

Fear, Courage, Motivation

Monday, December 24, 2007

The Emergence of Very Difficult to Near Impossible Goals

I like the idea of courage and bravery as bottom line philosophies to follow.

Without fear there can be no courage. Thus, in order to have courage and be brave, I must face and deal with some kind of fear. And the idea above the fear must be so compelling that is it worth fighting and/or pushing aside the fear in order to do it.

At the moment, I can't think of any big fears. I can't think of any big ideas either. That's partly why I've not been too motivated.

But maybe I haven't been thinking enough. Maybe if I really delve and dive into my person, I can find some fears, ideas, and with them, new motivations.

Let's start with fears: Any fears I can think of?

I just got a job doing a weekend folk dance workshop in Raleigh, NC. I'll also be throwing in a concert. The date will be in May, 2008.

As soon as I got the job, I starting getting nervous. A shiver and tingle of fear went through my body. A good sign. I was waking up. Along with the nervousness came some annoyance. The annoyance was based on the thought: Why must I crank up my energy machine again? On the other hand, without cranking, I remain somewhat down and uninspired. Dueling energies. But I always end up leaning towards the positive, that is, taking the job, facing and dealing with my energizers, namely my fears, annoyance at the work I'll have to do, and all the trouble I have to go through to get the job done. But weighing all together, I always realize that basically, working is good for me. It stimulates all my energies and wakes me up!

Getting back to energizing fears? What about my fears? Do I have any? Can I find some?

Immediately coming to mind is the present annoyance of putting this Raleigh weekend job together.

Then came old age, brittle body, incapacity, and the fear of being unable to physically do the things I want to. This is a strange new fear that started after my Greek tour ended in November. I somehow sense it is a distraction, a fear related to my sudden lose of (financial) purpose.

Focusing on making mucho money, running my tour successfully, fulfilling all my vows to my customers, and building up my tour business, consumed my mind totally. I had no time for distractions, namely the above distracting physical fears that I my unoccupied mind is now creating.

But that is my present state. I cannot go backwards; I can only go forwards. My present mind is vaguely blank, free, empty, and thus open to all kinds of realistic or unrealistic fears that can rush in like bats flying into an empty barn.

What can I do about this? I don't know.

First, I realize that, since I am creating these fears, a deep, strange, and unknown part of my psyche wants these fears. It may even need these fears. They are, after all, motivating factors. My fears (sometimes called energizers) create motivation. Without motivation I am empty, unhappy, and lost.

Fear create my counterpart of courage which I use to fight my fears. And the ensuing conflict consumes my mind. . . and, under the rubric of Love, I both love and hate it!

It is the place I should be, and want to be.

Now, how to get there?

Having jobs, aiming for the jobs, will only create short term, transient, and temporary fears. I need more long term, "permanent" fears, fears that will last long after my jobs are done. I also prefer to call them fears rather than energizers. Somehow the word "energizers" is too bland. It doesn't do anything to my kishkas. Whereas fears creates great rumbling in my intestines and turns my bowels in shit bearing glands. Yes, fears have the possibility of scaring the shit out of me. Talk about motivation! What can an "energizer" do compared to that!

What levels of fear do I want? How about terrors or panics? Terrors and panics are too strong, Rather than mobilize and motivate, they immobilize and incapacitate. I don't want terrors or panics. But I do want fears!

However, fears are not that easily controllable. Once you open the gates, terror and panic may also be part of the flood. So be it. Handle them when they occur.

Result: I need some fears. Big Fears!

How can I find them?

How about starting with difficult to near impossible goals? Next to these goals, things like doing a folk dance weekend in Raleigh, running and leading a tour, promoting my events, etc. next to my Very Difficult to Near Impossible Goals, all the events, preparing for these activities, will seem and be easy.

Yes! I need to fill, nay flood my mind with:

An Evening with Jim Gold

It begins with a classical guitar Elevation Program where the audience, through the auditory canals, rises high into the stratosphere to dwell for a short time, namely, about five pieces, in the Land of Beautiful Notes. Then after dwelling here for five pieces or so, it descends to the Cloud Level where folk songs are sung by said artist, heard, and punctuated with touches of humor and gaida playing. From here, the audiences experiences the actual physical vibrations of sound in their throats through a group singing, shouting, laughing, and tickling experience.

From there, Gold moves the vibrations straight into the feet for the down to earthly, earthly foot feeling of folk dancing. The audience rises, pushes their chairs back, forms a circle and learns the basics of earthly folk dancing filled with foot feeling, and heeling (healing) vibrations.

Thus the program moves along like my day, only without my morning cup of coffee. From celestial morning vibrations to earthly foot-felt evening vibrations, from light to darkness, (and back to light again,) from the meditative, quiet, thought-filled,

classical guitar, celestial, and philosophical morning vibrations moving slowly downwards, earthwards through clouds of song to the final resting place of dancing feet placed firmly on the earth. Thus, in this program, are heaven and earth united in the giant oneness of One vibration.

Wednesday, December 26, 2007

Birth of (Hopefully) New Guitar Playing Attitude:

Ego versus Audience

Maybe one problem with my classical guitar playing is that it is all about me. My ego, how I can impress the audience, prove myself, how I can benefit, etc.

Suppose I started thinking (not of me, but) of the audience. Audience benefits. Their smiles and well being. How this beautiful classical guitar music can release the happy enzymes in their body.

Then my speed would make no difference. Speed is about my ego, and proving myself. It has little to nothing to do with their happiness. Focus on it, ego, self, always makes me nervous. It calls up my worst, not my best.

Babble Guitar Playing

A total reevaluation of every guitar piece I play. These pieces have nothing to do with their names.

Talk about daring and courage! I can play them in any tempo, in any way, even in James Joycian Finnegan's Wake manner.

I like Finnegan's linguistic creation attitude. Babble writing at its best.

How about playing guitar in Finnegan style? Is there such a thing as babble guitar? Should I not explore this new realm?

Using classical guitar pieces as foundation. It would certainly be off-the-wall and different.

Shut Up and Get Back to Work!

Why do I need confidence? Don't I have enough confidence? Yes. But still, the word came up. Why?

Certainly, one could always use more focus and even exactness. And although focus and exactness add to confidence, why does the word and practice of it even come up?

Evidently, part of myself also wants more confidence. But where? And for what?

How about to combat the haunting, rising, and depressing vision that I am running out of time. Old age is creeping up; death lies ahead. Thus why bother since everything will soon end anyway?

This is certainly an outstanding negative thought. Yes, it is a "fact," but so is the fact that young people die, that I could die tomorrow, that everything I own, stand for, and love could, at any moment, be suddenly all taken away. These decisions are up to God, not me.

These negative, depressing thoughts about old age, fleeting time, and death, are actually arrogant, stupid thoughts. Put these life decisions back in His hands. Jim Gold, just shut up and get to work!

Let's remember Who is running this show. It will give me some inner peace.

Here's a psychological perspective not often considered:

Perhaps depressing thoughts are just plain stupid. They are based on arrogance, exaggerated self-importance, lack of vision, warped and small (narrow) perspective.

Get with the Lord, man. He's the supreme Psychologist. Sit down, have a session with Him. He'll give you a good bop on the head. Then you'll get some perspective, and go back to your proper place.

This means that the only real reason to do anything is for the glory of God. The

b'simcha factor.

Saturday, December 29, 2007

TMS?

Could left shoulder, and even right thumb, be due to TMS? Both are strangely lasting.

1. Left shoulder. Rage at dying of the tour registration light. (Extending from this into rage at old age and death itself.)

2. Right thumb: Guitar resistance (and anger?) at Alhambra and arpeggio success. Doubtful, but possible. (Also violin bowing where thumb is involved. Seems like I'm reaching here.)

Note this TMS success: Strange post-Greek tour "weakness" pains in my quadriceps disappeared once I got the folk dance weekend job in Raleigh. Excitement and direction emerged, and the pains suddenly disappeared.

The Threat of Success

Now a new numbness, a strange tingling in my lower right leg is starting. It feels like its on the edge of falling asleep, as if the circulation to that area, mostly right ankle and calf area, has slowed, and (even) almost stopped. Why would I suddenly want to paralyze my right leg? Is it a new form of TMS, a new location for its syndrome? Or is it something more "serious?" Should I be scared, concerned, or what? Well, I,m a bit scared, concerned, or what? What's this all about?

Although it could be that I touched on my incipient emptiness, and the rage over the created vacuum that ensued. First I had placed its diversionary location (as possibly) in my left shoulder. Then perhaps, in true TMS fashion, I quickly diverted its scary aspects into a right leg numbness phenomenon.

This makes "sense." But personal doubts make its truth uncertain. I need total belief in its truth in order for it to be and make it come true.

First thought: My right leg is my kicking leg, my right foot is my stamping foot. Stamp and kick! Scream and fight!

I'm also made that I failed to do the long run I planned yesterday. I diverted myself into reading my email first; then I answering it. Big mistake. By the time I finished, my focus on doing a long run had vanished. I did a garbage run instead, and ended up disgusted with myself, and aching "with old age," for the rest of the day. And my left shoulder was killing me, too. Talk about the rage of self-disgust and lack of self-discipline flooding into everything!

Monday, December 31, 2007

If Overwhelming Force is my principle, maybe I can opnly do one Overwhelming Force (OF) at a time.

My OF is now guitar. Specifically, Al, Ley, VL, and Alard; then the others: arp/scale, and more.

It is my primary focus. Perhaps for a month, year, who knows. In any case, here is what I've done:

Today: Aim, intention, goal is: twenty Al, 20 Ley.

