

Fresh Start

Saturday, May 31, 2008

I finished my Raleigh Weekend; I finished my Tenafly Senior concert. I'm on the road to newness. I'm definitely ready, and old enough, for a new start.

What does that mean?

Last night, after seeing the fine Greek dancing at the Greek Festival in Tenafly, I realized deeply that, after a year of twisted focus, my task now was to renew myself. I wrote: "I'll have to spend time at these languages. That means daily practice. How?

Language study and practice:

Spanish (2 days), French (1), Bulgarian (2), Greek (2). And this at one hour a day.

Yoga (1) and running (1): 2 hours a day, 6 days a week.

Does folk dancing fit in?

Gaida and violin???:

Guitar (1). Journal writing is second nature.

Reward

Return to my Inspiration Core

This means, partly, that business is doing so well I can move it to second place. Success in business, along with its financial rewards, frees me to pursue my miracle schedule with greater richness, more fully, and in greater depth. It means I can more fully return to my inspirational core. No question, it has been neglected during the (post-Greek 2007) year.

Relishing, returning, and diving back into my miracle schedule is my reward for greater financial security; it is my business pay off for doing well.

Analysis of 2007 Post-Greek Tour Period

With the completion of my Raleigh Weekend, and performance of my Tenafly Senior Center concert, I feel my 2007 interim year has ended.

What happened?

My body was boiling, but I couldn't get out of the pot.

I wonder if all the aches and pains that seemed quite to develop and increase quite suddenly during the year were due to subtle neglect, and resentment over this neglect, of my inspirational core. Sounds right.

What was its cause? Why did it happen this way?

Before I was ready to move on to my next life, I vitally needed to complete important pieces of myself.

1. My choreographic self had to go public.
2. My classical music trauma had to be resolved.
3. My financial self had to be stabilized.

No question, these long-term goals were accomplished. Finished, completed, done. I am ready to move on.

In getting back to my inspiration core, my miracle schedule, I want (must) get back to love. I used to love doing yoga, running, language study, and all the others. Such a sensual and metaphysical pleasure used to course through my veins. During the past year, this love aspect has drifted backwards, descended into purpose: I did the exercises (of calliyoga) for a purpose and reason, as a means to an end, namely, to get in or stay in shape, to become stronger, more muscular, etc. This is absolutely the wrong reason to do these, or anything, for that matter. Only love lasts forever, and sustains all. Purpose, means-to-an-end, although useful in the short run, dies as soon as you accomplish your goal. Plus, with only purpose or goal in mind, you never really experience, get into, the roots and source of your energy, namely, love.

Returning to the miracle schedule means returning to love. Love is the miracle part of the schedule.

Love sustains the world. Please remember this and live in it.

Fear and Ignorance versus Freedom and Knowledge

Is there really much difference between this life and the afterlife?

The possible presence of spirits, (disembodied spirits, namely, my mother) sends cold chills of fear and terror down my back.

But is this fear due to ignorance?

First question: Do such spirits really exist? If I believe they do not, then feeling them, experiencing them, even thinking they might exist, would send such chills down my back. After all, such thinking goes completely against my materialistic training and upbringing.

But, on the other hand, if I thought disembodied spirits were "real," that the spirit world exists, that my mother could actually be "sitting" opposite me in invisible, metaphysical, non-materialistic form, then perhaps my chills of terror would disappear. I would be no longer living in the darkness of fear. I would be free from ignorance, enlightened, and liberated from this fear.

There is also a soothing aspect to the thought my mother might be "sitting" opposite me in her non-corporeal form. After all, she did love and take care of me. Perhaps she is still doing so. . . from above, or, in spirit, in spiritual form, "Sitting" opposite me.

In fact, I might ask, where does the "automatic" writing I do in my journal, and even fiction, come from? It always feels like it is coming from somewhere else. I am merely the scribe writing down the words that some unseen kind of force or being dictates to me.

Should I let the spirit of my mother and father enter my life again? After all, they

were very kind souls. They always loved me and did what they thought was best for me (although I might not have agreed at the time).

Perhaps they have always been here, by my side, near me, my protective spirits, but I didn't necessarily recognize them.

Are such thoughts creepy or wonderful?

In daytime, they are wonderful. But at night, they feel creepy.

What's the difference between day and night?

Day often represents the light of knowledge. Its angels sisters are joy and happiness. Night often represents the darkness of ignorance. Its devil brothers are fear, terror, and retreat.

Actually, I have a choice between day and night.

As a monotheist, I could chose unity over dualism. (As a former Marxist, I could even choose synthesis over antithesis.)

Why not work towards, aim for the Great Soothing? The Light vision of Eternity shining in the Ever Present.

Plus, this way Ma and Pa, as protectors and soothing presence, would be with me forever. (Along with my family and friends presently existing in corporeal forms.)

Indeed, with this kind of long-range, eternity-based thinking, I would "have it all!" What could be wrong, scary, frightening, terrorizing, or bad about this? I can't think of a thing.

Could it be that only ignorance is holding me back?

Could be.

Birth of "Rip Through Fun" Concert Attitude.

Post Tenafly Senior "Rip Through Fun" Concert attitude:

Scales fast as hell, arpeggios fast as hell. That's it.

Let all the Alhambras, VL Preludes, Leyendas, Flamencos, Zapateados, Farrucas, Bulerias, Jotas, all blast through. Fuck it and 'em all! Let 'er rip. A new day!

Sunday, June 1, 2008

Giving Shows: Jim Gold Show Project

Last year, my big project was creating 50 Folk Dances. I also I knocked off the classical music trauma. Parenthetically, I finished Zany (Part I). It is symbolic that Zany is home again. His only desire is to play the violin.

Could my next (“only”) desire now be performing?

It feels like giving performances will be my next year’s project. A la Raleigh and Tenafly Senior Center. I had so much fun giving hem! No doubt, I am ready.

Performances are the place to give out my fliers, and promote my books and CDs. But beyond that, they are a joy to do, a joy to give! (Look at what I just said! But I am saying it.)

I am ready.

Next come the where and how questions: Where shall I give them? How shall I pursue them?

My first thought is: Do local shows at Senior Centers. Senior Centers will replace what was, in my former performing career, elementary, junior high, high school, college, and even community concert shows. (Someday Jim Gold Show community concerts, given on the road, might be part of my next direction.)

But for now, starting in the fall, or even next week, my direction is to pursue giving shows in Senior Centers. That’s the “where” part.

Next comes how. The pursuit question. How do I get these shows, these performances?

I can’t even call this quest a pursuit of “work,” since these performing jobs pay so little. Thus, I don’t consider them “work.” Rather, giving them is part of my reward to doing well in the tour business, and for becoming financially stable.

Imagine: giving shows is my reward! Amazing. But the fact I have such thoughts shows the reality to their new existence.

How to get them?

The Video Connection

What a strange thought and feeling: After all that effort, all the work I put into classical guitar and singing, it now feels like it is somehow and suddenly “besides the point.”

I feel like dropping my guitar. I don't need it anymore. No question, I need some kind of break.

What would take its place?

Am I clearing a path for a new focus on video?

A course in film making. DVDs, video, the visual/technical direction.

Monday, June 2, 2008

What a great conversation with Zane last night. That kid is ahead of his time. He is truly not only my grandson, but my grand son.

Zane cured his left knee using only his mind. He cured it by sending mental/spiritual thought-vibrations straight into the meniscus.

Then he said something very wise. “There are no good or bad thoughts. There are only good thoughts and dangerous thoughts. Good thoughts mean better things for you. Dangerous thoughts mean danger, and are dangerous for you. I had been thinking dangerous thoughts for my knee. Thus, for a period of time it hurt even to the point where I needed crutches to walk. Then I thought good thoughts on an extremely intense level, and poured them into my knee. In a couple of days, the pain went away. Now, today, my left knee feels great. It's even stronger than his right!”

Amazing, but true.

How does Zane's thinking process apply to me? Well, let me go over my year. During the entire post-Greek tour period, it felt like my body was falling apart. What were my thoughts during this time? Mostly about pressures of creating 50 Folk Dances. But also, for the first time that I remember, my age scared me. I thought my body parts were acting up, hurting, pained, aching, was partly because I was getting old. Behind

the idea of “getting old” were thoughts of losing power, growing arthritic and crippled, being unable to dance (shows how related these thoughts were to my Raleigh workshop), etc. All negative, “bad” thoughts. Or, in Zane’s terms, dangerous thoughts. Indeed, they were dangerous. They created pain, and put me in a long-term, negative, downward cycle.

Yet today, although I still feel pains, my negative cycle has come to a close. It ended with my Raleigh workshop, then had a postscript ending with my Tenafly Senior Center concert.

