

Miracle Schedule

Thursday, January 1, 2009

After my meeting with Barry Walter yesterday I'm moving away from the idea of learning video and doing my folk dance video myself. Basically, Barry said I couldn't do it. I said, "Video is different. And especially with dancing, you need a cameraman to follow you around." Even the Dunav videos, although poor and amateurish, which are my models, have a cameraman following the dancers around as they demonstrate the dance. I could see I'd be amateurish, unprofessional, and create poor quality if I did the videos alone. Barry was right.

So, if I cannot do it alone, and I need a videographer to do it, I might as well work with and hire a professional. With this decision (I am, presently, this morning, still in the "leaning towards this decision" stage), I have lifted a great burden from my shoulders; I have freed up lots of mental and physical time.

I'll still do the folk dance video of my choreographies, but now without learning an entire new technique, video and photography which I've always avoided, even hated. Note I never take pictures! I have internalized my mother's prejudice towards photography. She thought it a poor substitute for "real art," which was drawing and painting by hand, like Jim and Myron Lechay, and other "real" artists. Now, facing this internalization for the first time, I can see that I thoroughly believe my mother! I agree. Photography, and its handmaiden, videography, are not real art! They are small and mechanical substitutes. Right or wrong, I admit, this belief is thorough and deep down in my gut,

With this kind of deep aversion towards photography and videography, is it a wonder that I resist learning these "inferior" forms? No! It's a wonder I even considered them! Why would I force myself to do something I don't believe in, something I have such disdain for, something I actually hate?

It's absolutely amazing how I have gone off path during the last year. It started after 2008 Greek Tour, continued through my Raleigh folk dance weekend booking and the concomitant creation of 50 Folk Dances and their three CDs; this misdirection and off-path drifting I have been doing, did not abate after I finished the Raleigh date in May. In fact, it continued on for seven months after that, right until today. It was accompanied by all kinds of first-time maladies and ailments from all kinds of strange leg pains, to sciatica, to left knee, to right shoulder, and now, in the last few days (since I am "on top" of my left knee and right shoulder pains), to right lower back. Walking, running, advanced yoga postures, all the exercises and movements that I love have been adversely affected. Talk about the conscious mind creating distractions! This has been a model year for Sarnoian TMS.

And yet, I can't and couldn't help it. I sense that somehow I wanted, even needed these distractions. My better or higher self put itself in searching mode. It wanted, nay needed, to learn something — new knowledge about the next stage, my developing new place in life, my new and future path.

I know I nailed it in my miracle schedule. (Note that schedule says nothing about photography and videography. Although it does talk about Studies. I wanted to consider photography and videography as part of "studies." But perhaps studies refer more to language and history.

Expectations

Perhaps the tour leading, performance-anxiety approach with its different expectations, would be good for concerts and folk dance teaching.

Expect things to go wrong. Stay on your mental toes. Like a tiger, be ready to pounce, be preparing to fix anything immediately, on the spur of the moment.

This might be called the realistic approach. It works for tours. Why couldn't it work for concerts and folk dance classes?

My reward? Happy surprise and pleasant astonishment when things go right!
The gift for a job well done.

Maybe I'll use this "realistic approach" for my body, too.

In the realistic approach, look to the Latin root for the meaning of expect. Look out, watch out for, guard against. Latin: expectare "await, hope," from ex-"thoroughly" + spectare "to look."

This is not about self-fulfilling expectations, prophecy, or even use of my beloved imagination. Strangely, it's about a word I almost never use or like to use; what I would call realism: observing, staying in the moment and simultaneously watching what's going on in both external and internal worlds.

Saturday, January 3, 2009

Yesterday I sold Alcoa, AKS, and Micron Technology. I made 1G.

To use stop-loss or not? The psychology of selling, buying, winning and losing. Which way to go? What to do? I've read all the books, done all the research, been through it all before. What now? It's a grand game.

Motivation: Living the New Leaf Life

My philosophy of the stock market comes down to living in the moment. The only question I now ask is: Did I have a good day?

Yesterday I had a good day. That's it. That's the end of that. What about today? Today is a whole new day. We start all over, fresh and pure, growing and groping.

Two years ago (or was it three?) I acknowledged success achieving many of my life goals. Then I hit a motivating depression. "Since I am successful, and have achieved my long-term goals," I said, "I no longer have my old fears to guide and drive

me on. What will motivate me now?

Finally, after two years (or is it three?) of psychic misery, I have worked through and answered my motivation question.

Sunday, January 4, 2009

Return to the Future

I wonder if “been there, done that” has become a kind of arrogance. It prevents me from moving on.

My novels are my business plans.

Time for another novel, another business plan.

I haven't had a dream for a long time. This one was quite vivid. In my dream I went back to my Greenwich Village, St. Marks street, fifth floor walk-up apartment. It was nicely decorated by a beautiful female performer who was trying to make it as a performer.

What does this mean? A sensual return to the old life. Nice decorations in my old apartment. What about “performing?”

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Return to Sarno Approach with a Vengeance!

I came home from folk dancing last night. “I'm sick of it!” I screamed. “I'm sick of my physical condition! What the fuck is going on here?”

Maybe I'll return to Sarno with a vengeance! Maybe, what I've learned from this many month slide, from my visits to physical therapy (practically useless) that the Sarno approach was right after all! Maybe I slid in order to return to his analysis with greater and even greatest confidence and belief.

Know thyself! That is always the dictum.