So far: 6 Al., , 30 min., 4 Ley. . .20 min. One hr, total.

I need a break.

Other activities will be "breaks." Main focus (OF): guitar.

Breaks between practice.

Even violin is a break.

This means becoming a "serious" guitarist, even for awhile.

What a New Year, and New Year's "resolution" this is! What a 2008 of priorities!

Tuesday, January 1, 2008

Classical Versus Folk World

A New Year! Happy New Year! What have I learned?

The classical music world is, was, so full of geniuses. What chance did I have? Little to none.

No wonder I went into folk music. Compared to the classical music world, everything in it was so easy! No problems of success here. Folk singing? A snatch. Folk dancing? Easy. I could be a master in a sea of mediocrity, simplicity, easy chords and steps. My personality (no problem there), ease with and among people (no fears of problems there), and unique writing/creative talents, zany and off-beat mind (no problem there) could easily pop out.

Right Foot

Why is my right foot and leg falling asleep and splitting off? Is this a recreation of the hurt/angry, broken love, nerve condition I developed in France at nineteen?

Is there an incipient rage in my right foot? Or is it something "more serious?"

Am I going through a slow, subtle shift in attitude since I returned from Greece? Am I going through some kind of deep transformation I am not aware of?

Certainly, my physical condition has not been the same. It's a new year, a New Year. What's going on here?

By returning to the violin, am I revisiting and recreating a teenage rage, the constant world of put-down, inadequacy, musical hopelessness, and more that I always felt. Yes, on the one hand, I loved the music. On the other hand, I hated the “classical scene” with all its performing stiffness. But how could I admit all this since I could never live up to its lofty standards. After all, who was I? A mere human sitting humbly and worshipfully at the feet of musical gods. How could I compete? I couldn’t. Thus was I always and ever in a lower position. Ever helpless and lower. And yet, I loved the music so!

An angry foot!

Maybe these teenage conflicts, miseries, and pains are now being revisited via, in, through, and around my right foot.

If true, this would again make Sarno absolutely right!

How can I find out if it is true? Maybe face the hurtful memories, anger, small teenage me, diminished adult self, the psychic pain of ever living under a black cloud, and see what happens.

Also I am now facing classical guitar inadequacies as well. These are replays of violin inadequacies, classical diminishments from another world.

Also I haven’t felt real rage for a long time. Several years, really. Last year’s tour success certainly blew any remnants away.

Now I’m thinking once again of performing, of performance, or somehow returning to the concert and performing stage. Thus perhaps am I revisiting the old classical music inadequacies.

Must I forever feel inadequate in classical music? Maybe. A life time question and struggle?

All other areas I have a chance to be adequate, good, even to excel. But in classical music, I must ever prove myself. And no matter how many times I prove myself (which is almost never), I always have to prove myself again. I never succeed.

Why must I ever put myself in this position? What benefits does it bring? Does it keep me humble? Or just mad, frustrated, and miserable?

Why do I want to perform anyway? Sure, I love the music. But so what? I don't need to perform in order to love it.

Do I really want to perform?

Growing up, I never had any desire to perform. What did I love? Music and basketball. I loved to play. But perform? A desire to perform?

In college, I loved study and scholarship. After graduation, I wanted to be a writer.

I never had the dream of being or becoming a performer. Did performing desire only come up when I wanted to, was looking for a way, as an artist, to make a living? Did it start for real after marriage? Maybe.

Meeting people, standing up before them, kibbutzing, having verbal adventures with them and in their presence is easy for me. It's unselfconscious and natural. No problem at all. It's evidently a talent, an inborn ability. But it has never been a dream.

So why should I want to perform? Maybe, deep down, I don't. Or I am indifferent to it.

If this is so, what do I really want? What are my dreams?

Am I standing at the edge of transformation? Am I reassessing, or rather, looking for the first time, at my values?

How did this happen?

Maybe music gave me my spiritual connection to God and that's all I need!

Maybe I really don't care about performing at all. It's only a business.

Maybe, if this is so, I really have no performing anxiety, no fears at all. Maybe my so-called performing fears are a resistance to my deep-down feeling of indifference, to the realization that connection to God through the Magnificence of music and its

spiritual melt-down experience, is my total foundation, and that performing itself is a mere sideline.

Sure, on the worldly plane, I have to make a living. Why not through performing? Yes, it is a business. A good one, too. But that's it. It has no greater significance.

So again I am asking the question on this first day of 2008: What do I want? What do I need? What do I love?

Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Writing: The Radiance of Imagination

How do I get back to my true self? How do I find it again?

If I gave up commercial, audience approval, and sales concerns, where would I be? What love and art form would I discover?

One thing I have given up recently is Zany and imaginative writing. Why have I given it up? What has replaced it?

Recently, guitar practice has (temporarily?) "replaced" morning/imaginative writing.

Well, truth is, nothing can replace it! Imagination and writing, or, in reverse order, writing and imagination, are my prime key to happiness!

How have I veered off track?

Thinking and exploring my put down violin teenage year past will not put me back on track.

Writing is my imaginative and musical form of composition. For me, it's imaginative exploration contains everything to fight off depression and a meaningless existence. Music, playing other people's compositions, although I love it, will never be enough. That is my truth.

In secret, I am a closet composer. Although I admired all the virtuoso performers of Beethoven and others, nevertheless, Beethoven and the composers were

always the creative gods. Performers, although brilliant, starlike, and godlike were never the gods themselves. They were always subservient to the masters. And who were their creative masters? The composers.

I have never had a desire to compose through notes. Words have always been my form of notes. I discovered this during my last year of college. It has been my truth ever since.

When I following my truth, when I remain on its path, I feel complete.

That is why writing, imaginative writing, is so good for me. It is my fulfilling and fulfillment priority. Practicing and perfecting my skills on instruments, although wonderful, fun, and perhaps even necessary, is nevertheless, a secondary shadow form.

True, my writing may never be recognized, read, or even published. (Well, I have to at least publish it. . . if only for myself. Plus, I evidently must accept the fact that I believe in future readers, that somehow, someone somewhere will discover me posthumously, and that all my writing will not be in vain. Yes, although I may never see or meet them, I do, after all, write for a secret, future, and hidden audience. This is important to know.

I am writing for posterity. It is my form of immortality. That's why God and I have this connection through writing.

Maybe I always felt this put down, and inferiority during myg teenage (and so many adult years because these virtuoso artists were secretly pointing out the wrong way for me.

The path of virtuosity is the wrong way. My path is not the path of virtuosity but rather, the path of imagination! And crazy, wild, off-beat imagination to boot!

Virtuosity may be the musical means to imagination. But maybe not. Maybe I was just dazzled by its brilliance, so dazzled that it blinded me from seeing or following my true path. This dazzlement has lasted and blinded me most of my life.

Time to step beyond its flashing, flashy light.

Time to see and stand in the true Radiance of Imagination.

Thursday, January 3, 2008

New Symptom?

Am I a hypochondriac? No. Physical pains are explorations of my psychology, adventures of the mind.

New symptom. It seems that as my left shoulder gets better, I am getting, developing a new symptom: a "fall asleep," vaguely numbing right foot.

What is this? A transfer of symptoms? A new form of "folk dance ankle?" Other? Is it something brand new that is actual physical? Or is it something brand new that is a reflection of my mental condition, as are and have been so many other past physical pains and annoyances?

I sense it is another physical form of a psychological pain. But I am not one hundred per cent certain.

I know I need this certainty for the fall asleep "pain" to drift away and vanish.

In order to explore this "new symptom" I have to find its cause. What causes this symptom?

Is it an incipient stroke in the making? Clogged arteries, paralysis, and even heart attack ahead? These are my worst-case scenarios and fears.

Or is it incipient Sarnoian anger/rage, repressed and relocating in my right leg? Is my mind forcing this wild emotion to "fall asleep" because it is so dangerous?

No question my wild passion for everything and anything has dribbled away. I am plodding along on known and usual routes, searching for and creating sales, services, and products. But the wild and drifted away. Why this is, I do not know. But it feel true, nevertheless.

How can I jump start my wild mind again? Do I even want to? Have I, sadly, really "done it all?" Have I only repetitions to look forward to? These are the questions.

As a Motivator, Fear no longer Works

Finances are better. I'm no longer totally insecure; I'm no longer always worried, nay panicked, bordering on terrified, about falling into poverty, destitution, homelessness, and ending up a Bowery bum.

So here's a biggie: Maybe the idea of scaring myself into action has gone as far as it can go, run its course.

I can no longer scare myself into action.

Fear as a prime motivator has lost its motivating force, given up its old power, it no longer works.

I need to find a new source of motivation.

Since returning from Greece, I have been in a two-month down period. What did I lose during this period? What was I mourning? Perhaps it was the above, my loss of fear as a motivator. The death knell of anxiety, worry, fear, panic, terror as motivators.

No wonder I was depressed. Who wants to live a life without motivation? And, miserable as my fears made me, nevertheless, they were prime motivators. And, over the months and years, through personal growth and the birth and development of much self-confidence, I lost them. They died. Fear as a source of motivation is over. After Greece came its funeral and mourning period.

The mourning period is over. My fears, along with the old neighborhood, have dribbled away. I am looking across the cleared plains at a new life. No clouds at all. The sky is clear, blue, and the sun shining strongly.

I need a new source of motivation to push, drive, lead me across these fresh, vibrant, clear-aired, oxygenated, and wide-open plains.

What could this new source of motivation be?

Duties

I have duties, but not fears.

Duties: A new word for my vocabulary.

