

Artistic Masculinity

Friday, December 12, 2003

Investing in my Body

The body is the temple foundation for the soul of my work.

Maybe I can take the time I used for the stock market and invest it in developing and improving my body. No question, my yoga, 50s, and running program has taken a back seat. My body aches in every place.

Perhaps it would be better to “invest in my body” so it will be able to folk dance, play guitar, etc. and do all the work (to make the “small increments”) it has to.

Big Killing

Taking The Small Increment Road

Big killing versus small increments:

I have been following the “big killing” road for a long time. . . almost twenty-five years. I followed it in both tours and the market. It has not worked. . . ever. Period.

As a post-transformational person, I recognize the experiment may be over. I’ve “done” the big killing routine. No question it was muchly based on Hope Road, a route based largely on lack of confidence, power, and strength.

The Small Increment Road is certainly slower. But it is more certain. The very idea of taking it must reflect a new, qualitatively different, dynamic, artistic masculinity/new field confidence. I can see the building blocks right in front of me.

It is time for a change. Isn’t the Small Increment Road the right road for the post-transformational me? Probably.

Chasing Away Old Man Pain

“Suddenly and Miraculously” Pain Free

Why did ninety per cent of the pains in my shoulders “suddenly” and “miraculously” go away? Posture correction? Doing a one-and-a-half hour total yoga session? Both? Other? Could that have been “all” I needed? Are, or were, other psychological factors involved, such as the overwhelming computer learning I had to accomplish during the month of November? It’s true that, during this time, I gave up total focus on all my miracle schedule, heavenly exercise programs – yoga, running, and the 50s. I hardly even stretched after folk dance. Nor did I warm-up before dancing. It was all part of an “experiment” to see how little I can do, how much I can get away with before such physical neglect created the inevitable slow “death” of my body.

I’m not sure about the answers to these questions. But it sure is nice to be ninety-eight percent pain free for awhile.

Notice how, after most of the pain drained out of my shoulders, I awoke with sudden new (minor) pains in my right elbow. So-called “mouse and computer” pains. Why now? I haven’t had those pains for weeks to months. Perhaps old man pain has jumped ship. The light of awareness chased his darkness from my shoulders. He had no place to go; so he’s hiding, once again, in my right elbow.

I just chased old man pain into a corner.

But he never gives up. Still, if I can keep him on the run by constantly focusing the light of awareness on his miserable behind, I’ll stay ahead in the battle.

Ramblings on Perfection and Imperfection

One Alhambra played with the cold perfection of relaxation; the cold perfection of perfect right hand finger tip touching and feeling of the strings. Perfection. . . .Cold perfection.

What is beyond perfection? Especially what is beyond cold perfection?

Warm emotion.

Warm emotional playing is the next step beyond “cold” perfection.

This means perfection is not the goal of playing. Rather it is a step, a stairway, a

rung on Jacob's upward ladder. Where does perfection lead? To imperfection. Where is this "higher level" of imperfection found? In emotional playing of the guitar!

Emotional playing brings in the human element.

The human element is ever imperfect.

Perfection is the first step on the road to imperfection.

You have to be perfect before you can be imperfect.

Peaceful, Relaxed, and Centered

Finding The True Tremolo!

On the right-hand five-finger and four-finger tremolo, the six-finger and four-finger arpeggio "finger tip feel": it is too fast to think individual fingers. Rather feel all finger tips along with their nails, flying and floating together.

This is a different level of tremolo, very hard to do. But it certainly feels good when I get it! Very peaceful, relaxed, and centered.

Is this the truest tremolo? Like the mystical, medieval, crusader search to find the True Cross, I am on the path to finding, nay, I am now actually touching, the relaxed and centered source of the True Tremolo!

I am vacillating between the morally right and centered leadership self, expressed in the eternal true tremolo versus thinking and focusing on the audience, expressed in right hand tension, uneven playing, and the ephemeral false tremolo.

Thus, in the deepest of ways, true tremolo and true leadership go together; they belong to the centered true self.

