

Editing

Thursday, August 15, 2002

Turn Editing Into An Adventure

I want my editing of New Leaf to be an adventure. Without this quality “Why bother? steps in.

Thus I have decided to make editing my adventure. How can I do this without really feeling it is an adventure? Well, answering the How? question may, in itself, be the essence, the very nature of this new adventure.

In other words, I am trying to create an adventure out what I consider to be a non-adventure.

Sunday, August 18, 2002

On Curing Myself

Why not go to doctors to cure myself?

Well, I’ve been to most of them; I’ve listened to most of their attitudes and answers. Some work, most don’t.

Now I’d like to figure out how to cure myself by myself.

Same with finance and debt. I’d like to figure out how to fund myself by myself.

When I have a problem part of the “fun,” challenge, and even excitement, is figuring out how to solve it on my own.

Sure it’s good to ask others for their opinions. I may find out something useful. But even as I do this, an inner part of me, the creative part, still wants to figure it out by myself. I want to find the thrill of discovery in my own way, in my own time, and in my unique manner.

I hate when others take their own fears and concerns, “blame” me for them (since they can’t cure me in their own way and time), and then try pushing, threatening, or bullying me in an attempt to make me do it “their way.”

I'll handle the vicissitudes but I refuse to be bullied by them. And this whether they are imposed upon me by daily events or by others.

Monday, August 19, 2002

Expansive Dreams Are More Important Than "Reality"

or

Infinite Wealth Is Found In The Expansive World Of Dreams.

I'm furious; but I'm in a box, too.

I'm mad that I have sudden "new" expenses, taxes, vacation etc. (really they're not new, just had been forgotten) and that I'm back to almost zero in my checking account. This means I'm at the edge again. Hopefully, I'll never have to borrow again, but "never" is a very unregulated, tricky word. Life's events so easily turn it into "sometimes," "often," and even "always." One thing about "never" is you can never be sure where it will lead.

In any case, I'm also mad about the verbal beating I received from her. On the one hand, she is like bully, constantly beating on the one who is down. I hate to see myself as a victim – and I won't. Nevertheless, she is beating on me and I find it hard to defend myself. One question: why should I even bother defending myself? My financial actions, although they have turned out to be totally wrong, are nevertheless totally defensible. Why? Because everyone has a right to be wrong. I tried, I won; or, I tried, I lost. Such is the game of life. But just because I lost today doesn't mean I'll lose again tomorrow. Hope is ever present. Hope comes to me in the form of dreams. Thus dreams are ever present. They are the meat and substance of my inner vitality. Without dreams I will die. Without hope, I will die. And without the expansive dream of hope I will surely die.

Let's look at this dream business:

Maybe it is more important that I dream than I be "realistic." In this sentence, realism refers to the moneyed material world. Expansive dreams, on the other hand,

belong in the metaphysical world of passion, love, hope, incentive, motivation – the visceral world of inner vision that vitalizes me and makes me want to live.

Without expansive dreams it is not worth living in the “real” world.

Without money, but with expansive dreams, I’ll at least still want to live in the real world, have something to live for.

Therefore, for me, expansive dreams are more important than “reality.” Another way of phrasing this is: the inner reality of expansive dreams is more important than the outer reality of material and financial existence.

Debt, money problems, as reflections of the outer reality, are certainly an annoyance, sometimes a major annoyance. But they are not life threatening. But a life without expansive dreams is life threatening; without expansive dreams filling my mind, I am dead.

When she, with the help of my mind, pushes me into a corner by calling me a gambler, financial failure, etc., I have to partly agree. However, it is very important that I remember the scheme of values I hold dearest, the inner list of priorities I maintain. That means that although I may be a financial failure, I am an expansive dream success. The expansive dream is the inner artistic vision come to life. I have succeeded in seeing myself as an artist and in leading the artistic life. That, after all, has always been my goal, finance and money merely a tool, a means, a way of keeping myself calm while I continue on the daily fulfillment of artistic vision path – mostly through writing, but also through guitar, singing, folk dancing, weekends, tours, my “outer business” pursuits (bringing my expanded inner vision to the public). In this scheme, money has always been secondary. In truth, I have treated it as a second class citizen. Certainly, the results of this treatment show. It would be nice if I could see money as more “serious” instead of just another “fun” instrument to play on, another form of guitar, violin, or even dance. And truly, very often the financial mess I live in terrifies me. But no matter, I seem unable to change it.

