

Playland Life

Thursday, January 6, 2005

Dare to Heal!

Talking to Deena Ressler about her Klezmer CD. I had lots to ask and say to her.

Perhaps one of my job is to motivate and inspire the next generation. David said I should become a healer. I understood what he was talking about even though I don't relate to healers. Yet I know what healing is.

Inspiring, motivating others may be my form of healing.

Eleni's husband died. I visited her a few times, talked to her. She liked many of the things I said. Perhaps the above applies to Eleni as well.

I'm also thinking about Dottie Rollenhagen's arthritic neck problem. Is there anything I could do about it? If I can heal my knee, make its sudden pain go away, through internal Chi relaxation technique, could I do the same for Dottie?

Is the above hubris or simple truth? Self-doubt rears its ugly head. Yet deep within me, I know the above is true.

Dare to heal!

Dare to heal myself. . . and others. That may be my next mantra.

I could start with my left shoulder.

No question my folk dance teaching heals others. But it is such an indirect approach. Don't I feel uncomfortable with "direct" healing? The idea of "I will heal you" (or maybe more modest is: "I will try to heal you.")

But the vibrations of folk dancing do cure; so do those of guitar playing. So I know about healing; I even know that I can do it. But it has always been and come as a by product of art. An accident, even a footnote. I have not been and do not feel "responsible" for the healing results. And yet, I am.

Truth is, I am mostly afraid to take responsibility. I always feel that God cures; I simply stand around and do my thing. In the process, the higher forces step in, take over, and, in their own mystical and powerful way, heal.

These higher powers work with and through me. I am merely a pawn in its game.

This may all be true. Although the higher forces released through art may be ultimately responsible, nevertheless, there is no question that part of me is doing this. I can thus remain modest and still truthfully say that I am “partly” responsible.

I am partly responsible for healing. That’s a start.

I have no problem with my “indirect healing.” (I almost said indirect healing “touch.” The word “touch” may be too much for me now.) But I am inching towards an admission of, taking responsibility for, direct healing.

If I could “direct heal,” what would that mean? Isn’t it hubris-filled and arrogant? Would I not worry that I am fooling myself, becoming messianic, getting really crazy, moving beyond the pale of humanhood? I worry about letting myself slip into arrogance, breaking the second commandment, and, worshiping myself as an idol instead of God Himself?

And yet, I would be doing good by trying to heal others.

Isn’t the title Healer, arrogant? How can one dare say they have to power to heal others? And yet they do.

Of course, ultimately, only the healee can decide if he or she is healed. This decision is arrived at independently and has nothing to do with the healer.

Isn’t my problem of healing similar to my problem of sales. I am afraid I will force my product down someone else’s throat, force my will upon them, and they will have no choice but to succumb. . .and buy something they really don’t want. I hear the voice of my mother and all the communists ringing in my ears. Dirty capitalist pigs! Crooked salesmen! Lying thieves! These words are not a good healing start.

So, just as I have learned to mistrust my sales power, so I may have learned to mistrust my healing power. After all, what is healing: It is simply making someone feel good.

Seen this way, making someone feel good is not so complicated. Perhaps healing, like folk dancing, is really not so complicated. And since I know how to teach folk dancing directly, I may well know how to “heal directly.” But it is a stretch and new direction for me.

I could start by thinking of myself as a Folk Dance Healer.

Can mere presence heal? Well, when I am among people and I think a certain way, it can.

How can I get faith in my healing techniques? How can I be more certain that they work?

Only by seeing their effects on myself? Do they work on me? Can I cure myself? Can I swish my energy around, direct it to various parts of my body, and, in the process, heal myself?

If I can do this, it gives me confidence. Then I can direct the confidence outward to others.

Much of this may be a question of: Daring to go public with my wisdom. . . .It is an advanced form of daring to have confidence. . .in myself.

Healers have a direct connection to God. Otherwise they couldn't heal. No wonder this makes me nervous, questions my confidence.

The healer opens up the channels in the healee. When these channels are open,

the healee then heals him or herself.

Thus the healer serve as an instrument through which the healee opens up his or her own energy and self-healing sources.

Ultimately, the sick heal themselves. . . with help from their friends.

Every morning I wake up in disrepair. My task is to heal myself.

When I teach folk dancing (or perform any other public activity) I also start off in disrepair. It is also my task to heal myself. In the process of healing myself, I heal others.

As a teacher, group leader, (even member of a group), we all start off in disrepair. In it our collective task to heal ourselves. This can be facilitated by a group leader.

As a group leader (and thus a “member” of the group), when the leader is healed the group is healed.

Thus, as always, the first task of the leader is to heal him or her self; in the process, the group will be healed as well.

Self-healing (self-“wholing”), self-unity really, is always the only way to go. The ensuing unity is then projected outwards.

Friday, January 7, 2005

My left shoulder problem may be related to too much computer use.

It didn't take that long to understand it. The “vacation” is over. Now I understand the concept of Chi. I've gone as far as I can go with it.

Now comes the question of applying it: applying what I know, where, when, and in what I do.

Sunday, January 9, 2005

Long Term Ideas

Increased focus: One language a year. Until Sept. 2005

1. Bulgarian

2. Computer Study

Oct. 2005-??2006

1. Hebrew

Monday, January 10, 2005

Return

"Sideline" and Centrality

Maybe it is time to return to being a guitarist. . . and an artist.

Wasn't this originally, what I wanted to do and be anyway? In the process of recent changes, successes, and developments, this goal and centrality of my personality has somehow drifted away.

But now that I have completed all (or most of) my work, and I ask what now, and, more important, a type of cosmic depression has descended upon me, in the morning, and during the day, I ask "Why am I here? What is the ultimate purpose and meaning of my existence?"

Reading, studying, business, all are important. But to find the central theme and juice in my personality, my spirit and God connection, I have always found it in art and in being an artist.

It may well be time to return. to reassess, to re-enter.

Thus, the next stage may well be recording and publishing of my work, my art creations.

1. It means guitar. . .and song publishing through CD creations.

2. It means book publishing. . .through New Leaf creations, and more editing of old leaves

3. Of course, during the rebirth of this renewed "artistic period" I will continue to promote my tours, weekends, folk dance classes, bookings, and any other aspects of

the JGI business. But they now become a “sideline.” And this, even though I may spend mucho time at them.

What will be the centrality, the renewed centrality? Art, artist, guitarist, writer.

New Year’s End of “Success Transition”

This means that with the New Year my “success transition” period, the “I’ve done it all before” period is coming to a close. . . . Nay, further than that. . .It is over.

Straight into the Playpen

Straight into the artistic playpen.

A new hierarchy and structure begins.

What does “artist” mean to me?

Artist means music, writing, and art (drawing/painting)

1. Music: Guitar, songs: CD production. Learn Home Studio.
2. Writing: New Leaves, more: Book production. Learn Quark.
3. Art: Web design: Learn Photoshop

In terms of centrality, artist means music. And the branches of music: Writing. . .the music of drawing/painting; words as an extension and expression of music. Art. . .the music of drawing and line, the music of shapes and color.

I’m a Muse and Mus-ic kind of guy.

Plus, find the pros who do this!

Returning to my art as an older man, an experienced man.

Returning Home

If I look at my twenty-five year history, the arc of my history. . . I am returning home. Odysseus returns to his art house, his art home in Ithaca.

There is no more “reason” for me not to be able to play the Alhambra, Leyenda, and Flamencan arpeggios.

“Reason?” This means I have been consciously, unconsciously, blocking my return home. . . for twenty-five and/or more years.

Somehow, subconsciously, I could not “allow” myself to play these pieces until I returned home.

This means I can now play them; at last I am allowed. I have been released.

Forty Years in the Desert

Maybe it's more that twenty-five years; maybe it's thirty-five years. Maybe it's forty years. Forty hears in the desert.

Maybe Greeks need less time than Jews. How many years was Odysseus away? (I sense twenty-five but research reveals it was twenty). Whereas we knows Moses was away for forty. (That's twice as many as Odysseus).

Maybe a Jew needs forty years in the desert, forty years of wandering before he can return home.

Tuesday, January 11, 2005

Running

Should I start a Running Journal?

Writing a Running Journal symbolizes a deeper commitment to not only running, but to transitioning in and out of running and a focus on the between-run life (this means the stretches, rests, etc.), as well as running itself.

It would indeed be a new beginning.

I guess the question I am really asking is: Am I really at a new beginning? Am I really serious about starting over? If yes, how serious? Am I at a Chi Running style

new start?

Isn't the above a type of Return, a Returning Home as well. (There is purposefully no question mark at the end of above sentence.)

If I start a Running Journal how will it be different from the one I started many years ago?

Some basic beginning questions:

1. Should I create a separate hand-written running journal (similar to the one I started many years ago)? Often and usually written with after sweat of the run.)
2. Should I create a separate Running Journal written on and with the computer?
3. If I decide to write on the computer, should I make this journal part of my daily New Leaf writing? Put it under the rubric of Running.

Today's Danny Dreyer Chi Running formula for success is: form, distance, and speed. . . in that order.

(Would this also apply to guitar. . . and more? Maybe.)

Slower Folk Dance Teaching

Last night at folk dancing Avi said, "We're getting too wild." "Too wild," in my opinion, meant teaching and moving too fast. I agree with Avi.

My Achilles heel in folk dance teaching is that I often teach too fast.

Slower folk dance teaching would be a challenge for me. Slower folk dance teaching is a form of controlled wildness.

How can I make it a challenge to myself? How can I keep my interest and nervousness at bay in and through slower teaching?

Controlled Wildness

Thank you, Avi. This is about controlling my wildness so that I can communicate it to others. It's not a suppression of wildness, a repression of the "running wild on the lawn." Rather it is about controlled wildness.

Adrienne

I was also too quick in telling Adrienne about leading the line "backwards," that is, with people back to back. My telling her made her nervous. After all, it was her first time leading. She was probably self-conscious to begin with. I should have waited and watched. I jumped too fast.

Wednesday, January 12, 2005

Habits

To establish my new Chi running habit, run every day for forty days. (Then see what happens and again decide where to go and what to do.)

The goal here is to maintain good form! It is holding on to your focus, your focus on form. It is repeating and holding the form focus over time and distance. It's about quality not quantity.

As for whether to use a hand-written or computer written running journal: Use both!

Set up my forty day running program right now. Write down the forty days, the forty dates in my hand-written running journal right now.

