

Maximum Creative Effort

Sunday, September 28, 2003

The Gift of Maximum Effort

The gates of heaven open when you make the maximum effort. Energy flows through your being. Aches and pains, worries and frustrations dissolve as you surrender to the higher power.

This momentary but wonder-filled state of wisdom, peace, and composure is the gift of maximum effort.

Thus the way to handle aches, pains, frustrations, and worries is not to avoid, distance yourself, run away, or retreat from them. Rather it is to work harder! In the heat of battle you discover amazing strengths!

Slightly Hard

Thus I need things to do that are slightly hard, slightly above my head. Too hard and I'll get discouraged, too low and I'll get bored.

Slightly hard is just about right; it will push and inspire me to make my maximum effort.

Monday, September 29, 2003

Discouragement is one of my worst feelings. It totally wipes out my spirit, drives my soul into the ground, kills me. I want to end it all. This kind of deadly discouragement makes suicide a veritable option.

The killing off of spirit is a terrible self-crime. One of the worst. Perhaps the worst.

Do I want to continue life in a discouraged state? I doubt it. But simple

awareness of the power of discouragement may help to dispel it. Look it straight in the eye. See it for what it is.

What is it? And why do I “want” it?

A better question might be “Why do I need it. . . now?”

What have I been doing right to push myself back into the hole so far?

One thing I was doing right was the stock market. I had a great two weeks in the beginning of September. . . even a great month. I made money and I seemed to be “getting the hang of it.” All my year of trading study appeared to be paying off. Then I hit a bump in the road. The market went down; I lost what I gained. I’m back to where I started in the middle of August. Discouragement hit.

Based on my winning streak I made some unrealistic market plans: I “planned” to make a thousand a day (as I did for one week in September.) I also planned to make stock market trading my new “profession.”

Both “plans” were killed by the stock market downturn and my subsequent losses. I “did everything wrong” during the past week. I ended up confused and running scared. Then I got out of the market completely. . . for two days. The whole week was a total mess.

Maximum effort always chooses life.

Deep awareness of its killing power is the only way to handle the heavy, black, coffin lid of discouragement.

I must say a new dream has been born: It is to succeed in the stock market. Notice I did not say “make money.” I said “succeed.” (Toni Turner and Alexander Elder say: If you focus on trading well, money will come “as a sideline.”)

This is not an artistic dream. I have fulfilled that by finally accepting myself as an artist after about a thirty year struggle. But now artist is a done deal. No problem

there. Onwards and upwards post-transitionally. I am ready for new dreams.

Whether it is the right dream or the wrong dream, I'll never know. But I do know it is my dream.

Market "Instinct"

I was doing everything "right" in the market. I put all the right stops in, etc. I even "knew" the market was too high, that it would soon fold up for awhile. "Instinctively," I knew. I even sold CTXS short because I thought it would go down. It did, too. But later. I was too early. But I was "right."

What, if any, lesson is there in this? I was "right," but I didn't follow my instincts. I didn't even fully believe in them. Me, have an instinct for the market? How could I, a rank amateur, even think I could be so smart as to have one, own one, and follow through on it?

But I did have it.

Dare I believe it? Is this hubris, mere guessing, trying to see something positive "after the fact" of the down market? Maybe. But maybe not. After all, in the long run, I was "right." (How can you be "right" if you lose money? In the market, "right" is in quotations.

Nevertheless, if I am every to have self-trust and self-confidence in my decisions, I must look into the possibility that I am developing a "market instinct."

Such an "instinct" would be based on knowledge and experience. Well, even though I consider myself a market beginner, I do have some market knowledge. . .and experience, too. Thus, why shouldn't I also have "some" feel for the market, some market instinct?

Well, let's face the possibility even the fact, that I do.

Where will this lead?

The Fool Factor

Up markets make me careless. Greed wins as prices climb slowly on a wall of worry.

Down markets make me cautious. Fear wins as prices tumble precipitously in an avalanche of fear.

Thus was I fooled again.

The Sneezing Collapse

It is amazing to me. No matter how hard I struggle I still cannot attain financial security or the inner peace it would bring me.

Why is money always such a problem? Why can't I conquer the financial mountain?

This endless struggle is a phenomenon I cannot comprehend.

The sneezing and the cold I am starting to develop, am at the edge of getting, are being caused by the discouragement of the stock market down and the subsequent (temporary?) collapse of my financial dreams.