I say “unable.” But deeper down, could I really mean I don’t want to change it?

Is there something vitalizing, some secret life-giving energy, in the financial straits I live in and create?

In other words, does part of me actually want to live in this financial mess, find it “interesting,” challenging, even bordering on “fun?”

What a horrible thing to say or even think. But of course, part of me does enjoy self-torture. I do have a hidden sado-masochistic tendency. Could part of me actually be enjoying this self-flagellation?

But S and M, self-flagellation, I see as negative terms. Could I rather say that part of this financial mess I live in and create is actually motivating? It feeds my humourous view of the absurdity of life. Truly, it is absurd that I allow myself to live this way. But I do. It is like the absurd things that take place on tour. Things often go absolutely the wrong way. I get into situations, or situations come up, that I can't possible get out of. But I do.

Yes, somehow I manage to creatively extricate myself from so-called impossible situations. I call these the miracles that take place on tour. And when they happen, they truly make my day. Perhaps I am unconsciously recreating them in my financial world – called “impossible” financial situations that I force me to become very creative and figure a way out of their intricate mazes.

Or is this all a rationalization?

I tend to think not. Rather, in the expansive dream mode, I believe I am at the edge, the border, of an important personal truth about myself and how my mind operates. It is, after all, a creative, artistic mind. It hates the hum drum. It must constantly change, or “recreate” so-called “reality.” In fact, a good part of this mind I live with actually hates so-called material reality. It cannot stand the heavy, predictable, sodden, fixed nature of the visible material and moneyed world. It strives to both create, destroy, then create again what is exactly around it.

As I say, it cannot live with the hum drum.

Isn't that what I am doing with money? Sure it's dangerous and a bit off-the-

wall. But I admire off-the-wall. It is an important part of my mad shoe energy scheme.

Yes, I'll work to earn money. I'll live in the annoyance. But always remember it is a secondary priority.

Truly, I am lucky to have and live in my expansive world of dreams. What could be better?

Sure it would be nice to have lots of money and be financially secure in the temporal material world. But, on another level, infinite wealth is found in the expansive world of dreams.

Paying Off Debt As Fun

On the other hand, she, and parts of my mind, are trying to turn my debt into a terrifying drudge; they are trying to take all the fun out of paying it off.

Fun? Paying off a debt as fun? Now here is an absolutely radical new idea!

Yes, creativity is when the human mind connects to the joy and magic of the creative flow. The human mind is curious; it yearns to wonder and be amazed. It is eager to learn, grow, expand, be excited, enthusiastic, and expressive. Why shouldn't all these characteristics also be present in not only creating my debt but in the creative voyage of trying to pay it off?

What hold me back is the medieval thought that debt is "bad." Maybe not medieval but puritanical. Somehow debt is, in a puritanical sense, evil. It contains parts of the devil.

These concepts take all the fun out of it.

Certainly Judaism, and contemporary society, are riddled with these concepts.

But the artist, as supreme radical, tries to go beyond this stationary, puritanical, drudge-filled, fun-less view of live. We try to go beyond living like dreamless automatons, mindless serfs. Rather we want to become masters of our inner visions.

Thus, for me, the challenge, magic, awe, mystery, wonder, and fun of paying off my debt is the way to go.

My personal struggle is to constantly remember this.

Tuesday, August 20, 2002

"For My Education"

This morning I'm quite down on myself money-wise. But I have to ask myself: if I suddenly got a windfall of money, was able with it to pay off all my debts, and had money left over, would I still follow the same route as before? In other words, is today, this morning, merely another form of down day, or has there really been a substantial change in my thinking?

This answer, I think, is, no. If I suddenly got a windfall I'd probably end up doing almost the same thing. But I probably wouldn't borrow anymore. I think.

Of course, I borrowed with total confidence that I could pay it back. And truth was, I could. . . until the stock market crashed a few months ago. I was actually in fair shape until the crash. As least I was even. And I had a plan to pay off all my debts through earning plus taking a thousand or two out of the market every month. But the market crash remove all my stock market money.

On one level. I was even "lucky" that I was on margin. This "forced me" to sell my stocks "early." In so doing, I avoided an even further descent and loss of money. In truth, I was able to pay off \$13,000 in debt through my stock market monies. Had I not sold then, my total monies in the market would have been much lower.