This forty day model can, should (and will) be applied to other aspects of my life. . . although I'm not sure right now which ones.

For inspiration, see Tiger Woods story on page 125. It took him nineteen months. And he got worse before he got better.

Running and (is) Warm-Downs

Runs are always followed by a warm-down stretch program. The warm-down is part of the running program. Thus, when I say “run” I mean all aspects: Running and follow through warm-downs.

“Sleepy Spot”

All the above is also true for guitar practice.

Maybe that guitar “sleepy spot” is the border of the Deepest Relaxation, and thus the border (entrance to) the Deepest Energy Source.

But evidently (or perhaps), to enter, I must fall asleep first.

It is such a deep, profound, and beautiful sleep. Total oblivion. What is it? Why am I there? What does it mean?

Yoga, squats, and push-ups: Can you simultaneously relax a muscle as you tighten it?

Perhaps try it mentally: When tightening a muscle, think you are relaxing it: Call tightening, relaxation. See what happens. Experiment on and with “up-stroke” in squats and push-ups.

Thursday, January 13, 2005

Turn My Ventures and Adventures into Art Forms

I read an article in the Wall Street Journal this morning entitled The Post-Saddam Boom. It said that investment in the Middle East has risen everywhere; in fact, it has leaped. (You’d never know about this optimism by reading the main stream media, which is mostly full of gloom and doom about the present and future of the Middle East.)

In any case, what does this mean for me? It means that soon, eventually, perhaps even next year, I can start running tour to the Middle East again. I can start with Israel

in spring of 2006. Then perhaps add Egypt, and even return to Tunisia. I can do Morocco. The Middle East may (will) open up again.

And I always loved studying the Semitic languages, and especially writing in Arabic.

All this means returning to old forms, old places, old ideas. It means restarting them. All were good to begin with. But I have to restart them, give them a new and renewed birth. One way of return would be looking upon all these ventures as art forms.

Since art is my core and center, my question would be: How to turn my ventures and adventures into art forms?

Turning my life into an art form means: responding to life situations, from my business calls, folk dance teaching, guitar playing, to running, yoga, and the fifties, with the right mix of focuses and movements.

Look at Chi Running pages 127-28 for a beginning.

Non-Artistic Life

When my mind is scattered, jumping, and overwhelmed by contradictory thoughts – so many things I must do – this is a perfect example of how not to focus, function, and run my life with the art forms of an artist.

This is the negative way to look at jumping; it sees the jumping mind as “driving the artist into the dirt” concept. It is the “overwhelmed by jumping” idea.

Focused Flexibility

However, there is another way of looking at it: If I see the jumping itself as part of the art form, as part of the flexibility involved, a focused flexibility, even a “focused jumping,” then I can easily jump from one thing to another.

The Flickering Return of “Why Bother?” Resistance

The only direction I can and want to go is: Rebirth of the old. I love all my “old” Jim Gold International activities. Yet, there was a point where they had been “done.” This was the “I’ve been there, done that” stage.

Well, that transitional stage is ending. I’m moving fully into rebirth, reincarnation, metamorphosis.

Notice one of my reactions, a resistance to this rebirth. It is the old: “Why bother?” syndrome. Why bother? I’m too old. I see myself dying up the road, pretty soon, too. In say, ten years, twenty years, really when doesn’t matter. The fact is, no matter what I do, death lies ahead of me. So, why bother? Why bother doing or trying anything?

An old, old neighborhood disease. I see it, know it, understand it; yet it returns anyway.

What to do? Look it straight in the face. . . . It will slowly dissolve. Then move on.

Build up my tour company so I can start traveling again.

Start 2006 plans. Israel, certainly Romania in the summer.

Focused Flexibility: The ability to jump from one thing to another. . . in a focused manner.

Life’s art form, the art form of life, how to turn life into an art form is based on (the perhaps acquired skill of) focused flexibility.

Friday, January 14, 2005

Sales as an Exciting and Stimulating Adventure!

Divide my sales calls and pursuits between:

1. Calls to old customers on my mailing list: the “good potentials” and others.
2. The pursuit and explorations of New Markets. This will start with

explorations for the Norway and Iceland tour. My job will be to find Norwegian and Scandinavian folk dance groups throughout the country. Start with them. Call Lee Otterholt. Does he know any? Then search the web.

This “new approach” would be called “Adventures in New Markets.” I could even be exciting; an exciting exploration. New people, new markets. Perhaps new people equal new markets, or vice versa, new markets equal new people. I emphasize the new, the excitement of the new.

Perhaps finding such “new” has been the missing link in my sales program. It could turn sales from a drag into an exciting and stimulating adventure. Is this asking too much? We’ll see.

What are Folk Dances?

This new markets, new people concept also applies to the new Mario Battista Salsa Workshop I just booked for my Monday night folk dance group on March 21st. I’ll promote it with the hope of not only attracting former folk dancers, but new dancers, new people as well.

Maybe I can even expand my folk dance classes through some social dance workshops. Actually, salsa, rhumba, samba, meringue, mambo are not “social dances,” (whatever that is), but Latin folk dances.

Is that true? In general, are so-called “social dances” really folk dances in disguise? Are the labels, “social” and “folk” really false distinctions? After all, it is “folk” who do both kinds of dances.

Dances: Are Salsa, Rhumba, Samba, Meringue, and Mambo really folk dances in disguise? Why not?

Tours: Will such an exploration and study eventually bring me run a tour to South America (or at least Dominican Republic) in order to learn more about these dance forms? Hmmm.

I'll call Mario to find out. Perhaps he'll even want to run a tour to Latin America with me. . . He and I? (A la Lee and Yves tours) Hmmm. What a learning experience that would be!

"In Chi Running, speed does not come from pushing; it comes from an increased ability to focus and relax." Danny Dreyer.

This is no doubt true in all my other activities, especially guitar playing, yoga, folk dancing. . . and even business. Business? How business. . . and sales? Something to think about.

Dance Distinctions Breaking Down

Maybe I am limiting myself by calling the dancing I teach and do "folk" dancing. What is "folk" dancing, but folks dancing. That means all folks. It also means, on one level, no distinctions or separations between the many "forms" of dancing. True, there are many forms. But there is only one dance, one Dance. And on one level, it is the dance people do, all people, All People. On another level, it is the dance of nature and of the universe.

Both people and the Universe, dance. I'm not concerned with that philosophical fact now. But I am concerned with personal expansion, expansion of my so-called "folk" dance vision, and expansion of my dancing and of dance, in general.

The first step might be to expand my definition of "folk" dancing. This would now include all folk dancing, and thus, all forms of people dancing. People Dance might be a good name for it.

I don't yet know how such a view would effect my vision of "folk" choreography, but it certainly would.

Would such "performing arts" as ballet, modern, jazz and etc. dancing be part of "folk" dancing? Why not? People do them.

You might say they are done on stage and are thus "performed" dances or

performing arts. But so-called “international folk dances” are also done on stage, performed. Witness the Tamburitzans, Moiseyev, and hundreds. more.

Thus, on one level, all the dance distinctions are breaking down. We’ll see where this leads me.

Form are different; they change. But Dance is Universal.

Wouldn’t all this talk also be true for guitar playing? Yes, there are differences in styles, distinctions between forms; but ultimately, there is only one guitar playing, one Guitar Playing. And this is done by people.

Thus, classical, folk, jazz (and other) guitar playing is really One Guitar Playing. It is all done on an acoustic guitar. Electric guitar is a different instrument. Thus, its playing, (rock and roll, etc.) is not in the same “guitar” category. . . . Or is it?

Am I being too narrow? On the other hand, I usually hate the sound of an electric guitar. (The only possible opening and stretching here is hidden in the word “usually.”)

In any case, I can see somehow combining, in some form (maybe composition, “guitar choreography) the acoustic guitar forms found in classical, folk, and jazz. (Here I could find, at least personally, the One Guitar Playing and One Guitar Player.)

Flying off to Sarasota with the Klezmer Connection, Michele, Dima, Joe, and Dan for the Bar Mitzvah of Jason Katz, son of Wendy and Michael Katz.

Took a long walk in s Sarasota suburb around our Country Inn and Suites.

Saturday, January 15, 2005

Morning in Sarasota.

As I edit my New Leaf 4, it is somewhat frightening, awesome, and awe inspiring to see how good the writing is. Nevertheless, I am improving and tightening

each entry.

But the importance of Barry's editing, cutting out my repetitions, might well be what makes the reading so good. I can't talk about what he has left out, but what he has left in, is readable, excellent, and fine.

Tighten and clarify: that is my New Leaf 4 job. Put light and power into each sentence.

On Chi exercise style:

It is very hard to believe that relaxing will make you stronger; hard to believe that relaxing muscles will make them stronger.

But it will.

The difficulty and challenge is to break the hold of old thinking habits.

If Beethoven, my hero and model, could write nine symphonies, why can't I write nine New Leaves.

What, if any, is the significance of nine?

Ludwig von Beethoven: Symphony Number 1, 2, 3. . . .

Jim Gold: New Leaf 1, 2, 3. . . .

Sunday, January 16, 2005

Chi Debt Paying

Indeed, my debt is too results oriented.

Make paying off the debt process oriented.

The Chi debt focus: What is it?

The Overwhelmed Feeling: Focusing the Mind

Wanting to pay off my debt immediately, result-oriented debt paying may well be part of the overwhelmed feeling. Thus I “have to do it at once” in order to free myself of this feeling of being overwhelmed.

Of course, this created impatience, unhappiness, and more. And the question arises, once I have succeeded in paying it off, in removing the overwhelmed feeling, another overwhelmed feeling comes along to take its place.

Indeed, a part of me must want to be overwhelmed. Even though I hate it, I must like it, too.

Why?

First, overwhelmed give me a sudden purpose, function, and focus. My focus is to immediately or as quickly as possible free myself from being overwhelmed.

I jump from scattered mind to focused mind, from monkey mind to Chi mind. This aspect of overwhelmed is good.

Thus, the bad part of overwhelmed is not the overwhelmed part, but rather the feeling of being overwhelmed. That feeling is one of claustrophobia, suffocating under my burden.

But again, I create this feeling. Thus, part of me must want to feel claustrophobic, want the motivation of escaping from such suffocation.

Thus, in a subtle way, the feeling (of overwhelmed) is creating motivation; I am motivating myself by focusing on how to escape from suffocation. . . and ultimately, death.