Will duties replace fears as “motivators?” Certainly, they are not as dynamic, up and down, whip-sawing, gyrating, and zim-bam-boom as fears. Duties are, seem, and “feel” calm, even, “rational,” and “reasonable;” they’re a more level reality as opposed to the “drug high” of fear.

But whatever they are, that may be where I am.

Duties have a sense of obligation, owing others, karmic debt, paying back. I “must” do them (even though I may not want to or prefer not to.)

Do I want to live that way? I don’t know. I’ve done the other routes, traveled the artistic, self-lined path. All have run out of gas.

The duty route may well be my next path, my next adventure.

Return and Rebirth of Excitement!

Throw in Some Inspiration and Enthusiasm!

Maybe one of the things to be excited about is that everything is in order, everything is in place, I have conquered the fear factor: it has run out of gas, run its course, is no longer useful.

Yesterday I replaced fear with vaguely boring duty. But perhaps I should replace it with excitement! And, on top of that, throw in some inspiration and enthusiasm, too!

In the last two days I have moved through three psychological stages, from crouching in the corner with fear, to standing up for duty – dutifully performing your allotted tasks – to jumping into the fray with excitement, inspiration, and enthusiasm!

Not bad for two days work.

New Dance Questions:

Beginning of a New Tour Business

Israel and my Israel tour is a trip into the world of choreography. I could see it that way, plan and prepare for it that way.

I began my tour business with the question: How much can I improvise – and stay within the folk traditions.

Perhaps I can “begin” my tour business again with a new question: What is the world of choreography like? How to write down, organize, prepare, and even disseminate (my) dances? How do the Israelis do it? Their folk dance is all choreographed (improvised); their folk dance teachers are the kings of choreography.

A la my Hungary and Hungarian language study beginnings: This would also be a good, new reason to learn Hebrew. Also to learn about Israeli dancing. . . a totally new phenomenon for me. But they are choreographers, unabashed and free! (Like Poland, the Polish dancers, Richard, etc.)

Israeli choreographers may, in fact, be my and the model.

This is a reason for (post-seventy) excitement.

Maybe it is time to drop this seventy and post-seventy idea. It is besides the point. Excitement is excitement. Age and time have nothing to do with it.

I am finding a real, gut-felt, heart-felt, artistic, creative, intellectual, transformative, growth and development reason to run a tour to Israel!

Saturday, January 5, 2008

Worthwhile Fears!

I finally found a worthy fear, something I should definitely be afraid of. It is: Neglect of my disciplines. The fear of not following them!

Not adhering to the dictates of my miracle schedule should create anxiety, worry, fear, and mucho trembling. Even better, it should scare the shit out of me!

Without following it, I will literally fall apart. Fear of falling apart is a worthwhile fear!

Thus can, and will, this worthy fear energize me!

Sunday, January 6, 2008

The Older Athlete

How to think of myself for the next thirty years? What kind of self-definition, attitude, and direction do I want?

Older athlete. I like the title and direction. Perhaps that's the way to go.

The older athlete can (easily) play musical instruments (athlete of the small muscles), sing (athlete of the abdominal muscles), do folk dancing, yoga, calliyoga, and running (athlete of the large muscles); he can even study (athlete of the cerebral muscles).

Wouldn't this mean that athletics and the athletic way would have to come first. Primary, primordial, top priority, most important. The physical, mental, moral, psychological, and even spiritual foundation of all other things I do.

Would the athletic way would take an even higher priority than the artistic way? Maybe.

Truth is, one cannot even have an artistic way without a strong body, mind, and heart. Thus, in this sense, the artistic way presupposes an athletic way.

It would be fun to improve my athletic abilities.

Faster scales and arpeggios practice, faster running, faster and more push-ups, squats, sit-ups, scorpion poses, head stands, increasing my vocabulary of Bulgarian and other foreign words, more and more, on and on, would simply be fun and exhilarating. Period.

Thus the central theme, foundation, attitude, and approach of the next thirty years would be athletic rather than artistic. Artistic secondary, athletic primary. Quite a

fundamental shift.

Tuesday, January 8, 2008

Left Shoulder

Why does my left shoulder hurt? Some guesses: Burdens of tourism, finding and collecting new tour customers, filling this year's tours. Constant annoyance and frustrations over these self-imposed burdens. Anger at giving up my "true artistic calling" in favor of commerce; rage turned inwards creating self-disgust at giving in to such cowardice.

I hate to think I may be onto something in the above paragraph.

After all, what do I have the money for? Isn't that what last year's successful tours were supposed to buy? Peace in the form of some financial security to give me the beloved mental and artistic freedom to create?

And what am I doing with it? I'm back to square one selling tours. Is this reasonable? Maybe. But I don't thrive that much on reason. Or perhaps, reason puts me ever in conflict with my passionate, artistic nature.

Do I dare take my "artistic vacation?" Do I dare live my life according to the "artistic vacation" principles I believe in? Do I really dare to be an artist and make the (financial) sacrifices it entails? What is the best way to spend my life on earth? Wasn't being an artist what God put me on earth to do? Is He testing me? Is He strengthening me through self-imposed trials of anger, rage, cowardice, and self-disgust? Am I backing out, running away from His plan?

Could this also explain my right thumb pain?

Do thumb, shoulder, (and other) pains reflect some kind of post-seventy, self-identity crisis?

The question: What is my really important work and purpose? What does God

want from me? What shall I do to the end?

Back to the artist or businessman conflict. I thought I had resolved it. Maybe I was fooling myself; maybe I haven't.

Deep in my heart, I know artist is top priority. But I don't know if I have the courage to live with its economic insecurity. But I also hate being a coward. I may even hate myself more for being a coward that I hate the economic insecurity. If this is true, then there will be, is, no choice for me but to grab the brass (gold) ring.

Go down in flames? But at least I'll feel the heat, live in the passion, glow in the light of the fire.

Organizing, selling, and running tours employ many of my talents. Nevertheless, although it may be artistically run, and can even be seen as an artistic creation, running tours is, bottom line, a business creation.

It takes a lot of time and effort to run a business creation. I have limited time, effort, and energy. Is that how I want to spend it? Or would I rather put my limited resources towards artistic effort and creation?

I know I am asking the either/or question. I know the reasonable world expects the split answer of "both."

Can passion and focus be so divided? Can they stand "both?" Somehow I doubt it.

After last year's tour successes, I now have some background and money. Am I getting ready for my next big life decision and direction? Is that what my aches and pains are about? I'm sensing they may be. . . even are!

How frightening and horrible. But also, how potentially exciting!

Would this also mean I would have to make my living by selling my art? Would this also energize my art?

Would this also mean an end to my tourist business? Or at least such a small emphasis on it that it would slowly dribble away by itself.

I just felt a hint (gasp?) of relief with the last paragraph; also a hint of adventure.

Last year I was blessed by God with incredible tour and financial success. Why did He do it? What was His purpose? And consequently, what is my purpose? Am I now set up to fulfill my true and real mission?

What, pray tell, is that? Didn't my mother say, or at least hint strongly, that it was an artistic mission?

Friday, January 11, 2008

"Never Been There, Never Done That."

I have come to the end of my "Been there, done that" philosophical line. It has lasted almost two years.

Of course, all along I knew this state of mind was impossible. It is a philosophical and spiritual truth that every moment (of every day) is different. Thus it is impossible to have "been there, done that." However, I created such a mental a place of rest in order to recover from battle fatigue, world weariness, and the struggle for physical subsistence, mental freedom, and spiritual awareness.

Why did I need such a rest? After twenty or more years of working, and had finally "accomplished" many of my goals. Evidently, I needed a break, time to rethink my life before moving on to the next stage. It took almost two years. But now my break has run its course. "Been there, done that" has become (and always was) a barrier to freshness, excitement, enthusiasm, and inspiration.

Monday, January 14, 2008

Concert Battles

The only reason for me to plan a concert (battle) and prepare for a concert (battle) is to stimulate and inspire myself!

Is giving a concert battle the biggest challenge, worry, frustration, and decision I can think of? Does it not present the situation where I can dive straight into my panic?

Would I learn and grow from “voluntarily” giving a concert battle? Or would I simply continue going round in the same classical panic circles?

Could I ever give a classical concert without trauma and panic? It would mean complete acceptance of playing the classic guitar pieces my own way.

No Segovia, Bream, Sabicas, Heifetz, Horowitz, or living in shadows and shade of other recording gods. None, zero, forgotten, eliminated from my mind, uprooted and eradicated. Is such a freeing mental lobotomy possible for me?

Beyond the Trauma and Panic Protective Circle

In order to do this, I would have to mentally step out of the trauma and panic circle. (Trauma: cause, panic: symptom.) I know this is a circle of my own creation.

Why did I create it? For protection. Thus is it a protective circle!

This trauma and panic also leak into other aspects of my life, subtly, and not so subtly, affecting confidence and self-worth. I’ve felt it before tours, weekends, and even folk dance classes, but I doubt it was ever as strong as before playing a classical concert, a classical guitar concert piece. Remember the Erie Philharmonic, and Town Hall. But maybe I’m fooling myself. Maybe the panic lack of confidence panic has, does, and always did seep into most things I did. So-called classical music trauma and panic was just the beginning. The teenage first one. And notice, I didn’t feel the panic about conducting Rosamunde for the Music and Art orchestra. All I remember there was intense focus and excitement.)

Yes, I create my own (classical) trauma and panic to protect myself.

To protect myself from what?

Could I live post-seventy life without trauma and panic? Could I step out of and beyond the protective circle? What a treat that would be!

If this new door is now opening, it is cause for celebration!

I wonder if the trauma and panic circle of protection also served as an energizer. Probably, in its own twisted way, it did.

Does the fact it feels like energy has been drained out of me mean I am starting to step beyond the circle? Could be.