So, all in all, miserable as my market experience was, I did end up with something. Everyone lost mucho money in the market crash; I was one of those "everyones."

Where does all this leave me today? Exactly where I was before the market crash. But with no hopes of paying off my debt through market earnings. Of course, over the years, those earnings never happened anyway. Plus there was my desire to pay off my debt not through the market, but only through personal earnings.

Aha! That was my desire, my choice: market monies must not be touched. The

debt I built up on my own, therefore I must pay it off on my own. "On my own" means through personal earnings gained through personal work.

Well, that is exactly where I am today. Only I have no market back up, no imaginary market hopes to sustain me. I am now truly all alone in this venture. I repeat: I no longer have imaginary market hopes to sustain me.

I am talking about hopes here. I never expected to actually use the market money. My ego, pride, and whatever said I must pay back this debt "by myself." I cannot use mother's market money. That was my "gift" to play with. I lost, nay squandered, the gift. Such is life.

However, should I use the word "squandered?" Would my mother (and father), who gave me the money, use that word? The way I see it, they would not. For this kindness, nay vision, I have to ever thank them. They would instead say that the money was used "for my education." And truth is, I believe this. Sad, miserable, painful as it is to lose the money, I truly do not think I squandered it. My words, my description would be: I used it poorly. But I cannot even say that. During the period I had it, I thought that, although I was taking a chance in the market, I was nevertheless, using it wisely. Yes, I was taking a risk but I thought it was not an unreasonable risk. And of course, I was accompanied by many others. Look at the millions of people who lost money in this market crash. I was caught up in a crashing economic tidal wave. Such is life, and such are the vicissitudes of life.

So even though I lost most of my money and am now in mucho debt, I nevertheless still cannot even fault myself for my past actions. Oh sure, in hind sight I see many things I could have done differently. But Monday morning quarterbacks are a dime a dozen. Everyone is smart with hindsight.

So I stand here today sad, dazed, mad but unrepentant.

If the money I spent, lost, was for "my education" what have I learned from all this?

Good question, indeed.

Could it be that the vicissitudes of life are much trickier and more powerful than I thought. Again, that anything can happen, even to me. I am truly not protected at all. . . by anything. I live in total danger of falling off the cliff at any moment. There is truly no protection at all from the storm.

Yet in this storm I must go on. I must continue to pursue my vision, fulfill my destiny, answer my calling. . . and this despite all the blinding, smashing, relentless, unknown, and unexpected vicissitudes that will ever and constantly assail me.

Yes, the money was “for my education.”

Perhaps what I have learned is the importance of courage, fortitude, and inner strength in sticking to the (my) vision of unblighted enthusiasm, spark, excitement, curiosity, wonder, and dynamic magic vision despite the ever-pounding hammer blows of life.

Ankle Tops Reflect Money Fears (Support Fears)

When I got up from this writing my left instep hurt. It hasn't hurt all week. Why now?

Could the pain be somehow related to anger, fears, and constant concerns about money? After all, I am now “depending” on my feet to earn a living, to support me. Could there be a emotional psychic reflect in my insteps?

Could be. Actually, a deep part of me knows this is true. But I hate to face or admit it. I wonder why. Could it have something to do with denial of the inner strength of my intuition and wisdom?

No doubt.

These so-called arthritic pains are definitely physical reflections of psychic states, mostly fears and angers, I know it. But since every fear, every anger, is fresh and new, I have to ever face the fears and anger anew. Each time I have to “know” it again.

Thursday, August 22, 2002

Ever Reappearance And Rebirth

I am rereading my New Leaf 1995 journal and see I had the same problems then as I have now. I am dealing with the same issues.

What is my conclusion? I will never "solve" my problems; that dealing with my particular set of issues will never cease. Certainly, I will gain on them, make progress. But my issues, know as "problems" will ever reappear but in different form.

That is the nature of Jacob's ladder.

Aches And Pains Can Make You Wise

Sure the aches and pains of grandfatherhood slow you down. But what happens when you slow down? You are "forced" to look at things, to do things more slowly, thus "more deeply". Advanced age draws you the world of depth and gives you the opportunity to become wise.

Sunday, August 25, 2002

Great program at Three Arrows last night!

Why?