Now, I have given up dangerous thoughts, and replaced them with good thoughts, namely, a renewed commitment to self-improvement in miracle schedule activities. Of course, these include running, yoga, calliyoga, and now, even dancing! Plus I’m adding a thorough language study program, a daily hour of the several languages I mumble in. The difference now in this present study is that, deep in my heart, and mental aspects of my soul, I see all languages as related, and, on a universal, cosmic level, the “same.”

On yesterday’s Sunday, I ran an hour and three-quarters, then studied languages all afternoon, and I experienced a thorough and delightful brain cleansing.

So I am on the heaven road. Dangerous thoughts have funneled out of my brain. I have filled the cerebral vacuum with good ones.

Numbers are Good!

Numbers are Excellent Motivators!

After many years of exercise practice and questioning, a decision has finally been made about numbers:

Numbers are good. Why? Numbers are excellent motivators. They drive me on.

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Mental Habits to Work on, Change, Break, and Discard

1. "Get out of the mental habit of regarding your present life as the only one."
2. Get out of the mental habit I can't play Alhambra.
3. Get out of the tendency (based on fear) to see pains in my body parts as physical.

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Channeling from my Teacher

I have my own channeling; it comes from my own Teacher. The wisdom of its results are found in A New Leaf journal writing.

Why not reread and believe it?

Why does this Teacher send me pain signals?

Some questions arise: Do these pains come from Him? Where else would they come from? Am I "blaming" Him, becoming a victim? I don't think so. I know I come in many parts. One of my parts is Him. In that sense, we are One. So, although I may subtly "blame" Him, since He is me, I am still taking responsibility. Thus, by creating the best, least dangerous, and correct(ed) thoughts, I can still cure myself.

Knee, thumb, shoulder, instep, hammer toe discomforts: I still see them as spiritual problems disguised as physical ones.

Perhaps these insights will give me a new confidence and belief in the writings of my journal. Perhaps they will make me realize New Leaf is truly worth editing, for my own rereading and own good. And if rereading its knowledge and wisdom is good for me, it is good for others as well. Thus worth and worthy of publication.

Is all of A New Leaf channeled? Does it all come from a Teacher? Probably.

If yes, this makes me feel very honored, very privileged. That I could be so used by higher forces, by forces for good, by the Teacher. (Could this also be channeling when I lead folk dancing, tours, concert performances, other? What an important and beautiful thought!)

This channeling, “other-directed self-concept,” raises the level of A New Leaf importance. Publishing and spreading it around becomes less of an ego thing and more an important service to others.

It’s not that I have to “try” to channel. It may simply be a new explanation for a natural process that takes place whenever I sit down to write, put on music to folk dance, give a concert, or put myself in leadership mode for a tour, or bar mitzvah or wedding when I gather the folks up to lead them in dance.

It may be something I do “naturally.” But, now I have a new explanation for the process. By seeing it in this higher, elevated, other-and-upper channeling, Teacher directed manner, I am raising myself up.

I am now going to practice on my Rubio guitar. In the channeling debate, and as a channeler, what does right hypotenar “discomfort” signify? What does it mean?

Friday, June 6, 2008

Guitar-Playing Subtleties of Atomic Power

I always love the idea of the drama, glory, apotheosis, and blockbuster lighting strike of making great discoveries. Perhaps I am again in the process of making one.

These are such slight and subtle right hand finger gradations. Now it’s an apoyando/scale focus on the middle finger.

Am I on the cusp of some new dramatic guitar-playing discovery? Am I at a new guitar growth place? Could be.

One never stops growing and changing. There are always subtle increases and changes. There is always progress. It is possible, of course, not to change and grow. Decay is part of the growth process. The old must die and be discarded before the new can be born, rise, and take its place.

Could I have worked with such subtleties in the past? I doubt it. In any case, I am touching them, working with them now.

Will these subtleties eventually create a leap forward in my guitar playing? It’s

like discovering the atom, and working with the power of fission. No one can see the atom. Yet working with its subtleties releases incredible power.

I'm talking about the power of the atom here. Minute, minute changes, subtlest of looks. Can the bending and relaxation of the middle finger's bottom, ultimate joint, make such a difference in the smoothness and speed of apoyando (rest stroke) guitar playing? Could be.

Chinese Medicine

I wonder if Chinese medicine would deal with more subtle explanations of the right hand. Will the road to greater guitar relaxation and better playing lead me to Chinese medicine, and through the study of Chinese medicine, eventually to China?

Is there further to go? Should I erase the subtle distinction between life and death?

It's all One. But the Energy is mottled with many levels.

Saturday, June 7, 2008

A Vehicle for Ideas

Am I really such a garment, a vehicle? Where do my ideas "suddenly" come from? And why do they come? Could they be gifts from "others?"

I like the line, "As a rule, most persons stay near the place where they lived on earth."

Could my parents be closer than I thought? And my relatives and former friends, too? Certainly, I don't truly know "where" my ideas come from. Are these distant, or not-too-distant souls "sending" me ideas? Interesting possibility.

Are my inborn musical and organizational talents (not skills, for these are developed here on Earth) results and possessions transferred from past lives?

When I first met my wife, did the "Wow!" and love at first sight come from former lives? Were we together before? If so, will we be together again in the future?

(All these eternal, life-of-the-spirit thoughts are so optimistic!) True, my wife reminded me and looked, I believe, somewhat like my mother, especially her radiant, dynamic smile and flashing, passionate eyes. True, they may have reminded me of my mother. But did my mother also come from a former life, and did I chose to be born through here because of this?

In other words, are all my persons, my most personal contacts, connected? And this eternally? In a spirit and spiritual way, is there really no, or at least not much difference between life and death? One only changes clothes and countries. And this, temporarily.

Was I a musician, writer, tour organizer, and dancer in a former life? Or former lives? Possibly.

Since no one knows these answers for sure, perhaps I'll simply choose them as right. Thinking and believing them create three wonderful things: They feel so good; they are so optimistic; and they remove all fear of death.

The Truth of Now

Perhaps past itself is a fiction. What I think of as the "past" is not really, and has never been, the past. Rather, the moment I think about this past, it becomes the present. "Past" metamorphoses into the ever-lasting, spiritually infinite Now.

I'm wondering where this year will go. Perhaps it's focus will be on coordinating this life with the after life, bringing them both together as one, and as One.

Like a Dancer!

An interesting thought is taking shape: Use my body as an instrument, a vehicle, for a higher purpose, namely, music and dance (the music of dance, to express music through dance).

Running is, naturally, part of dance. It is a basic step, the running step. But, if I

think of my body as the instrument, even yoga, and calliyoga could and would become part of choreography, part of the dance. True, most of yoga is stationary and held positions. But these could be held a short or shorter time; they could become held or holding dance positions, and while dancing them, dancers would count out the meter in their minds, moving in rhythm, quietly, inwardly, in their heads.

This is actually a move towards unification. Instead of many separate entities, disciplines, and practices, now these all move towards unity, a oneness, towards an All is One.

When I run, think like a dancer, move like a dancer, run like a dancer. When doing yoga, or calliyoga, think like a dancer, do postures like a dancer, see myself as a dancer, with the idea of eventually bringing these positions and postures public.

My energies are flowing and coordinated again, all pouring towards a purpose!

Monday, June 9, 2008

The Truth of Everlasting

Is the will really so powerful? Why do I begin almost each morning, almost every writing sentence, with doubt and a question? Why can't I be certain? Should I be?

Or is it better to be "humble" and forever raise questions? Perhaps.

But nevertheless, what, in life, can I be certain of?

How about the power of will? (Even this "answer" is posed as a question.)

Is will free? If yes, how free? Totally free? Does it, can it, have such power?

The power of will depends on the amount and power of the energy behind it. The energy behind it, depends, to a great extent, on the power of belief. For example, if one has great belief in the power of will, that alone will create great energy, more energy than if thinks that maybe, perhaps, the will has great power.

In any case, what does all this have to do with me?

What about belief in immortality of the soul? How strongly do I believe that? At

all? True, most of my materialistic upbringing and training militates against it. Yet my love of music always and ever points to something higher, my Beethovenian vision, the celestial melt-down theory, proved by my own musical meltdown into heroism, awe, and Magnificence. That is my personal proof of the existence not only of higher forces, but of the Highest Force Itself.

When I experience this melt-down I know, and become part of, the Ultimate Truth. This is the Eternity Existing Self in which, although often forgotten, the immortality of my soul ever resides.

Okay, so that's one Truth, the Truth of Everlasting, forever encased in rhythm, cause and effect, and karma. It is the immortality I can absolutely believe in.

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

There is cause for optimism. Things change, even in the political world. Only it takes place so slowly, sometimes over months and years, that one loses patience, and forgets.

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

Order, Discipline, Practice Routine, Priority Organization.

Why the sudden down this morning? Could it be my video project, and finger printing necessary for my NJ Travel Agent license, have distracted me from my . . . what? Other loves?

A puzzle.

Yet I like the video project. An intellectual challenge. And even the miseries of licensing in NJ and the frustrations of working with state agencies could be looked at as another kind of challenge: The "How the bureaucracies work" challenge.