In fact, as I step beyond the circle into the sunlight, with no dark fears to surround me, what will now energize me? Mere sunlight?

Sunday, January 20, 2008

Dictatorial personalities, a la Toscanini, plus genius a la Heifetz, and talent a la many others, helped create wonder and awe, but also total crushing of my classical music personality.

Now I've entered the classical music recovery program.

Toscanini was the kind of father who always told his children what was wrong but never told them what was right. However, since he was a genius, everything he did was excused.

I basically, feel, felt, the same way. I stood in such total awe and wonder, and appreciation of musical genius, and even talent, that anything these people said or did I would, could, and did excuse. Beethoven could do no wrong. . . even though he did. Heifetz, Rubenstein, Horowitz, Toscanini, on and on. . . they were simply gods and could never do or be wrong. Perhaps, if they were, my religion, based on (classical) music, would crumble.

Thus, along side awe and wonder over the beauty and magnificence of classical symphonies, concertos, and sonatas, and virtuoso parlor and encore pieces, my classical

music playing lived in constant trauma, inferiority, and fear.

I willingly, and even “happily” lived under this dictatorship. It was a trade off: I could enter the musical heaven provided by my musical geniuses, genies, and deities, experience and be part of their musical Magnificence. In return, I’d have to give up much of my personality, bow down before their superior talents, and worship at their feet.

This is the trauma I am leaping into and dealing with in my 2008 life.

Let’s face it, many of these creative geniuses were brilliant and wonderful musicians, but terrible people.

That’s why I fell in love with folk music and the folk music scene. It was so human! Performers could make mistakes and it was no big deal. (Almost) everyone was accepted. And when Pete Seeger got all of the (for classical concerts: humble and worshipful audience) audience to sing along with him, allowing the peasants into the concert, letting them become part of the concert, I was swept away with the first time feeling of awe and wonder for humans, unifying Magnificence through the truest, humblest, and most accepting audience participation.

Yes, in one sing along Pete Seeger changed my life. I became a folk singer, and it was so easy. Later I became a folk dancer. That too, was so easy. So was becoming a writer. In fact, beyond classical music, everything felt “easy.” Why? Because I felt free to offer and open my personality. After living under the classical music dictatorship, I felt free to make mistakes. I could be myself. I stepped (slightly) beyond feelings of inferiority, humiliation, and criticism. And although there was still some criticism by others, somehow it didn’t bother me as much, or terrify me in the usual classical music way.

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Meaningful, Passionate, Expressive Playing

Here is the most beautiful, wonderful, and freeing guitar and music thought: Perhaps (at this stage) I am moving (have moved) beyond technique. Now my purpose in music (and everywhere else) is the play musically.

That means with expression! That's it. There is nothing else.

This means that fast or slow arpeggios and scales are besides the point.

A meaningful, passionate, expressive Alhambra, Leyenda, Alard, Villa Lobos Prelude No. 4, Bach Prelude in D minor, Recuerdos de Sevilla, and all the other, is all I need and want.

I don't have, and have never had, virtuoso flash. But I certainly have enough (guitar) technique to play with expression!

If I have today reached this divine state, it means I can play the way I am, express who I am, be the real and true me. What a massive victory this would be, will be. . . is!

Can I make this, my ultimate wish, true today?

Well, in one sense, there is no choice. I have been everywhere, done everything else, "been there, done that" in a thousand different ways. Self is the center. All roads lead back to self. I have traveled on so many roads, discovered and explored enough to realize I've explored enough of them. It's time to come home, to be myself, to play and express my self, and with it My Self.

God put me in the place today. What can I do but accept His challenge? It takes courage and daring. But I've exhausted all my choices. Be faithful to yourself. It's the only one I have left.

If all this happens and comes true, I will certainly become the greatest Jim Gold musician and guitarist that I know!

This would be a life's dream fulfilled.

(I had a cold all week.) It certainly was worth getting sick over this one!

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

The Art of Scale Playing

The art of the scale mimics nature. The higher you climb up the mountain, the slower you get; but as you descend, you start to roll and pick up speed.

Scale playing mirrors this natural phenomenon: On the way up you slow down, on the way down, you speed up.

That's how you practice scales with expression. Both up and down, you increase your heart beat. Up, the ascend, creates extended effort, down, the descent (creates) increases speed through rolling.

Amazing and wonderful is this approach. Goodbye.

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Split as Usual

I'm sick of being sick! Sick with a cold, sick in the shoulder, sick in the knees, sick and sickly. It is not my style. I hate it.

Yet I have it. Should I hate what I have? Is that a good and proper approach to mental and physical disease?

Yet, on the other hand, I must admit, I have a beautiful life. My guitar playing and performance, is falling into place. Suddenly, I have somehow been able to deal with my lifetime classical music trauma, moved through it, and am now even stepping beyond it! This in itself, is a minor, no major, miracle!

So I am both steeped in sickness, and walking among wonders and miracles.

What can I say? Split, as usual.

And speaking of split:

It's good to worship God. But it's usually hard to remember and hard to do.

It's also good to worship the gods; they are God's earthly representatives. But

they must be the right gods.

The musical geniuses, Beethovens, Heifitzs, Horowitzs, and many more, I grew up worshiping, were my gods. I worshiped their creative genius, knelt at their virtuoso feet, gazed ever upward at their stage and performing presence.

Although it traumatized my classical music brain, it also gave me an unforgettable sense of awe and wonder, gave me the bone-chilling, melt-down experience of Magnificence, and put me in touch with the Divine.

Which comes first, music or movement?

Or are they the same?

At the beginning of the world, during its cosmic creation, Music came before Movement.

Look at its mirror in my teenage life. I always practiced (played) my violin before going out to play basketball.

Intellectually, I know sound and movement are the same. But emotionally, (for me), music (sound) precedes movement.

What does this mean? Keep practicing!

It may also mean that, as my personal path, focus on music and movement may be the only way for me to cure bodily ills.

(Watch out for the "only" word. Doesn't it, as "one-ly," apply only to God?)

Sensual Aspects of Yoga.

Through the power of mind, the sensual yoga approach spreads energy throughout your body, or directly into a particular part.

This sensual approach to yoga, and calliyoga, callisthenics, and running, is the artistic approach. It is my approach. Somehow I have lost and forgotten it during the past few months, or even year.

Next step is to mentally transform each ache or pain into its sensual aspect.

Friday, January 25, 2008

Sensual Makes my Day!

Sensual made my day! Sensual, artistic yoga made the difference.

Yesterday afternoon I did an hour and a half beautiful, focused yoga. At the end, I felt better than I have felt in months! This wonderful, floating, euphoric feeling lasted all evening. I went to sleep feeling calm, healthy, vibrant, and alive. This morning, much of the same feeling remains.

What a wonderful place to be. Everything in place and feeling right.

Rebirth of sensual yoga "with a vengeance."

The Fun Fugue

How I Beat Prickly Pinky Pain and Had Fun Playing Bach!

I had lots of fun playing the Back Fugue in E minor last night. I saw fugue notes, drunk and bouncing, staggering around a New York bar of their choice. A funny vision. As I played, I fugued at my own pace.

I never had so much fun with a Bach fugue before.

Suddenly, I felt a prickly pinky pain in my left hand. A broken blood vessel feeling, whatever that means.

I had always seen Bach as "serious," music, played by "serious" musicians. An aura of respectability, establishment acceptance, elitism, even snobbery hovered, like a

cloud, over any playing of Bach. Having fun in a Fugue? Who ever heard of such a thing? No “serious” musician would do or even think of it. But I, rebel that I am, took the fun challenge!

“Pinky” is a funny name. Pinky is a funny finger.

Could pain in the pinky be a braking, hold-back, repressive pain? Could my hand be warning me not to have this pleasure? “Stay in the old neighborhood,” it shouts. “Give up this idea of having fun.”

Fun playing a Bach fugue is the ultimate kick in the pants of my classical music trauma.

Well, I did it! A great psychological victory. I had fun playing Bach! My only repercussion is prickly pinky pain, and that in itself, is fun-ny.

Sunday, January 27, 2008

Danger and Depression

The Thrill of Danger in the Down Feeling or Scared Shitless on the Concert Stage

I feel totally wiped and whipped, as if the bottom has fallen out of my emotional, physical, and spiritual life.

Yet, part of me likes to begin the day with this down emotion and in this down manner.

Down and dangerous. A white wind rushed through me, sending subtle chills down my spine. A ripple, a hidden stream, a dark tinge, a backdoor hint: I feel the thrill of danger.

Tonal Life Shift

Qualitative change. New miracle schedule approach.

Should I call this a Life Shift in Tone? A Tonal Life Shift. I like apocalyptic visions.

It took seventy years to develop. Years of daily repetition, practicing the same pieces, scales, and arpeggios over, over, over, and over again. Quantity building upon quantity, number piling upon number. Finally, the water boiled. It turned into steam as the qualitative attitude transformation occurred. Soft, easy, relaxed, tonal approach.

Starting with guitar playing, we'll see how it move on to running, yoga, and. . . we'll see.

Guitar

A sweet, soft, unobtrusive, "behind-the-scenes" Bach. Over the sound hole with almost only (exclusively) free strokes.

Eliminate 99 per cent of rest stroke, even in flamenco.

Monday, February 4, 2008

Reassessment of the Concert Life

(Concerts as a Challenging, Even Fun Event)

Through my new guitar practice, supplemented by violin lessons, I have for the first time in my life, a chance to become a fine classical musician!

This awesome, late-in-life volcanic eruption, this amazing breakthrough, offers the opportunity of a new focus and self concept. I could become the (classical) musician I secretly and always wanted to be!