Started off with an hour of folk dancing. Excellent! Then a break. Then about forty-five minutes of folk singing. Great! It included "Irene, Goodnight," Tom Lehrer songs, bits, and Granados' "Spanish Dance Number Five", then a magic coin trick. All of it was great!

And left with such a wonderful feeling of inner peace, beauty, and love. This must be the right program for me. Also an excellent order of events.

My left elbow is killing me this morning. Could it be from playing Granados last night? Or the guitar in general? Or, I hope, it is psychological a la Dr. Sarno, because of the grand success of the program? I certainly hope it is the latter.

Is it?

Let me say it is and see what happens. Let's see if the left elbow pain either diminishes or goes away completely!

I could be wrong. . . but I could be right, too!

It's just so much fun singing, laughing, talking in foreign accents, Russian, French, Scottish, etc., doing magic tricks, playing the gaida, reading, talking, ad libbing, and playing the guitar in front of people!

Maybe I need the audience to have fun singing; maybe I won't bother doing it without them.

I Need a Group (I Need An Audience)

In order to have the fun of group singing and the ad libbing interaction with the group, I need a group. (This is also true for the fun of teaching, leading, folk dancing but I do this so often I don't think about it.)

This is the reason I need an audience, the reason I need to, should, must perform.

Why do I so much hate to say "I need an audience?" Is it a denial of my performance desires and even need? A denial of the "Hey, Ma, look at me!" phenomenon? Or simply a denial of my bottom line desire to have fun? And, on the deepest of levels, a denial of the incredible fun of publically running wild on the lawn?

Sleepiness as Resistance and Prelude to Excitement

As I morning practice the "Alhambra" slowly, isn't the sleepiness I feel a hesitancy, a kind of resistance to crossing the border into the land of excitement?

Isn't this the same kind of sleepiness I feel in other endeavors, like the pre-performance sleepiness.

This sleepiness helps me avoid the anxiety of excitement.

But the sleepiness could also be a prelude to excitement. I could decide to cross into the land of excitement, of joy and God.

The Elbow Voyage: Guitar Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela
(Relocation of Guitar Excitement Resistance)

I wonder if this resistance to guitar excitement could be locating, relocating, in my elbows. For years it used to be in my right shoulder, then in my thumb, index finger, etc. Once I became aware of, and slowly knocked off, these resistance centers, my inner rebels did not go away. They simply moved, changed location. Is their new address: Elbowland?

Does the pain, especially in my left elbow, relate to guitar? After all, it started, or at least I was made aware of it, while I was playing guitar in May, just before our trip to Santiago de Compostela and northern Spain. It was in Santiago de Compostela that Segovia held his master classes, and where Rick Madriguera won his two Ramirez guitars before I bought one of them.

Thus I have a guitar connection through my Ramirez, through Rick, through Segovia, through Santiago de Compostela, through Spain.

On one level, our entire tour was a pilgrimage. But on another level, a deeper level, could this have been my personal pilgrimage into the heart of my guitar playing? Into the church of Santiago de Compostela I plunge; into the waiting and accepting arms of Segovia! Mama Segovia is waiting for me in Santiago de Compostela. He is waiting there with open arms. He accepts and loves my guitar playing. He accepts and loves me!

Why did my left elbow start to hurt just before I set out on that Spanish voyage? Not only was going to Spain, home of the Spanish guitar, and the classical guitar playing I so want to master and play well, but I was visiting the Santiago de Compostela home of the master and his master classes. Master Segovia would never accept my "Alhambra". But perhaps that was the cause and purpose of my inner

pilgrimage. Perhaps I was secretly, unknown to me, going to accept his personal blessing, his recognition and love of my guitar playing.

What is the meaning of an elbow? What symbolism does it hold?

Three months later I realize the guitar meaning of my Santiago pilgrimage. And who is Santiago but Saint James? And what is my name?

Was this trip a precursor to a new level of self-acceptance, love, and recognition? Did this happen not only with my guitar symbolized by my Alhambra playing, but with my entire personality as well?

I don't know if all this is true but it certainly is interesting!

Facing The Fun

Is my task now to review and renew the past but with new eyes of self-confidence?

Look at the songs I wrote. How good they are! "Social Director of the Garbage Dump" looks funny and fresh. In fact, all (or most) of my old songs look good, nay even great! What is happening to me? Revisiting the creations of my past with a startling new self-confidence.

I'll have to face the fun of performing them!