God Connection and Money

Can I ever find a God connection to money and the stock market? Somehow, I doubt it, even though intellectually, I know there is one.

Perhaps right there is the core of my money (and stock market) problem: Basically and fundamentally, I don't believe in them!

I believe in the arts. I believe in my God connection.

I believe in my God connection and its realization through the arts.

No matter how much I push and try, I cannot get myself to believe in the vital importance of money and its hand maiden, the stock market. I know I need it to survive. But who wants to "only" survive? I want to live beyond survival. I want to thrive, grow, and most important, glow!

Most of (if not all of) my relationship to money is based on fear. The rare good

feelings I get from it come from the temporary lifting of the veil. The “elation” I feel when my stocks go up or when I get checks in the mail is really due to relief. For a few moments, I no longer have to be afraid, for a few moments I think I have financial security. Then the feeling slowly dribbles away and I move on to my next financial fear.

But even though I know I am afraid and have financial fears, even though I experience fear, I still do not believe in it. After all, there is no God connection.

This may be the root of my giant disconnect between the outside “real” world of money, finance, and material reality and my inner, private dream-world reality. Even though I must deal with money and the outside world, I fundamentally, do not believe in them. And this, even though they constantly hit me over the head with reminders of their existence.

Is this brave? Is this stupid? Is it both?

Or is this simply me?

If the above is all true – and I believe it is – how do I now deal with the outside world? How do I deal with my money and financial problems?

Could the answer be: I don’t?

Perhaps the fact that I don’t believe in it is “showing.” That’s why the finances never quite work beyond mere survival.

Should I just give up on the whole thing and put it in God’s hands? Even though a part of me has been fighting against this idea “forever,” that’s where it has been all along.

Even though I try to love and be excited by it, perhaps I have a basic contempt and scorn for money. Certainly that has been part of my upbringing.

I believe in the arts. Money is a necessary foundation, the sidewalk upon which you walk towards your artistic goals.

No question I was put on earth to fulfill my artistic vision. How will I handle the

money problem? I don't know.

Or maybe I should not handle it at all. Let it slide. Focus totally on my artistic vision. See what happens.

What an experiment that would be!

Maybe such a life style experiment it is the true post-transitional step.

If this is all true, why even bother with money? Why not adopt a simplified life style (inexpensive and cheap) and focus on fulfilling my artistic vision?

Totally following my artistic and creative vision; totally give up on money. Is this an expression of total confidence. Total self-confidence. And total confidence in God. Fulfilling the purpose He gave me: To use my gifts and artistic talents to their fullest.

Evidently, I was not put on earth to make money but to fulfill my artistic talents and offer them to others. That is my gift and my giving.

If all this is what I've learned through the stock market, it has taught me a lot. It is probably even worth all the money I lost. Indeed, "higher" education is expensive.

Saturday, October 4, 2003

Time for a total shift and change.

I need to start and develop a new business or new businesses.

1. Stocks (This "business" is in its infant stage)
2. Web business
3. Other. . . or all.

Can (or should) these businesses be related in some way to my old businesses?

Can, are, or should they be expansions of my old businesses? I'd like that.

Or are they "completely new?" I like that, too.

Bodily Knowledge, Reflexivity, and the Market

I wonder if the past week's tremendous whack of discouragement wasn't, in some subtle and unknown way, a whack of knowledge, self-understanding, and revelation, the banging open and knocking down of a brand new door opening a new passageway into myself. When I entered this new arena, the discouragement came because I only saw the darkness and not the light beyond.

Maybe the trauma of discouragement hit me over the head because my market instincts were right! In fact, they were right (as the down market proved) only I figured them out and acted on them too late.

Is this "acted on them too late" an excuse? No, it is an explanation of my action? Truth is, I had the knowledge. But I lacked the experience. With more experience I might have timed it better. But I am simply, market-wise, not used to being right. I'm not used to thinking I could even be right, ever be right, or that I could even have a market instinct, reflected in my body pains pointing out a market direction. All these ideas are so new to me.

Me, right? In and about the market? It is such a radically different view of myself. I'm just not used to it.

But maybe I'll start to.

What about my left shoulder pain? I've never had that before. It started sometime last week. . .or maybe a little before when my mind (and body?) Were totally involved in the market and my "new ability" to do things well in it. Then the destructive trauma of the down market hit me. Could my left shoulder reflect or be a reflection of the "new market pain?"