Going deeper, is the overwhelmed feeling really based on the fear of death? Am I creating this fear in order to motivate and focus my mind? Probably and possibly.

How interesting and strange this mind is.

Thus by accepting and dealing with the overwhelmed feeling, I fight against sliding off the cliff, and prevent a hurtling descent into the abyss of death.

Starting today, I shall embrace Overwhelmed. Better overwhelmed than to die. That’s the concept. And I agree.

Do not try to escape the Overwhelmed Feeling: Rather. Embrace and use it as a focus tool.

The nature of mind is to drift and jump.

The mind needs to focus in order for happiness to occur.

Focus equals happiness.

The overwhelmed feeling is related to the fear of death.

Fear of death focuses the mind.

It forces you into the "channels of happiness."

This is not a bad thing.

A Place in the Future or Living the After-Life

If fear of death helps motivate and focus my mind in this life, would fear of life help motivate and focus me in the after life?

I'm talking here about fear of rebirth, reincarnation, and never wanting to return to this painful worldly material existence.

I've heard souls enjoy the after-life; few want to return to this world. Rather than return to earth for a visit, they'd rather have their soul mates and friends join them up there. "Things are good here," they say, "Real peaceful. Why would any of us want to return? Like a women in Florida said, "I should have come here years ago." How did I know the after life would be so relaxed and easy going. No pressures. A pleasant, non-material floating existence. This is real retirement! No worries about pension plans or social security payments. Indeed, I should have done it years ago."

Worldly people say, "Who wants death when you can have life?" But those up above say, "Who wants life when you can have death?"

I am presently, attached to my body. I don't want to lose it. But posthumously, I may happily say, "Who needs it?"

Chi re-examining of 50's and number orientation:

Maybe my 50's and numbers are result-oriented goals (not process oriented.) Big hmmm here.

Monday, January 17, 2005

Guitar: I may fall asleep when I warm-up with scales and arpeggios in the morning because I tense my breath, and even stop breathing.

It may be a breath question. And this may be true of all my pre-performance "anxiety." The tension causes me to hold my breath, stop breathing, and even fall asleep.

This is because I am skirting the excitement, not diving into it, avoiding the upcoming and rising passion.

I am also trying to gather, maintain, center, focus on, and hold my energy. (This is partly successful; the partly unsuccessful part is shown in the fact that I fall asleep.)

Wake up should come (and usually does) when I finally do dive into my passion. This is the desert at the end of my warm-ups, playing my pieces, playing full out, giving them my all. True in exercises, too.

How can I change this?

How can I focus more fully and more quickly?

First recognize the Chi center.

Next question, challenge, and practice: How long can I hold my focus on the Chi center?

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

Guitar: Principles of Chi Left Hand Relaxation

Principle of Chi application: Relaxed Chi bar.

Left hand, relaxed, Chi-principled Alhambra and Leyenda "limp bar" practice.

I have never focused on left hand relaxation as an impediment to Alhambra (and

Leyenda and arpeggio)relaxation. This could be a new development.

Focus on left hand relaxation, and left hand bar relaxation for all my pieces. This kind of practice has rarely, if at all, probably never, been done.

Indeed, a new (or at least a further) development.

Singing: apply Chi principles to singing.

Focus on relaxing limbs, arms and legs while running and vocalizing in place; straight line going through body a la running style.

Loose, relaxed, "limp" throat (What is that?)

Certainly loose, relaxed, "limp" shoulders and neck.

See (focus on) the abdominal Chi center, too.

Wednesday, January 19, 2005

Speed is a By Product of Proper Form

Guitar and running (and dancing): Speed is a by product of proper form; proper form is a by product of proper (concentration and) focus. Perfect focus is proper form.

"Limp Finger Touch"

Focus on dan tien during Alhambra and Leyenda; limp arms and fingers. Think from dan tien through limp arms to (through) limp fingers. The "limp finger touch."

Power through the dan tien creates the "limp finger touch."

Give Chi reading a rest (a month?) to absorb the lessons.

The rest of the week is computer study and some calls.

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Bliss Mode

Could it be that the post-transition results are in and that the results are that I am there and there is no other place to go?

I've passed through the "run wild on the lawn" and "thriving on chaos" phases. It took twenty years, maybe longer, maybe thirty. Well, whatever. During that period I've traced out my field, my country, my garden. I like my field, country, and garden. I've traced the perimeters. I don't want to go beyond the borders; also, even if I wanted to, I can't. There is no place "new" to go. The "I've been there, done that" feeling pervades all.

I am in a new place. What is it called? The old place. As Voltaire hinted: I've planted my garden, now I am cultivating it.

I live in the world of the known. Although there is work and surprises up ahead, nevertheless, the old inner sense of wanting, needing, looking for panic, fear, thriving on chaos, running wild on the lawn motivations is dribbling, or has dribbled, to a halt.

I stand in my field; I cultivate my garden. Period.

This is not a bad place to be.

But it is certainly a different place. It is a different mode, a different feeling, a different pace. I've never been here before. I am simply not used to it.

The feeling is one of pleasant, peaceful, calm even bordering on blissful. Again, not a bad place to be. Only it feels so strange. Paradoxically, new in an old way.

I've worked hard to create my garden. Now I am being "forced" to live in and cultivate it.

I'm sure there will be some "new" up ahead. But it seems I will be experiencing it from the "different pace and mode" perspective of my garden.

I am, evidently, moving in the slower vibrations of pleasant, peace, calm, and bordering on bliss.

Should I call this "bliss?" Dare I call it bliss? Bliss is such a high state; it lives almost beyond achievement. It is the fruit experienced and tasted once I have accepted the "been there, done that" feeling.

Is that why Chi Running has been so attractive? I am ready to look into, experience, and even accept the bliss mode.

I haven't accepted it yet. Today is the first day I realize it might be the feeling that is "bothering" me, the confused state I am in when I ask the question: "Where am I now?"

Yet the word is coming up, softened by the word "even." Pleasant, peaceful, calm, and "even bliss."

The bliss mode. Hmmm. . . .and in the distance, Wow! Now there is an achievement!

What is "bliss mode?"

Sure I've got thing to do. I've got problems.

I've got problems to solve. But I don't have worries!

I've lost (much of) my need for worries, fears, and panics, chaos (thriving on it) as a motivating force.

As Columbus said after he sailed on his first voyage (learning the world was not flat, but round): "I still have problems in this world, but at least I won't fall off it."

If I am in the bliss state, if I accept that I am in the bliss mode, how will that affect my attitude towards sales calls? Towards tours, weekends, folk dance classes, booking, business in particular, studies, computer, writing, guitar, running, yoga, and life in general?

My miracle schedule activities always bordering on or at least, concerned themselves with, the bliss state. Not so my financial and business activities. Will that now change? Stay tuned and find out.

Bliss mode would be more an acceptance of the idea that nothing has changed but everything has changed.

I means I would be living on a different vibrational level.

Bliss mode: It's not a new business state, or a new artistic state. It's a new attitude state.

Is the bliss state the chi state? Probably. Or at least, bordering on it.

Suppose everything starts to go wrong, life falls apart, the plugs come out: will I still experience, feel, believe I am in bliss state, bliss mode? Will "been there, done that" still reign?

Does bliss state have nothing to do with events that take place daily in my life? It is a "beyond" state, existing beyond and past the vicissitudes of daily existence? Is there something eternal about it? Does it transcend the mundane? Does it have something to do with religion, God, and metaphysics? Does it put me in touch with an eternal, unifying principle?

If so, it should remain with me despite local ups and downs; it should stay with me beyond, or in spite of the pissings and moanings, highs and lows, of daily life.

We'll see.

Bliss and Chi

Is there a relationship between the bliss and Chi state?

Is that why the Chi Running so attracted me? It helped "explain," and incorporate, in running form, the bliss mode.

Locations: But bliss is in the brain, whereas Chi is in the abdomen, the dan tien.

Would their synthesis combine brain and abdomen into one, spinal, chord connecting, whole?

Friday, January 21, 2005

New Directions

1. Marketing
2. Graphic designer. . .Quark
(a. and sound engineer. . . Home Studio)
3. Bulgarian

4. Chi Running and all its associate approaches.

Somehow the study of marketing may lift me out of my narrow-minded, tour-beset self. It may create, for me, emotional some emotional distance, a broad-beamed painter's interest, and a student's perspective.

Notice I'm using the new, wider, concept-word "marketing" instead of the formerly dreaded, narrow-perspective word "sales."

Is this an end product, a result of the self-transformation process? Will I now be looking at marketing, not necessarily with dull, capitalist-and-entrepreneurial repressing equanimity, but rather through the lense of excitement, expanded perspective, and freedom! Wouldn't that be nice.

Freedom versus Peace

What is more important, peace or freedom? The peace process, or the process of moving towards freedom?

Who needs peace, if it is the peace of slavery?

I go for freedom.

Formerly, mostly through the meditation arts, I searched for inner peace. I never got it. Now I know why. Deep within, I never wanted inner peace. I wanted freedom.

As an artist, my first priority was always freedom.

Freedom, not peace. (Or perhaps, the latter as by product of the former.)
Freedom may lead to moments of inner peace; but the opposite is rarely true.

Freedom is obviously much more dangerous than peace. You have the freedom to succeed marvelously, but also the freedom to fail miserably; under freedom you are free to embrace life but also free to kill yourself.

Peace however, is a middle state without ups and downs. In order to maintain it, you have to push down the ups, and pull up the downs.

On the surface, peace sounds good. But in reality, there is quite a bit of force, even tyranny, in maintaining it. "Shut up. Keep things peaceful. Don't bother me!" These are often words that go with peace.

Freedom however, is often wild and wooly, directionless and chaotic, exciting and depressing.

I go for the wild ride. But I'll accept a quiet sail on the lake now and then.

Trauma Area Revisited

Guitar: The right hand, hypothenar relaxation area. Sending Chi between the thumb and fingers, connecting these two areas through a Chi bridge of deep relaxation and total focus.

This right hand hypothenar area is the trauma area that stiffened, froze, and set me back in my guitar playing over twenty-five years ago.

Right hand trauma revisited and replayed but this time under the guise and direction of a new (dan tien, Chi) confident self.