My so-called success syndrome was a mixed blessing. (“so-called” because it killed my motivation; thus it wasn’t so successful after all!) I wanted it, but it also killed my motivation. This made me angry. Furious and depressed! What is depression but anger turned inward! This fury disguised by confusion has been my mental state for about a year.

A few days ago, to my happy surprise and amazement, I somehow discovered a new source of motivation.

Passionate love feels right for the next stage of life.

The success syndrome knocked me a blow, threw me totally off balance, and I lost this mad shoe love for over a year. Naturally, fury and confusion covered by a subtle but thick cloud of depression ensued.

Fury, confusion, and depression resulted from so-called Success Syndrome:

Notice and remember that mad shoe love includes “mad.” Thus it combines fury and love.

What is dancing with mad shoes?

It is the passionate union of fury with love.

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Stock Market Training Program

The basic emotions of the stock market are greed and fear.

Here’s a good way to think about them:

On the surface, trading stocks looks like I’m dealing with money. But deep down, in emotional reality, I’m dealing with fear and greed. Trading stocks is very personal and gutsy.

That’s why answering the “Did I have a good day?” question is a good approach.

Did I have a good day yesterday? Yes. About 10:30 a.m. I sold PBT and MU and made \$500. Indeed, for about an hour, I felt peaceful, elated, full of fun and happiness.

In the afternoon, I checked the market again. PBT had gone up another half a point. The fact that by “selling too early” I missed out on the extra \$200 made me feel a bit bad.

Feeling bad about my wins belong in the greed category.

Feeling bad about my losses belongs in the fear category.

Learning to deal, tame, and control these emotions is what my stock market training program is all about.

Life Line

If I don't find something important(to dive into), body and mind will disintegrate into pain and death.

Grab a lifeline. Judaism, the stock market, writing, music, almost any one – any kind of commitment – will do.

Coming Home

Suddenly (first time in over a year or two) I feel so lucky: Lucky I found this, lucky to be alive.

I can't believe the good fortune of have of standing at the border of this state. This morning, I have briefly stepped over the border. Part of me says, it's too good to be true. After years in the wilderness, of slogging through the inner land of transformation, I have finally come home.

My only question of doubt is: Will it last? On the one hand, I don't see how it won't. It should last. Why? I've been everywhere else, done everything else, “been there, done that.”

But, on the other hand, nothing lasts. Entrance to this new land must be fought for and won anew each day.

I hate the road of doubt. Yet I live and suffer in that state, too. Perhaps learning

to accept doubt is part of sanctity (from Latin sanctus: holy); part of being holy, wholly is feeling comfortable in the state of paradox.

Audience and Me

Think of the audience in a totally selfish and self-centered way. What can the audience do for me?

Rather than asking, What can I give the audience, ask, What can the audience give me? Why should I bother performing for them? What can they do for me?

And this includes my concert audience, folk dance audience, tour audience, audiences in general.

Until now, audiences and public performances have frightened me. Why? Perhaps, in my mind, they push and control me, forcing me to think and do things I don't really want to think or do. They are my master; I am their slave. Rather than vice versa. No wonder they scare me.

But what if I could reverse the equation, put myself totally in charge, and see their benefits to me.

If I see audiences in a totally selfish way maybe the result will be a desire to play for them! Notice I use the word "play" rather than "perform." I see myself playing. But performing is for circus clowns, public slaves doing tricks merely to please their masters. This is a helluva way to think and perform, and I absolutely hate it!

So, by following the "selfish method," I may be onto something, even a positive approach to performing! Rather playing in my sandbox with the audience who "participate" through active watching. What is active watching? Sending me their vibrations and thus energizing us.

Could the aches in my body be the burdens of audience, the burden of responsibility I always and forever feel towards the future, ever-existent, mythical and imagined audience? This audience follows me around wherever I go. Even when I am alone they are present. What a drag and burden. No wonder I ache. Who needs them?

No matter how hard I try, I can't get rid of them. These ever-imagined creatures are constantly on my back, telling me what to do, trying to influence my decisions. How can I get rid of them? Maybe I can't. Maybe the only way to "get rid of them" is to give them a new function, to see them differently. Certainly, this new self-centered, selfish approach, where I see them as energizers for me is a new and positive approach.

I wonder if such an approach will release my mind, and, in the process, relieve psycho-physical aches.

So what can the audience do for me?

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Money and Motivation

Am I passing out of the money as motivation phase, reaching a point where making money is no longer my main source of motivation? Is this one of the reasons I have been down for the past year or so?

In the past week I've lost lots of money in the stock market. It's absolutely amazing how fast stocks can go up. . . or down. But behind my losses, as I look into my mind, I strangely see that a (good) part of me wants to lose the money! Yes, a part of me is happy for my losses! This is not a good attitude or approach to either the market or money making.

Well, at best, I am split. Part of me wants to win, that is, make more money in the market. But, again I must admit, that part of me want to lose, to lose money in the market.

And, again I must admit, that during the past few weeks, when I have both made money and lost money in the market, my mind had a constant win-loss cloud hanging over it. Win or lose, I couldn't stop thinking about the market. Indeed, a negative addiction. I put what I consider to be a small and unthreatening amount of money into the market. I knew that, even if I lost it all, my life style would not be threatened. And yet, even with this small amount, I couldn't stop thinking about it. Up and down

market thoughts kept clouding my mind. I was never free of it.

I've been through all of this before. Do I want or need to go through it again?

No.

But it is so depressing to think about giving it up. What will I do with my extra money if not play the market? And this, even though it clouds my mind, distracts me from more important things, and destroys my focus.