Thursday, December 18, 2003

Great Physicists and Digital Electronics

I have just started reading two books, one on the Great Physicists, the other on

Digital Electronics. And this all to understand the basis of computers.

Fascinating, indeed. I wonder if I am starting, am at the edge of, a new existence, a new road.

The past twenty-five or more years have been spent trying to convince myself, to prove to myself that I was an artist. In the process, I also wanted to learn how to support myself so I studied business as well. Indeed, it was my artist/entrepreneurial phase.

Now I wonder if I am not at the border of a new phase: call it the scientific phase. I also wonder if I am not returning to the past. . . only differently. After all, I started college as a physics major. I loved the wonder of the universe. Also, I figured that once I learned and understood all about the wonders of the physical universe, I could then get back to the wonders of music which was the emotional, artistic, and spiritual center of my universe.

The common element in both arts and sciences was wonder.

Well, now I have the confidence in myself as an artist. . . and even as an entrepreneur. Although my financial life is a mess and I have yet to solve the money problem, nevertheless, in spite of these monetary failures, I still have full confidence in my artistic and entrepreneurial abilities. So, in a sense, that life question and “problem” has been solved.

Now what?

Perhaps I am now ready to move on to the next phase.

What would that be?

Last year was my stock day-trading year. I spent most of my mental time and energy studying and playing the stock market. That phase has ended.

This year (starting in November) is my computer year. I am studying all kinds of computer programs. With this, I want to understand the foundations of computers, how and why they work. This leads me to the books on Digital Electronics and the Great Physicists.

Artistic masculinity has been solved. I have taken my first steps into the New Field.

Sunday, December 21, 2003

I have to get away from the world in order (later) to reenter it again.

Progress in nuance is slow and difficult. The last one percent is the hardest.

Nuances are subtle; improvements seem so small. My guitar progress can only be measured in millimeters and micro-seconds.

But, of course, where else is there to go?

Mental Toughness Equals Confidence Equals Relaxation

Among other things, mental toughness means having the confidence to relax (and stay calm in situations) right away: in guitar playing, running, yoga, folk dancing, performing, and even with the other problems of life.

Why do I want or need others to agree with me in the first place? Because I want them to confirm my views. With confirmation comes self-affirmation.

But do I really need others to confirm me? What, after all, do they even know about me? The answer is: mostly nothing. Therefore, it is an illusion to even seek their confirmation.

Self-affirmation can only be found by looking within.

Wednesday, December 24, 2003

Be Kind to Myself

Congratulations for Facing and Standing up to the Trauma

The mother trauma:

The trauma of standing up for my way of doing things. First, she will get

enraged in a terrible storm of hysterical yelling; then, when that doesn't work, she will threaten to die. Ultimately, the result of these tactics is to make the whole problem my fault. Then I will feel guilty, change my ways, and go over, submit to her point of view.

Truth is, I won't submit to her point of view. . . and this, even though I may try. . . for awhile. But I always "sink back" to doing it my way, to being who I am. Therefore, trying to change me from the outside is utterly and ultimately hopeless. A will of the wisp. An illusion.

Yet I fear the trauma, anyway. Even though intellectually, I know I will survive it, nevertheless, I fear the upcoming storm. Perhaps I just need more time to picture it in my mind, to think about. After all, handling trauma on its deepest emotional level, takes much patience and many years.

Perhaps I could be kind to myself by realizing this,
I might also add congratulations for constantly facing, dealing with, and standing up to it.

So: If I stand up for myself, for my way of doing things, I will be annihilated!

Is this a realistic fear? Maybe.

Should I face it nevertheless? Absolutely. Death never goes away. But the fear of it can be confronted. One must look it straight in the face, deal with the destructive forces head on and with full consciousness. It is a necessary survival technique, and it heightens the intensity of daily life.

Or is the trauma a fear of death or a fear of abandonment? Is abandonment a type of death? Does it feel worse than death? Maybe. But once abandoned in this life, one recovers. . . and moves on. Once dead, recovery comes only through reincarnation.

Choosing Trauma as a Form of Mental Relaxation

This fear of abandonment is a temporary return to a place I haven't been to for awhile.

