daily life. It is the ever-existent ghost in my closet, prodding and pushing me incessantly, never giving up its claim on my freedom-desiring mind.

And I am forever looking for ways to escape. The stock market trading route is the one I have chosen.

It is no fun to live under this sales and money pressure. But somehow I have managed to do so, and, even under this miserable and unhappy pressure, keep up all my creative ventures, publishing books, creating folk dances, be alive.

But although I have succeeded in doing this, I still hate worry and pressure. Although it drives me to sell, sell, sell, and thus ultimately to succeed in building up my business, still it is totally uncomfortable, and I hate it.

But somehow, something has now changed. Perhaps it is because I am in the new Alhambra mode. Or maybe it is simply that the time has finally come. Perhaps I'll never know why. And it doesn't even matter.

The main thing is that, suddenly, sales have a new glow! The "sales as self-amusement" suddenly fell into my lap yesterday. I don't know why, and truly, I don't even care why. But it is a totally amazing, wonderful, freeing attitude!

Coordinating with my Muse

Sales and Music as A-Muse-ing and Muse-ical

Practicing “Alhambra,” “Leyenda,” Zambra, Sor, the Flamenco pieces, Bach, and more slowly over the years, has not made these them any better, or even faster. They have remained stuck in the same place for years, never improving, never played in an exciting tempo, never speeding up. . . but not getting any worse either. Rather, they have remained in a state of suspended animation.

In my new “Alhambra” stage, I have somehow developed, decided, or whatever that none of this slow, careful practice works. Or perhaps it was right and okay for the learning stages of those pieces. But that passed long ago.

Somehow it is time, and I am ready for a change. Basically, it is: Screw the old, slow, careful, get all the notes right and perfect method. I’m moving on the fast, sloppy, and divine.

I know the old does not work. Perhaps this new approach will. Or maybe it won’t. But at this point, who cares? It is certainly more fun.

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

The Alhambra Quest

A velocity at the speed of white light beyond notes.

I wonder what that means?

Dropping more barriers, aiming for the speed of light

Aiming to be the speed of light.

Lightness.

A heavenly body in earthly mode.

An earthly/ethereal quest, impossible and possible.

I'll never get there, but always keep trying.

Ever on the lightening path, but never arriving.

Turning matter into spirit, turning notes into light.

Yes, it's impossible, but I keep trying.

That's life

Beyond the Alhambra.

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

Gaining On It

Learning to Live in the Lightening

Along with my mind and attitude, my body has to change so I can feel more comfortable and natural living in the lightning.

Playing Sor lightening speed is a good start. Then Alhambra, too, with light bass flying. And Leyenda, again with light bass flying, and then even flamenco, with lightning apudendos.

Part of it is I never dared to dive into speed because of all the "mistakes," and sloppy notes I played in the process.

But now I see the sloppy notes, missed notes, and mistakes as secondary, as part of total relaxation and entering the lightening.

This year is about learning to live in the lightening.

So I'm making progress, gaining on it.

Dance and Legs

The step and transformation into the guitar lightning started with my left shoulder disablement—never before felt pain and incapacity. I couldn't even play the guitar for a month. Now it is fixed and I am on my way.

I wonder how this kind of mental transformation into and through speed and lightning will apply to my dancing and running legs. Strangely, they are slightly better this morning, too.

Am I gaining on them, too?

Diving into Intuition

“We'll see” is a doubt sentence. It casts doubt on my intuitions about the long term and immediate future.

True, no one can truly know these things. Nevertheless, my intuitions have their own truth.

Self-doubt does hinder me. It may no longer be useful.

Do I still need it? Do I even still need the “perhaps” word (another form of doubt) to soften or distract me from the power intuition's inner truth?

Instead of self-doubting, I think I'm ready to move on to something else.

Friday, November 16, 2018

RebellionRe-emerging in Public

Playing slow in public is my rebellion.

If this is so, then why bother playing fast when my public form of rebellion is playing slow?

Why even practice to be fast?

The reason used to be so I could prove to myself prove that I am a good player, that I can compete with the Segovias, the others, the best of them.

But I am no longer competing. Those days are over and gone. Thank God and good riddance.

So where am I now?

My first “vision” of performing publically came yesterday when, to my surprise and amazement, I imagined giving a concert.

How did this even come up in my mind? I was actually enjoying my practicing, enjoying running wild on my guitar. I had finally succeeded in my own mind in playing the “Alhambra,” and was enjoying all the goodies that come with that success.

As a success, I could even imagine a re-entry into the public world. But I would have to re-enter with an entirely different attitude.

Then, last night, I thought of bringing back my entire guitar repertoire! Reviewing, going over, everything I used to play.

With such a re-entry, I needed to be in good physical shape. This meant a return to

yoga, running, even gym.