Should I grab it?

A new musical – and life – commitment. Walk the road of Becoming, the road to becoming an excellent classical musician!

What would it mean? What changes would I make? What would I have to give up?

Obviously, I'd want to keep and continue my other commitments. Writing, yoga/running, (folk singing?), and tours.

What about folk dancing? Teaching and leading. I do those as I breathe – easy,

no effort at all. Sales, too. Since I put no effort into booking bar mitzvahs, weddings, or other special events (the promoting is done by others), folk dance sales amount to no effort either.

What about study? Well, although I'd still like to dribble along with foreign languages, most of my study would now be in and of classical music.

Thus study would move from language to classical music.

I hate to drop language study. Can I do a trace of it? Along with classical music study? We'll see.

What does all this amount to?

Do I have a long-term public goal? Is my distant dream and purpose to give concerts in the future? Without such a goal, can I rationalize all this study and practice? Does it need a professional purpose to make it all worthwhile?

I am used to seeing myself as a professional guitarist. Thus all practicing was aimed towards an eventual performance. Can I become an amateur again? Do I even want to? Or is this a fancy mental dodge, to avoid the big commitment?

In this, my new post-classical-music-trauma life, will I be able to see concerts differently? Will I no longer be traumatic nightmares? Can they become challenging, even fun events?

Wouldn't that be great?

The Simcha Life

A new ache, pain, different and unknown. In my right outer quadricep. It happened Friday night in Darien. I don't know how. . . or why. There was no sudden movement, no sudden pain. Yet by the end of the class, I could hardly walk. A new and different pain. My first thoughts were of total disaster: My a folk dance teaching career would soon be over; I wouldn't be able to fulfill my commitments to future folk dance jobs. And of course, this pain would destroy all my dance teaching pleasure.

What's going on here? Is it a Sarnioian problem? Why did this pain start? Why

is it continuing? How do I handle it?

Then during G-scale guitar practice this morning, I suddenly felt a new pain in my left hand, on my left wrist top.

That makes two new pains: Right thigh for folk dancing, left hand for guitar.

But notice: My January cold is completely gone, my left shoulder pains have subsided, even my right hypothenar thumb pain has just about disappeared!

This means I can no longer distract my mind, "fool" myself, through these old pains. Am I now, in Sarnoian fashion, developing new pains to distract my mind from its fears?

Why am I crippling myself?

According to old Gold and Sarnoian theory, I am doing so in order to avoid joy, escape from mad, unabashed enthusiasm, and the ecstatic happiness of running wild on the lawn.

However, I have just cut through my classical music trauma. And truth is, I've faced this joy-squashing trauma in everywhere else. And I dealt with it successfully! In other words, I have relived my traumas, and come out the other side! I am ready to start my new life! I am ready to face and live life beyond my traumas! That means in full fire, light, and ecstasy of running wild on the lawn. And this in all things I do! Always!

I have broken down the doors, come through the January colds and fire. Now I stand outside in blissful light. Paradoxically, my trauma is I am beyond my trauma. A this tautology cannot be true, even though it is.

Well, is it?

Maybe it isn't.

How to deal with life in the "isn't" world?

I love folk dancing. I love folk dance teaching. As I was teaching folk dancing in Darien last Friday night, the thought crossing my mind: I love this job!

I love guitar. I love playing classical guitar. (And violin, and gaida).

I love writing. Zany writing. But so far, I have found no resistance here. Unless, this cosmic depression, feeling of meaninglessness, haunting me over the past few months, is love resistance. Hmm and wow. Something to think about.

As the symbolic pus in my right thumb broke, so the pus in my right thigh may be popping.

Right thigh resistance pain could be a reflection of the same kind of right thumb resistance pain.

Meaningless and cosmic depression haunting my recent months could be a resistance/denial of love for writing.

Am I not basically over all this resistance to ecstatic joy, running wild on the lawn, and unabashed enthusiasm? Answer: Yes!

The walls of my classical music trauma the last holdout, were just broken. Over, finished, done. Love is open and ready to flow.

Free at Last!

My guitar concert must-perform days are at an end!

A fitting climax to the classical music trauma solution. Well, I have not so much give up performing as giving up the need to perform.

This means no more need to prove myself – in anything. No need for guitar performance kudos, public acclaim or appreciation.

Besides, I get plenty of kudos and appreciation from folk dance teaching. But it is different. How so? I have no need to prove myself in folk dancing. Folk dance kudos, although always nice, are not as needed as guitar performance (in which I had little-to-no classical playing confidence, and thus needed constant approval to prove that I could do it. And this, even though it was an bottomless well, and endless endeavor, since no amount of approval could give me the rock-bottom classical music playing confidence I needed.)

So I could say that giving up the need to perform is the grande finale of my

journey to personal confidence. I no longer have to prove myself as a classical musician! I have finally stepped outside my prison. I can stand in the sun, bold and free!

Now let's go backwards, check out my feelings towards my past guitar performing career. I must admit, that the whole thing was a subtle, quiet, unacknowledged twenty-year trauma! Since I can now see and admit it was a trauma, I can ask: Why did I get into this performing field, anyway?

In my earliest Greenwich Village days, I wanted to be a writer. Then I faced marriage and the need to earn money. I didn't want to work at an ordinary job. Somehow I "fell into" performing. Lincoln Adair introduced and opened up the school assembly program field. Although performing was traumatic (although performing for children was easy and fun, it still didn't prove I could play classical guitar). Yet performing did provide personal and financial "independence," and fed my sleeping entrepreneurial instincts and fierce desire for personal independence (and to never succumb to the board of education type bureaucracies) and artistic freedom.

Performing was a gutsy thing to do. I face the trauma monster, struggled learning how to sell myself, and emerged victorious. During my fifteen-year performing career, I survived, made money, and won. But just because I won and discovered I have performing talent, nevertheless, the classical music performing trauma always remained.

I could say I followed the heroic route. I daily overcame my obstacle although it never dissolved or went away.

Actually, in truth, my only obstacle was my classical music trauma. It fed into all other aspects of performance, ever making me feel "lesser." Had I stuck to folk singing, no problem. Why? Because for me, folk singing, like folk dancing, is easy. I snobbishly (hidden fear, there) saw it as a "lesser" art. After all, anybody can learn a few guitar chords and sing. What's the big deal? No talent needed. Of course, writing songs is another story. That shows talent and creative ability. I liked that. It too was no

problem. Yet writing songs, and performing them, although “easy,” never erased my ever-present classical music trauma. Thus, even though I created, I could never have total confidence in my performance. Always and ever, the ghosts of past classical music masters hovered over me. I heard subtle but strong voices say, “Oh sure, you’re folk singing, leading group songs, telling stories, ad libbing, holding your audience, and more. But you know that deep in your heart you are merely avoiding classical music; you still cannot play or perfectly perform classical guitar pieces. You, Jim Gold, are a sham. You can deny, run away from, avoid your inferiority by performing, displaying, and demonstrating all your extraneous personal talents as long as you like, but the shadow of your miserable classical music playing will never lift. You will never prove yourself no matter how many concerts you give, no matter how many of your audience love or appreciate you.”

What a burden to live under! And for so many years.

But it has now been lifted. I have cut the classical music Gordian knot. I am no longer bound and submerged under clouds of debilitating darkness. I am finally free!

If I ever perform again (which I no longer need to do), it will be totally different experience.

I will perform as a free man. . . .Or not at all. Both are equally fine.

In summary, this feels like one of the greatest personal breakthroughs of my life!

Outwardly, it may appear that nothing has changed. But inwardly, there has been a total revolution.

Life changes start in the mind. Eventually, they are expressed, demonstrated, and ultimately, effect the outside world.

Will this revolution be reflected outside? Probably.

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Bliss and the Pain Body

I have a vested interest in holding on to my pains, promoting them, really. After all, without them, who would I be? They are part of my ego, self-definition, secret, and recently, – through journal writing and speaking to friends – gone public pride.

Once again I stand divided: I both want, need, and admire my pains; but I also want to free myself from them; I want to cross the line, and enter the world of bliss.

Will my present pain neighborhood eventually become an old neighborhood? Is a new bliss neighborhood, truly the next stage of development? Intellectually, I realize there is no place else to go. Old worlds and old neighborhoods: “Been there, done that.” But perhaps I am not yet totally bored with them, not yet totally done. Maybe the state of “totally done” takes months or even years to reach.

In any case, for the present, I am stuck in this transient pain world, wishing, desiring, and preparing to pass through.

Dare I drop aching, and accept, embrace, dive into a whirlpool of bliss? Is it a whirlpool, or a quiet, peaceful lake?

Can I, dare I, transmute each pain into its fun, fun-ny, laughing, music-filled, gaida-hoping, string-singing, vibrational, horsehair tickling, violin-jumping, tuning-fork happy, bliss-filled counterpart?

Well, I don’t think it’s a question of “can” or “dare,” but one of self-understanding. Presently, my eyelids are down; the flying dancers dance in darkness behind my brain. When the curtain rises, the show will begin.

Friday, February 8, 2008

Happiness Recipe

Am I in the terrifying process of letting go of my known identity?

I’d like that. I need it, too. A fresh start.

Dropping my identity as a (guitar) performer would be the first step. How about dropping my other identities, too. In fact, all of them! Start from zero. Begin again. Ah, how I would love that!

Perhaps playing violin, and, through it, returning to my teenage years, is another first step. In my mind, the last two years of high school were the happiest years of my life.

Why is that? What do I remember?

Violin all day. Then basketball. That's it. The happiness recipe.