I recognize it as a negative addiction.

But by giving up the market, I am secretly and deeply giving up a longtime personal source of motivation: desire for money! It is money I really don't need for survival.

I'd be giving up the greed and fear factor. For over forty years, since I got married, these twins have been such a source of motivation!

Now I have to face giving them up. How depressing and sad.

It means I now I have to find a new source of motivation.

The hand writing is on the wall; the time is now. Let's face it: Motivation through money is dying. How sad.

What, if anything, can replace it?

Let's take a deeper look. Behind the money motivation lay the great emotions of fear and greed. Can I reinvent myself and my mind by finding a new source of fear and greed?

Where and how?

Evidently, I need fear and greed. Can I redefine them? Can I find them in a new place, in a softer, more realistic form?

Folk Dancing?

The strangest thought also occurred to me last night: Since money no longer works as a prime source of motivation, maybe I should go into folk dancing! Certainly, it's lots of fun. And with the financial pressure off, who knows where it might lead.

I might also ask: Can I lead a life without fear and greed? Do I want to? A life without greed and fear is staring me in the face. Perhaps it is even and inevitable, my next stage of life! If this is so, do I even have a choice?

What would be my source of motivation if greed and fear are no longer present?
Folk dancing?

It would also make the stock market “besides the point.”

The Bait of Distraction

Yesterday evening, during my yoga exercises, to my amazement, my right knee worked! No pain in kneeling squats. It felt easy and right. First time in, what, half a year?

Then I wondered why. Could it have had something to do with self-healing through my folk dance conclusion? I always thought of my left knee problem as somehow related to my position, place, direction, and purpose in folk dancing. Yesterday, especially after the Monday night class, I concluded and made peace with the idea and fact that I am a folk dance teacher. No longer a guitarist who happens to be a folk dance teacher. And no longer annoyed by the constant and gnawing feeling that, although I love the dancing and teaching, the field does not pay.

Even my stock market losses helped me reach this conclusion. (Can I thank my losses? Why not? No question they served a learning direction, teaching me, once again, that focus on the stock market is not for me. I was not put on earth to be or become a stock market trader. Although perhaps fun as an interesting (but losing) sideline, my trading form is fraught with wish fantasies and win/lose tensions. It even hurts my right shoulder (which started hurting just as I wrote this!)

Perhaps I should see my losses as a blessing in disguise. By losing 25 percent of my stock market trading money, I may have saved myself from losing twice as much. That's the short-term reason. The long-term reason and the main question is: Why was I put on earth? Why did God give me talents? What is my ultimate meaning, direction,

and purpose? Although trading stocks is exciting and fun (when I'm winning), making money by trading is obviously not one of my skills. This has been proven many times in the past. The fact that I am not good at it, and often lose so much money, merely demonstrates this. Like a huge stone standing on my path, trading stocks blocks my way. Its temptations, distractions, and tantalizing existence stand as an obstacle to personal growth.

Can I avoid the bait of distraction?

My Path to Shoulder Cure is Through Music

Guitar: Last night, feeling liberated from my imaginary profession as a concert guitarist, for the first time, I improvised completely, freely, and in my style on the guitar. Is this the hint of a future, post-transformational guitar path?

Although I related my right shoulder pain to violin playing, I also relate it to my attitude towards music in general and even the guitar in particular. Thus, just as my left "folk dance" knee has been "cured" through a new relationship towards folk dancing, perhaps my right shoulder will be "cured" when I find my new relationship to guitar, violin, and music in general.

My path to shoulder cure is through music. Guitar in particular, violin in general. Or vice versa.

Lifting a lifetime classical music burden from my shoulders, and replacing it with the freedom of composition, improvisation, and creativity.

Choreography through improvisation in folk dancing.

Composition and improvisation in guitar.

Right Shoulder

The reason I relate my right shoulder to my violin is: I remember my teenage lessons with Graffman and how he squashed my musical individuality. Never a kind word, and only once a word of encouragement. Classical music in general, and my

classical music teachers in particular, Vladimir Graffman for violin, Alexander Bellow for guitar, represented and fostered the squashed individual, and for me, squashed (and did not foster) my off-beat, mad shoe, enthusiastic, off-the-wall, zany personality. However, this was no true of some classical music teachers, namely Celentano for violin in Eastman School of Music, and Rolando Valdes-Blaine for guitar. They were live-wire, fun, full-living and full blooded individuals who, in my view, wouldn't, stand for the classical music scene with its snobbism, perfectionism, and elitism.

Perhaps now, as an older, more mature person returning to the violin, I am beginning to face these grand negatives (which stood besides my incredible love of the live-wire music.) These traumas, squashing, and constant subtle and direct put downs. On top of the wild horse music I loved, they created "burdens of classical music" which I carry with me to this day.

I sense these hurts have deep psychological roots. And they have never been dealt with! Maybe that's why my shoulders hurt.

Stocks and the Stock Market

Are stocks a distraction from my real work?

It's not even a money question. I make more by working in my business. If my stocks magically doubled or even tripled, I can still earn more by running a good tour.

Money is merely the measure of winning or losing.

So I'm not trading stocks for the money. I'm trading them for the magic! Magically, and without any effort on my part, they can go up! But, of course, magically, and without any effort on my part, they can go down!

But when I own them, up or down, win or lose, they haunt my mind.

Can I handle them? Should I? Since they are such distractions, and remove my mind and energies from my real work, are they even worth having?

Why should I bother? Good question.