All of them: "Grendel," "The Backwards Clock," "Art of Gargling," etc. Even "Group Guitar" and "Thomas Gilfry." All old stuff. Folk songs, too. French, Italian, Russian, group songs, etc. A return to past and former greats.

Returning to performing with a vicious vengeance, riding a joyful cloud of fun!
"Blow the Clouds Away!"

Wednesday, August 28, 2002

Listing the Pains in the Complaint Department

This is the complaint department. Why is my body falling apart?

It is an old complaint, hardly worth publishing. I am simply writing about it in the hope of curing myself. This is writing as medicine, pure and simple.

So-called Arthur is creeping up on me. Arthur, or course, is Mr. Arthritis. I don't really believe in him or even quite know who he is. And yet there he is.

Let's begin by naming the parts that hurt: I could call them folk dance pains. But perhaps they go beyond folk dancing, too.

First there is left foot top, then left inner knee. Last night I added right inner knee, and some right foot top. There is also my left elbow, originating, I believe from a lotus position foot-pulling.

I think that's it for now. Oh, yes, a slight pain in my left buttock. I think it came from running. But that one is, at the moment, very minor.

Friday, August 30, 2002

At the Bottom of the Valley

I am depressed; I am down. And thank God for that!

Looking into my depression, I see hope; I see my energy returning.

Depression, melancholy, sadness, the saturnine qualities. I'm back to reading Thomas Moore's Care of the Soul, and it is wonderful to read. He lauds depression.

Isn't the fact that my body is killing me a form of physical depression? My foot tops, knees, and elbows are fighting against me. These members of my inner mafia are in the process of knocking me off.

They're stripping me, not only of my folk dance career, but of my love of running and yoga. They're murdering my joy and ability to luxuriate in physical movement.

No wonder I'm depressed. But, my depression, my sorrow, sadness, down, and melancholy, is, as usual, the gateway to my cure.

But perhaps "cure" is not the right word. True, I want to get better, want the pain to stop, want to function in my full physical capacity again. But I don't want to be

“cured” of depression. I don’t want to lose this strange, dark, saturnine, mysterious inner power, this gateway into the Unknown.

I don’t want a cure. I want a flow.

Truth is, part of me loves my depression. It loves the melancholic energies seeping into my being from this dripping down, mossy, dark, and low state.

Will looking deep into this depression heal my body? Feels like it might. But the trail of life is often mysterious and twisted. One cannot say rationally, definitely, with certainty and a powerful “should” where this fucker will lead.

But it is time to look deep into the maw again. Who know what treasures lie at the bottom of the valley?

The pay off is: I am becoming aching, older, and wise. I am learning that knowledge and wisdom count. I know life is suffering and knowledge makes a difference.

If life is suffering, then the pains of my body are not only part of life, but will never go away. Oh, they may change, but if they do, some other kind of pain will come to replace them.

Even joy can be seen as a type, a variation, a strange mode of suffering.

The combination of b’simcha and b’oy veh!

Work through pain as a stimulant to joy. Pain and suffering as gateways to joy; and vice versa.

Yes, joy and suffering are opposites. But really, on a higher level, the highest level, what is the difference between them? Is there one?

I need a new attitude towards my body pains. Actually, I know and have the

attitude: it is seeing pain as a stimulant. But somehow I have forgotten it.

Somehow I have become afraid my pain will destroy my folk dance career. I've backed off from it. Somehow I've moved into the frozen fear aspect and backed away from the stimulant aspect.

Like to take another look: to renew the "old" attitude, but with added "saturnine" wiseness and wisdom.

Sunday, September 1, 2002

The Poetics Of Pain

My elbow pain began in May. (Some more crippling foot pain probably also advanced.)

My stocks crashed in May. I sold them all, got out of the market, and with that exit lost—or gave up—all my financial hopes.

What will I depend on now? Where will I get my financial and general more? These questions haunted me as they floored me.

My left elbow went into "tennis elbow" spasm; my feet collapsed even further. This all happened when the stock market, father of my hopes, collapsed.

Could they all be related? MY left elbow related to my guitar which is a means of financial support; my feet related to folk dancing which is a means of financial support. Now, suddenly, without the stock market financial hopes, all my support depends on me! My total support is now "in my hands" (as I crawl on my elbows, and on my feet!