Today I would not play basketball. Instead, I'd run. And throw in some yoga, too. Spiritual/mental fulfillment through violin, then physical/mental fun and fulfillment through running, and yoga.

Where do my other activities fit in? Maybe as second tier candidates.

Life in a major and minor key:

Major key. The first tier pillar: A life of music and sports. Plus writing to sew them all together. Not bad.

Minor key. The second tier pillar: Earn money through folk dance teaching, bookings, and tours.

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

New Mind

Very strange: I am starting off this morning with no pains or even thoughts of pain. Parenthetically (or not so parenthetically), I have been exercising greatly during the last couple of days. Last night I played the Mendelssohn cadenza greatly. What has happened. . . if anything? Has my transition to priority dedicated mornings been completed?

No left shoulder pain either. Does it have something to do with my weekend connection of left shoulder pain to violin playing, and yesterday's great Mendelssohn cadenza playing?

Has that pain cycle ended because I am at a new beginning? Or is its lifting merely a passing morning phenomenon?

I am introducing doubt. According to Sarnoian philosophy, creating doubt is the

mind's way of distracting, clouding the issue, denying my victories, and an attempt to keep me in the old. Pain-of-transition neighborhood.

According to my new mind, I should believe I am here!

I know that I have not only changed my mind, but changed my activities and priorities! (Priorities: Guitar, writing, violin, (gaida,) running, and yoga in the morning; business, folk dancing, etc. for the afternoon and/or "relaxation.")

Few tour registrations are coming in this year. It may be a slow year. Yet for now I do not mind. In fact, part of me does not even want to be bothered with registrations or business! I just want to retreat into a quiet corner, meditate, think, put new priorities together, and then have the courage and conviction to follow and practice them.

It means my tours, bookings, and folk dancing, although important, are secondary. Music, writing, and "exercises" are primary.

I need a better name for exercise.

"Exercise" comes from Latin root exercitium: to drive out farm animals to work. Etymologically, it is related to "exorcise" which derives from the New Testament Greek root exorkiein, and Late Latin exorcizare: to drive away evil spirits by adjuration (ad: to, jurare: to swear).

Nausea, Headache, Whipsaw Reversal Leads To:

The Priorities Plus Life Style!

I feel dirty, polluted, soiled, and nauseated that I now strangely feel compelled to return to work, my tour business, folk dancing, bookings, Raleigh folk dance weekend, and even the potential study and learning of a new technology (teaching folk dancing through my computer).

Could this nausea and headache mean I'm ready to reenter the world, and this with my new mind?

Friday, February 15, 2008

Beginning the Day

Why did I begin the day this way?

Is depression a good place to be? What use does it serve?

Should I embrace or dump it?

I sense mine is based on anger turned inward.

Anger at what? Well, among other things, lack of sales. Few are calling, few registrants or checks in the mail, little love or recognition. I have been forgotten and abandoned. I am daily slapped in the face by the black glove of non-recognition.

In my mind, I have "given up" sales, exchanged it for the "happy retreat" of entering my teenage room to practice violin, guitar, write, run, and do yoga. All personal, private, and wonderful things. But none of these face or deal with my ego's need for public recognition.

I feel split. I am annoyed by public pressures and demands. "Leave me alone. Let me practice (violin, etc.)!" But I also need it. My non-recognition wails shout: "Call me, recognize me, buy my books, folk dance teaching, concert program; send me a tour registration check."

What can I do about all this?

Is this present depression caused by lack of balance? Evidently, I need inner and outer, in-room artistic practice and creation, and outward, public recognition of the in-room imagination products.

I need both.

It's President's Day Weekend. Where am I?

Completed the 2007-08, post-tour, pre-practice and violin lesson period. Dealt and done with classical music trauma. I'm combining good guitar practice with violin lessons. Even gaida practice has improved. My in-room activities are all in excellent order. A good place. I'm on a fine musical road,

What about recognition? Do I now want to push ego-satisfying events? Or

would I rather in my room, practice skills, give up hopes for future audience, and remain depressed?

Performing

What is performing?

Seizing the moment, creating on the spot, jumping into the whirlpool of Unknown, peering into the abyss, seizing the terror center of Creation.

No time for depression here. Fear of the Unknown, trembles, and increased heart beat, are easily replacements.

Performance (performing) is the terror energizer.

No matter how many times you perform, you never know what will happen, how it will turn out.

Saturday, February 16, 2008

On Catastrophizing and the Unstoppable

Am I on an unstoppable retreat into myself?

Catastrophize means: Instead of just a pain in the shoulder, I see my entire body is falling apart. Unstoppable retreat means: I am losing my powers of choice and decision.

What are the hidden benefits of catastrophizing and/or creating an unstoppable retreat into myself?

Catastrophizing (everything will fall apart and there is no way I can stop it) makes me feel helpless. With helplessness comes an old, childhood yearning for mother to step in, take over, sooth tattered feelings, handle my situation, and make everything all right.

“Unstoppable” is another form of catastrophizing. Helpless before an unstoppable force.

But in truth and actuality, I choose to catastrophize; I choose to interpret events

as unstoppable. These are personal decisions. I choose to make them because of their hidden benefits. But as I uncover their meaning, I realize these so-called “benefits” are false psychological props, twisted visits to the old neighborhood. There is little positive, helpful, or beneficial about them. Rather they propel me into the land of negatives, fear, terror, panic, and, on the up side, depression and hopelessness.

Better to live in the land of positives. A happier choice, a happier decision.

Try it.

Success and Depression

Last year was a financial success. This year is a mental success. But strangely, my calm, easy, balanced, mental success state is also depressing me.

(It is not a happy, ebullient, exciting, inspiring, enthusiastic state.)

We know how depressing success was. It sapped my motivation. Maybe so-called mental success is the same.

Am I a depressive? Many artists are.

Well, at least I am an artist. That’s the most important self-definition I can think of. I’ve succeeded in accepting myself as such. That is a victory that does not depress me!

Depression and the Artist

Or: Thank God I’m a Depressive!

As my mother saw me in my childhood, if I’m happy, I win (and she won), if I’m sad (or “depressed”), I lose.

What would happen if I was sad (depressed)? Mother would rush in to rescue me; she’d take charge, take control, do anything to “help” me. I hated it. So to avoid the “help” and the charge, I always presented a happy public face.

But secretly, deep within, I may have yearned for my private periods of down time. Like a happy hippopotamus, half-submerged in soothing brackish warm water, I

enjoyed wallowing in dark moods, relished my mud-and-moss, fructifying sad states. After all, they were where so many of my creative efforts were born.

That's why accepting myself as a depressive does not depress me. In fact, it makes me feel great!

Why shout wahoo for life in the Depressive State? It is the place where I create! I pay no taxes there.

I never want to lose it.

Aches and pains often reflect events in this state. That's probably why I create them. They remind me of the true capital, my source, the inner creative chamber of my imagination.

Depression Downgraded from Melancholy

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century depression was often called melancholy. It was somewhat romantic – artists living in garrets, consumed (by tuberculosis, or some other disease), suffering from melancholia and dying for their art.

Thus the connection between depression, melancholy, romanticism, and the artist life. Yes, it is romantic to be an artist! And romantic to feel depressed, or melancholic.

In contemporary times, romantic qualities of melancholia along with its creative states have been lost in clinical, narrow psychological definition found in the present word "depression."

Depression is something to be cured of. Nothing romantic, beautiful, or creative about it. The beauty, power, motivational, and creative dynamics of its dark and fruitful state have been discarded. The business of modern psychology along with its drug counterpart, have flattened it out.

Well, fuck them!

I am an Artist

A depressed state is part of an artist's arsenal. It is the creative nadir of the depression-elation cycle.

I am an artist.

Visiting the lower depths, bottom-feeding, drinking from the River of Darkness, nourish my power, and give weapons to use on the Battlefield of Creation.

Maybe I felt depressed during my teenage (violin) years but never realized it.

Through my present violin lessons, I revisit those years, re-experiencing them "through" my shoulders.

My shoulders have been trying to help me deal with these past emotional pains by "blocking" their way, distracting me from the pain source. No wonder they hurt.

Connections: Violin, shoulder, mother, sadness, melt-down, Beethoven Symphony, Magnificence, radio, classical music, WQXR, kitchen, food, violin, crying of the strings.

I go to the basement, sleep, cry, and avoid the world. That's why I sleep so much, and avoid getting up early in the morning. Instead I turn over and go back to sleep. I'm dealing with teenage monsters and musical demons from the past and hate to face them. Paganini's mad violin is racing and dancing before me.

Every day I hit amazing truths in my writing. Every day. . . until the next day, when they develop into totally different ones. Maybe the key word here is "develop."

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

What is Happening?

Am I secretly preparing to make a long-term, late-life, return, and commitment to music? And make folk dance and tours "merely" my means of support? "Merely" my business? A pleasant business, of course, but nevertheless, a business. Is that why I am "dizzy with unexpectation?"

Scary.

Does this mean cutting back to a minimum effort in business in order to give me more mental and physical time to practice? This would be a “logical” result, a “reasonable” path after cutting the Gordian knot of classical music and money traumas.

Some kind of return, reevaluation, and throwback to teenage years. Reordering of priorities. Return to music as my top priority. Is that the symbolism of my left (violin twisting) shoulder? Is that why it hurts?

From armchair to violin. Is this the search Zany is making?

Is this the so-called “end” of my folk dance and tour career as I once knew it?

I feel like disappearing into the woodwork for a year or two, play my instruments, see where this leads.

Maybe I’ll do just that. How and where do I start?