This week I felt very discouraged over my trading losses. In fact, I was about to

give the whole thing up.

But today, I think learned something.

If I am going to play the stock market, use much smaller sums of money. Then I will not be so emotionally involved in the outcome, in my losses and gains. Plus I'm still a beginner. I still learning how to play the game.

Friday, January 16, 2009

Music

Truth is, I have never felt comfortable with (any?) of the guitar pieces I play. They always seem to belong to someone else.

I feel slightly sickened and pushed down when I play these pieces them. To whom do they belong? The classical music establishment. The violin and classical guitar establishment. Ghosts of my pushed down past. I am never adequate when I play them. That is my anger, shame, and potential humiliation, perhaps the psychological source of my right shoulder pain.

I take a big chance whenever I play them, I'm also holding back the flood of such feeling.

I still see the disapproving Alexander Bellow (one of my teachers. But not Rolando Valdes-Blaine. He liked me, and let me be me. But in my mind, slightly behind him, sits Andre Segovia, in even more haughty disapproval.

Same thing with the violin: I see Vladimir Graffman (one of my teachers. But not John Celentano at Eastman School of Music. He was human and friendly, treating me with respect. He gave me a glass of wine during my first lesson and even talked to me like a human being!) disapproving. Far behind him sit Jascha Heifetz and some other non-descript world famous violinists. They are so above me, they scarcely deign to lower themselves to give time or attention to disapprove of me. But of course, disapprove of me they do. Mostly Heifetz. But mainly, Vladimir Graffman.

Thus I have “chosen” my two most put-down teachers as my models, the ones I see whenever I play classical music.

I sense my right shoulder has to do with violin. I even “explain” it by saying it has to do with bowing arm overuse. But, deep down, I don’t quite believe that it is a physical thing. And this, especially since the pains began few months after I started playing the violin more intensely. Thus no immediate relationship between violin playing (bowing) and right shoulder pain.

I think playing violin, and even taking lessons, brought up old repressed memories of my teenage, violin lesson, put-down years.

Perhaps I ready to face the rage, hurt, and devastating destruction to my self-image those years brought. I also wonder how much I overcompensated by saying how much I “loved” the music. Did I really love it that much? How much rage was involved in the cosmic melt-downs I felt during the Beethoven Symphonies and others? I always felt my personality floating away. I interpreted it as the highest kind of experience. But was it partly, nay mostly, a grand denial of my anger, a suppression of my rage at the constant put-downs I experienced during my classical music lessons? Wow. Am I onto something here? Yes!

The cosmic meltdown was partly an upward blending into the universe, a union with the highest cosmic forces. But it was also fostered by a tremendous unexpressed rage. Why do I call it a divine madness, or a mad shoe? The shoes were definitely filled with rage, even as they united with heavenly forces.

Bipolar, bipartisan, binocular, a dialectical paradox.

I have never looked at their rage aspect. But my right shoulder has! It also holsters my right fist which is getting ready to smash these classical music put-down fuckers!

If I’m going back to my classical music put-down roots, I ought to start with that whole Music and Art, none-Juilliard (I would never be good enough to get in) scene. Powers of psychoanalysis.

I never got mad during that Music and Art teenage period. I got headaches instead.

Vladimir Graffman was close to the top classical musicians in the world. Intimate with Horowitz, Heifetz, etc. all the greats. Taking violin lessons near such awesome stars, demi-gods, really, I was ever awed, wowed, and submerged. There was no way I could approach or even come close to them; I would remain in their shadow forever. Being in their company, playing or even being mentioned in passing breath by them, was totally unthinkable and impossible. Anger wasn't even a thought, rage never a consideration. In fact, I didn't even know what it was.

My quirky personality and happy (raging) enthusiasm didn't have a chance.

That was the past.

Where do I stand today? That is the question.

Saturday, January 17, 2009

(Incredible and Unbelievable) Victory!

I know something big happened last night. I could feel the crack.

It's too good to be true, and I don't want to jump the gun but with yesterday's writings and revelations, my right shoulder problem has cracked! I've "broken through."

The right shoulder problem, along with its aches, pains, and discomfort. Has "disappeared!" There is "no more reason" for its existence.

"Must"

Sudden fear: I don't want to be arrogant or hubristic about this. All glories must be performed as a prayer, with worship of the Highest Glory in mind.

Notice the "must" in the above paragraph. This "must" is okay. It is not the "must" of psychotherapy, the psychic memory demand of mother. Rather it has a higher calling. Emanating from Above, it is the "must" of tsvi, the must of mitzvot, the

must of divine commandment.

Trinity of Glories

Perhaps this is where the study of Hebrew as the divine language comes in.
Weaving together my trinity of glories: folk dancing, guitar, and Hebrew.

The snow is falling beautifully outside my window. Let its soft white flakes
water my future spring garden.

If I plant seeds of ecstasy, glory will rise in the spring.

I wonder where writing fits in.

So far, I find no shine, glory, or ecstasy in spreading the word.

Spreading the word relates to business. Tours, book and CD sales, etc. Can I,
should I, "must" I, find glory and ecstasy in business? Is it commanded that I mix, then
merge kabbala and business. "Must" I become a kabbalistic businessman?

"Must" I become my own St. Paul?

Is it written that I become my own St. Paul? (If it is, who wrote it?) A life
problem. But so was playing guitar.

I'd like to have the fire of my gospel fill my soul. But so far, I haven't found it.
It's an imperfect and broken source. Writing and its results remains outside my trinity.
It needs repair, a bit of tikkun.