Must I suffer physically to learn and reflect the market? Perhaps I must.

Evidently, George Soros does, too. He “reads” the market “through his body.”

But on one level this is totally reasonable. Why shouldn't my body reflect both changes in my inner world as well as the outer public world? Both are connected – and “intimately,” too.

My body is a barometer for the outside world.

The world enters it through pain and pleasure.

The stock market, and my business, deal most directly with trends, ups and downs, in the outside world. According to my attitude, these create pleasure or pain in my body.

My Nature

I'll also have to admit that the stock market, being in the stock market, being in and part of the action, is vitaly important to me!

I don't quite know why.

It is similar to my involvement with tours. When I gave them up, along with all the troubles and mental pains they caused me, I got depressed. I had thrown out the baby with the bath water.

The stock market, with all its up and downs, troubles and pains, haunts me. It is, like tours, and even business, a constant source of wonder and misery.

What is my fascination? Why am I in it? I don't quite know. It may be that, like a moth drawn to light, I am attracted to wonder and misery.

Filling the Emptiness, Finding the Excitement,

Loving the Study!

Perhaps I do the stock market with such terrific and hope-filled intensity in order to fill my emptiness. I need, always, some excitement. And I love to study something.

Perhaps the stock market and its excitement have little to do with money.

(Although “winning,” getting some money out of it, would be nice.)

But perhaps it is fundamentally all about emptiness, excitement, and the excitement of study! We Jews love to study.

Without something new and exciting to pursue, life gets very bland and empty. Soon much of the meaning goes out of it. True, we study about God and His Laws; but everything is in God. Thus, almost any study will do.

The stock market filled my study passion for over a year. It filled my emptiness, gave me excitement, goals, and love. Making money in it would be nice: It shows that you’ve “won.”

But ultimately, it is the game of learning, and the joy of study, that I pursue.

My Business is the Only Way Out

My November “graduation” in stock trading is coming. Wouldn’t it be ironic if it means I am giving the whole thing up!

I’m disgusted and discouraged. I’m on the edge, almost over the edge. November is graduation day. But I’m preparing now.

If I look over my whole stock market “career” I see only losses. Sure, I see lots of hopes for gains as well. And I’ve had some. But most (if not all) of my victories drew me further into the market, which resulted in even greater losses.

I gave myself one year to “experiment,” to see if I could succeed. Well, although I’ve learned a lot, I still have only lost more money. I’m in college, and I expect to pay tuition; still, suppose my greatest college lesson is: I don’t belong in the market!

I hate to think that’s true, hate to admit it, but all history points in this direction. Not only do I lose money, I waste (or spend) a great deal of mental (and physical) time thinking, worrying, studying, wondering about it and fiddling at the computer screen.

Would all this be better spent pursuing my business?

Would I, in the long run, make more money? And would I have a mentally more peaceful, more productive life?

Yes, I want hopes and thrills. But maybe I can't (and shouldn't) try to find them in the market. No question, it is full of hope and thrill, lots of ups and (even more) downs. And ultimately, I end up in more debt. In fact, all my debts are really due to the market. . . or rather to my hopes of making money in it.

So I sit here and contemplate giving it up.

Let us assume I do. Next question is: How will I make money? How will I pay off my debts? Is it possible through my business?

But I have no other choice. If I give up hope of the market (and realistically, it is only a hope), then what do I have left but my business?

It may take years, or the rest of my life; nevertheless, pushing my business seems to be the only way out aside from a miracle, which I can't count on it.

It is ironic I am contemplating such a decision one day after I began my Trading Journal. Trading Journal, yes. But a short life for TJ, indeed.

Relief

"Out" of the Market

I hate to admit it but its such a relief being both mentally and mostly physically "out" of the market. It's a feeling of control and, something I didn't even have when I was winning: inner peace! (I have hardly any money in the market. I plan, if at all, to take small to very small positions, 100-200 shares.)

I have been through a one-year stock market "passage."

Even though I have a lot less money through the market, and have given up the idea of making any future money in it, what a burden has been lifted off my head!

Perhaps I am poor, in debt. . . but unburdened! And this, for the first time. Free! Wild, indeed. I never would have expected these feelings of inner freedom. Is

this what graduation, giving up hopes, and realism is all about? If yes, give me more of it!

The stock market is okay as a miniature sideline, play thing. . . very minor plaything. The less I put in it, the better I feel.