So what's the problem? None I can think of. So why the sudden wake-up down? I don't know.

This is the time to learn. I have the week, month, even the summer "off." What

else is there to do? Plus I wanted a challenge, something new, a vitalizing fresh brain exercise. Learning video, plus how to navigate regulations and government bureaucracies is a challenge.

So why the down? Maybe I have to integrate my other activities with these new ones. Maybe it's an organizational question. I've been somewhat thrown off base, dislocated, derhythmitized, thrown off the trail, upset by these new challenges.

I also feel a pressure to finish the video project "before my vacation ends," in other words, by the end of the week or month, or even the summer.

Aha, that's it! I put this kind of "finishing pressure" on myself. I've got to learn it and "get it over with" so I can get back to. . . what? Miracles schedule aspects? Perhaps and yes.

Video belongs to the study aspect of the miracle schedule. I will and want to study forever. Plus the study aspect has been missing from my miracle schedule form for months. With video (and government bureaucracy) I've added a new study link. This is good.

Maybe the sudden morning down comes from confusion, how and where to fit these new studies into my miracle schedule day, and thus, into my life. Aha, confusion. Confusion creates disorganization, lack of strong focus, purposelessness. This state of mind brings me down, depresses me.

Thus return to order, discipline, practice routine, and priority organization. It's what I need to chase away downs, lift depression, and put me on track again.

Thursday, June 12, 2008

My Personality

Freedom Through Money is an Illusion

About Freedom: I may get money, but I can't escape my hard working, perfectionist, disciplined, organizationally oriented, and compulsive personality. Thus tensions and pressures will always be upon me. If they don't exist, I'll create, invent, or

look for them. Evidently, for strange and unknown reasons, my personality wants and “needs” them.

My personality “needs” its own slavery of goals, perfections, tensions, and pressures. No amount of money will change that.

Thus, earning as much money as I can and want, or receiving it in any other form, will never set me free. My personality will always create (and desire) tensions and pressures. They will have little to nothing to do with the amount of money I make.

For me, so-called freedom through money is an illusion.

Thus will body aches, back aches, other aches go on forever. Expect them. One tension will unknot, one problem will get solved, and then I will create another to rise in its place. That’s my personality, the one I was born with. No escape.

So expect it, deal with it, and learn to love it!

Broken illusion: A long time (certainly starting with marriage, maybe even a life time) illusion broken!

I’m not against making money. But making it, especially after the basic finances have been met, is not going to make that much difference. And, as for my personality, it will make no difference.

This should certainly slow down, even stop, my chicken-with-its-head-cut-off, frantic quest, ever haunting obsession with and for money. (Of course, part of this insecurity can be explained by my entrepreneurial/artistic, no-steady-job existence. Nevertheless. . .)

Power of Love

Last year I asked the question: What will motivate me if fear of financial instability and insecurity is removed? This also explained my fear of success, and downs after success.

It’s been a long time figuring this out. Slowly these illuminating changes have

taken place within me. Finally, I recognize, see, and embrace the motivational power of love.

I first experienced Love and its power in and through music. I loved music! As a teenager, I discovered this power when I played the violin: The transforming, magnificent, meltdown feeling of awesome Love. It has never left me. Truly, it is the secret of my smile, confidence, and inner toughness. It explains my "I'll never give up" feeling. Deep down, I know I've got the goods, the best thing imaginable: Love! Just because things in the outer world may be going miserably, why would it or should I give up my inner treasure? My amazing answer always rose within my being: A resounding "No!" Never, never shall I give up this inner treasure. I also know giving it up would mean death. I would be committing psychic and spiritual suicide.

Emotions and Exercises

Time to release lust and anger. They're in my right, punching, fighting mad side. (Note: it's right thumb, right hammer toe, right shoulder, right sciatica-type leg pain. My right side is killing me.)

Kill them back! Fight and smash the fuckers! Lust contains a mix of anger, anger a mix of lust. Mix the explosive energy brew. Smash the fuckers! Fight for my Love!

Saturday, June 14, 2008

Adding People and Business to my Miracle Schedule

It's a clean-up, mop-up, reorganizational time weekend. How is this expressed? By cleaning up, reorganizing my den, the dining room, and the basement.

Dining room and basement reorganization will make Bernice happy. But the whole reorganizational thing will make me even happier. Why? It's all subtle preparation for new life ahead.

What does the new life contain?

For one, it will be motivated by Love. Behind and in front of this gigantic new

motivational energy concept will be “former” miracle schedule activities. Added to them will be a new world of video learning and skills. (Belonging to the study branch of miracle schedule.)

Why do I use quotes in “former?” Because I’ll be returning to miracle schedule with a new motivational understanding and source. This new source, namely, Love, will allow me to include, not only people, but business as well!

Aches, Excitement, and Love

Speaking of the connection between Love, motivation, business, people, and my miracle schedule, I just opened my email and found great tour-related letters from Lee, Cheryl, and Cally. Exciting, indeed.

Often pain comes from holding back excitement.

Make the connection between aches, excitement, and Love. When I do, aches will fall away. Then energy enzymes of fresh-flowing pleasure will wend and wind their way through my body.

In fact, right after I wrote this thought a warm current of energy flowed through my body.

Monday, June 16, 2008

My mind grabs, grips, and jumps. Often, I can hardly hold on to it. And I love/hate the relationship.

Maybe (that may explain why) I’m afraid to study East Asia. It’s so big, so massive, it may, nay will, overwhelm me. Maybe I’m wise to fear it.

What’s with the “maybe?” Why do I begin so many sentences and ideas with doubt?

From Sciatica to Sigh Attica

The “sudden” explosion of so-called “sciatica” pain in my right leg, started while practicing my Romanian Sirba de la Vadoul Loui Isak dance choreography.

But it really began after my May folk dance teaching weekend date in Raleigh, NC. At that time, the day before I was about to fly down there, my back went into an incredible spasm. I could hardly walk. I even thought of changing my flight to the following day, thus postponing my departure and the date itself! (It would have been a total give-in to psychosomatic pain. Luckily, I ended up not doing it.)

My Folk Dance teaching and concert in Raleigh were a smash hit. Great crowd, great teaching, great guitar playing, singing, humor, and more. I handled it, pulled it all off in spite of my back. Grand success.

But after I returned home, a slight back pain, a “sciatica” continued subtly, quietly, popping up periodically for over a month. Yesterday afternoon, for some reason, it exploded or blossomed into full bloom.

Last night, after our Thai meal, when I stood up to leave, the “sciatica” pain was suddenly so intense it almost crippled me. I could hardly walk. It scared the shit out of me. “I’m almost totally crippled,” I said to myself. “How will I ever dance with this?”

I dragged myself to our car, went home, hobbled up the stairs, took some suggested ibuprofen, put ice on it, then heat, anything that might work. What was happening to me? Why now? I’d been fine this morning. This afternoon, after I danced, my right leg had hurt slightly. Nothing serious. Why later did it all suddenly fall apart? Why was I now almost crippled?

About 10:00 p.m., I picked up Sarno’s Healing Back Pain and read a letter from one of his patients. Basically, the writer said, after months of doctors visits, pills, bed rest, and more, all with no results, he read Sarno’s book and now understood – and agreed! – that his pain had psychosomatic origins. Then his attitude changed. Now he realized he would do no physical damage to his muscles by using them. He tried moving, walking, running, and exercising again. At the same time, he tried paying no attention to the pain. It got no worse. And, in fact, as he worked with these

psychosomatic medicine ideas, slowly, it began to get better!

I recognized myself in his letter. I followed his “advice” and did the same. Almost suddenly, as I thought differently about my leg, took a leap of understanding, my “sciatica” pain almost suddenly disappeared! In fact, by changing my thought processes, I turned my sciatica in a “sigh attica.” I transformed the pain into a mere “sigh,” then put the sigh far away, out of sight, in the attic.

Folk Dance Psychosomatics

So many of these pains in my legs began after the 2007 Greek tour when I “decided” to become a folk dance teacher. That meant I would take my teaching “seriously.” That, in turn, followed my conversation with Bob, when I decided to accept doing the Folk Dance teaching Weekend in Raleigh, and with that, I decided to write up all my dances and choreographies. This started a year’s project which resulted in my 50 Folk Dances book and its accompanying 3 CDs. A major project.

But the main thing here is, I decided to take my folk dance teaching “seriously” (In the past, it could never be “serious,” since I had to make a living, and there was no money in it. Even the top teachers are paid a ridiculously, truly disgustingly small amount. How could I even think of taking such a “profession” seriously? And this, especially after my career giving my “World of Guitar” concerts in schools, colleges, and for community concerts. Here was a true career, which paid good money! Folk dancing, on the other hand, was so unprofessional, so amateurish, how could I even think it as a career? Impossible.