But now I look at the stock market and even though I've got \$2000 in it "to practice" I realize that only a miracle will allow me to make real money in it. And I've just about given up believing in such a miracle. Sure I'll stay in the market "for play." But for "real money" I'll have to do something else.

What?

Well, why not work? It seems the best and surest and, in the past and present,

most successful way for me to make money, support myself, even engender hope and “more.” And this while doing, working at, what I love!

Realizing this is a most radical shift. It also could focus my mind on the “poetic source” on my foot and elbow pains, my guitar and folk dance career support pains.

Truly I have only myself to depend on, only myself to support me, only myself and my talents to create and support the work I do. But is this so bad?

Hardly. Here is the startling and brilliant fact: I can make more money – the most money – following the road of my talents and doing what I love best! Is that so bad? Hardly.

There are tigers of confidence in my closet. They have come out to play on my gone-public lawn, to romp and frolic on the public grass.

Monday, September 2, 2002

Arthritis of the Soul

Create a poetry of the foot. Make the foot go, walk, run, dance in interesting places.

Maybe my feet hurt because they are bored. What new and exciting dances are they dancing? To which new and exciting places are they running? What new and exciting yoga stretch or even high calliyoga number are they aiming for?

The answer to all the above questions is: none.

Perhaps it is a boredom disease of the soul that is being expressed through the pain in my feet? An arthritis of the spirit.

Elbow, too?

There are four levels in playing guitar: Pleasure, fun, joy, and ecstasy.

Pleasure and fun are somewhat related but I don't exactly know how yet. Pleasure has a physical quality to it, fun a frivolous one.

Joy, or simcha is the next level. However, there is still something “human,”

“relational,” even “earthly” about this quality.

Then comes ecstasy, the highest level. Here you touch your deepest inner potency and briefly enter the Land of God.

The Silence Of Others

I used to interpret the silence of others, especially after I play my guitar or offer important, deeply held inner convictions, as a silent rejection of me. Now, however, I am thinking it might simply be the sound of others thinking, considering, perhaps even “stunned” into, personal reevaluations and inner meditations.

By offering my deepest thoughts and expressions of my talents I may be deeply affecting them, causing them even to reconsider their attitudes.

This is, indeed, a radical departure from former thoughts of rejection. It is a radical development.

Shifts

I am going through radical shifts of perception. That’s why I’m so tired.

But is this a good excuse not to do things, not to run, do yoga, or follow other aspects of my miracle schedule? Perhaps, and perhaps not.

Perhaps that’s what a vacation is for: to radically rearrange my mind, reformulate my life through a reformation of attitudes. Take a new look at the revolutionary power of imagination. The Protestant Reformation comes home to roost.

Should I give in to the flow. . . or fight it? I don’t know. The opposition forces of Imagination are locked in even battle. Effort has temporarily stopped. Should I give in to this situation. . . or fight it? I don’t know.

Perhaps I can and should watch it, become aware of the ongoing battle.

“Speaking” On And Through The Guitar

What is actually “said” in the Bach Fugue in A Minor? What does it actually

“mean” to me?

I don't know. I've hardly ever thought about these questions. I've been too busy just learning how to play and survive in the fucking notes.

Reading From Beirut To Jerusalem by Thomas Friedman reminds me how much I love the Moslem Arabs, their personalities, and their culture. I was always treated well and with friendship by the Arabs in particular and Moslems in general. Plus I loved the friendliness, humor, and open smiles of the Egyptians.

This is all good to remember in times of September 11th stress.

The Alhambra Paradox: Never The Perfect Alhambra
or Imperfection Is Best

Playing the Alhambra I alternate between despair and hope: I despair because I believe I will never play it perfectly and hope that perhaps some day I will.

This is another form of my dream of perfection. But part of that dream is hope. What is hope but the “wanting more” in disguised form. I will always want “more.” I will never lose my desire for it. (Once I do, I am dead; once I do, I will die.) Thus the life-giving part of me wants to ever remain imperfect, and that is why my playing of Alhambra will ever remain imperfect.

I do not understand my despair. Why would I despair in the first place? Because I will never be able to play Alhambra perfectly. But another part of my soul never wants to play it perfectly. I do not want to lose the motivating and drive force of my “wanting more.”

Perfection is a form of death.

This is the Alhambra paradox.

Today I'm giving give up on despair. Truth is, I never want to play the Alhambra perfectly! And I never will.