Would this be the next step in post-transitional life?

Starting today I thought I could rest on my glories. But I guess not. A
disturbance occurred. Soon I'll be moving on.

Remembering Hypothenar

The guitar is now a cure area, my own sanctuary city. I'll be safe, secure, and
happy when I pick it up.

As I approached my lovely Rubio guitar, eager to begin playing my newly cured
music, I suddenly remembered how long ago I was beset by thumb and hypothenar

(now I realize it was TMS) muscle problems. Those hypothenar pains, along with all thoughts about them, have totally disappeared. Once they were so prominent in my life. Now I've completely forgotten about them!

This means some day I'll forget all about my present pain situation. Like my former right thumb pain, their TMS forms will vanish into the night!

Guitar!

All the potential threats of audience pile on have fallen away. I have reclaimed my guitar practice. It has indeed become my sanctuary city, a place where I sit in meditative exploration, and feel safe, secure, and happy!

What a change of attitude and accomplishment: Jump and click my heels with joy!

While playing Venezuelan Waltz by Antonio Lauro, I broke down and cried for the beauty of it. The beauty that finally I can play it slowly, with total feeling, and freedom to enter and explore each note, to wonder about the why's of a diminished chord, or follow the downward path of the melody line, scattered with descending diminished, sevenths, minor, and major chords. And I am finally free to wallow in the wonder and beauty of musical formations and guitar vibrations.

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Imperfections

Maybe it is a wise book. I just don't want to deal with my imperfections again. Moving from artistic and financial imperfections to physical imperfections.

Of course, imperfections are also motivators!

On a physical level, I'm totally disgusted and enraged at the way my body has betrayed me and beaten me up. What the fuck is the matter with it? I'm sick of its incessant whining.

Joe Freedman emailed me, asked if, on our tour, I would teach some folk dances for the Dunav group in Israel. I answered, "Absolutely yes! I'd love it!" The request inspired and motivated me. It raised me up. Even though I'll only teach a dance or two, the idea of teaching a new group of unknown Israeli folk dancers hit me in the marvelous nervous gut. Yes! Getting in good, nay, great shape for this late March date is now my short-term goal! (Should I aim for great shape? Is great possible? Of course, I could aim for great and settle for good.)

Thus my imperfections drive me on. Maybe some day I will even thank them!

For the past two or so years, during my transitional "been there, done that" period I lost my source(s) of motivation. I had become "perfect." How boring, dull, and depressing that was!

Perhaps it's time to return to my imperfections!

Note the re-introduction of a formerly favorite word "perhaps." It signals that things are not completely right and hints at movement towards some vague goal. I used to like that. Then I gave it up for strength and self-confidence. At the time, these qualities felt like novelties. Presently, the novelty is over. I accept strength and self-confidence. I'm moving on to: "Now what? What's next? What do I do with my strength and confidence?"

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Scary Thought

Here's a scary thought: Suppose I have no passion left for all the work I do; suppose I have really "done it all," namely been in these fields so long, the passion and newness and adventure has all run dry. (Presently, the only "enthusiasm" I am feeling and learning I am doing comes from trading stocks!)

Suppose the time has come to give up everything I once did? To start totally

fresh, to move on?

As a start, if my only present interest and enthusiasm is for stock trading, dare I study it again? Dare I move into it, grab it by the hours, drive into it with a passion, commit myself to it?

In the past, I've lost so much money. Also it's made for so much trouble at home. Is such gambling a mistake, a temptation I should avoid? Or, believing that I am somehow a "new me," that I have matured, learned something from my past mistakes, and changed, should I grab it, and take a chance?

Should I throw away my tour business, folk dance classes, guitar playing and lessons, language study, and more, give it all up: and dive with a passion into the new and dangerous area? Or at least think about and approach my "former" professions differently. As mere "jobs". While my passion is now directed towards conquering (or at least dealing with) my greed and fear, learning the skills of financial balance and calm, and entering the life of a market trader?

Is this a "legitimate" passion? In the past, I threw all my money and hopes into it. Plus, armed with the philosophy of "I'm smart. If I spend ten percent of my effort studying finances and the market (instead of working in the low paying and difficult music and writing professions), I'll make money, and even get rich: I even "planned" and made my next goal one of becoming a millionaire. Yes, in that early, youthful phase, I hoped, expected, even planned to get rich. In retrospect, this was my big mistake.

In my present, more mature state, can I enter the market, become a trader, trade stocks in a safer, more measured way?

If I did this, how would I go about it?

"A double short and double long on oil." What does this mean? How does one short stocks safely? What are the protections?

Friday, January 23, 2009

Forgotten Dreams

Maybe success started a long downward road of distraction from my true dreams.

What are my true dreams?

Seems I've pushed them away for so long I've forgotten them.

Maybe they're returning as nightmares, attacking my denying mind/body, pounding it with mental traumas and physical terrors.

Like Zany, standing on the mountain top, free, alone, and beautiful, playing violin (or guitar), communicating with the Musical High One: Is that the source of my power, creativity, and desire?

Of course, I have to do local work here on earth to move the physical functions. Nevertheless, losing sight of one's true dream leads to crucifixion on a cross of aches and pains, and ultimately, to an empty soul, followed by death of the body.

Perhaps the difference between a child and an adult is: a (four-year old) child runs wild on the lawn, while an (seventy-year old) adult plays wild on the lawn.

The watchful, limiting eye of mother hovers over the child.