Disappearing Trauma

(The Need for Hypothenar Trauma Protection is Gone)

Maybe formerly the trauma was brought on by lack of confidence. I was facing the trauma of confidence. But now I have the confidence. The trauma is no longer

necessary. I don't "need" the trauma to protect myself anymore.

Hypothetar trauma is no longer necessary. It is turning into cotton, chased away by the infusion of Chi confidence.

Trauma protection need is gone. It can dissolve. . . and disappear.

Saturday, January 22, 2005

Leading the Playpen Life: Computer as Play Thing

In order to help my mind learn new techniques on the computer, the relax it in the learning of new programs, it would be best to see the computer as a play thing. Computer as playpen. That is the best approach.

Computer as plaything, and as Playpen. This may be, hopefully, the first step towards the Playpen Life. (What is the title of this New Leaf anyway, but Playpen.) Leading the Playpen Life is one of my goals

Guitar: Just as I no longer need the hypothetar trauma, I no longer need the sleep trauma, either.

Sunday, January 23, 2005

Art, Artists, Soul. . .and Marketing

Should I change careers, become a graphic artist, and thus move into the art world? (What a thing to say!) I need a new career, a new direction, something dynamic and different.

I could also go back into music, concerts and more. But there is not much direction to grow here. . .at least that's how I see it today.

What am I saying? Art and music, music and art, the arts, an artist. Am I moving "back" into the arts?

The trip to the library taught me something. After I searched and found the books on marketing on the Teaneck Library shelves, I felt nauseous. When I took them

out and gave my card to the librarian, I felt disgusted. As I drove away with them in my car, I felt empty.

Finally, when I read, or rather, “glanced” through them at home, and felt totally bored, I realized I would never read them. Next day I returned them to the library, went down to the shelves on Artist Lives, and took out books on Rubens and an autobiography of Thomas Hart Benton. The Benton book is great. I can’t put it down. How did he live? How did he make it and get along? How did he “market” his art and survive in the art world? Plus I am sympatico to him as an artist. How do artists survive, inspire, and get along? Here are subjects I am vitally interested in. Books on lives of the artists: These are real books on marketing!

The art of marketing. . . originating in and dribbling out of the soul.

Jump into the daring of the artistic life. It might return my sense of adventure!

Music, guitar, and performance: With the end of my need for trauma (signified by the end of hypothenear trauma need), where is there for me to musically go. . . in music and/or in guitar playing? What is there for me to conquer and learn?

The only direction I could think of a year or so ago, and until the present, was to explore my field and dig deep, go down and find adventures in depth exploration.

But now, with the end of my need for trauma, where is there musically and guitaristically to go?

I don’t know.

But it appears I have reached a type of ending. A guitaristic ending, a musical end.

Now what?

Recording?

Isn’t recording focusing on technological, not musical growth? Or is it a further exploration of musical and guitaristic depth? Or both?

(Or am I just blowing off here, trying to make words. forcing ideas out before their time?)

Discouragement and Depression

What is the difference between discouragement and depression?

On one level, depression is caused by anger turned inward.

On another artistic level, depression is the vacuum that precedes creation.

Perhaps both levels are tied together, but this morning, I don't know how.

Discouragement, on the other hand, is the voice of the Devil. It comes straight out of his mother. . . and is his best tool. It is the inner voice (often "confirmed" by outer voices) that says "No, you can't do it. It is impossible. Give up. Don't try."

Are depression and discouragement linked together in any way? I don't know. . . yet.

Old, No, and New

The last year (or more) of transition was to turn the ocean liner around, to find and change directions.

Now the ocean liner has been turned around; it faces a new direction. Time to move on, sail on, go on.

The death of old direction (past twenty-five years), death of no direction (transitional past year), the birth new direction (now).

Play all the (old) guitar pieces in the new Chi way. That's the start!

The Land of Actual Playing!

I wonder if my hypothenar trauma is related to my sleep trauma. In fact, I wonder if my sleep trauma is caused by my hypothenar trauma.

Thus my guitar practice is not so much a technical practice but rather a

psychological one. I am constantly and subtly exploring aspects of personal trauma in their musical (and guitaristic) form.

I am not trying to improve technically so much as “improve my understanding,” and move beyond this understanding to actual playing. Guitar practice is thus not technical, but rather psychological.

How to move beyond trauma, and even “beyond Chi,” and into the Land of Actual Playing!

Today I am now “playing” with trauma.

But by moving into the actual Land of Actual Playing, I would be tying my guitar playing to Playpen. And isn't this the name of my New Leaf?

Computer play, guitar play. Growing my Playpen.

The Playpen Life, The post-transitional, post-traumatic Playpen Life. What a lofty goal! A “return” to childhood. The fresh, pristine, childlike vision. Heart of the Playpen, God Himself. The resurgence and resurrection of spiritual climax.

Practicing the Playpen Life: Jump into Focus!

Can one actually practice the Playpen Life?

I could start by “playing with my traumas.”

Hypothenar trauma, sleep trauma, lack-of-focus or rather, jumping mind trauma.

Can jumping mind be called a trauma? Why not? It creates trauma. Or does trauma create jumping mind? Yogis say that jumping mind is the nature of mind. If this is so, then jumping mind comes first, and jumping mind creates trauma. Trauma is an expression of jumping mind. When the mind is focused, trauma disappears.

Oneness, unity, peace. . . and freedom are created.

Thus, in terms of focus, peace and freedom can go together. But in this sense, peace here means freedom, but not necessarily security.

Monkey mind is traumatic mind; it creates a mental zoo.

Make the mental leap: Jump into focus!

Monday, January 24, 2005

From Trauma Mode to Playpen Mode

Trauma mode, fear, and worry were once motivating forces.

I am moving beyond them.

I am moving beyond trauma mode.

It has dropped from my repertoire like an old fruit.

So far I have given up, dropped guitar trauma mode; this is true of yoga mode as well. Now I am giving up, dropping computer trauma mode, and with it, morning mode, and morning sales trauma mode.

In fact, I am in the process of giving up all my trauma modes. They have served their purpose; I no longer need them.

My now goal: Move from trauma mode to Playpen mode.

Chi mode (remembering, practicing, and incorporating it), and Playpen mode are somehow related.

Playpen Guitar

For me, Playpen mode and Chi mode are the same. Playpen mode is my name for it, Chi mode is the Chinese (and Danny Dreyer, Chi Running book) name for it.

But they are the same.

Now I am practicing Playpen Guitar.

Finger Tip Playpen

Fun, fat, furry, relaxed, sensual finger tips: Right-hand Finger Tip Playpen.

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Sales Turn

The reality is: Whatever work I chose to do, be it tours, weekends, folk dancing, guitar, whatever, most of my work will be selling. I might as well sell something that makes money,

What makes (or can) make money?

1. Organizational skills: Tours and weekends.
2. Guitar: School assembly programs and guitar students
3. Guitar, folk dance, or both: Club dates.

Notice folk dance classes are not on this list. They may be “fun” and feed the base, but they do not (at least for now) make money.

Or maybe, I’m feeling discouraged because tourwise, to my surprise, I’ve finished ninety percent of my sales work. I’ve called my “good potential” customer list; I’ve placed all my print ads. Next month I’ll probably do a mini-mailing and few mop-up, “good potential” customer calls. Minimal known work.

Web and Internet as a Sales Tool

The only new tour-sales element is exploring the web: Send out E-mail tour itineraries to all known folk dance groups. I’ll try this for a month, see where it leads.

I wonder: can I also explore school assembly, guitar students, and club date sales through the web? Hmmm.

Guitar: Diving into the trauma. Vaguely, it feels disgusting. Part of me feels disgusted. I wonder why.

Perhaps the disgust is the return of the old neighborhood “No!” to diving in.

Later: Now I’m going to hide out in my bed from the emotional avalanche.

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Dreams

I am so much into the public world. Will I forget my private one?

Have I given up my dreams? Am I too “tired” to follow them, or simply temporarily discouraged by low folk dance class attendance?

Do I, at the moment, even have any dreams?

Or have I given up these private creations in order to pursue my public, money-making agenda?

And, if I lose the balance between private and public, will I lose my soul as well?

These are good “down-asking” questions to ask as the private world of my post-traumatic guitar playing starts to fly!

Talk about a dream being realized!

I may have to build new Leyenda right hand thumb callouses.

Thursday, January 27, 2005

Preparation, Editing, and Publishing New Leaves

A Good-In-Itself. . . and My Only Choice

Sense of Purpose Returns

Once again I feel I have lost the driving beat, the purposeful, forceful, forward sense. And this, even though my guitar is rolling, and the Alhambra finger-tip touch is flying.

I feel it in writing. Where is my writing going? I have piles of New Leaf journals to be read, and published. But they remain unprepared, unedited, and thus, unfinished.

I see this editing as mop up work. It is aimed at completion, and the public; it unites personal and private with sales.

Am I not facing the mountain of editing work that lies ahead? Plus the fact that, once finished, I face the real possibility of no external monetary and recognition rewards. No public okays, no sales.

The latter is a truth and a deep one. Yet no sales, although an annoyance, is not

exactly what is stopping me from this gigantic editing and publishing task. What may be stopping me is herculean nature of the task itself.

In this sense, visiting Eleni was good for me. She is not publishing her best historic work on economics, banking, and perhaps the Ottoman Empire, she is not realizing her personal dream, and neither am I. I encouraged her to publish. I also face a own publishing problem. Am I now ready to encourage, nay insist, that I prepare, edit, and publish my own works, my own New leaves?

Why would I do this? Why put in so much work, if there are no public rewards up ahead, no sales. Why pile up more books in my basement? Why put in all this work “for nothing?”

Maybe I should do it because editing, preparing, and publishing all the Leaves of New Leaf is a Kantian good-in-itself.

It also has cosmic significance: Writing and publishing my works is one of the reasons I was put on earth.

These are two fundamental truths. By not plunging into this necessary, but often distasteful, preparation, editing, and publishing work, I am opening myself up to the overwhelming, cosmically depressing feeling that life is purposeless, directionless, and meaningless. This feeling is, indeed, a killer. Since I prefer life over death, by fighting to prepare, edit, and publish New Leaves, I am actually fighting for my life! I am choosing life over death! A wise choice, indeed.

The very fact that cosmic depression consumes me when I do not write, or not work to fulfill my dreams, demonstrates that I’m on the wrong track, or rather, no track at all. Lost without purpose, wandering trackless and without energy, in a desert of meaninglessness.