Believe it or not, imperfection is in my best interest.

Performing Imperfectly In Public

This is an incredible illusion. Wanting more, expressed through wanting to play the “Alhambra” perfectly, has been driving me to practice the guitar. As I see it, once I perfect it, I will stop practicing. But I love to practice. In succeeding in my perfect “Alhambra” endeavor, I will lose my love. Therefore, secretly, I keep destroying the piece.

Paradoxically, this also prevents me from performing in public. Part of me says I will not do so til I “get this right,” until I can play a perfect “Alhambra.” My desire for perfection acts as a lid on my public performance.

Could it thus be true that even in public, I want to play imperfectly? It must be true.

The lid of death has covered the imperfect flow of life.

There is a big difference between wanting perfection and being perfect, or achieving it. Wanting perfection contains the wanting more and is full of life. Reaching the pinnacle is a state of death.

The best one can do at the pinnacle is roar the lion’s victory cry for a few moments and move on.

Passion Panic!

With my running, yoga, and calliyoga exercises I feel an incipient panic. On one level, I’m afraid if I push I’ll hurt myself. On another level, I’m afraid I’m getting old; my body is fragile, takes longer to recover, and I’ll hurt myself by pushing, or “giving it my all.”

I’m afraid of “giving it my all.”

Thus passion is pushed in a corner.

Afraid of getting old, of hurting myself: Is this a bottom line fear of death?

Or is it a fear of my passions?

Am I suffering from passion panic?

The way to handle passion panic is to say to yourself: "I'd rather die than give in!"

Friday, September 6, 2002

Importance of Jealousy and Envy:

The Virtue of Intolerance

Let your jealousy ride. It shows the value of being less tolerant, the hidden power – and virtue – of intolerance.

I'd love to use some of this "newfound intolerance" in my own life.

How? Somehow I've got to find some jealousy or envy within myself. Can I find any? Where? And in what?

First thing that comes to mind is money. But I feel no envy or jealousy towards rich people. In fact, it is amazing that I have no feelings of jealousy or envy towards the rich, or even towards those middle class friends of mine who have much more money than I. They also have the security of their pensions and larger bank accounts.

Why don't I feel jealousy or envy towards them? The only answer I can find is: Perhaps I do but refuse to or simply do not or cannot recognize it within myself.

First, let's take jealousy: If jealousy means the fear that someone will take something away from me, then there is truly no reason for me to be jealous of these middle class friends. Since I have no money, there is nothing for me to worry about losing to them (except perhaps my dignity. More on that later. . . maybe).

How about envy? Well, if envy is the desire for what someone else possesses, then last night I did notice my desire for the security and peace of a pension and money in the bank that Sid has. Perhaps I did feel envy towards him.

So, although there may be no jealousy I can find in my soul at the moment, perhaps I am discovering a kernel of envy. I hope I am. I want to get some motivating form of intolerance out of the Care Of The Soul book by Thomas Moore.

The intolerance I want to find is an intolerance of myself, in myself, and the way

I have been acting. I need a strong dose of limits and lack of freedom, a sense of order. The only area I can see use for these qualities at the moment is in the area of money.

Can I limit myself? Do I truly want to? How about the idea (rationalization?) that life is short and I might as well grab, suck at, milk, luxuriate in the moment no matter what it costs?

Have I been hiding my secret envy (desire) for economic security, for the inner peace that a pension, and a secure and large bank account, bring?

Have I been denying, resisting, hiding deep feelings of envy regarding money? Has this been the fatal flaw in my life's financial plan? Truth is, I have and have had no life's financial plan. I have refused to look at, or even think of such a thing. Too traumatic, limiting, unartistic, inhibiting, too lacking in freedom. Better for me to learn about running wild on the lawn and the full power of releasing my artistic soul. That is the reason I have been put on earth. Not to make money, but to recognize, be put in touch with, release, and express my passions through artistic endeavors. All else, including money, has been a mere footnote.

Well, I have learned to release and express all my passions. There I am a success. Is it now time to turn to the "darker side," the money side, the security side? Is it time to fill out the blanks in that mythological equation?

I have always chosen freedom over security. No doubt I will continue to do so. Nevertheless, can't I still give security its due, take a new look at the god within? Is it a god or a demon? Well, who it is doesn't matter.

The big question is: have I been denying a force within myself, the power, security, and money force?