The watchful, limiting eye of mother is gone for the adult. Thus the adult plays free, alone, and beautifully.

No question I've lost, given up. Mother's watchful, limiting eye. Thus presently, I live in a temporary no-man's land of aches and pains surrounded by strange walls that claustrophobically push me inward in all directions.

Next voyage and country I (hope to) visit is Playland, where I (can) play free, alone, and beautiful.

Although I live on earth, I have celestial roots.

Remember this with each passing ache, nebulous and ephemeral pain, overwhelming business upheaval, tour cancellation, market reversal, negative surprise, and more.

Guitar Masseur, Classical Xanax

Maybe the sleep that playing (classical) guitar induces in me is a total blessing. Instead of fighting it, go with it. Relax: take the guitar pill. Guitar playing (classical) may be my way of relaxing. It is my personal masseuse, Xanax, sleeping pill, and more.

It distracts aches, chases away pains, and by focusing on beautiful tones, creates wholeness.

The Spice of Peace

When I was fighting to pay off my debts by building up my tour business, I felt motivated, driven, committed, and even vaguely inspired. Once I “succeeded,” that is, became financially stable, boredom, malaise, “been there, done that,” lack of motivation, and a vague depression set in. Thus the paradox that my “success” period was also a psychologically down period.

The success “been there, done that” period, was followed by a transitional “aches and pains” period.

Now I enter a new “perilous but exhilarating” period. Motivation has returned. It comes from a realization that dealing with danger, facing and diving into my fears (perils), gives birth to exhilaration.

I’ve always sensed this, even vaguely known it. Yet I always fought this duality, struggled against living with and within its paradox.

I’ll call the paradox of “living on the edge, between peril and exhilaration,” the spice of peace.

Without a bigger danger to distract and exhilarate me, peril energy reverses itself, turns to my body, and creates aches and pains.

Knocks and Knocking:

Traveling to an Unknown Land Called New Life.

I wonder if right shoulder, right hip, and left knee are entry points into a new world. A world of motivation and dynamism. As such, the knocks, jolts, pains I experience there represent a knocking at, and eventually, knocking down, the energy doors to an Unknown Land called New Life.

Pains are energy clumps. Once knocked apart, broken up, their fiery molecules shall spread freely through my person.

I know this is true. Nevertheless, I must evidently still go through, work through, the pains of transition. There's no rushing it, no escape, or even cure. I'm gaining on it, but not there yet. The process will simply take as long as it needs to take.

Wednesday, January 28, 2009

Cloud of Dread

Suddenly, the Cloud of Dread hangs over me.

In the past, Cloud pursued me for years.

Only during my two-year "success" and transition period did it disappear.

The Cloud was replaced by lack of motivation. This down immediately coalesced with vague depression, accompanied by strange aches and pains. Like four gnawing rats, these unwelcome aches, pains, downs, and depression, became keepers of my mind, bedrock of my existence.

For more than a year nothing could shake them.

This morning the Cloud of Dread appeared again. Black with perils and exuberance, heavy with the waters of potential danger and future exhilaration, it hung over my head for a glorious moment.

The difference? Now I welcome it!

God bless my cloud!

God bless dynamism's returning!

Winged carrier of energy, power, and glory,

Salvation appears in a Cloud of Dread.

Pouring Health

“Alhambra” performing image: I am pouring cups of flowing health into the audience. They sit (she sits) right before me, close but not too close. I pour and pour the warm health of music into her arthritic joints and hardening arteries. They loosen, move, flow, and relax. She gets better and better from listening.

I am a healer, doctor. The touch of my “Alhambra” (music) cures.

Dr. Zany (James, Dzamy) takes the stage.

(Is that the longtime hidden meaning of the doctor in Dr. Zany? His heals, cures. He is a shaman; music is his vehicle, He returns to the stage as a healer!)

Of course, Zany is me. With music and performance as my vehicles, will I return to the stage as a healer?

Obviously, music will have to heal me first. Will it? Will I let it?

Healing others will heal me. Healing me will heal others.

A totally new reason to perform.

It's not mere entertainment. It's healing.

Healing journeys: See folk dance classes and tours as healing journeys.

Can the healing journey heal me as well?

Friday, January 30, 2009

Returning to Business

Returning to business; my business is sales.

Money is sliding and I don't like it. Not one tour registration came in during January. Very quiet around here. Until three days ago, I didn't mind. In fact, I liked it. I need the time and space for a mental vacation, to put my brain and body together. Well, that has basically happened. If they haven't mended, at least my mental crevasses

are closer together.

With the advent of Tuesday's first financial flicker of worry, I am, evidently, ready, willing, even wanting to return to business.

Yesterday I started my tour calls. It was a good day, even though no registrations came in, because I set purpose in order: my goals. . . then improved on those goals.

Would Trading to Win be my blueprint book for the future? Why not? It's excellent! Ari Kiev's philosophy assumes you're okay to begin with. (Pains and anxieties are part of your present. You live with them in the present, the moment, the here-and-now.)

Thus the following quote: "Pursuing a about challenging yourself, tapping your potential. It is not about feeling better or correcting a deficiency."

I like this!

Tapping into Alhambra Potency and Potential

In this sense, my goal would no longer be to correct tremolo deficiencies in my "Alhambra" (which improved immeasurably yesterday!) My goal would no longer be to correct other deficiencies in my body, namely, left knee, right shoulder, and right hip. Simply accept these as part of my baggage. In accepting them, I will transcend them. Then focus on and pursue my goals. Challenge myself, tap into my Alhambra (and other) potency and potential.