However, I love folk dancing and the entrepreneurial life. I love, and am so proud of the fact I can make a living following my loves and passions, making money as what I call an artist-entrepreneur.

In any case, after Greece and my talk with Bob, I decided I had enough money to treat myself. What would I treat myself to? A folk dance teaching career! I could now “afford” to work for less, to do folk dance workshops, along with local concerts (also

paying little). So I undertook the Raleigh Workshop commitment. It became my impetus, my rational, my reason to prepare my 50 Folk Dances books with its three CDs.

Thus did I, in my mind, become a “professional” folk dance teacher. And—talk about psychosomatic! From that day on, “new” pains in my legs began.

And this because the question arose, can I really be such a folk dance teacher? Can I hold up physically? Thus, psychic questions were transferred to my body. Knees suddenly hurt, squats became a problem. (Only a week before, knees did not hurt, and squats were easy.) Also, brand “new” pains suddenly appeared in my quadriceps! Suddenly, my legs were a problem, where only a week before, everything had been all right. Why such a sudden transformation? Definitely, it had something to do with “becoming” or accepting the fact I was now a folk dance teacher.

I wonder if some of these new pains were really due to anger in disguise. I was “giving in,” accepting the folk dance field premise of low teacher pay, low workshop pay, low pay in general for all folk dance teaching jobs.

In the past, I had sworn never to give in to this, never to accept it, always to fight it. The low pay (and thus low status of folk dance teachers, and thus, folk dancing, in general) always enraged me. How could the folk dance world and its components, the folk dancers, all be so cheap? Truly disgusting! And now I was giving in, accepting it, becoming part of the low pay system. And I was putting in so much time, energy, love, and thought into creating my book and CDs, and all for the “honor” of receiving low pay for the job!

Truth is, one registrant for a folk dance tour pays more money than the entire Raleigh weekend. How disgusting is that! And I spent months of work so that I could become part of this low paying field, so that I could “belong” to the constellation of low paid folk dance “names,” the low paid stars of the folk dance world.

Am I going into this low paid field for ego gratification? Partly. But it is also to satisfy my love. I love folk dancing, I love the music, I love to choreograph. Maybe in

order for love to flower, to feed love, one must sometimes accept low pay. There are, indeed, other rewards.

Maybe I am simply at the place in life where I am ready to treat myself to these rewards. And part of accepting this treat, is accepting the fact that pay, although important, is nevertheless, in the case of love, secondary.

Love brings its own rewards. Its own kind of currency.

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

Lifting the Black Veil of Sigh-Attica

My sigh-attica returned again late yesterday afternoon, and especially during and after we went to eat and shop at Cosco. (Yet I was absolutely fine during the day.) Something is going on here.

Why did my sigh-attica start as soon as I finished (stage one) my video project? And of course, it "finished" after my Raleigh workshop. Yet subtle minor pain still lingered in my right leg for a month and more after the workshop, and this pain finally exploded into major stuff two days ago (Sunday).

Sunday night and Monday I handled it Sarnoian style. Fine and amazing, no problem, gone! But then it returned. And again, for "no reason." Why?

I reread the letter to Sarno which had so helped me yesterday. I read the words "emotionally stressful event." I thought, "Aha, the post-2007 Greek Tour year was much more stressful than I thought. The year's ending came in two parts: First, post-Raleigh workshop, second, learning and conquering the basics post vide camera and editing basics. This finished or happened on Sunday. Then, strangely, that's when all my sigh-attica problems began. Or maybe, not so strangely.

Now all the year's pressure was suddenly off. The stressful year was over, it ended. Then suddenly, crash! Maybe I was now ready to face, look at, analyze, understand, and even eventually accept all the shit that happened to me. Truly, deep parts of the year were great traumas which, since I had to do and live in them, I denied.

Now it was over. I no longer had to deny them. Well, instead, my mind created a sigh-attica so I still wouldn't have to look at them

Well, that's over. I'm sick of my wall of denial, my black veil of sigh-attica. I'm ready to look.

What was the problem with the year? Was I subtly "pushed" into doing something I didn't really want to do? Like "becoming" a folk dance teacher (a la Lee), like going public as a choreographer? Do I, did I, really want my main self and public definition to be a folk dance teacher, and a choreographer? The main purpose of the year began when Maica, Maica was danced by the group in Delphi and I did not get credit for choreographing it. In fact, many of the people on my tour, since they were new and from other parts of the USA, didn't even know I taught folk dancing! I wanted recognition and credit for my dances. I also realized I would never truly get it unless I promoted myself and my dances. The only way to do that was to become a "professional folk dance teacher." And that meant touring the country doing workshops, classes, and personal appearances, a la Lee.

Yet, in the past, I had always refused to do this. In fact, I partially disdained it. Why? Basically, the pay to all folk dance teachers, even the top ones, was always so ridiculously low. I felt, and still feel, it is denigrating to work for so little.

Yet now, this year, because of my ego, and desire for recognition, I gave up these "principles" and did it. Of course, many good things came out of it. Nevertheless, I do have a mysteriously induced sigh-attica. Did this quasi-vomititious act create part of it? Was it one of my 2007-08 traumas?

How about my mental competition with Lee? Of course, I see the positive benefits of such a competition: Look what I created! Nevertheless, did it bring back hidden sisterly competitions and ego-denying childhood communist principles? Did these help feed my vomititious feelings about competition in general?

And do I also secretly resent giving up folk dancing as my "hobby," as a secret, low-paying love which I mostly do for fun? Coming out of the folk dance closet means

I now become a folk dance figure and must not only live up to expectations, but constantly sell myself whenever I appear in public at folk dance events. Do I really want that? Is it worth it? Well, of course appearing to sell my tours is financially worth it. But merely to appear as a “folk dance teacher” or even as a “folk dance choreographer?” Is that worth it? A good part of me doubts it.

In my core, I have always seen myself as a musician who writes. If anything, I would like to be known as a writer. And peripherally perhaps, as a guitarist. But folk dancer? It is so unprofessional, so low paying and even amateurish. Folk dancing has always been a fun-and-joy “easy sideline.” Maybe I want to keep it that way.

Also the fact that (unlike classical guitar) I don’t take folk dancing so “seriously” means that I can relax with it and have fun. (This is also partially true of writing.)

Do I want to kill the golden goose by making it a realm of competition?

Probably not. (But somehow this year I “couldn’t help it”)

Is this another reason for my sigh-attica? After all, one of its main fears is that I will not be able to dance. In fact, remember how my quadriceps started to hurt during the year? Another first. The pressure was now upon me to not only write down, publish, and present my choreographies, but I would also have to travel around the county teaching them, A “new profession.” My new fear was that somehow I would not have the strength to dance. More proof of killing the golden goose. By becoming such a “professional” I was taking the fun and joy out of (my) folk dancing itself.

Didn’t I secretly resent my slide into “professionalism?” Well, not so secret. But I did it anyway. A year of conflict where I constantly rubbed my positive and negative forces against myself.

Do I want to go back to the freedom and abandon of obscurity? Do I want to remain unknown and free?

The freedom to create with total abandon. No restrictions. Yes, I love it! But could I, will I, give up recognition, ego, fame, immortality, love from others, and untold mysterious other goodies in order to achieve it? And would this state of obscurity itself

be an important, personal (even ultimate) achievement? Good questions, indeed.

Does it take more courage, and is it ultimately better for personal happiness, to give up desire for these achievements of ego?

Perhaps one of my goals for the next year is to somehow return to freedom. I've "done" the folk dance ego thing. Indeed, it has brought me recognition, and through the recognition, some happiness highs. And its restrictions have caused me to create books and CDs and even skills I would not have created without its pressures.

But is it a route and direction I want to continue on? I am not bored with it, nor have I achieved a "been there, done that" state. Yet I am, nevertheless, ready and desirous of moving on. To what? Return to freedom?

Or do I simply have a beautiful conflict which will remain unresolved in my sigh attica? This feels about right.

Sigh attica may also be one of the burdens for following my own path and doing what I love.

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Battle of the Right Leg

Yes, I'm also furious! Furious that I'm hurting. Fuck, fuck, fuck! What the fuck is the matter? Mad as hell. Mad at my pain. It was all going so well for two days. Then suddenly, poof! Over, gone, back down, right leg down, ruined dancing, ruined walking, even ruined standing! Ruined, ruined, ruined! What the fuck is going on?

To my knowledge or remembrance, I have never had a pain as bad as before last night's folk dance. (Yet I got through the night pretty good.) And now, this morning, I'm back to scared. Is this lower back pain, and sciatica down the leg, and pain walking, dancing, standing, really something serious? Will it last for days, weeks, months? Am I now long-time incapacitated? Are my dance classes on the verge of being over? Is all my potential fun down the drain? A gloomy, miserable, pessimistic, enraging,

maddening picture blazing with fury!