There “is no choice” for me. I must prepare, edit, and publish all my New Leaves. It is part of my central life’s work. I will not be satisfied until it is done, or at least until the task is tackled. As Jews say at Passover, “Although we may not complete the task, we must constantly work towards liberation.”

God has Spoken!

The above is a statement of purpose par excellence. My life has returned to meaning and direction. I have been given my universal marching orders. God has spoken!

Sadness and Creativity

There is a deep sadness to the completion of my Alhambra project. And yet, I love the sadness.

Why do I love it?

Perhaps by loving it, I am embracing the burning dynamic of my soul, the heart and essence of creativity.

Perhaps creativity begins in sadness, in its post-exhaustion, hollowed out center.

Dream Recovery

But maybe that's why I have been feeling somewhat good in the last couple of days: I am on the cusp of recovering my dreams.

Learning computer is a necessity, not a worship.

Friday, January 28, 2005

Totally New Way of Guitar Practicing

It's over, it's over! I will never again play that slow, torturous, "wrong" Alhambra again!

I cried in sadness for my loss, the old ways are over, have ended . . . and in happiness for my gain, the new, trauma-free, flowing Alhambra way has begun!

I am thus introducing a totally new way of practicing the guitar! The loose, relaxed, free-and-chi, fast, free-flowing way.

This is true in fast-flowing flamencan scales (picado) as well as arpeggios.

Saturday, January 29, 2005

Meditations on Perfection

The best a human being can do is to achieve perfection.

What is perfection?

Perfection is perfect focus.

I can achieve perfection. . . for a few moments at a time.

Start this morning by playing the guitar perfectly, with a perfect focus, for a few moments.

Then try increasing the length of focus time.

These attempts to increase focus will spread into running, yoga, and hopefully, everything else I do.

Thus, work to increase the length of my perfection time; work to increase (and intensify) focus.

Guitar: Learning, through the power of focused relaxation, to climb inside my left hand bar muscle. Relax my left hand as I play bar chords.

Perfection is perfect focus: I wander in and out of it all day long.

Perfection is not difficult to achieve; but it is difficult to maintain.

Horror stories, death, and destruction also belong to the Playpen/Playland Theater and are thus part of the Playpen of Playland Life.

Playland Life, the ability to live in the Playpen and focus on its perfection, is based on accepting the unreality of transience, and seeing through the illusion of material reality. Life in the Playpen, Playland life, is founded on intuitive, metaphysical

truth: the intimate knowledge and relationship with the One.

Sunday, January 30, 2005

Last night, with Bill and Sue, we listened to my newly issued World of Guitar CD. It made me sad because, among other things, it brought so much happiness, joy, and pleasure to Bill and Sue.

Evidently, seeing my talents in full flower, seeing how they give pleasure both to myself and others, joy makes me sad.

If such joy makes me sad, I wonder if sadness makes me joyful! Hmmm.

Why not? Such a contradiction and paradox seems "reasonable" to me. After all, if depression precedes creation, then I need to be depressed before I start creating. Creating is dynamic, fulfilling, focused, and joyful. Wouldn't I then, secretly, anticipate such joy during its preamble, my sadness otherwise called my "cosmic depression?"

Again, why not? Seems reasonable to me.

If all this is true, then joy is sadness, and sadness is joy. They are blended and mixed together. Sadness contains the seeds of future joy with it, and joy contains the seeds of future sadness with in it. We're talking her about "creative" sadness, the "depression" that precedes creation.

What about life's tragedies and woes? Could they also be counted as the sadness that precedes joy? I doubt it. But a deeper view of metaphysical truths might prove me wrong here. I hope so. But I may be stretching it.

In nay case, on a creative level, there seems to be no question that sadness and joy are deeply related, two sides of the same coin, really.

If joy is sadness, and sadness is joy, welcome them both.

Sadness is related to the "melancholy of creation." These grey clouds precede the storm. After the torrential rains, skies clear and the sun comes out.

Yes, no question about it: I have a slight headache this morning from the joy playing my CD gave others and myself last night.

Monday, January 31, 2005

Truly this anti-Bush, anti-American, anti-war attitude borders on a mental disease, a sickness.

What a victory are the Iraqi elections! The nay sayers flooding the media, the Democratic Party, the so-called "liberals," the anti-war nuts, all have been pushed into total irrelevance.

What will they counter with now? Their views have become truly laughable. . . and besides the point.

New Guitar Playing and Singing Freedom

What To Do With It?

1. Play the fifteen minutes straight of warm-ups. Standard and daily. (Follow same pattern with yoga and calliyoga).

2. Question of the day and future: What will I do with this "terrible" fact: The barrier has been broken. . . and I am now free?

I hate hanging (I am uncomfortable) in the limbo of freedom. I like direction, and a meaningful goal.

What will I do with my new guitar playing and singing freedom?

Guitar Playing and Singing Goals

Performing and Recording

There are inward and outward goals.

1. Inward goals are artistic ones. They deal with such questions as "Do I play well?"

2. Outward goals concern others. I see only two of them: Performance and recording.

I feel I have "completed" my artistic goals. (Of course, one has never really

completed artistic goals. One grows forever. . .either up or down. Nevertheless, after almost thirty years of playing, for now, “temporarily,” as for artistry on the guitar, I’ve gone as far as I need to go.)

Thus the only goals I can see up ahead are performing ones. Recordings would be an adjunct to my public performances.

Are performances really up ahead? Will I want to put in the energy and time to pursue them, to reestablish my performing career? It is truly the only direction I see, the only direction there is to go. But do I want it?

We’ll see.

It seems I am inexorably moving in that direction. Perhaps I’ll know more in the fall. Now I still have to fill up this year’s tours.

Performing and recording

1. It means, among other things, bringing all my folk songs back, my originals and my group and standards, my foreign ones, all.

2. It means resurrecting and recording all my classical pieces, and maybe even my original classical guitar compositions.

3. It means finding places to perform them, all of them.

Shall I start in Florida? Is this the bigger “meaning” of this year’s Florida Folk Dance Camp booking?

Is there anything I can find that will motivate me to practice my singing? It has never been a problem. Therefore, why and what will I, can I, “work” on, to improve myself? Nothing I can think of, at the moment.

This attitude has now spread into the guitar.

I have, at the moment, in singing and guitar playing, something to maintain, but

nothing to improve.

Thus I have “nothing to do.” (Or certainly, very little.) I know I have to maintain things; I do not know that I have to improve. Maintenance means “little to do.”

The Art of Being

Perhaps, like the fifteen minutes of necessary guitar warm-ups, I should practice guitar and singing, simply do it, and shut up. Never mind looking for new, fancy meanings and motivations. Maybe I am at a new stage. Maybe I have moved “beyond” meanings and motivations.

Perhaps I am the meaning; I am the motivation.

This art of being could be my new way of looking at it.

Whatever I turn out to be, there seems to be no choice in my direction. I still have to practice my guitar. . . and even singing. For now, the best way may be to simply practice, just do what you have to do, and shut up!

Of course, there is also the idea that I don't have to do anything. I don't need any goal or direction. I can just play my guitar, sing, and try to enjoy it for its own sake.

I don't know if I can do this. But it's worth a thought.

That my guitar playing and singing could just become a relaxing and fulfilling “sideline.” It certainly would be a radically different attitude. But whether I could stand such freedom, I don't know.

(This too of my yoga, calliyoga, and running. It could also be true of my writing. From none of this do I make a living. So such attitudes are possible. But again, could I do it? Can I think it? Should I do it? Should I even think it? I don't know.)

Could enjoyment alone ever be a motivation? Could it become a “new” motivation?

How can “mere enjoyment” be a motivation? Shouldn’t motivation be about self-improvement, making money, or both?

However, enjoyment does go with such words as “fun,” Playpen, and Playland. So it has certainly been a central theme in my life.

Maybe doing these things “for fun” and “enjoyment” has been a long time “goal,” a major place I want to reach. . . and be.

Can I allow myself such “pleasures?” Should I? Or must I always concern myself with practicality, sales, money, self-promotion, and making a living?

Are these questions all part of a bigger quest for freedom? Probably.

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

The Millionaire Goal

In the process of not paying too much attention to my finances, it seems I made an excellent “mistake.” Evidently, seem to owe ten thousand less than I thought. If this mistake is true, it is an excellent one.

However, it brings me closer to the end of “debt adventure.”

I’ll be glad to get rid of my debt. On the other hand, miserable and pressurizing as it was, debt is its own kind of “adventure.”

Endings are sad. . . but also happy.

When I finish paying it off, I’ll need a new goal, a new adventure.

How about resurrecting the old “millionaire” goal? Even though I don’t need that much money, such a goal and adventure would be good for my mind. But this time, rather than trying to achieve it through the stock market, I would do it through

my own efforts. My own business.

The millionaire goal: something to think about.

Guitar: Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4: Fast and light arpeggios. Get the heat up.

The concept of heat generation. Hmm.

Also I'm continuing web design lessons with Nikki. Graphic designer, web design improvements: Learning the skill.

This "millionaire dream: is a very gone public vision. I'm "using it" simply to inspire and motivate myself, to get myself to "do something different."

Since I've learned to live not only "without money," but in debt, I don't really, in the old sense, "need the money." I can live without it (although, of course, "it would be nice.")

Why then am I resurrecting the millionaire vision?

First of all, I like it. Even though I don't need the money, the vision itself seems to energize me. For now, I will no longer ask why.

Instead, I will ask How?

How can I fulfill the millionaire vision? And this, only through my business, my work, my personal efforts. The stock market and "waiting for heaven to drop its bountiful gifts effortlessly into my lap" is dead, gone, buried, and over. Thus, I am in a totally new place. This I know.

How? What in my now-gone-public work can possibly fulfill this vision?

Is the birth of this vision the reason I hurt my foot Monday night? My back hurts too. This hasn't happened in years. Is the back pain related to the birth of this great vision?

It is a mad vision. That's why I like it. "Madness has the advantage of surprise." A great "Yes!" to this John Batchelor line.

My body is really shit this week. And for some reason, unbeknownst to me, I'm letting it slide.

My back is telling me: The tour pressure is on. Time to organize!

Thursday, February 3, 2005

Love Motivation

Tectonic Plate Shift

Yesterday, in explaining the sudden demise of my body and my inability, or total lack of desire, to do anything about it, I wrote:

"Two tectonic plates meet and clash in my lower back. . . and even my left foot outer step. One plate is fear: the plate of the past, of old attitudes towards work. The other plate is love: the plate of the future and my attitude towards it.