Eliminating Classical Guitar

We went to a Tom Paxton concert last night. Nice.

"I could have been a Tom Paxton." What a terrible, sad, true line. I could have been a folk singer, had a career as a folk singer and performer

But classical guitar held me back. Classical musical, classical violin, classical desires, and the never-ending need to prove myself, first, always, and above all, as a classical musician.

Now I finally see it. My folk song, ad lib, one-man show performing career has always been blocked by my self-created classical guitar block. I just see, and simply have always seen, classical music (as expressed through guitar) as the only true art form. Folk music (like folk dancing) has always been secondary. Why? Because it is so easy for me. Folk songs are so simple to play; it is so easy to lead a group singing. (Folk dancing is also so easy to teach.)

Psychotherapists might say I always needed to put myself down, withhold my freedom, create a block so I would not thrive, so my mad shoe self would not freely leap out. Perhaps they are right; perhaps I needed not to thrive in order to thrive. And even survive. Who knows? And, at this point, who cares?

I just see it plainly today. The final freedom. Classical guitar will now move into the realm of classical violin. I'll play it just for myself, "just for fun." It will go into the category of personal necessities, along with other miracle schedule aspects like yoga, running, and study, (and even writing?) Actually, today, right now, I'm not sure where classical guitar will fall. But fallen it has. And that is both sad and good. Sad because an old life has passed (and it only, took forty-three years!). Good because it liberates my mind and soul, freeing me to open the front door, and release my mad shoe self into the world.

If I ever performed again, I would eliminate classical guitar completely! Or perhaps throw in a Lagrima or something. A novelty. One of the many off-beat, ad lib things I throw into a show.

But it is too early to say. For now the vision is clear: I have to, want to, and am finally free to eliminate classical guitar from my public performances.

Sunny Day

I looked at a map (of China, then Greece) with interest! I played Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4, Alhambra, and Leyenda with no future performance in mind! My fingers are having fun.

I'm luxuriating in my newfound freedom.

Books and Writing

Book a year. Plan the book (an experiment), write the book. How to dump it on the market? Perhaps my small new market is my folk dance classes, tours, etc.

Sunday, February 1, 2009

Phases and Stages.

Julie Bender just died. I'll call Edith Jason with condolences and more.

His death brought back all my folk dance weekends. My first guest teaching at Edith Jason's Folk Dance Weekend at Gibbers Hotel in, I believe in 1981, in the Catskills. Then I started my own weekends at Hudson Guild in 1982. In 1984 I ran my first tour to Hungary and started the tour business. This led to almost twenty years of Folk Dance Weekends. They ended for good about two years ago. The Folk Tours are still going.

Julie's death brought back the whole period. And now the Folk Dance Weekend stage is over. Some day, the tour stage will be over, too. Hard to believe. But true, nevertheless. I'll remember both with fondness and melancholy.

Phases and stages.

Before the folk dance stage, I had a fifteen-or-so year guitar and folk song concert career. School programs, college concerts, club dates, and more. Although I always thought that some day I would return to giving concerts, presently, that stage too has ended, closed, and concluded.

I had a fifteen-year or so stock market phase which ended in 2001. But now, after a seven-year break, it has been reborn.

I also wonder if my Klezmer Club date career is over. Folk dance leading dates with Michele and her Klezmerconnection band for bar mitzvahs and weddings have dwindled to almost zero. We'll see where that leads.

Phases and stages, birth, growth, and death, and then (sometimes) rebirth. The cycles go round.

Monday, February 2, 2009

Free!

Scholar and New Self-Definition

Free!

I feel so good, so free, I just don't know what to do.

I wonder if this destruction of of classic guitar and music prison, this leap into freedom, will free me to become. . . a scholar!

But, of course, scholar in the perpetual student mode.

I've always loved to study; I've always loved scholarship; I've always had a love and passion for study and learning. (That's why I loved college, even though I got miserable marks.)

One of my early teenage images and dreams was seeing myself sitting at a small desk in the attic with one desk lamp burning, surrounded by books, visualizing my early hero Albert Einstein. As a young physicist and scholar (ancient Hebrew rabbi/student/scholar with white beard?), I sit there for hours studying the secrets of the universe.

In this sense, becoming and seeing myself as a scholar.

What a radical, new, self-definition that would be!

Is scholar the new self-definition and even the new self I've been looking for? Is it the "reason" for all those transformational aches and growing pains?

No question my miracle schedule with its steady diet of study and learning is subsumed under "scholar." Surrounded by passion and love, it is my mental connection to the high one, Mr. Big.

It means approaching all things I do with a new vision: That of a scholar, giving me peace, love, passion, and perspective.

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Guitar: The strangest new kind of freedom. It absolutely doesn't matter how I play, or even if I play! I've never experienced this kind of hanging, dangling, limitless freedom before. Totally wild, wonderful, and strange.

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Power!

VL arpeggio is rolling. But it is also accompanied by the sickening "What for?" feeling. As if the guitar has a higher purpose. Namely, performing for others. Back and forth. Is this kind of perform thinking a mental habit or higher purpose and calling?

I basically can't believe that my VL arpeggio is so strong and sounds so good. Was the above "What for?" sick feeling a psychological cover up, a defense mechanism, denial, and put down of this impending (feeling of) power?

No question the sickening feeling was denial of my power. It came straight out of childhood! The guitar freedom I felt yesterday was its precursor, and opened the door to its glory.