Then I thought: But why would I play? Why even bother practicing all the old pieces? If I'm not going to be playing for money, fame, or both, to what purpose?

Then I thought: For the glory of playing. For the Magnificence. I'm finally free and can do it! For the glory of playing, and, as Bach said, for the glory of God.

Then I imagined giving a concert.

A classical guitar house concert for ten or so people in April's house. It would include "Alhambra," "Leyenda," flamenco, all the biggies.

Several years ago April had asked me to give a house concert. Evidently, it has staying in my mind, hanging in there for the right time to emerge. Now is the right time.

I even threw in the idea of doing a public reading for my Infant Vision publication. A return to public readings. Then I even decided to add five folk songs to my classical concert! ("Mule Skinner Blues," etc.) This would be a return to singing. If I did, it would mean a complete return, a complete re-entry. But of course, this would not really be a return—you can't go home again—but rather a rebirth or renaissance. And it would have to come with a completely different attitude.

And the house concerts, of whatever, would be free. No money (or a minimal amount) would be involved in the return. I would not be returning for professional reasons.

So, if I'm not professional, and am not doing this for money, why would I want an audience in the first place?

More to motivate me, push me to be my best.

And why try to be my best?

For the fun of it!

Saturday, November 17, 2018

The Excited State

Stepping into Performance: Feeling And Using Group Energy

Not that I can always be there, but excited, translated as fast, is an excellent, maybe the best, place for me to be.

It is the upbeat, optimistic state, and is (used to be) heralded by what I called the pre-performance anxiety state. This state, with its overlay of fear, always covers up, and sometimes even suppressed, the high excitement state lying beneath it.

Fear and excitement go together. This was, of course, always seen in my pre-performance anxiety (PPA) state.

Now that's I'm thinking about performing again, I'm re-examining PPA in my new relaxed and unpressured state of mind. My first thought, written yesterday, was about rebellion, and so-called hidden desire to say "Fuck the whole audience. I'm not giving in to their demands (which I saw as fast, dynamic, Segovia competitive playing.) "And never will! I'm going slow no matter what!"

But last night this rebellion dissolved when I realized that "fast" dynamic, excited playing is best for me! It wakes me up, motivates, creates confidence, optimism, dynamism, drive me forward, all those good positive things!

So the performing and playing word I want is not “fast” but rather “excited.”

What I now call the excited state is really the down-to-earth, public performing word for the “running wild on the lawn.”

However, the magna difference is that running wild on the lawn was done privately and alone on my own personal lawn, whereas excited is done publically in front of others, with others present and even “for” others.

“For” others? I’m walking on dangerous ground here.

“For” others? How so?

I’m feeling and using group energy to motivate me.

And vice versa.

This would be performing at its best. Plugging into the universal energy: Best for me, best of the audience, best for all.

Replacing Fear with Excitement

A New Goal and Life Style

Since fear and excitement always ride together in all public performances, a new goal and direction would be to replace fear with excitement.

And by “public performances” I mean, and will mean, not only business events, but social event, too.

Focus on the Excitement and Inspiration

It means sustain, remember, focus on, the excitement, the missed notes, mistakes, sloppiness, errors, etc. are all diversions, not that significant, especially when compared to the overall importance of staying in touch with the higher forces, and adding fascination and interest on the side.

In fact, the fascination and interest may indeed come, on the side, from the mistakes and sloppiness, missed notes, missed steps, tour mishaps, etc.

Fascination comes from mistakes, inspiration comes from above. Focus on the inspiration and excitement. Let the mistakes slide. Toss them off as part of the side show.

Sunday, November 18, 2018

Performing

No matter how much I twist and turn, I cannot get away from the idea of performing. For others.

Whenever the question of meaning comes up, the answer always boils down to service for others—in this case, performing for others.

This ultimately means (ugh, I hate to say it) giving concerts. That, evidently, is the ultimate purpose of my guitar playing. Not giving myself pleasure, although that is obviously a very important motivating aspect, but, beyond pleasure, sharing my creating with others.

Ah, how hate that word! Performing implies slavery to the whims of others. I cannot be good and whole until others approve. Ugh, ugh, I hate it. But although I hate it, it remains obviously true. It means no matter how much I work and try, I am ultimately

vulnerable. And although acceptance may never come, the lack of it will always hurt and pain me.

Performing and vulnerability: the ultimate connection.

What can I do about this?

Awareness of my imprisonment may be the first step. That I will never be free unless I perform, until I give a concert. And even after giving it, it may still not be accepted. Result: I go down in flames. The only consolation is: Rather than giving up before I try, better to go down fighting.

If that is my final thought and prize, maybe I ought to consider going down fighting. In other words, jump into the fire of concerts and performing.

Note: I always “perform” when I teach folk dancing. And secondarily, when I lead tours. But somehow, I don’t consider that true performing.