"Money and fear are deeply related. In the old plate world, they had been a prime source of motivation.

But now I am grinding that plate into oblivion: Going beyond it, I am moving toward and into the love motivation."

The love motivation is a brand new source. It is becoming the "only" legitimate source to move me forwards.

I feel the tectonic plates fighting, struggling, clashing, and crashing in my body. But slowly, gradually, now more rapidly, fear, terror, and trembling are sinking to the bottom. Love hasn't won yet, but it is quickly winning.

This is a historic period which I will entitle: The Great Transition of Attitudes period.

No doubt, when it is complete, my body will be cured.

Onward with the Love Motivation

How does the love motivation work? What do I love?

1. I love the people I work with, sell to: my customers.

2. Doing the details: I love the challenge of putting them together all the tour, weekend, and other events. Indeed, this one is hard to believe. I used to think that doing the details mostly annoyed me; I even hated doing them. Now somehow, I am enjoying them. seeing them in terms of love.

Love over fear: Love of details replaces fear of being overwhelmed by them.

Love comes from the heart. Chi comes from the belly or abdomen. What or where is the difference?

Does Chi tap into the fear factor, the energy of fear?

Does Love tap into the heart factor.

Is there a difference? If yes, what?

Love over fear:

Loving the details instead of being overwhelmed by them. Wow, what a jump!

Guitar: Broke its back. The Alhambra/arpeggio period may be over.

No wonder I don't feel like practicing.

What to do now? What direction, if any, to go. Jazz? Composition? Other?

None?

New directions in guitar: Will there be any? Moving on.

Is this also a question in yoga, calliyoga, and running? I don't feel like doing any of them, either.

Friday, February 4, 2005

Sliding into a New Galaxy

Yes, the tectonic plate shift is pounding my lower back, head, and shoulders.

The tectonic plate shift is killing me.

Time to fight back!

Start with my body. Start with my lower back, shoulders, and even my mild headache. Yes, I am building a new body to fit my new mind set. Business is rolling in. Tourist-customers are calling; registrants are rolling in for Norway. Tony called about the Florida and possible Gary Redmond Dinner Show connection.

Shocked, stunned, dismayed, euphoric, and paralyzed: I am in a new place. The tectonic plate shift still grinds my lower back. What to do? Awareness is the only answer: Recognize the shifting energies in my earth body. The stars in the universe are shifting; I am sliding into new galaxy.

Building Success Muscles

Evidently, success and overwhelmed go together. I want success. But I don't like being overwhelmed.

What to do?

Time to start building success muscles.

I can start with push-ups. Success push-ups. I place my hands on the Overwhelmed floor and push. My resistance is the floor of Overwhelmed.

By learning and practicing the push against Overwhelmed, my success muscles will increase. I'll get stronger.

First I lie on the floor of Overwhelmed. Then I do my overwhelmed push-up. In doing so, I "distance" myself from overwhelmed.

Will I ever become successful in this venture? Can I ever completely eradicate Overwhelmed? It is, after all, a mental state. It is possible to achieve such a state.

Living in Success Land, while freeing myself from Overwhelmed, would be the greatest success of all!

Something to think about and work on.

First step: handle the "overwhelmed-created" pains in my lower back, out-step

of my left foot, and even shoulders.

Send the lodestone of success through my blood; lodge it in the muscles, sinews, skeleton, and veins of my body.

What is the guitar success muscle?

It is the Chi Deep Relaxation muscle.

First forays into Success Singing. Focus is on tone, deep relaxation, and going in any direction. Half songs, whole songs, no songs.

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Success Neighborhood

Surprise at success is a subtle form of admitting I am a failure. Since I am not a failure, I must see it as a subtle form of psychological return to the old neighborhood.

But old neighborhood is history. Realistically, I am now in a new neighborhood: admitting, accepting, and dealing with success.

At first, this new success neighborhood overwhelmed me with its wonders and mountain of new responsibilities they entailed. It flooded me with new aches and pains, psychological expressions of over-excitement and over-whelmed manifesting themselves in my physical body.

But after last night's folk dancing, when I realized and accepted my entry into the new success neighborhood, all the pains vanished. This morning I feel great!

I am returning to Chi, and General Zany.

Past and Present

I have certainly been through a mountain of shit, years of living in the old neighborhood, in and surrounded by shit.

But it has served as the necessary fertilizer to fecundate and help create the new success neighborhood.

New Cells for a New Mind

There is no question that my old aches and pains were necessary to destroy old neighborhood cells. In the ensuing vacuum, new cells were created. New cells are necessary to build a new body to contain my new mind.

Now this body and mind, refreshed, reinvigorated, reborn into a new mind set, can move into the new success neighborhood.

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Success is the Best Policy

One does not walk easily into success neighborhood. Look at my left ankle pain. Yet, even though it may hurt, success is the best policy.

My "success pain," this time, the one in my left ankle, is evidently created by walking, dancing, or running into the new neighborhood.

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Tours:

Reduce the phone aspect of tour business to "social" calls.

a. Mailing

b. Web-spread

(Idea: Keep the whole thing "social")

Guitar: Power rising. Starting with, and witness, the arpeggios in Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4.

Slow power. It feels different. The audience is gone.

Friday, February 11, 2005

The Dangers of Joy

I fixed Bernice's computer by changing the wireless modem. The process took about two hours. Most of this was a conversation with Frank.

When I woke up this morning, I think: "I should feel victorious, but I feel drained."

Again, am I denying myself the joyful "wahoo!" fruits of my victory? Am I denying, pushing back, even squashing, my enthusiasm? Probably.

This kind of denial seems to be happening quite often these days.

I wonder why.

Well, actually, I know why. Intellectually, I know why. I learned about joy push-down, and putting the lid on during psychotherapy. But, although I know it, it seems I can never believe it. And I don't even think this is due to a lack of faith in my vision or understanding.

Perhaps my hesitation, even denial of such victorious joy is due to and caused by deeper reasons. Perhaps there exists some kind of inherent wisdom, a secret protection plan, in its denial. Intuitively, instinctively, my body and mind may "know" more about the dangers of joy than I care to admit.

Now there's an interesting expression, a good expression: the dangers of joy. Indeed, something to contemplate.

There is (at least for me) a secret danger in joy. Perhaps it is not so secret after all.

What are the dangers?

1. Energy vitiation.
2. Dream destruction
3. Imagination stops. You have arrived at a high point.

Enthusiasm is different from joy. Enthusiasm is an engine. Riding on wings of imagination, it drives mind and body forwards. Joy is a place. . . a place of rest. It is a stopping point on the mountain peak, and thus a temporary arrival. It is also the forerunner of the dismal upcoming slide down the mountain and into the soggy valley.

A New View of Put Down

Meaning and Purpose through High School of Music and Art

Putting myself down is one way of suppressing joy. Perhaps there is more intuitive, instinctual, and self-protective wisdom in this than I think.

Is this a subtle way of revisiting the old neighborhood? Perhaps.

Maybe the old neighborhood had more hidden wisdom that I thought.

Am I getting ready to examine and mine this hidden wisdom?

From the new (and paradoxically, sometimes sad) perspective of success neighborhood, is it time to look back into the possible benefits of the old neighborhood?

Could the put down, the crushing of the self into the in-room, violin practicing, Music and Art High School corner, be one of the benefits? It did, after all, help create, force, and foster imagination.

The old neighborhood did, after all, have music, violin practice, the High School of Music and Art with its friendships and inspirations, and the soaring of in-room imagination. Plus basketball. These were indeed, motivating and inspiring situations.

I may see the fruition, realization, and “completion” of these qualities in the new success neighborhood. But in their completion, the qualities themselves seem or feel like they have lost their meaning and purpose.

Evidently, I need some qualities of the old neighborhood to survive and to constantly vivify myself. I’ll call them the “Music and Art High School” qualities.

I consider the Music and Art “retreat into myself,” with its fostering of in-room, artistic imagination, my highest goal and achievement. Let’s not lose it on the outward

struggle and path for survival.

Perhaps it is time to return to the delicious and creative “put-downs” of old neighborhood. . . but this time, as a success.

Freedom and Opposition

Freedom does not mean no opposition. Opposition is part of the democratic process. A spirited, vociferous debate strengthens and enlivens the process. There may even be shouts, screams, insults, and curses. But it is all done through words. There is no physical violence. shooting, or killing. That’s the difference between democracy and fascism, freedom and free-flowing dialogue versus the totalitarians.

Guitar and sleep: Maybe I should just give in to and enjoy the wonderful peaceful sleep the guitar practice induces. Perhaps this type of deep relaxation, this sleep, is one of the great guitar practice and playing benefits and joys.

Sunday, February 13, 2005

Could my left outer foot pain be a spiritual problem?

Could it be related (among other things) to my upcoming engagement at the Florida Folk Dance Camp?

I sense it is. If yes, physical therapy will make little to no difference.

Novels

I started reading A Tale of Love and Darkness by Amos Oz. I’m reading it now, in the morning, during morning coffee. It is very well written.

Wouldn’t it be a lovely miracle if I started my day off by reading novels. . . and started this at morning coffee. My first peeps into the day with excellent writing styles before my eyes. Wouldn’t this be a minor miracle, and a herculean change.

Maybe it is very “reasonable” to fear the “excitement to the point of swooning” that my life often serves up to me. The excitement could mean life, but the swooning could mean death. Life and death served on one delicious and terrifying plate.

I want to dive in (life), but I save myself by pulling back, retreating (death.) This constant conflict (in this case, the “excitement to the point of swooning” of my many tour registrations as well as my upcoming Florida Folk Dance Camp teaching job) may well be reflected in my left outer foot.

The two opposing forces of this conflict paralyze and cripple me. Thus my left foot hurts and I “cannot walk.”

A good novel combines wisdom with beautiful writing. In this sense, it is like a self-help book. But it instructs more indirectly.

Maybe the pains in my shoulders and neck are also, partly due to the “excitement to the point of swooning” of doing, learning, even mastering elements of the computer!

An intellectual fascination and amazement.

Perhaps I love the computer! And only my fear of its amazing capabilities and power, keeps me from realizing I do.

There is also a sensual element in my guitar, singing, running, yoga, and even folk dance teaching success. A sensual “excitement to the point of swooning.” Again life against death.