Yes, fury and rage! What the fuck am I really mad at? Oh sure, the pain is driving me nuts and scaring me a bit. But is there, was there, something deeper? Something deeper that started the whole thing?

Or is it a cumulation, a chickens coming home to roost rage? Now that the war is over, I can deal with and face all the shooting, danger, hardship, and terrors of the battlefield. The folk dance battlefield, the war for ego recognition, audience appreciation, self-appreciation, and my insatiable desire for self-worship, worship by others, and love.

Why do I need all this stuff? I don't know. But I need it, nevertheless. Why even bother questioning it? Am I angry at myself for needing it? Yes. It forces me through hoops I hate jumping through. On the other hand, it forces me through hoops I love jumping through. More conflict.

Maybe I have to make "peace" with conflict. But how can one make peace with war? The battle within, the war without. Endless fighting. It starts in the morning and only ends at night when I am too exhausted to fight anymore. Then I go to sleep and, next day, begin the cycle all over again.

Well, I like to fight. Nothing wrong with that.

What battle am I fighting in my lower back and right leg?

I know I need a specific rage target. My pain started when I was choreographing Sirba de la Vadoul Loui Isak, It was a nothing, easy step moving to the right! So it has something to do with folk dancing.

(Could I have been right yesterday about the pressures of becoming a "professional folk dance teacher." Do I really want such a thing? Or would I rather remain a professional guitarist who, "on the side" teaches folk dancing? I could also remain a professional tour leader. Again, at least that pays money and can thus be considered a profession.

Perhaps folk dancing is and always has been my personal public play pen.

Maybe that is God's message to me, and also why it never pays money. Money is not its point. Playpen, public fun, playing with others is its point. That is my lesson.

Maybe my rage is due to feeling forced to make it my profession, to thus, take much to most of the fun away, and think of it in terms of ego and money. This I did as a guitar performer (at least it paid good money) and still do as a tour leader (it too pays good money.) In these fields, formerly guitar concerts, presently organizing and leading tours, at least all the headaches I have are worth it: They lead to making a living, to earning money. I am paid for my headaches. But if I accepted the challenge of becoming a "professional folk dancer," I would not be paid enough for my headaches. And, in the profession creating process, much of the fun might be drained out as well.

Must I face the fact that, after all this work, creating and writing down my 50 Folk Dances, creating the 3 CDs, all culminating in the Raleigh workshop, after all this work, I finally decide I do not want to become a professional folk dance teacher. That means I traveled for months on the mental wrong track, wasting my time in a wrong direction mental effort, creating a "waste of time" book and CDs. (Well, it wasn't a waste of time if I learned something about myself, learned that folk dancing is, was, and always will be not for money-making and profession, but for fun. Yes, I may and will make a pittance of money in it, but that is and always will be secondary, besides the point.

Yes, I spent part of my mental folk dance year killing the golden goose. I now must face and realize that. The golden goose's fiery meltdown is found in the fiery rage burning in my lower back and right leg. And perhaps the pain in my right leg is subtly pointing me in a healthy, better, and right direction. Keep the freedom, abandon, and joy of dancing; keep the joy of creating my own spontaneous choreographies from the great folk music I hear.

I think I'm onto something here. Now let's see what happens when I get up.

Deep in my heart, I know I'm right. But doubt and self-doubt are, once again, created by my mind as a distraction. They come along to cloud the issue, and keep me

from jumping the gun. (Notice their wet blanket effect.)

From past experience, I know that reflection and think-time will chase these clouds away. Then I'll stand in the open, cloudless field, and as the blue sky and sun above canopy my being, I'll strongly and proudly proclaim a "Yes!"

Folk dancing is God's gift to me for adult running wild on the lawn. He is telling me not to limit it by becoming a "professional folk dance teacher." His message is delivery through the harsh pain in my back and right leg.

But the place of folk dancing in my life has always been cloudy. Filled with much anger, too. Since I wanted to make a living at it, I resented the low-to-know amateur nature of the field. Yet, it has been a pathway to higher learning, to exploration of history and languages, to my development of leadership and organizational skills both for Weekends, Tours, and the travel business. I have much to thank folk dancing for. Only making money is not one of them. So be it. So it is. Thus folk dancing remains my public playpen, a place where I can freely learn, grow, and experiment with new forms, be they organization of weekends and tours, leadership skills, languages, inventing spontaneous choreographies, or more.

I am, in a sense, rediscovering, redefining, and re-inventing folk dancing for myself. This is good.

Thank you bad back and right leg.

When the problem is solved, the disease will dissolve, disappear, and go away.

I must be on the right track here. My first steps across the living room were pain free!

I wrote the last two sentence above for my readers, not for me. When I got up again to walk across the living room, the old pains returned. I played to the audience, not to my inner freedom. Result: I took aa step backward and I got whacked in the leg. Another example of mind, in its ancient and protective form, stepping in to distract me from my inner truth of freedom.

Before I wrote the last two sentences, I was right on target. Pain disappeared. But I got distracted again. The pain reappeared.

I'm still on the right track. I just took a step backwards.

Pushing my Ego Limits my Freedom

Do you realize that pushing my ego limits my freedom!

This means that: When I strive for recognition by others, for kudos from peers, etc., I am suppressing, even squashing spontaneity, weighing down and imprisoning soaring spirit in a cell of "Will they like me?"

Buffeted by Folk Dance Winds

I must admit, its been a terrible post-Greece semi-year. I have been pushed off the path, quite lost, buffeted by folk dance winds for months. I knew it was a difficult period, but I didn't quite know why. I got distracted from my artistic, freedom, and folk dance center. No wonder I'm mad. No wonder I hurt my back before the Raleigh Weekend, and now.

Friday, June 20, 2008

Sciatica as a New Disguise

Strange how all the other pains have left my body: my left knee is fine. I've forgotten about my right hammer toe, and my left shoulder, which pained me for so many months, is now forgotten, too. Same with my right thumb: forgotten.

So, most of my old pains have either disappeared or been forgotten (for all intents and purposes, disappeared and forgotten are the same thing.)

However, since last Sunday my right sciatica, down my back buttock and right leg, is killing me! This pain sometimes mysteriously disappears for awhile, then returns with a vengeance. But the strange thing is, notice this, all my other pains have "suddenly" gone away. Only the grand sciatica remains, and this with a vengeance.

Could the sciatica be replacing the other pains? Is it a displacement, a new distraction created by my mind, invented to “fit” the new mode, this post-Raleigh folk dance mindset, this vaguely “peaceful” mental state in which I am now living? Notice also the sciatica came when the “distraction” of the first stage of my video camera and video computer download learning ended. I was then “free” to feel the sudden downward pull of the wind blowing me, once again, into the terrifying abyss of nothingness. Rather than face my fall into that state, I “grew” the “distraction” of a painful sciatica instead.

Truth is that, aside from the sciatica, I have no pain anywhere in my body. And a day or two before the sciatica came, I did two great yoga sessions. These brought me back to the wonderful yoga sessions I used to have (but hadn’t had for months) when I would totally luxuriate in the physical wonder of my body. Beautiful and wonderful were these states. Feeling them is why I loved doing yoga. But I hadn’t done a good session since the 2007 Greek tour, namely, hadn’t done one for months. Now I was suddenly returned to those glory days. Then, bang! The sciatica suddenly, and for no apparent “reason” hit.

Is my sciatica, a depression in disguise? Or is it a resistance to the wonder, glory, and excitement of great feelings in my body? This kind of mento-physical back-and-forth contradiction is typical of my personality. Am I merely “doing it again,” but this time, disguising my flight in a new, fresh, dynamic, painful sciatic form? Could be.

On Pain

I wonder if part of me want pains, likes, needs, and is attracted to pain. It certainly gets my attention and wakes me up! Thus, I attract and create my own pain. Although miserable, annoying, and sometimes screamingly hurtful, pain is, after all, a kind of stimulus.

In this way, I would welcome it more as a friend, a stimulant and teacher, but one who visits me in enemy form.

This seems like a helpful, excellent, brilliant insight.

Since pain so immediately gets my attention, its prime teaching is the importance of focus. Notice how, when I totally focus, the pain slowly dissolves and disappears!

This happens even if I focus on the pain itself. Breath into it, and focus.

That's why focus on dance and my dance class on Tuesday night, or even an afternoon walk, chased sciatica away.

Sunday, June 22, 2008

Doubt versus Knowledge

I "know" my mind creates the now sciatic pain as a distraction. But perhaps a bigger present mountain to climb is doubt. My mind is also creating doubt, really a form of disbelief, as another distraction.

Why do I doubt, when I know? Notice, for example, when I am teaching folk dancing, and there is no doubt, no thought of my sciatic pains, only total focus on the dance and group I am teaching, there is no pain! If that can happen, total focus creates no divisions of doubt, and no doubt brings a state of no pain, this proves that doubt rises as a form of psychosomatic distraction.