I wonder why? Perhaps the image of concert performance on stage, is what I grew up with. In any case, that image is what I am stuck with. Somehow, one of my tasks on earth is to work out its destiny.

Imagination Safe and Secure

There’s no way of breaking my connection to humanity, no matter how hard I try.
(Why would I want to?)

No matter how much I want to remain in the teenage-violin practice chamber of my imagination, that, too was an illusion. Yes, the first half was, and is real. It is a practice

chamber, and it is in my imagination. The unreal part of it was that this chamber exists separate from the world, isolated on some lonely cliff, some secret chamber, untouched by the world. It really means I wanted a protected place, one where my imagination could roam free and not be criticized.

But truth is, although outside folks, the audience could always criticize what I do, my imagination itself could never be destroyed. It can only retreat into a corner, hide itself under the bed. But no matter where or how it hides, it can never be destroyed. That part, too was and is an illusion.

What am I left with? This vital part of me, my imagination, can be criticized, but not fatally.

Knowing this, when I practice/play before an audience, they may indeed throw their darts. Those may hurt my brain. But not my imagination. Not my soul. Nice to know.

So, since my imagination is safe and secure, what does the criticism even matter? Who cares? Since my treasure is safe, the arrows of criticism become quite dull. And even besides the point.

Standing at Victory's Doorstep

Note: My left shoulder weakness returning as I write this.

Could it be that my next step is letting my imagination roam as I play classical guitar! Putting myself into each piece with the full range and power of my imagination. Play it any way I choose. What a victory that would be! And I am at victory's doorstep.

It means my imagination is safe. I can be criticized, but I can't be hurt, or destroyed.

Since this is true, then what's the big deal?

Thumb Shift

“Alhambra” and tremolo:

Could this be right? A slight shift of right thumb makes all the difference? Well, at least it does today. We'll see where this leads over time.

Miracle Day

Suppose I wake up one morning and the miracle just happened: I can play the “Alhambra.” With this victory come the ability to play all the other arpeggio pieces.

How do I feel with this miracle in place?

Reviewing the past years, I have to admit that the inability to play “Alhambra” had many hidden “benefits.”

1. Kept me practicing guitar.
2. Gave me a goal: Improve, become a good even excellent classical guitarist.
3. Ultimately, this practice would free me to perform in public again.

So today, with the miracle in place and the “Alhambra” door open, and I can play all these arpeggio pieces, and I am good, nay excellent. Where does this leave me?

At first, I feel a bit rudderless, directionless.

But suppose I get used to this “I can play them all now” state? New goals will form.

So get used to it.

We'll see where it leads.

The Art of Giving

I'm giving a concert. (See April, and house concert participants in the background; see Barry and writing group participants in the background.),

What am I giving?

Notes. Notes are healing and happy sounds. I'm dropping notes in their laps.

“Alhambra” giving: I'm giving her the rich, luxuriant bass notes, with a light tickle of treble on top.

So I'm giving them a healing, and a happy.

Is there any fun in giving?

Yes.

By giving a concert to others, I am also, in the process, giving a healing and a happy to myself.

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

No More Performing Ever

Alhambra for Self-Amusement Only

It's the day before Thanksgiving. Yesterday I had a business conference with Deborah. We talked about the tour business, then in end, about my idea of possible return to performing. She said, "Go high," which meant, instead of aiming for audiences in libraries, clubs, churches, wedding, bar mitzvahs, synagogues, etc. I should aim to the Bergen PAC theater, a one-man show as a prelude to a larger, more well known act, or even book my own show and sell tickets. I liked that idea. Definitely new and different. It scared me.

I hung up the phone and have been thinking about it ever since.

Aside from being scared, the bigger question again loomed: Now that I can play "Alhambra" to my satisfaction, which means I am now free of it as a long time block to performing in general, do I really want to perform?

Yes, now that I no longer have to "prove myself," my mind is finally free to "decide."

And this morning, I said, "Never again. I never want to perform again. "Been there, done that, am sick of it." Yes, I may and no doubt will play the guitar, but only for my self pleasure, my self-amusement.

Yes, this New Leaf is called "Alhambra and Sales Self-Amusement." Well, I can also drop the Sales part and simply re-name it "Alhambra and Self-Amusement." (Sales comes under the Self-Amusement rubric.)

Thus the only reason to play "Alhambra" is for self-amusement. Performing "Alhambra," or anything else, for an audience, for others, is totally besides the point.

Evidently, I am coming the to end of this "Alhambra" lead. I have solved my Alhambra and performing problem.

Recognition Of My Creative Self

(The Alhambra Protected Me)

For me “pain of performance” only came with performing classical guitar, with “Alhambra” as the highlight. I never had pain performing folk songs, ad libbing, playing gaida, or even doing a reading of my fiction.