Why am I returning there now? Why am I even bothering? Could it be a subtle denial of my present computer, guitar, and even loose-singing successes? It wouldn't be the first time.

Truly, I have accomplished much in the past month to six weeks. I am now "finished."

What does "finished" mean? That I can glow for awhile, realize I have "gained on it," and that, after a short and glowing respite, am ready to move on to the next level.

Perhaps "putting myself down" by returning to old traumas is my subtle way of "resting," taking a mental vacation. Who knows, I may be choosing this kind of misery and depression because it relaxes me.

I'm leading folk dancing and singing at Congregation Sons of Israel in Leonia tonight. It's only 3:30 in the afternoon but I can't stop thinking about it. What to do?

I might as well enjoy the mounting intensity of this pre-performance excitement.

What did I just say?

Enjoy! Enjoy the heightened intensity of the pre-performance excitement. Will this be my new way of looking at performances? I hope so.

Friday, December 26, 2003

Gliding Past my Brain

It is a amazing how so many of the principles of physics: magnetism, inverse proportions, amperes, volts, (but strangely, not ohms: resistance or conductivity, a notion which I somehow completely understand) that contain ideas, glide right past my brain.

This is probably because I do not yet see the poetry in them.

Even though I have a practical organizational sense, I am basically a dreamer, poet, and romantic. I understand poetry; beyond that not much makes sense.

Thus my "job" is to see the poetry in physics, the romance in electronics, the dream behind and beyond the digital.

As I break down crying over the beautiful five-finger tremolo I just playing, I really feel like a lost soul in this world. I just can't figure things out. It means handing myself over to God completely. What I know is so limited. I don't understand the tremolo or why it has taken me so long to get it. I don't understand its personal and deepest meaning. Why, why, why? My ultimate answer is: Who knows?

Such an attitude brings me mucho humility. Arrogance (whatever I have of it) just doesn't seem to work anymore.

As I go deep within I forget more and more about the external world.

Part of the beauty of this guitar playing is the growing ability to focus deep within, and forget the internal audience that once judged me as they listening.

This internal audience, one very similar to my external audience, is slowly withering away. Thank God!

Monday, December 29, 2003

The Right to Dignity

Trauma problem rising again: No matter what I do or how good I am, she will find something wrong and yell at me.

According to her, I will never be blame free. There will always be something wrong or bad that is my fault.

If there is no question she is thinking this, then the real problem becomes: why does part of me agree.

Well, on one level, I have messed up.

I have no problem agreeing with that.

But, and here is the key, I have right to do something wrong. True, I want to fix it. But I also have the right not be constantly badgered and yelled at because I have done something poorly or wrong.

Who is giving me these rights? Only my inner dignified self. That self gives me the right to fix it in my way.

Is that asking or expecting too much? I don't know.

But I can't ask or demand these rights from others. They are free to act the way they like. If yelling is their style, so be it.

Start Immediately: Jump Right In

Something has changed; something is different; things don't seem to work in the same way anymore.

Even my miracle schedule somehow doesn't work in the same way.

What is going on here?

Do I not need the old forms? Is it similar to "warming up immediately on guitar?" Is it I don't need the miracle schedule "warm-ups" the same way because I am there now, have arrived at the place where my skill is such that, through immediate focus and concentration, I can unknot and unlock myself within a few minutes?

Does that explain the down, sadness, and vague feelings of being lost? The rationale for my old forms has vanished, no longer needed. (Or, at best, I may need only a fraction, a shadow, of its former self.)

This would mean I hardly need my warm-up singing exercises anymore; I can jump right into singing. This applies to my yoga, running, my 50s, and even my folk dancing.

Warm-up exercises create heat and focus. Many years of practice, study, and the accumulation of practical knowledge have diminished my need for warm-up exercises.

Through intense focus I can create heat, practically jump right in, and this

without injury.

My first revelation came when I discovered micro-running: Immediate, slow warm-ups performed while running.

The micro approach to guitar playing, singing, and folk dancing is now available.

Start immediately. Jump right in. Isn't that what the 2004 left shoulder pain, unknotting, and unlocking is all about?