The true believer feels no pain; the true knowledger feels no pain. Especially (and only) when he is in his true believer/true knowledge state.

In this sciatica case, doubt is my psyche's form of denial. What am I denying? "Raleigh folk dance rage." (It used to rise as "folk dance ankle.") A kind of a post-traumatic shock.

(Is this the root of post-traumatic shock?)

Of course, there was the actual back-breaking, pre-leaving, lower-back paralysis that almost caused me to postpone my plane flight. Then, after the workshop (which went great), it "lingered" in sciatic lingering form in my lower back and leg immediately after the workshop, continuing for about a month, until full blossoming.)

Does doubt hide rage? Not always, but in this case. . . . Good question.

“The psyche creates doubt, the better to keep the syndrome going.” (The better to deny and hide the post-traumatic “Raleigh folk dance rage.”)

Right shoulder pain could have, might have (doubt forms), actually did start (knowledge form) to replace, or “compete” with my sciatica.

After all, it began Tuesday night (again for no apparent reason. . . . In trying to figure out why, I later blamed Ciuleadra and the shoulder hold we used. But here again, I’m looking for physical rather than psychic explanation.)

Return to my Essence

Since 2007 pot-Greece, I have been pushed around, blown about, battered by contrary winds.

Tourism, Raleigh audience, wifely finance. I have become so focused on service to others, I’ve neglected, even forgotten what I most deeply need and want. Deep in my heart and soul, what do I want? What is my essence? I have lost sight of it.

In the confusion of movements, I’ve forgotten my center. Indeed, this is an even deeper cause of my sciatica.

Who am I? Zany playing violin on top of Mt. Ararat is a good place to start looking. I know rediscovery, recovery, and return to my essence will chase away sciatica, right shoulder pain, and all other woes and tribulations.

Since my teenage violin-playing days, I have known that music is my essence.

Since this is so, my grand and quasi-total focus on tourism, Raleigh preparation, and more have side-tracked me, thrown me off, and directed me into a Tour of Sciatica Land.

I need to play violin, guitar, and even gaida.

Yes, music is my essence. Its finer, metaphysical vibrations of inspiration have always cured me.

Folk dancing with its athleticism is its reflection.

The Wisdom and Strength to Step into Freedom

I also am realizing that these long held desires for fame, glory, immortality, and recognition may not be good for me. They push me in the wrong direction, make me do things that, deep in my heart, I may not want to do. Thus they create extensive, unwanted, and even “useless” pressures, which in turn are reflected and in turn, cause and create pain and hardship in my body.

I’ve had these desires all my life, or at least since I went to college (or was a teenager?). Is this one of the advantages of ages? At seventy-one, am I now wise and strong enough to relinquish, to give up these ego-building, ego-needed habits? Having “been there and done that,” am I now strong enough to live without, or with minimal recognition?

Do I have the wisdom and strength to step into freedom?

My present sciatica pain reflects the conflict in these questions.

When the problem is solved (when this question is resolved), the pain goes away.

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

The Wrong Doctor May Make Things Worse!

Going to the doctor may not make things better. It may not even be neutral, with so-called ideas like “It can’t hurt, or “Give it a try,” or “It’s good to collect other ideas on the subject, etc.”

Actually, for me, with my kind of brain and Sarnoian-sciatica and even right shoulder pain, going to the wrong doctor may make things worse! Why? Because they plant the wrong suggestions in my brain.

Witness my visit to Dr. Stone. What did she say about sciatica? A. Rest helps; B. It can get worse; C. I’m not an expert on sciatica but it has several possible causes: A bulging disc, an injured piriformis muscle, arthritis, or several others. (In other words, the standard medical doctor’s hymn that every physical pain must have a physical origin.)

Well, deep in my heart, I don't believe any of this. Thus myu resistance to visiting Dr. Liss and getting his miserable analysis followed by physical therapy.

What is the best physical therapy I can get? It's hearing that it's okay to exercise, that I won't hurt myself, that I will actually, with the help of exercise and proper diagnosis, make my condition better! It just make take awhile to figure it out.

This is the diagnosis and analysis of my "hero doctors" like Dr. Garcia (long ago for my knee), Dr. Levy (for my "collapsed fifth cervical vertebrae"), and Dr. Sarno for the herculean explanations in his books. They are the ones I believe, the ones I follow. Each time I have done so, it has worked! And very quickly, too. My so-called diseases, pains, wrenching hurts, mysterious injuries, with only a few right words from these doctors, have disappeared almost immediately! Psychosomatic aches, from disabling sciatica to wrenching shoulder pains have quickly vanished down the drain.

That's why doctors, in their ignorance and with their wrong diagnoses, can and often do make things worse. It's better to go to no doctor at all than to the wrong one. Doctors steeped in medical school, materialistic doctrine, ignorant of psychosomatic medicine, believing most pains to be physical or structural in origin. Better to even be your own consultant. Better to look deep within and believe what you find, than to stand in the presence of, consult with and listen to mis-diagnosis, predictions of gloom, dire warnings of possible future catastrophe, your condition getting worse, your aches and pains possibly taking months, even years to heal, or may never! Doomed to a lifetime of non-healing. Avoid these like the plague, else they will visit their pessimistic and materialistic interpretations, their misguided mental plagues upon you. Better even to keep your own counsel. In the process, you may learn something big!

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Descent into Hell

As I sat in the JCC hallway playing a beautiful "Lagrima," "Adelita," "Venezuelan Waltz," and "Capricho Arabe," my back slowly started to tighten. By the

time I finished playing, wacko. Stiff back rising. Pre-folk dance teaching anxiety came, too. Unprepared for the assault, sciatica crept back. Soon its fanged serpent head rose in full force. Shocked, confused, slightly worried, my mind was not fully focused on the dance. (I absolutely hate teaching that way!) By class end, I felt beaten and destroyed.

That's where I am this morning. What happened? I just fell apart. The only awe I now feel is at the speed of my descent. Yesterday up, by evening down. A slow, torturous, horrible descent into hell.

Whipsawed for a day. Hit by the Great Both. I stand in awe of dichotomy.

Notice above in parentheses, I said, "I hate teaching that way!" And I do. It is a pollution of the beautiful art of dance. I'm not giving it my full focus, my best. Whenever that happens, I end up angry and miserable.

Perhaps I am angry at myself for running the class so poorly, doing such a shitty job. Of course, most of the class probably didn't notice it. I'm such a professional that I can hide my pains, and do a good, even excellent job, in spite of how I feel. But, although others may not know, I do! And I hate myself for my lack of focus, for giving in, destroying my art, not doing my absolute best, not giving it my all.

Perhaps I am totally pissed at myself for last night's poor performance. That's why I ended up discouraged, down, and beaten. I've had lots of nights when my body hurt, and I ended the evening with physical pains. But, although annoying, they usually don't affect my spirit, which usually soars after a folk dance class.

Last night was different. Why? I "gave in" to my supposed and so-called "injury." I "believed it" and let it take over my mind. In doing so, I destroyed my love, my passion, my folk dance class. Sad? Down? Hell no. I'm mad! Fuck me! You did a miserable job last night, Jim Gold. And you deserve all the pain you can get. There are certain things not worth giving into, certain things that are death to destroy. And truly, destroying them will kill you. (Notice how I started this piece with the words "I am dying. . .")

The art commandment is: Thou shalt focus!

The elevating power of art has always cured me. It has always been my salvation. Last night, by not kneeling before its dictates, not following its commands, I subtly opted for self-destruction. Sure enough, it killed me.

Notice I also said I want to listen to somebody. My puny words and answers are not enough. I want to bow down to a great force, to hear and participate in the wisdom of a great mind.

Maybe the person I want to listen to is Art. Art has the innate wisdom, the good sounds, the healing vibrations. Yes, he may be a hard and relentless taskmaster with his uncompromising insistence of total focus. But I know total focus, especially on Art's good vibrations, straightens out my brain, heals me, unites the schizoid splits, seals the bloody wounds of confusion, make me feel good, nay wonderful.

Certainly, Art is the master I want listen to and follow. Even though it may hurt my back, I don't mind bowing down to him, either. . . . So start listening today.

Taking Folk Dance Seriously

I rarely recognize the seriousness of folk dance teaching and the leading of my folk dance class.

(Folk) Dance class is a form of worship.

The folk dance imperative is: I say my prayers before each class.

It is right and truthful. I should tremble in awe before each folk dance class I lead and teach. I should tremble in awe before each performance. And this whether it be playing the guitar or running a tour. It is an honor and privilege. I am about to enter the Sanctuary of Vibrations, the place of Awe and Wonder. I am about to stand on Holy Ground.

Moses trembled when he stood on Holy Ground. And he didn't even teach folk dancing! Why shouldn't I?