This raises another long-time question: If I dropped classical guitar from all performances, and only did folk songs, group songs, ad libs, gaida, etc. would I also drop the pain?

I have no such pains when I teach folk dancing, lead tours, or on folk dance weekends in hotels. Yes, I have had plenty of annoyances, nervousness, some pre-performance “anxieties.” But I always felt and feel I can handle them.

That’s the difference: I can handle them.

The classical guitar performance, because it no doubt related to a childhood trauma, I always feel I cannot handle. It haunts me like a childhood or teenage nightmare: never gets resolved, never goes away. Maybe it’s even there for a good reason: to force me to be creative and be my true self. (I always felt classical music, and its “rote” performance of works by the composer masters, was never “creative” but merely a repetition of their work. Oh sure, all artists have their own “interpretation,” but it always had to be within the narrow framework of the written notes. No sideline adventures, wanderings away from what is written in the holy and hallowed “texts.” Thus these artists, even my great musical performing heroes, were

always slaves to the written note, to the text.

Wow, get a load of what I've just written! I've found a good reason, a positive reason why I cannot, could not, play the "Alhambra." In general, in my heart of hearts, I feel that playing classical music is uncreative. It puts me into written text prison. One always has to follow the text, or one has made a "mistake," one is "wrong." And voilà, the text proves it!

But my soul is one that wants freedom.

To have this new understanding of my creative self, and how the "Alhambra" protected it, is a fantastic new understanding and way to end this leaf.

It is really the Alhambra Freedom leaf.

Trauma Body Parts

Smothering of Life Force, Creativity.

What about my body parts?

My left shoulder hurts: Imprisonment of classical music, classical guitar, symbol: Alhambra.

Legs: Knees. hamstrings, twitching strangeness, hurting: Imprisonment by tour routine and schedule. Spain and others)

Later: Feels like my left shoulder is going into spasm; legs stiff and worried. (Leaving the house to teach folk dancing.)

Am I facing the emptiness and terror, the bottomless chasm, of this new freedom?

What will now fill the void?

Thursday, November 22, 2018

Seems that since September I've been in a long slow process of transformation. And all the aches and pains of this period are, pure and simple: TMS pains!

Hard to believe, but true nevertheless.

They started with my incredible left shoulder pain which crippled my guitar playing for over a month! And why? Because I could suddenly play the "Alhambra!" Evidently, the trauma of this freedom realization was too much for me, too scary and liberating, so I disguised, camouflaged, and distracted myself. Never had such a pain in my life; never crippled my guitar playing in such a manner. But it happened. Why now? Grand transformation in sight.

Then in October I ran my tour to Spain in tour-resistance mode. (Why am I doing tour? Making so little money during this tour, I developed a pain in my right knee. This too, I've never had before. (It was always my left knee. Now suddenly my left knee was "better" than my right.) Again a first. I saw it as resistance to my tour, and I was probably right. Nevertheless, this strange and new right knee pain, upon returning to the USA, "expanded" to include a grand fatigue in both legs, a heaviness and aching so strong I could hardly walk. I've had tired legs before, but they came after a real event, like mucho running, mucho dancing or whatever. This time, it was ten times worse. And for no apparent reason.

Then with the Great Thumb Shift of Monday, November 19, the "Alhambra" leaf

finally fell off the tree. I could not only play it, but I was now free to perform again, to offer myself with my show and all to the public! Suddenly, the “Alhambra” trauma, and with it the classical music performance trauma, all fell away.

I was free!

And a day or two later I decided I never want to perform again. So I was free of guitar, free of “Alhambra,” free of readings and concerts, free of the need and obligation to prove myself, free to move on with my life.

After the initial depression and panic, the directionless, purposelessness “falling into an empty chasm” feeling, I recover and said, “Okay, I’m free. What now?”

But yesterday after teaching folk dancing the legs pains were excruciating, and just about crippling. And “nothing had happened.” It was time for a conference with myself.

I read my old Sarno books and concluded that all my pains over the past three months were TMS pains. Pure and simple. That’s what they were. Nothing organic or “real.”

But what happened during the past three months to cause such pains? I lifted a giant burden, the almost fifty-year classical music performance trauma burden. In fact, it was probably even more than that, probably since teenage years, which would make it a sixty-five or so year burden.

So what is the new story for me? I just had massive victory! And the victory did not come without its own pains. Yes, no wonder my mental and physical body ached so. Yes, there is a “reason,” a TMS reason: Through the power of my own muscles and mind, I lifted a giant weight off my shoulders, expressed in the left shoulder.

Lifting a giant weight from your shoulders is also felt in the legs, which of course include knees, sinews, joints, hamstrings, and IT band.

So lifting that weight exhausted both shoulders and legs. But truth is, I lifted it.

I am ready to move on to life of mental and physical freedom to “Life beyond the Alhambra.”

What will this next adventure bring?

So ends a New Leaf.