But the important thing to remember is: I felt enslaved, haunted, even obsessed by it whether I was making money or not.

Amazingly thus, the money was besides the point. When I was riding high in early September making 1G a day, I couldn't shake it; and when I was down in the dumps losing 1G a day, I couldn't shake it.

Only now, by giving up all my hopes, have I shaken it.

An entirely new, maximum-effort way of thinking for me. I would now be focusing on the crowd, focusing on the audience, focusing on the public, focusing on the "outside," on those around me.

But for a completely different reason.

Instead of worry about their judging me (trying to improve so they will judge me well, etc.), I am now focusing on them because I know that doing so will produce my most majestic maximum effort! I will be reaching for, and will reach, my highest potential by focusing on them.

This is a radical departure.

Seeing others as not only part of me, but as stimulants and motivators who will push me, nay, inspire me to reach for my highest potential puts the audience in a totally new light. Rather than the "enemy" they become my friend. And this in the true Hebrew sense of the word, ra, where enemy and friend mean the same thing!

It's an attitude to practice! In guitar practice, folk dance teaching, running tours, sales, and more. Better it is an attitude, philosophy, and approach I should think about in everything I do.

Losing Streak

For the past few weeks I have been on a losing streak. I have lost money (almost) every day. First mucho money, then less money, but always losses. I finally realized it yesterday when the market still kept going up and my stocks went down. In fact, all the stocks on my list (which I hadn't bought) went up, and the three I owned went down.

In the beginning of September, everything I touched went up: a winning streak. Since the middle of September, everything I touch goes down: a losing streak.

I hate using the word "streak." It wrecks of luck. I would so love to believe that I have more control. But it is not true. Luck must has its power and place.

Perhaps I might like the word "fate" better than luck. But whatever I want to call it, I am on a classic losing streak.

Macho and Fast versus Luxuriation

Reflected in Day Trading and Guitar

I wonder if my (illusionary) belief that day trading is more macho because it is fast and faster, is related to my guitar (illusionary) belief that it is more macho to play fast and faster. (It may also be reflected in the run faster, do more ("faster") push-ups, etc.)

Would it be "better" to luxuriate in the stocks?

Is there a relationship between luxuriating in guitar tone and luxuriating in the "tone" of stocks?

Since I am an artist and my approach to life is an artistic one, could there be, could I invent a musical approach to stocks?

Could it be "based" on the tone, meditative quality, and luxuriation of guitar practice?

Think about expanding my trading time table from one day to six weeks

(maximum). Luxuriating versus fast and macho.

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

My Business is the Only Way Out

My November "graduation" in stock trading is coming. Wouldn't it be ironic if my graduation means I am giving the whole thing up!

Well, I'm not only disgusted and discouraged over the stock market: I'm at the point of giving it up!

I'm on the edge; I'm almost over the edge. November is graduation day. But I'm preparing now.

If I look over my whole stock market "career," I only see losses. Sure, I see lots of hopes for victories. And I had some. But most (if not all) of my victories drew me further into the stock market, which resulted in even greater losses. Thus my victories led, in the long run (even short run) to greater losses.

I gave myself one year to "experiment," to see if I could succeed in the market. Although I've learned a lot, I still have only lost more money. Sure, I'm in college, and I expect to pay tuition. Still, suppose my greatest college lesson is: I don't belong in the market!

I hate to think it's true, I hate to admit it, but all history points in this direction. Not only do I lose money in the market, but I waste (or spend) a great deal of mental (and physical) time thinking, worrying, studying, wondering about it; also mucho time at the computer screen.

Would all this time and effort be better spent pursuing my business?

Would I, in the long run, make more money? And would I have a mentally more peaceful, more productive life? Would I be utilizing my talents to the fullest?

Yes, I want hopes and thrills. But maybe I can't and shouldn't try to find them in the market. No question, it is full of hopes and thrills, lots of ups, but even more downs. And ultimately, I end up in more debt. In fact, all my debts are really due to

the market. . . or rather my hopes of making money in it.

Anyway, I sit here contemplating giving it up.

Let us assume I do. Next question is: How will I make money? How will I pay off my massive debt? Is it possible through my business? But of course, I have no other choice. If I give up the hope of the market (and realistically, it is only a hope), then what do I have left but my business?

It may take years or the rest of my life, but nevertheless, pushing my business seems to be the only way out. (Of course, there is always the possibility of a miracle, but I won't count on it.)

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So ends a New Leaf.