The Case for Delayed Cure

Although the pain is just about unbearable, and a part of me wants to be cured right away, immediately, right now, another part of me may secretly think Perhaps it's not such a good idea. Maybe I shouldn't be cured. . . at least not yet. Maybe a part of me does not want to be cured. . . at least, not yet. It may sense there is still a lot of wealth, a lot of rich wisdom left in my pain. This deep, wise part of me may want to sustain the pain, keep it for awhile. It does not want to be cured. . . at least, not yet. Not until I get to full message, the full teaching.

Brilliant!

Obstacles as Gifts in Disguise

What of the people who tell you you're a shit, you have no talent, no future, give up? Is this their opinion, or is it the "truth."

Truth is, only you can know. Look deep inside your body and mind. How important is this to you? Do you truly want it? Do you have any talent or gift for it? Certainly, your love for it is a gift. But is it enough? All these are questions only you can answer. No matter how certain they are, appear to be, or answer, truth is, no one else knows!

These obstacles, rock in the road, negative and discouraging people, etc. are put there to test your determination, love, and grit. They forces you to ask yourself the big questions: How important is this to you? How much do you truly you want this? And only you can say.

Friday, June 27, 2008

The Alhambra Syndrome: Success as Failure, Failure as Success

Guitar: Here's a new one, or maybe not so new. I definitely do not want to be able to play "Alhambra" (and all the other arpeggio pieces) because if I do, what will I have left to practice? Success with the "Alhambra," and other arpeggio pieces, will leave a gigantic hole, a cosmic emptiness, in my being. A grand "Now what?" I have

no answer to such success.

Therefore, I have a secret vested interest in keeping myself down, keeping myself low, preventing myself from playing the “Alhambra” and all the pieces it stands for.

Success here will lead to cosmic emptiness. Therefore, I fail on, and forever. I (secretly) want it that way.

Fascinating, indeed. What a psychology. Failure leads to fulness, purpose, and direction. I have a constant goal: To play the Alhambra well. But I never (want to) reach it. Success here will truly bring down the house. . . on my head!

“Cool Under Success”

I may often be cool under pressure, but could I, can I be “cool under success?”

I wonder if this kind of thinking also leaks into my thoughts about the publication and distribution of New Leaf volumes.

The Success Wolf

No question that success is a great trauma to me. It brings such a sense of emptiness, a totally lonesome and down cosmic void, a desolation, depression, a What’s there to live? What’s left to live for? feeling.

No wonder I develop pains of avoidance to replace it.

I’ve been wrestling with pains of financial success for over a year. I still have not found my answer. It’s the “Nothing fails like success” syndrome. I hate to live in such a void, but I do.

As for guitar success, I haven’t even begun or dared to look at it. It may be even feel emptier than financial success.

No wonder I have resisted success all my life. But I’ve always aimed for it. Aims are purposes and goals in disguise, or even in full view. Thus are they full of meaning. And I love and thrive on meaning, purpose, and direction!

And yet, I cannot but avoid success. This wolf is at my doorstep. Even all my aches and pains cannot force it to leave. It keeps staring at me, growling at me, tense and ready to spring at my throat! The success wolf ready to strangle and devour my purpose.

I wonder what my right shoulder pain and sciatica have to do with the success wolf. After all, the Raleigh weekend of folk dance teaching with its concert was a great success. Beyond my miserable back, so much fun it was! Creating and publishing my 50 Folk Dances book, along with its 3 CDs was also a grand success. So too was my Tenafly Senior Center concert two weeks later. Parenthetically, even my tours are a great success.

Could avoidance of the wolf have created sciatica? And, just in case sciatica wasn't enough, did I add my right shoulder "for good luck?" Get that, imagine that. Using the word luck, What a statement! Luck because I am so "lucky" to have sciatica and right shoulder pain! It helps me avoid the cosmic void, the emptiness, purposelessness, and lack of meaning that the feeling of success creates.

Could my confusion which helped create sciatica be due to this traumatic relationship with success. And did the grand Raleigh success trigger it off? This along with its encore success of the Tenafly concert?

Is this all about my relationship to success? Could be. It makes sense. (Even though it feels so senseless.)

I have just had a tremendous success in folk dancing and as a choreographer. And notice, the sciatica started with a folk dance, and a folk dance choreography, as I was choreographing Sirba de la Vadoul Loui Isak. And it started on an easy, nothing step, a mere traditional Alunelul type 7's to the right. Yet it was involved with choreography and folk dancing, or folk dance choreography. My choreography. Formerly, a great success. (Just as I wrote this last sentence, sciatica pain returned to my right buttock, thigh, and leg.)

I'm onto something here. It "makes sense."

Sunday, June 14, 2009

How Important is my Miracle Schedule?

Yes, the tour business may be fun, and I can make and am making lots of money from it. And this makes me and my wife happy.

But what am I losing in the process?

My self-definition has changed. It has drifted away, even dropped its miracle schedule base. In fact, I hate to admit it, but recently, I've re-defined myself away from it and am slowly in the process of "giving up" on its importance.

Is it wise for me to be "giving up" music, pushing it into a second place, lesser role? Is it good for me physically? What of the others? Writing, study, yoga, running, the pillars of my former self? Business, money, and tourism are subtly pushing them aside. How important are all these to the foundation of my psyche? I've made them lesser priorities, pushed them into the background; they have become second-place citizens.

Can I truly "live without them?" Is this the right direction? Am I cheating myself? Am I partially mad at myself for "giving up" these former wonders? Although it's wonderful, fulfilling, and fun to make mucho money in tourism, ultimately, is this dramatic shift in priorities good for me?

Or is it making me sick, creating lingering pains? Is the daily appearance and wane of sciatica a reflection of this shift? Is it partly due to my new "self-definition?" And here's a good question: Is this new self-definition destroying a portion of my self-confidence?

In the light of these lingering pains which are creating self-doubt and cause me to question my self-confidence, I must ask: How important is my non-paying, miracle schedule? Is it the hidden energetic and spiritual foundation of my financial, touristic, paying life? Without it, would I even bother running my money-making tours?

Is my right shoulder pain and sciatica a reflection of an unhealthy values shift?

An unbalanced, imbalanced priority shift? Is it telling me I am drifting, moving in the wrong direction?

Is it telling me to reverse priorities?

My mother told me money isn't everything. Perhaps she was right.

Music and art were "her" values. (That's why I went to Music and Art high school.) They are mine, too. I agree with Ma.

Monday, June 30, 2008

Success Syndrome

If the cornerstone has been knocked out, and I am deeply depressed (ah, it feels so good to write these latter two words!), which came first, the chicken or the egg? I believe it is the egg of brain.

Returning from the farm always touches off this kind of low. Memories of mother, childhood, and more.

The building has been blown apart to make room for the new Success skyscraper. But what is success? That is the question I have been wrestling with most of my life, especially in the last two years, and am now in the process of pursuing.

This morning "they say" that success is based on love and being deeply inspired. What do I say? I like it. I agree.

Why do I like this depressed feeling? Why does saying it, looking at it, even feeling it, make me "happy?"

I think it may be at the core of my "former" sciatica, and present morning thumb and right shoulder. (Substitutes keep rising. Notice my thumb was fine until my sciatica "disappeared.")

But what am I depressed about? And that's why this Success Intelligence book by Robert Holden is so good. It talks about, analyses, and deals with my success syndrome. In fact, I would say, the depression which I am so happy to look at has lots to do with my confusion over what is success. Thus it has something to do with my

values.

The depression points some kind of emptiness in my life. And part of the emptiness comes from my “success.” And I have not been about to figure this out for almost and over two years. . . since my tour/financial success began. And you know, this success has both excited and depressed me. Last year, since it felt like such a surprise, and I had large debts to pay off, it mostly excited me. Now, since I am financially solvent, it mostly confuses and depresses me.

What do think? What to do? Holden’s book certainly helps. One of the lines in it is: “Nothing fails like success.” I stand presently in that confused place.

Also, it is depressed when everything you’ve wanted to achieve, you achieve. That’s another hateful place I’ve been in during the past one or two years. And it all came crashing down post-Greece 2007. But for awhile, I had my 50 Folk Dances and Raleigh workshop to prepare and “distract” me, then came the post-Raleigh Tenafly concert, and video project distraction. All this ended around June 12st. Then I had two great yoga days. I said to myself, “Finally, I’m on the way back. I’m recovering and feeling (physically) great for the first time in months! Then, crash. Sunday night, after my Romanian dance, came sciatica. Tuesday night, during folk dance teaching came right shoulder. Why right shoulder? What did that have to do with dancing? I don’t know/ Yet strangely, sciatica and shoulder related to folk dancing. Why now? I kept and keep asking. Well, maybe because all my distractions (nay, denial forms) had ended.

Could I be ready to deal with my success syndrome? Is that why God, through His messenger, sent me Holden’s Success Intelligence book?

Don’t sciatica and right shoulder (and even right thumb) cripple me from my work? Don’t they help and “encourage” me to avoid it? Why avoid it? Well, since I am now a successful folk dance teacher, and successful tour leader and organizer, even a successful guitarist, the success has drained all the joy out of my work. Thus working

will only lead to more emptiness.