Give Up Catastrophizing

I’m working hard at giving up catastrophizing. It takes lots of practice and thought. “Luckily,” I catastrophize every day, so I have every day to practice.

A big deal, an excellent post-double-trauma conquest.

This morning right guitar thumb has returned. I also noticed it with push-ups last night. We’ll see how I handle it.

Does catastrophization have something to do with traumas?

Was it some kind of compensation mechanism? I’m not sure.

Did the former existence of traumas caused me to catastrophize my fears? Now that these Gordian knots have been cut, I am ready to take another look (actually the first look ever) at this knotty issue.

Catastrophe Creations

Would I create catastrophic scenarios out of minor aches, pains, and annoyances in order to avoid, nay distract me from the greater fears and terrors (hidden within my

two former traumas)? Possibly.

Sarnoian distractions. Catastrophe creation: Creating mental pains as replacements for physical pains: My mind's way of inventing distractions to "protect" me from greater (infant and childhood) terrors.

These catastrophes are my inventions, dreams, creations, creative nightmares of my mind.

The catastrophic scenarios I create are definitely not realistic. How do I know this? The frightening scenarios I invent, do not materialize. (Does this also mean the physical pains I create are also not "realistic?" Maybe.)

Symbolic frightening catastrophic scenarios:

1. Right quadriceps pain, knee pain, hammer toe pain (notice hammer toe hasn't hurt for a long time. I haven't even thought about it. I wonder where it went.)

Catastrophe: My dance career is threatened and will soon be over.

2. My right thumb hurts. Catastrophe: My guitar career along with exercises, namely push-ups, scorpion pose, etc. will soon be over.

3. My left shoulder hurts, both shoulders hurt. Catastrophe: No particular one at the moment, except perhaps the possible inability to ever do the scorpion pose again.

As I watch the constant stream of thoughts race through my mind, I'm amazed at how many of them are laced with hidden, subtle fears. Perfect ground for catastrophization.

If I could handle this problem, would I be free? Certainly, I would be freer.

This puts me at the border of a great truth.

Return to Teenage Beauties

Where do I stand? Where am I going on this snowy Friday morning in February?

I have cleared all my reading books from the dining room table. I have nothing to read. Nor am I interested in reading anything. This is the first time in years. My

mind is basically blank and at a standstill.

This means I am at a turning point. Once again I wonder where I am and where I am going.

So. . . where am I? Where am I going this Friday morning?

1. Cut through two traumas (repeating them for personal satisfaction, the classical music and money traumas.

2. Dealt with, cut through, and am moving past catastrophization.

What am I doing?

1. Finishing my folk dance choreography book and CDs.

2. Practicing guitar, violin, (and partial gaida). And that's it!

That's my "problem," resting place, and why this morning I am puzzled in homeostasis.

Seems the only thing I am presently interested in is: Playing guitar, and learning the violin. (Plus partial gaida). Thus instruments and music are my focus. Period. Other doings and events, although I do them, are presently "on the side."

And as I fine tune my focus, I see that most of my concentration is on the violin. The overflow from violin learning and lessons seeps, drifts, flows into my classical guitar. (Also gaida on the side.)

This is another nail in my past mental-habit program. I used to see myself as a guitarist. Now even the guitar may be drifting to the side as violin steps into prime place.

Can I afford such commitment and redefinition?

Of course, violin and its music have always been a teenage and lifetime love. Guitar has its place, but mostly as an informal instrument to accompany singing. But folk guitar, although mucho fun, social, and easy, was never enough for me. True, I loved the simple dynamism of folk music. But classical music was always the center of my universe. Since I always loved it, and its instrumental ambassador, the violin, classical guitar really served as a post-teenage substitute for violin.

So now I have returned to my teenage violin. And this, along with sports. During my teenage years, I never read books, or studied anything (beyond music). Reading came only after I went to college. Study then opened up the entire universe for me.

So, where am I?

I have returned to my teenage years and interests, exploring and reevaluating these beauties.

Retirement Mode

I didn't make any money during my teenage years. I never cared about it or give it a thought. And why should I have? My parents took care of everything. Ah, how glorious that was!

Now, as an adult, I have to take care of the financials. Well, I partly and mostly have. I have business mechanisms in place to partly and mostly handle this.

I am partly and mostly ready to retire. Is this return to teenage years my form of "retirement?"

What does "retirement" mean? Well, first of all, maybe even last of all, in other words, mainly, it means not worrying about money.

Well, I have noticed this year, a slow-to-sudden sag of personal interest in money-earning forms of work, namely, tours, bookings, and folk dance teaching. This signifies some basic form of security. It has freed my brain to focus on "other things," even another way of life.

One Year Sabbatical/Retirement Experiment

Maybe I should experiment: Make this my sabbatical or retirement year. See what happens.

How do I picture it?

Like a Cape Cod vacation. Mainly guitar, violin practice (some gaida thrown in),

running, yoga, writing (reading, too).

In retirement mode business things become an amusing pastime.

This certainly is a daring experiment. And it is different.

This is where my heart is leading.

Truth is, it is not that much different from my present life style. Most of the above retirement changes are thus taking place in my head. They are attitude and approach changes.

Retirement takes place in my mind.

Sunday, February 24, 2008

Wishing for the Winds

A strange deadness in my soul this morning! No desire to do anything. Mostly no desire to learn.

It's beyond "been there, done that." A resting place with no oomph. I won't call it "depressing." Happily, I'm in the process of giving up that awful clinical word. I'm looking for a new term to describe the state, perhaps "fallow" or some other word I have yet to find or invent.

Presently, a cloud of strange wistfulness hangs over my head. Gray and possibly pregnant, a morning wishing state grazed with the vague hope that vital, powerful new winds of inspiring freshness will blow my way.

Could poetry, babble writing, music, athletics, language, or all of these fill the gap? Something else? I don't know.

Performing

Must I return to performing?

But I refuse to return with my old performance fears and pre-performance anxieties.

If I return, I'd like to return as a new person, a new performer. This means mainly with a new performing attitude.

Is it possible? Could that possibly be the new goal of mine? No question a new performance place would be one totally filled with artistic creation, and totally void of pre-performance anxiety.

Are such a calm place and focused state possible?

Is it possible to be passionately cool, calm, collected, and focused?

As a start, I would be totally focused on interpretation. And parenthetically, I would know that my interpretation (since interpretation is totally personal and based on my own knowledge, experience, attitudes, and personality) has to be right.

The clouds of Segovia, Sabicas, Heifetz, etc. hanging over my head would have to disappear.

Have they? I think so.

(Alhambra and Leyenda are my tests.)

Well, I'm ready.

"Anxiety" is different from realistic fear. When the tiger attacks, realistic fear is good and correct. But worry about the tiger, when it is presently non-existent, only creates anxiety. This kind of worry wastes my energy. I am ready to try dropping it, and embarking on.

So what is the new state of deadness I felt this morning? Boredom? Balance? A strange homeostatic mixture of both?

But was it boring? Or was a calm bordering on balanced?

Balance is the key to sanity.

Was it a prelude to balancing my energies in performance?

What would that do that? Artistic creation.

To Be Fearless

To be fearless, it's back to God for me.

He's in charge.

Such a return would dissolve pre-performance anxiety along with all other anxieties. It would give meaning, direction, and ever remind me of the fearless purpose-filled life.

Put this remembering into daily practice.

How would I get back to God?

Bible study, and reading books on religion again?

My life is presently filled with the familiar. What is left? Return to the highest and ever-lasting Awe and Wonder experience, chock full of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. Isn't that what music, dance, writing, athletics, and creation itself are all about?

Plus I'm always looking for an audience. Why not perform for God Himself? He's always around.

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Folk Dance Knees (and Legs)

"Do not catastrophize." Voila this morning's agenda.

Look into my post-Daniela headache. Part of me is angry for the work I do putting together these folk dance workshops with guest teachers, angry and jealous at the fact I am not center stage.

Look at the extreme pain in my knees last night. Was that not partly (wholly?) caused by physicalization of jealousy and rage? I was not teaching, I was not center stage, I was not having all the audience attention, I was not having all the fun.

Lots of "I" here. The "I," my ego, is totally affected. Cause and center of my

anger, rage, and jealousy. How horrible and difficult to admit I am so flawed. But I am. Better to admit it, and, in the process, create possibilities of dissolving these distracting physical pains.

(Indeed, this intensity of my knee pain is somewhat new. This, plus knowledge of my own headache creations, lead me to the anger and jealousy emotions, and their present distraction through creation of, this time, knee, leg, walking, and basically, “dancing” pains. In fact, I used to suffer from what I called “folk dance ankle,” sudden and unknown pains in my ankle coming before and sometimes after folk dance teaching (but never during my teaching!) I vaguely realized I was “crippling” myself with pre-performance anxiety (visiting through my ankle), and its concomitant militancies of anger and fear that I might fail, and rage at the fact that my folk dance audience had such power over me, and that, through their possible critical views of me, create such psychic, then translated-into-physical, pain. Folk dance ankle, indeed! Last night it turned into folk dance knees. (And as thighs, hips, and quadriceps hurt a bit, perhaps, folk dance legs.)

I certainly feel better writing about this stuff. And I am successfully following my new rule of not catastrophizing. We’ll see if my knees feel better when I stand up and walk around.

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Is it the Coffee?

Is there a thrill in feeling miserable?

Or is it the coffee?

Is there a pernicious but subtly delicious taste in catastrophizing? Are morning downs really ups in disguise? Are they reverse wake-up calls from my inner alarm clock, pre-dawn energizers, hidden quests for adventure, subtle searches for freshness and daily new challenges?

Or is it the coffee?

Performing and Sales: "Been there, done that"

What is new?