Monday, February 14, 2005

Guitar: Going so slowly (in Leyenda, Alhambra, Villa-Lobos, and more. Looking past the veil into the mystery; Dive into its slow, mysterious, medieval center.

I’ve lived in the Land of Speed. I’ve seen its tensions, miseries, dynamics, and

revelations.

Could the Land of Slow be the next frontier? Slow strips away the veil and enters the Land of Mystery.

Slow is the technical means, the technique; touching, being, standing in the Mystery, is the end, the Center.

Slow and Focus walk hand in hand.

They look inside each note, search its meaning, examine its essence, look into its Mystery.

Slow flamenco. Going past the surface fire.

Finding new fire within the fire.

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

I feel down this morning.

Let's face it: I may like and want the adventure of feeling down!

What adventure is it? I don't know yet. But perhaps it symbolizes destruction of the old. Thus the valley of Down can give birth of the plains and even mountains of New.

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

Calling people makes me feel I'm in the (sales) fight.

Time to start choreographing new dances.

Maybe it's time to read some inspirational literature, the classics, even poetry. Maybe it's time to ride the Muse again. I've already "done" forward; maybe its time to

go backwards, back to the classics.

And I am in a vague kind of rut. And truly, I like admitting it. I may even like being in this rut. Why? Because once I realize and admit it, I can then start figuring a way out of it. That's the creative part, the movement that lifts the veil of depression.

Depression is the prelude to the realization; the realization is the first step towards the upwards, and the uplifting light.

Sure I hate my depressions. But I also love them. I want to get rid of them, but I hate to lose them. And when one (sadly?) dissolves, a deep, inner part of me (may) yearn for another.

Depressions are the down-up lover. I yearn for their sinking embrace; then I push against them, struggle, scream, and yearn to escape their grasp.

They are Mr. and Mrs. Paradox, my artistic family members all wrapped up in one.

Spring is Here!

Born is the Mantra of Improvement!

Spring is here.

Born is the mantra of improvement.

I've passed through the valley of "I've done it all before," with its ensuing transitional boredom, half-ways, half-downs, and half-ups.

I need a new mantra. And I know what it is: Improve!

Yes, I love what I've got, what I do, what I am. My fields of endeavor have not changed, nor do they need to change, nor do I want them to change. But I still need an engine to drive me forwards, backwards, sideways, and upwards.

That engine is: Improve! Improve my guitar playing, singing, running, yoga postures, even my dancing and sales techniques. Improve my language skills, computer skills, and more. Improve them all. Improve!

The next question is: How to improve? But that is easily answered. One begins by pushing to the edge. To the edge of the road. But first, one must realize what road to travel on. I've come to that place. At last! Spring is here!

All the seeds of improvement have been planted. I've been watering them, weeding the garden, preparing for months, nay years, for their growth.

Now their time has come. Spring is here.

Sun shines on the Garden of Improvement. It is ready to grow.

Yes, I've got good things; I am doing good things. But I can always make them better! I am ready to start. I am ready to start trying. Note the word "trying." It has lots of effort energy in it. That's what I need now, that's what I am ready to grasp: the hidden energy of effort.

The voice of discouragement temporarily returns. It asks: Is it worth the effort? After all, you are getting older; you will soon die. Under these circumstances, is it worth putting in any effort?

My answer is: Yes! I can improve on getting older. I can even get better at dying!

Life and death are temporary states. But improvement lasts forever!

And, of course, the mind hurts, the body aches, the emotions go hay wire. But that itself is (part of) the improvement process!

The mantra of self-improvement could saturate every movement.

Thursday, February 17, 2005

I am in Promotion, Publicity, and Advertising

I am a Salesman!

Well, Ma, I finally have a real job, a steady job, one that will make money. I am in promotion, publicity, and advertising. I'm a walking advertising agency. My job is to promote and sell. Yes, I am a salesman. Even though Arthur Miller died, and Death of a Salesman Willie died, and even though all communists think it is shameful, and also artists, I among them thought it shameful, in spite of all these negatives images, I finally am at the realization of my social, public, and ever personal self-image: I am a salesman.

That is my job. Oh sure, I have other skills. And they are meaningful, too. Nevertheless, all my skill and talents would, will, (and perhaps should) remain in the closet if not for my salesman work and identity.

On first glimpse, this is a crushing blow to my artistic image. What about my artistic self, my creative self? Where will it go? Probably nowhere. But once again, even in the arts, I've not only "done it all." but, more important, I realize my arts will stay in the closet if I do not promote them.

Evidently, it is personally very important to me that they d not stay in the closet. After their creation in the private laboratory of mind, and in the actual laboratory of my home, their next step, and the culmination of their existence, is to get them out of the house and into the public. The public may hate them, like them, ignore them, or more. Their opinions are beyond my control. But my final job is, nevertheless, to get them out there, to set them before public eyes. My job is to sail my ships on the waters. Where they will go, who knows?

O, one of the realizations of post-transitional life is: I am a salesman. Promotion, advertising, and publicity and what I do. So did St. Paul. Gospel time is on hand.

I am certainly not embracing the salesman life. It is more that there is no choice. That is the road right in front of my nose. My body aches and my mind changes directions and self-definitions. Actually, it is not changing directions. I have always

been a salesman! Only I either didn't know it, or wouldn't face of admit it. Too shameful for an artist and communist. But those days are over.

A warm feeling of relaxation just came over me as I wrote those last lines. Perhaps if I can face, admit, come to peace with, and eventually, even love, my newly self-admitted salesman self, perhaps its warm flow will suffuse my body. That, indeed, would be its own kind of miracle.

We'll see what happens.

Well, I don't even have to wait and see. Truth is, it has already happened! I am there! Now. This is what happens when you fall off the cliff and land in the post-transitional state.

Ready to Promote Folk Dancing

This year has been my tour sales year. I've got about three months to go: March, April, and May. It is almost over. I see the ending in sight.

What's next?

Last night I thought: My next year will be a folk dance sales year. I will try to build up my folk dance classes. I see it as a three-year project.

Why am I doing this? It is not even for money. The money can be (although rarely is) found in the tour business, and booking business. Even guitar lessons yield more money than folk dance teaching. Yet I stay in it. Aside from the fact that my folk dancers are part of my tour and weekend base, I also must admit, I thoroughly love it! I love the field, the dances, the music, the people, the whole scenario of folk dancing in a circle together to beautiful music. When it works, it is sensational.

But, of course, the money has always been weak to awful.

For some reason I can't or don't want to explain, I am ready to start promoting, selling, advertising, publicizing my folk dance teaching and folk dance classes. Maybe the reason is: I am just ready.

In any case, I am ready. I see it as my long-term next project. I'm aiming to

bring in the next generation. Naturally, as a side benefit, this will ultimately feed my weekends and tours. But this is not now my reason for doing it.

As I say, probably I am just ready.

What about all the aches and pains in my body? There is the hope that once I get my mind straight, they will all go away.

It's happened before. I cannot promise it will happen again. But part of life's mental adventure is to see if it will.

Mind and Body

The deeper question: Is the body a servant of the mind? Or is the mind a servant of the body?

Deep down I believe the former. So does a true mystic and kabbalist. They see the body as a "surface manifestation" of the mind. So do I.

Could there be a compromise? (Could mind be servant to body and body be servant to mind?) Could there be both? If you are a Christian Scientist, you would say no. I'm on their side.

Isn't this part of the shift from St. James, (saint Jimmy) at home in his room practicing his craft, to St. Paul bringing the skills and craft of Jimmy, the gospels of Jimmy, to the world.

I carry the burdens of my world on my shoulders. That's why they hurt.

I bend and break my back under their weight and herculean labors: That why my back hurts.

I support the whole system with my legs. That's why they hurt. Ankles and feet are the closest connection to the earth. Knees wobble and almost buckle under the strain.

Even though Ma tried to shield me from danger, tried to make things easy, nevertheless, creating and carrying the art of Jimmy boy to the world is no easy task.

Perhaps if I face the herculean difficulty of my task, I wouldn't feel so bad about it. Part of me, a good part of me, feels that bring my art to the people should be easy. That attitude comes, no doubt, from my upbringing.

But all my experience proves it is not easy. It is a constant and never-ending struggle. And I am constantly amazed by this fact. Surprised and disappointed. It "should" be easy. . . but it is not. This is the voice and attitude of Ma stepping in to protect me, to smooth the road, to lighten the danger, to "make me happy."

Well, it never works.

The struggle to be an artist, and to get recognition as an artist, is always tough and never-ending. That is the true nature, the reality of life here on earth.

Although the salesman may not always an artist, the artist is always a (the) salesman.

But it's not: Woe is me, life as an artist is tough; I have to be a salesman. Rather it is: Life as an artist is tough; I am a hero for trying!

I wonder also if I am subtly paralyzed with fear over this upcoming Florida Folk Dance Camp. And this, even though everything is together. But after all, I am (as always) leaping into the unknown. Just because it was good, a hit, last year, doesn't guarantee it will be the same this year. Evidently, I should be worried, concerned, get my performing energy up. And this even though everything I can think of doing is in order.

Everything is in order, but the future is still unknown. Thus I have to prepare to call up my performing and performance energy, if nothing else.

I want to be a hero.

How can you be a hero, if you are not afraid?

How can you be a hero, if you do not struggle against pain, suffering, and evil?
A hero fights fear and the devil. That's what makes him a hero.

Friday, February 18, 2005

Getting to be time for a New Leaf as I enter my salesman self, my new self-definition.

Nervous Hypothenar Reflections

I'll be performing on the guitar at Florida Folk Dance Camp. I'm now working on, revising and looking at, Serenade by Joachim Malats. Hypothenar fears are entering my right hypothenar muscles again. The advantage I have this time is one of awareness: I've been through this before.

But doesn't it reflect an upcoming performance anxiety? Indeed, it must.

Well, why shouldn't I be nervous? Indeed, I should be. This kind of nervousness for an upcoming challenge is good for me.

Expanded Salesman: Expanding my Sales Self

If my new job and self-identity is to sell things all day then I might as well sell other things besides tours, weekends, folk dance classes, bookings etc. I might as well add CD's books, refrigerators, or whatever. If my definition is "salesman," does it really matter what I sell? Sure I have to sell quality and things I believe in. But I believe in refrigerators, too.

Jesus designed the program. St. Paul sold it.