Rather than face the emptiness – too life threatening, build a distraction (sciatica, right shoulder, whatever.) With sciatica, I can't dance. . . or even walk on tours, right shoulder I can't lift my valises. I'm generally crippled. Part of me is horrified, but part of me says, thank God!

What a psychological dynamic and conflict! Yet, it is not even a conflict. It is all quite clear. In order to save myself from death, dying meaninglessness, emptiness, purposelessness, directionlessness, I create a distraction (in this case, sciatica and/or right shoulder). Miserable as the distraction is, it's better than dying!

Hardest to face is a meaningless and empty life. Better death, than life without meaning. That's how my psyche see it.

Confidence

Confidence in myself and my skills means leaving mother. How sad and frightening that is! I even cry when I think about it. Jumping into, grabbing, even embracing my new self means daring to step away from home and enter the frozen world on my own.

What are my choices? If I do it, I'll be scared. If I don't, I'll be paralyzed by back pain, riven with sciatica residuals, pounded (and ice-picked) out with frozen shoulders.

Bravest and Most Heroic Act

My bravest, most heroic act is now daring not to be nervous before a performance of guitar, folk dance teaching, or tour leading. (Anything else?) These are areas I know.

Naturally, for each performance I will prepare as much as possible. But, truth is, I am always "preparing." Preparation and practicing is my life style. So, in that sense, I

don't even have to "prepare as much as possible." At this point, I know my stuff. My job then is to simply appear.

They say if you want to be wise and find wisdom, talk to the inner self. Well, I'm doing that, and this self sure is popping. Amazing. Look at the observations, analysis, and revelations the little fucker is finding, look at the wise nuggets he is tossing out! Hard to believe. Yet I know they are true.

By giving up my pre-performance nervousness, I am also giving up some excitement and thrills. I'm giving up the chills, exiting the horror movie, leaving its thrill of fear. In one sense, it's a loss (like the former thrills of the stock market). On the other hand, I don't have much choice. Giving up these thrills and moving into the land of self-confidence is where I'm at. It's a development. I'm leaving the old neighborhood, moving to a new home on a new level.

Thursday, July 3, 2008

Mitzvah and Relaxation

Mitzvah and relaxation cure sciatica. Right shoulder, too.

Heavy, tremendous fatigue this morning upon waking up. . . but no pain! It feels as if I've been through a huge battle, have emerged victorious, but am now wiped out, exhausted from the struggle.

So be it. I'm the winner. Since meeting the Iranian old man my sciatica has broken. I believe he was an angel form of my father coming down from heaven to teach and instruct me.

Mitzvah magic ensued after I drove this old Iranian man to the Presbyterian Church on Palisade Avenue. He thanked me after I drove him with such an absolutely beautiful gratefulness. He looked skyward thanking God with his eyes. So beautiful it made me cry. I hugged him in my own thankfulness. It broke me up causing a most

beautiful Beethovenian meltdown, mitzvah warm-burst in my heart. Ever since, my sciatica and I have been on the way up.

Yesterday morning my folk dance teaching at the Rodda Center felt close to normal. Close, but not completely. Right after the class sciatica attacked again; it lasted most of the afternoon. Then around nine in the evening, I took a walk. The sciatica appeared again.

But this time I thought two new things:

1. I remembered my mitzvah purpose: Relate and turn my pain into mitzvah mode.
2. I focused on relaxation of my body, walking "like a drunken man" in total rag-doll mode.

Almost immediately sciatica dissolved. The following one-hour walk felt completely normal! I felt changes deep in my heart. I felt cured.

This morning big fatigue. . . but no pain. An amazing process.

Sciatic Mourning

But I do feel a strange sadness. Part of me "misses" my sciatica! That could be the reason for this morning's heaviness and feeling of fatigue. I'm mourning my sciatica. It did, after all, represent my former life with its old, self-involved, performance anxieties and fearful ways. Although miserable these fears and ways of thinking were familiar parts of my old life, they were my old neighborhood friends. Now I've given them up along with my former life style and thoughts. They are gone. It's always sad to leave the old neighborhood, even though it contained so many miseries. Sad, sad sciatica: Its pain helped me cling to my former existence. Now it over, coming to a close. Even as I say goodbye, I know I'll remember and miss it.

Before I move on, I must first mourn the departure from my old neighborhood. I'm mourning the death of my old self with its old pre-mitzvatic life.

As I got up from this writing, sciatica returned. "Thank God," I thought.

But it returned “only a bit.” I know it’s a goodbye pain. I’ve broken through its camouflage. The pain won’t last. Sciatica has served its purpose. It has become a “been there, done that.”

Performance

One of my beliefs is that if I am nervous before a performance (concert, folk dance class, tour, whatever), I perform better.

But will I?

I believe such nervousness will key me up, psyche me up, put me on my toes, prepare me to dive into the moment, into the abyss. . . .

But will it? Does it really matter? Or is it only my belief?

Suppose instead of pre-performance anxiety, I believed I would be better if I relaxed, or simply showed up on time! After all, I know my stuff and have confidence in my abilities.

I also believe I have to be in good physical shape, nay, optimal shape, to do a good job. But, in the past, I’ve done a good, even excellent job when I’m in terrible shape. That’s because I’m a pro, and will do a good job no matter what. That’s what a pro does.

Result: I don’t have to get nervous to do a good job, I don’t have to be in good shape to do a good job.

Success Brings Rising Pressures

What am I sick of? Restraints. The social restraints I have tied myself up with. Sciatic and right shoulder rage rises up against them. Enough, enough! I can’t stand it any more! Nauseous, sickly yellow and green vomitations of free-flow bile rise from my innards.

Is this the Sarnoian rage, disguised for a month, and hidden in the darkness of sciatica and inner recesses of my right shoulder?

Social restraints. Placed upon me by others. Or rather, placed upon me by myself but “blamed” on others, faulting the for my hold-backs and restraints.

And what, pray tell, have I been restraining? The wild daring of mad shoe madness, of course.

I feel totally locked up and restrained.

When did these restraints begin? (Post-2007 Greek tour?)

Totally disgusted with my past. Reach for a new level of freedom.

Partly they are the restraints of success. Tour success, Raleigh success, 50 Folk Dances with its 3 CD’s success. Of course, success bring me a great high. But also, instead of bringing greater freedom, each success puts a new demand on me. The demands of growth. Which I dutifully and even happily accept! Successful tours lead to more tours, successful folk dance book, CDs, choreography, and Raleigh appearance leads to more choreography, the desire to expand by learning how to do videos, and even considering more folk dance teaching appearances.

With each success, the pressure rises. Is this happiness? For me, maybe. Or, as usual, in Gemini fashion, I have both positive and negative feelings about it.

Conflicting notions.

Is this about learning how to “move easy in harness?” Yes.

What to Do?

What to do?

I hate being pushed around or told what to do. Although it gives me pleasure to please my customers, I absolutely hate it when my desire to do so becomes my primary motivator, dictating what I must do.

My bottom-line motivator must be the magic of spontaneous creation, and the sudden burst of awe, wonder, and beauty it creates. Sparks of life fly; mitzvah magic is created. Audience, customers, travelers, or others love it! And, if for some reason, they don’t, who cares? I have been faithful to my bottom line. I have not given in to public

pressure, not succumbed to the storm of public demands. Rather I have looked to my inner muse. Happiness and joy suffuse my being. And that's certainly adequate for tonight.

Revenge of the Muses

If I am being so honest, maybe I should look into my motivations for the Raleigh workshop. They were ninety-five percent based on my desire to show others, prove myself as a folk dance teacher to the general folk dance world, and my desire and need for recognition as a folk dance choreographer. All this was post-Greek tour stuff. (With Lee much in the back of my mind.)

Result: I accomplished a lot. With my 50 Folk Dances and 3 CDs I put my whole choreography world together. But I also did it with very unsatisfying motivations in mind. Rather than the satisfactions and beauties of spontaneous creation, working directly with my inner muse, I focused much of my attention on "outer things," namely, reception of the folk dance world, what others (the outer folk dance public) would think of me, etc. Very outer directed. Mostly to prove myself. It wasn't even business, entrepreneurial, or money directed. In fact, I hate to say it, but I did it mostly to prove myself, to show the general folk dance world I was "something," not just a tour leader, but an artist, a folk dance artist.

The enraging result of being so thrown off track is an incredible bout sciatica. Revenge of the Muses. A smack in the behind from my Muse. I was unfaithful to her! Added to that, she threw in some right shoulder pain.

Lesson of the Year

Lesson of the Year: Remember my center!

I just cannot let myself be pushed around by so-called public demands, and by my lower instincts of desire for recognition. It throws me off, enrages me, causes me to lose focus, and is simply bad for my health.

So ends this New Leaf.