The glory of guitar power experienced through right hand finger tips. (The Power and the Glory, The Glory of Power, The Power of Glory.)

I wonder if this power will now begin percolating through the rest of my body? The result of a two-year metamorphosis. The glory of February resurrection.

Time to Learn and Develop a New Business

Since tours are standing still (losing), maybe I ought to reassess the situation, and in true mastery form, slow down and play smaller in order to get myself back on track.

But what is the track?

Economic fear, hesitation, spend little, hold back, and save money is the mood of the country. Perhaps this year, instead of promoting tours (big expense), I ought to

promote and build up small expense (low fee) folk dance classes.

Strangely, the classes have been larger. Is this the reason? Maybe I'm focusing on and pushing the wrong stock. Or is this a rationalization?

Or perhaps this year, this slow period, is the time to learn and develop a new business. Could stock market trading be that business? No question, I am interested, fascinated, even thrilled by it. I always have been.

But I did poorly in the market for twenty-five years. I lost most of my money. When 9/11 happened, I got out completely. Eight years passed. Now, personally, professionally, and mentally, I am in a very different place.

For fun and interest, I've returned to the market. But do I have the daring to think of it as a new business?

Sadly, half of me sees my ancient mother and present wife telling me I'm a fool to think in such a way. "Jimmy, you don't have a head for business, or the intricacies of financial manipulations. You're mathematically stupid. After all, you're an air-head artist. What can they know about the hard-headed material and stock market monied world? Besides, you have a gambling mentality. You're a gambler, and no good. Go back to your closet and play the violin. Stock market, finance, and business are for big people."

What negative voices! However, these voices are present in only half of my brain. The other half obviously sees things differently. After all, look at what I'm doing: I am trading in the market. Part of me believes I can. But half of my mind is holding me back. I'm trading with a limp.

This negative attitude is based on my past and my history. But more important, is the present fact that part of me believes it!

But metamorphosis is here; the time of change has come. I'm giving up these old beliefs. I'll no longer walk with a limp.

Saturday, February 7, 2009

Goals and Motivation

Sources of motivation have fled. "Outside" pressure, and so-called financial reasons, don't create upgraded goals anymore. I'll need to create them from the "inside."

As fears dribble into lassitude, I ask: is love of the game enough motivation to play?

I like to win and glow. Fulfillment of specific goals brings the winning glow of joy.

The challenge is to invent specific goals.

If I invent such goals, will they motivate me? (Of course, the very purpose of goals is to motivate me. They won't be good, correct, vital, right goals, if they don't.)

Thus I judge goals by their ability to motivate.

Dreams are excellent motivating tools.

Do I have any dreams? That's my problem. I can't think of any, at the moment.

Since I can't think of any, I'll have to make some up.

I know creativity inspires (motivates) me. Thus, creating (inventing) goals has to be my first step.

Why Read New Leaf?

Why should people read my New Leaf? To give them courage (and encouragement) to go through and believe in their own transformations.

A New Form Concert, A New Leaf Concert

How about giving a concert (show, performance) which has everything! Guitar, songs, readings, ad libs, the whole works. Use it as a platform to sell my books, CDs, folk dancing, tours, bookings, all. A total sales presentation.

A new form concert.

Start real small. Local library, senior center, etc. Charge very little (even

nothing?) An experiment. A la Rand.

The purpose of this is the concert itself. (Sales, anything else coming from it, is totally besides the point.)

Totally new: A New form concert. A New Leaf Concert.

Note: My right shoulder suddenly hurt as I said New Leaf Concert. Wow. What does that mean? Does right shoulder relate to concert and performance life? Probably.

Just as my left knee "got better" after I did squats in Reka (a return to folk dance life), so my right shoulder may get better when I somehow return to concert and performing life.

(Now my right shoulder is really killing me. I must be onto something.)

Monday, February 9, 2009

Certainly it is Different

o fear or desire. Only a chance to exist. It's a strange place. Buddhist state?

I am more "comfortable" in states of passionate desire. Or at least I am more familiar with these so-called high artistic states. I know them in their wild, up and down moods, their torn-up passion.

But a calm place without fear or desire? A place beyond greed and fear? Is it temporary, a passing phenomena, a resting place between rounds? How long can I last here?

Do I even want to stay?

Is this the best I can do?

I don't know. Maybe. Certainly it is different.

Entopeggiatic Guitar Playing

Focus on the Picture

The effects of entomology on guitar playing.

Imagine yourself a bumble bee, wasp, fly, or other insect gliding, flying over the strings.

Entomologic approach to arpeggios. (Insect arpeggios.) Entopeggia. Imagine insects: Study their life to become a better guitar player.

Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4: Visions of a wasp's nest.

First part. View of nest. All the wasps are inside. Nothing is happening. Calm and quiet.

Second part: Wasps leave the nest. Wasps swarming.

Third part: Wasps return to nest. Calm and quiet return.

A picture, an interpretation!

An artist of guitar paints pictures.

How to step out of myself as a guitarist and become egoless when I play. Focus on the picture.

I'm afraid to say this but. . . I've found a wholly new approach to guitar playing!
An interpretive, picture approach.

Could this be an egoless reason to play in public?

If I ever play in public again, it has to be egoless.

Focus on the picture, the wasp's nest, creating the egoless state.

Could I create this state in other activities I do? How about teaching folk dancing? Start tonight. How about expanding egoless to tours, sales, stock market trading, social relations, performances, everything I do?

Make egoless my focus, the place to be, my next state.

So ends a New Leaf.