Why am I ready to become a salesman, to accept the St. Paul gospel role? Partly it is because I have accomplished my goal of becoming, or rather, seeing myself as an

artist. Done. Finished. Through. I have been ready to move on for a long time. It has finally happened.

“Refrigerator” Jim enters the ring.

Why refrigerator? It is big, bulky, cold, hard-surfaced, and insensitive. It has many qualities I need in order to sell things.

Saturday, February 19, 2005

Pains and the Future

My problem is I am beset by physical ailments I don't really believe I have.

Deep down I believe they are mentally constructed and that they will, when the right idea comes, immediately and miraculously go away. Therefore, although I have these ailments and parts of my body hurt, I don't take them “seriously.” Part of me laughs at them, and even “boasts” I am a hero because I consider them as so insignificant.

Right now I believe I am aching because of the upcoming Florida Folk Dance Camp. That, I believe, is the origin of my newest “folk dance ankle” pain. True, it does not seem to be in the usual place. . . or is it? Actually, I don't really remember. But it is, nevertheless, in the ankle area. Folk dance ankle, indeed.

These pains are so “interesting.” Are any of them really new? Haven't I had them all before? Well, yes. But they are nevertheless different every time. Why? Because the challenges, fear, angers, and terrors I face are different every time. Take the upcoming Florida Folk Dance Camp, for example. Last year I spend months preparing for it. This year, I am totally prepared. I “know” what will happen done there. I've “done it” before.

Well, have I really “done” it before? How could I have “done it” when it has not yet happened? Aha, this a future event, and although I can prepare as much as possible – and I have – nevertheless, the future is the land of the Unknown. And the

Unknown is filled with surprises, terrors, unexpected leaps and falls. It is the Mystery, the Unknown. Truly, prepare as much as I might, I can never truly “know” what will happen. Thus fears, doubts, hesitations haunt and even plague my mind. As well they should. I am facing the abyss. No matter how much skill I have amassed over the years, there is always the chance I could fall in. Past success does not insure future success. Even the skills that have become so much a part of me could suddenly, for “no reason,” fall away and disappear. Anything is possible in the hidden, unknown, and distant future.

No wonder I am hesitant and afraid; no wonder my body reflects these doubts in its aches and pains.

Only awareness of their origin seems to be the “cure.” And perhaps, ultimately, the only cure is to do and finish the Florida Folk Dance Camp. Then my reality created tension will go away; the camp will be over; I can move on. . . to the next event, the next tour, the next group of tensions created by facing the future and its Unknown.

So, the pains I feel are “reality” based. Yet, even though they are “real,” they remain insignificant in their offering. They are like the back and gastrocnemius spasms. They hurt like hell, terrify the soul, make you scream with pain, but, in actuality, do no physical damage to the body. They kill the mind, but leave the body intact.

Isn't this why a good part of me realizes their origin, realizes their truth, and thus does not take these pains “seriously.” But, along with that, they hurt so much I often doubt myself, doubt the psycho-mental origins of these pains.

Doubt and belief stand side by side in the schizophrenic mind. Such phrenias, schizoid, even multoid, schizophrenia, even multiphrenia, may be the very nature of mind itself.

There is no escape from my mind. However, awareness of how it operates might help.

Handling Pain through Focus

Suppose I was going to try to “handle” each pain. How would I approach it?

First, I would focus on it, look at and into it with all my might. And this with the idea of dissolving its strength, hold, and power. This is, after all, what I do when I teach folk dancing. I focus real hard on working around these pains. . .and, guess what, while I am teaching, they disappear! They do go away! But they come back later, later when my mind loses its focus.

What does this say about pain and focus, and how focus can help deal with and even temporarily “cure” pain? A most fascinating phenomenon. And useful, too.

Focus and Awareness: The Keys to Pain Management

The idea I can handle pain through focus – intense focus – gives me a feeling of control over the pain.

This, combined with awareness of its origins, does help. Focus and awareness: the keys to pain management.

On playing Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4 arpeggios fast. Watching my hypothenar muscle tighten: I’m dealing with real traumas here, diving into the lion’s mouth.

But I’m dealing with it, looking at it, diving in!

For a few (good, nay excellent) moments, the perfect practice of focus and awareness.

Big guitar playing success! I’d better stop now. I’m afraid if I push further, I’ll ruin it.

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Only Bulgarian

Now I will be reading only Bulgarian until my tour to Bulgaria this August. Well, when I was nineteen, in France I read only French for a year.

When I started the tour business twenty-two years ago, I focused only on Hungarian for a year. Hungarian language, history, culture, everything Hungarian. After going through my transitional year, I am now returning to past forms.

This is my Bulgarian year. Everything Bulgarian. Starting with language.

In my life, it's return-to-past-forms and consolidation time. I see it as lasting three to five years.

How about developing my own form of "Ashtanga yoga" practice, my own order and pace. Hmm, I like it. Thanks, Danny (Rosen).

The Power of Core Values: A Scattered Explanation

True power comes from core beliefs, values, and principles. From these, even if you have no money, arms, you can start to build it.

If you have only money, but no principles, values, and core beliefs, your only power is one of appeasement: you can buy off your enemy. But the enemy keeps wanting more and more, and eventually defeats you.

Core principles however, fight from the inside. And this even without money. From core beliefs, principles, and values, outside political influence, power, and money will follow.

Friday, February 24, 2005

We're in Ocala, Florida.

Sitting at Ellie's bursting with Bulgarian. What else is there to say?

Write my morning notebook in Bulgarian. Now there's a challenge!

Perhaps I should also buy Cyrillic fonts.

Guitar: Ma says, "I'll wait for you as long as you want, Jimmy boy." Now that's love, real love. That is really God's love.

Pre-performance anxiety, and the aches and pains it creates, are all part of the performance. In other words, the performance starts with and includes pre-performance anxiety. This kind of "performance" can last days, weeks, even months.

Pre-performance anxiety is a knotted ball of energy; it can torture and inspire. But it is all part of the show. It is the ninety per cent of the iceberg that the viewer does not see.

I wonder if my "newest" left shoulder pain is due to the "burden" of my tours, carrying their weight on my shoulders.

Why left shoulder? Transition pain: Giving up communism. Embracing the fire and powerful motivating forces of capitalism.

Monday, February 28, 2005

End of Florida Folk Dance Camp.

I am tired but happy.

I have a headache; yesterday I had a back ache. Interpretation: inability to process an excess of joy. I like that approach. It puts my pain and suffering on a positive basis.

Indeed, joy not suffering, may be the problem.

Future study: DVD production a la Dan Lampert.

Idea: I should always be going public, always be selling! Selling creates energy and focus. It is simply good for me!

I break down and cry over the Beauty we have created on this Florida Folk Dance Weekend.

By and through dancing, we create a short but memorable atmosphere, a reservoir of positive vibrations and emotions that resound, in infinite dissolution, throughout the universe.

The vibrational power of Folk Dance Goodness sustains the world.

One of my Florida Folk Dance Camp highlights was that Bob Gutin came with his acolytes, Tim Sneed and Barbara Shine. We did the old, great dances, and made the old, self-searching connections.

Talking to Bob, I continued the resume of my life. He said:

1. I have become a one-man Folk Dance industry.
2. I have developed much teaching authority (by running tours, etc.)
3. He said, "You keep getting better." What a compliment!

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

I woke up in Sarasota with my back killing me. I had had a "Tiger in the window, no money in Hungary, forgotten my money belt" dream.

Go for the psychology of back pain and its dream revelations.

What is the psychological cause of this pain? It must be success! Yes, it was a great Weekend, a great Florida Folk Dance Camp. I was great. I gave it my all; I gave it my absolute best!

I met the challenge in every possible and every best way. I ended up tired, nay exhausted, but happy.

Total Weekend focus and concentration! Success!

What is success?

I become my own hero. I faced the Tiger in my dream. . .and it finally went away, disappeared. I faced the Tiger. . .and I won!

The Tiger is my back ache. I faced him, fought him, and ultimately, I won. I beat the Tiger. I am my own hero.

The struggle of life against death. Death is the Tiger. Fight it. Achieve temporary, temporal wins.

The fight goes on forever.

In this forever fight worship your inner hero.

Pat your local inner hero on the back. That might well be the way to heal lower back pain.

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Saga of my Body

My body speaks to me.

I'm getting "back" to normal. But not quite yet. That won't happen until we get "back" to Teaneck. Still, today is an improvement.

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Resistance!

My joints, along with my back, also hurt. Knees, ankles, and shoulders. They are stiff with not only fear. . . but resistance!

What do I resist? Mostly, the outward social and people activities I do. And yet, part of this gone public process, this gone public me, is energizing. Part of the gone public me loves it.

Conflict and rubbing.

Will I always resist? Will the only place I am and become totally "comfortable" always be the inner chamber of my imagination, my teenage room at home in Riverdale? Maybe.

Can such a room ever become totally available in public? Or will there, publically, always be an element of defense against the outer forces of evil and

negativism?

Alone is my in-room fountain, the citadel of my imagination.

Can I ever be comfortable in public? Will I consistently be partly threatened when I socialize, meet others, or perform in public? Will I always be forced to resist?

And will such resistance always be “expressed” in bodily aches and pains, through my lower back or stiffened joints? Is this the stiff-necked, Jewish resistance?

Freedom through defense. Such resistance may be a good and necessary thing after all. I am saving and protecting my center, my spiritual core.

Thus, I must ask: Is my body really falling apart? Or is it being fine-tuned to resistance? Am I a resistance fighter, part of a long line of ancient freedom fighters? Am I ever fighting for my right to be me? I am ever engaged in this endless fight and struggle.

There is also the fact that I have been in a social straight-jacket for this entire week. Soon it will be over. I can't wait to get home!

Yet, this whole week was a big success.

Perhaps my next challenge is: How to handle success. How to handle the pressures, tensions, life style, joys, defeats, and victories of success. How to live in and deal with the success attitude.

Part of this week's aches and pains may have been triggered by the success trauma. But this week is also witnessing the birth of the new success attitude.

A new, post-Florida Folk Dance Camp door is opening. It's new question and challenge is coalescing: How to deal with and handle success.

It means doing yoga with a new success attitude.

It means playing guitar with a new success attitude.

It means walking down the street, carrying luggage to the car, going to the airport, and more. . . all with the new success attitude.

So ends a New Leaf.