Further Applications: A Radical New Approach

"Point of Transformation"

Here's a radical new approach: Maybe instead of doing each exercise by the number I should do it to the point of transformation. In other words, over and over again without counting, focusing on the feeling the exercise creates in my body and watching my body and mind being transformed by the constant repetition of focus on the exercise.

Counting the numbers is very earthbound.

Focusing on Soft Power flowing into your body parts (forgetting counting and numbers) catapults you into the mental/spiritual, high-voltage world of magnetic force and electromotive energy.

It moves you immediately from quantitative to qualitative.

On Performing Silence

On performing Six Lute Piece Of The Renaissance:

Silence between pieces is part of the concert presentation and music itself. Plan, it, count it, program it.

The technique and power of performing silence: Use it playing guitar in public,

teaching folk dancing, and more.

The technique, use, and power of silence at beginnings and endings of performance.

Silence, when used correctly, is extremely commanding.

Also think about meter and rhythm when performing: It's much more fun!

Mother's Voice Returns

I've been waking up with the cosmic downs during the past few days. Also, I keep thinking, "I've done it all."

What is this "new deadness" in me?

Am I no longer willing to take a chance, to jump? Am I afraid of hurting myself. . . again? Hurting myself by running too hard, pushing too hard, doing yoga too hard, stretching too much, overdoing it? Am I so afraid of overuse and overdone injuries that I am pulling back from great and breakthrough efforts?

I am stuck in "Middle Land," taking the safe, known routes. No thrills in that. No growth, either.

Indeed, the computer fields I am exploring are totally new. There are thrills in that. Along with visits to electronics, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc.

But what about the "old" fields? I used to like, even thrill, with them. Now I am treading water, bouncing the ball in the same place, just keeping them up, maintaining them. I am working on a maintenance level. Well, although there are no thrills in that, it's still okay "for awhile," especially since I am thrilling in my New Computer Studies.

But the morning cosmic downs are bringing the "for awhile" into question.

What is going on here?

I am definitely afraid to "push beyond." And this, mostly in my physical pursuits: Running, yoga, 50's, even some dance. I am, or have (temporarily) become

afraid of hurting my body. . . again. The excuse or “explanation” is that my body is becoming old and I must be more “careful” with it. Because of its advanced and advancing age it is more prone to injury. Well, although this is and may always have been true, as an attitude, it is total bull shit. It is, really, once again, my mother speaking to me from the old neighborhood, telling me to take it easy, don’t work hard, lie down, relax, take it easy; if you don’t, you’ll get sick.

How did this fear of injury seep back into my soul? How did my mother’s voice return so subtly? I don’t know. But, in any case, it did. And today, I am on the verge of recognizing it. Nay, not on the verge, rather, I am there.

Mother’s voice returns. What shall I do with it?

The question may also emerge: Why does it return now?

Hint: I gave a great Monday night folk dance class! I just about gave it my all. . . with many new Ciga and Jaap dances. At the end of the class, I bend sideways and hurt my back in a somewhat different and new way. I had no remembered ever hurting my back in that particular spot, and in that particular way.

Hurting backs are always a signal. What was wrong? What was bothering me? Well, I had just given the class my all. Mother’s voice returned: “Stop making that all-out effort. You’ll hurt yourself.” Well, to fulfill her self-fulfilling prophecy, I did.

Perhaps I am getting ready to fight Mama’s voice again, to struggle against her noxious, fearful, but partially internalized warnings. Perhaps this is another and next aspect of the post-transitional state. (That “post-transitional” word is getting boring, but I don’t know what else to use. . . yet. Even “post-transitional” is metamorphosizing into something else, another term or word, something new.)

Folk dancing, running, yoga, the 50's: all to be looked at again and fresh, reconsidered in the eyes, under the gaze, and through the recalcitrant voice of inner restraint, the fear-filled voice of Mama.

Not that restraint is bad. Only it has gone to far.

When restraint has turned into a straight jacket, it becomes a noxious wardrobe:
it is the wrong clothing for me.

So ends a New Leaf