So far, only the violin.

But this is an amazing thing to say about performing, and even sales. Have I been avoiding them, especially performing, not out of fear and pre-performance anxiety, but out of boredom? What about the energizing annoyances of sales? Am I avoiding them for the same reasons?

Let's start with performance:

For years I have been practicing the guitar, "preparing" for some vague and future performance. I saw using singing, readings, ad libbing, and any other personal skills I could throw into my one man show, for that same vague and future performance.

But now, if the thought of performance has become ho-hum, why would I continue preparing for it?

A New Place for Classical Guitar

Maybe the classical guitar is (now) very much like my violin: I'll use it only (or mostly) for fun. I play for myself and my own personal satisfaction. I'll almost never use it in public. As I see it now, I would start most performances with ad libs and a song, or songs. I might, in the middle of a program, do one or two easy classical guitar pieces, maybe Pavanese, a flamencan dance, Romance, D'Amor, maybe something else. But that would be it. That's all I need. What will I do with all the other pieces I know, and my arpeggios work-out pieces? Why, play them for my own satisfaction and fun, of course. (I might also use them as play background music when I play professionally for cocktail parties, etc.)

This means my program, the One Man Show I will do in Raleigh, NC, the one I preparing and working towards, as well as my newest May, "Spanish guitar" oriented program at the Tenafly Center will be mainly folk songs, talking, ad libs, even a gaida piece. Classical guitar will have little (or even "nothing") to do with it. It will be mostly a "personality thing." (Maybe I'll just borrow a guitar for it?)

Indeed, this is a step into greater freedom, a very surprising (directionless-direction) step.

Moving from Fear Orientation to . . .the Promised Land of Doing

If money is no longer my main concern, and fame, fortune, and immortality went out the window long ago, and I am no longer fear oriented, fear motivated, or have to prove myself as an artist, then what will motivate me to do anything? This question has been lingering in my mind for a year or two.

If I am no longer afraid, what will propel me to run a tour, give a concert, or anything else? A great seminal question. It hit home during my lunch with Bob. He asked, "Jim, if you had a million dollars, what would you do? Would you still run tours, give concerts, run, do yoga, write, or study? If yes, why would you do them? For what reason?"

What a question! I haven't been falling apart for the last few months for nothing. My old, former body and mind are dying. Perhaps they are, by now, totally dead. I'm ready to move, to travel to a new place of motivation, the Promised Land of Doing. My only question is: What and where is it?

Musical Expression Success!

How do you learn to express your music?

Look deep, deep, deep into your heart. But first you must conquer the technical aspects of playing.

How much technique do you actually need to start playing with expression?
Can a rank beginner do it?

Probably not. . . but maybe. . . It's a good question.

What is the arpeggio passage in Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4 all about? Trying and failing, trying again. . . and failing, and then more trying. Many attempts. Frustration and fighting against the storm. On the border of despair, but not quite. Ever on the verge of giving up, but never doing so. Struggling and trudging through the quicksand of a storm.

The Transubstantiation of Values Rebirth Program

Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4 is about fighting off depression.

Alhambra is about watching the sunrise.

Leyenda is about visiting Hades. A trip into the darkness and fires of hell. During the bar chords you hear the inhabitants, the condemned souls, screaming. Middle passage takes place at the mouth of the Hades entrance, the cave; it is a meditation on the nature and view of the outside world, its sun, clouds, and light, a meditation upon the relationship between heaven and hell. At the end of the middle passage, one returns to hell. The finale, or coda, is a fatalistic summary of the experience.

For a better understanding of Leyenda, read Dante's Inferno.

Sylvius Leopold Weiss Gigue: It's the devil dancing the Gigue.

I am saying something, talking about a subject (depression), telling a story (visit to Hades), when I play.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Sarnoian Basics

Getting back to Sarnoian basics: Could all these new post-Greek tour "arthritic"

aches and pains I have been experiencing be caused by the repression of anger and sadness? Are they, as Sarno says, distractions created by my mind, aching walls built to hide and disguise my emotions anger and sadness? Traditional Sarnoian thinking. It could be true: I could have been avoiding facing and dealing with these basic principles.

For instance, let's take anger. It has become quite foreign to me. I haven't felt anger for many months. Where did it go?

No question, that when the Greek tour ended, I felt sad; and I have been in a mourning mode all winter. I have been trying to recover from the shock of such an amazingly successful 2007 year. Doesn't mourning and sadness go with anger? Yes. Therefore, over the past few months at least, I (may have been) have been avoiding, or at least not facing, anger.

What was I angry about?

The loss of a fabulously great, successful, and exciting year. The elation of making all that money! Ah, what an upper! All year long, as the registrations came in, one after another, from all over the country, expansion, expansion, I was on fire, glowing, my brain going wild with business running wild on the lawn ecstasy. An incredible business and emotional high. Even as I write about it, my fingers and entire body are starting to tingle again.

When the Greek tour ended, I lost it all.

Isn't that something to be mad about? Yes! Mad and sad. I could have screamed and cried for a year. But I didn't. Instead, I got all kinds of new aches and pains; and old ones came back even stronger.

Later, during the winter, I dealt with my classical music trauma. More sadness. Madness, too, although I never dealt with the anger of it, the madness in the trauma.)

But basically, I was mad and sad about the sudden loss of elation. What gave me the elation? All that money coming in, all those customers loving me, all that adulation, respect, success, power. What a high! I was rolling! I was on my way! My

greatest business and power dreams were being realized. And suddenly, after the Greek tour, it was over. Down I went.

Sadness and rage, indeed. But I hated to admit it, hated to face these emotional losses. Instead I created a barrier of distractions, a wall of aches and pains.

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Doubt

Return to doing all my old things and my old views.

I can't think of or find anything else. Plus, maybe I'm right to begin with.

Music, art and athletics: Artletics. Plus some business.

My old life was good. Now that I've solved my traumas it could be even better.

So what's the problem? My aches and pains have confused me, thrown me off key, caused me to lose my way. I don't understand why I have them, why they are suddenly becoming common and prevalent.

Could rage alone be the answer? Possibly. But I'm not sure. Doubt is the problem.

Sarno says doubt is created by the mind to avoid central emotions of anger, rage, sadness, etc. It is another form of distraction.

New Challenge

Previously, last year, I had all these good things going. This year I still have all these good things going. In fact, presently, I see all the good things going as getting even better! (Look at my guitar, music, and money conquests!)

So what's the problem?

Am I dealing with the deadness of success?

If that is the case, why should my success be so dead? Why do I (did I) want to make it that way? Could it be my present form of return to the old neighborhood?

Could I now make my success dynamic, motivated, fiery, and friendly?

Now that's a new challenge!

Perhaps while last year was about dealing with business and financial success, this year is about dealing with its aftermath: the emotions of success.

I can no longer deny it. On any level and in my own terms, I have succeeded. Even guitar and music have fallen into place. There is nothing left to do but face my success, face the fact that I am successful. . .and with this, the first step was and is to face the deadness of success.

How do and did I do this? My first step was to avoid it by returning to the old neighborhood.

Well, I've done that. Now I'm ready for the second step: dealing with my new challenge: Making my success dynamic, motivated, fiery, and friendly,

Would this be the finale of my attitude change? I hate finales and endings. Thus, even the emergence of this question is a downer in disguise, a subtle form of return to the old neighborhood.

Yes, of course, I'm down and depressed because I am "stuck" in the Land of Success. But that's old news. What can I do? What can you expect? That's just the way it is.

There is no denying it. I stand full in the belly of success, in the belly of whale. No escape. I can kick, scream, and cry, but no matter what I do, I remain stuck and fixed in the Land of Success.

Only a new attitude towards my new nationality and home can save me.

I feel nauseous, disgusted, and sick. But that's old news. What can I do? What can you expect? That's just the way it is.

Indeed, the aches and pains of the past few months derive from dealing with success. Success aches and pains. The aches and pains of success.

Greece, Bulgaria, tours, violin, guitar. Bang, bang, bang, one success after another. Guns shooting off. Bang, bang, bang. They're shooting success bullets into my body. Sure they hurt and create pain. Weird and strange, but true.

My next challenge: Dragged kicking and screaming beyond my old neighborhood into my new nation. How to change, develop, and learn to live mentally, physically, and emotionally in the Land of Success.

Proof Beyond Doubt

I can't whip and stimulate myself with the bad anymore. How disgusting. I feel totally nauseous.

Sure I'm mad. (Mad, rage, anger, indeed. That's the proof. It should end my doubts and my doubt.) I'm losing all my old sources of stimulation.

Failure and Stimulation

Failure, hanging at the edge of failure, was a tremendous source of stimulation. But I've lost it. No wonder I'm mad. Sad, too. That's why I woke up sad every morning for the past few months. But the mourning period has passed. I'm in mad mode now.

History of moods: During the past months I have passed from sad and achy—Jan-Feb, to mad and hopeful—last few days, to calm and successful—this morning. (Stimulation still hiding.)

The dawn of understanding is in sight.

Since fear, worry, and proving myself are no longer sources of motivation, I have to desire (or motivation) to give a concert. (But it is fun playing and improving for

myself.)

Nothing is stimulating.

Starting at zero.

Only the plucking of right index finger on the guitar is pleasant, and wonderfully pleasant at that.

Could pleasant be a place to begin again?

Right Index Finger and Land of the Pleasant

The right index finger was always at the center of my biggest problem in playing arpeggios on the guitar. I wrestled with it for years. It always held me back.

Wouldn't it be strange and ironical if now, right index finger pointed the way, the path and direction, to the new Land of the Pleasant.

So ends a New Leaf.