Truth is, I'd like to feel some jealousy and envy; I want it to motivate me, to right, lift, or at least balance my sliding, tilted, down-in-the-dirt financial side.

Actually, the way I have handled my money, how it has disappeared, what I have done to it, is totally disgusting! Certainly, I feel a nausea with myself and my

financial actions, disgust at my willful attempts to deny, push away, and pay no attention to money. I have a disdain for money.

Perhaps this secret disdain is my Achilles heel. It is not even so secret. It is right out there in the open: a communistic, artistic, Karl Marxist, revolutionary, utter disdain for money. Along with this goes an utter disdain for the material world. An "I am better than that; I am better than them, I don't have to work or worry about money like all the others jerks, the stupid drones who live down there in that lower material world. I am an artist! I disdain their world, their work, and their way of life. I am above it all."

Talk about hubris!

Oedipus the financial king has fallen. Perhaps this is the point where I should start looking at my Greek tragedy financial life.

The Secret Power Of Disdain

However, it is also important to remember the power, reason, and deeper purpose of this disdain. It has given me the courage to fight the negative societal forces, given me the "I'll never give in, I'll die first" power of opposition, the power to stand aside, aloof, apart, to face my inner creative demons, give them their due, and thus become an artist.

So don't be so quick to knock disdain.

It may however, be time to recognize another layer within my soul, weaker perhaps but valid nevertheless: the financial, money, security, inner peace, and power layer.

We'll see where these explorations lead.

Truth is, I'm proud of my airhead ways, of my courage and ability to fight the forces of money and security, to stand up to them, to fulfill my highest calling, to become an artist. I'm proud of my "fuck 'em all" attitude.

But isn't there any deep satisfaction, any running-wild-on- the-lawn ecstasy, I

can find in money?

In other words, is there a way to balance the dictates of adventure, freedom, passion, and ecstasy with the more mundane but necessary pursuits of finance, security, and money?

Maybe there isn't.

Making The Mighty Try Is Mine!

Should I go back into the stock market with this uncertainty attitude? Is it even worth it? If I do, I'll lose the innocent high derived from the naive hope of infinite wealth.

That's what I'm giving up if I accept uncertainty: the adrenalin high of infinite wealth; false hope kick in with its naive rush of curing might.

What is the opposite of naivete and innocence? Realism. What a come-down. Won't it breed cynicism? Perhaps. But it might be a "healthy cynicism." And I could still give it my all, try as hard as ever. Only this time I'll realize all my efforts may not work.

But again, it is the effort and work, the try-and-give it my-all, that count. No one can ever predict results. Results are in the hands of fate. But putting in my best effort, work hard as I can, giving it my all, making the mighty try, are all mine!

Sunday, September 8, 2002

Unending Tension

Could there be more emotional freedom in polytheism? And acceptance of the human condition?

Hera and the virtue of possessiveness.

Jealousy is the desire to possess. . . to keep what you have.

Envy is also the desire to possess. . . but to possess the possessions of others.

On a personal level, jealousy speaks to me: "I don't want to spend my money; I want to keep it all for myself; I don't want to "share" or give away my art creations; I want to keep them and my art all for myself. Etc."

With my wife, jealousy is obvious. We got married on its basis. No question or problem there: I want to keep her for myself.

But my relationship to money is a question and problem. I am trying to understand why I am so loose and easy with it, why, on one level, I pay so little attention to it. Could I be denying my possessive self? Or am I more like Zeus with his erotic creative union with the world? Certainly I have within me elements of both Zeus and Hera. But I lean strongly towards Zeus.

Truth is, I would like to be more jealous of my money, so I could get and keep more of it. But "unfortunately," I would rather be adventurous, creative, and, like Zeus, erotically grab the world around me.

No matter how I twist and turn, although I recognize money's obvious importance, it still comes in second.

Maybe that's as far as I can go. It's important to be married to my Hera. But it's more important to be Zeus.

That's just the way it is. That's just the way I am.

I live in unending tension. There is no either/or.

I have to have both.

Monday, September 9, 2002

Scared? Go For The Passion!

Today is my day off. I wonder what that means?

It means no two-hour yoga.

But why?

I got so tired yesterday from following my excellent two-hour routine, it scared me off.

I love this routine! I'm so proud of it! I'm proud of myself for following it. It makes me feel great!

So what is keeping me back? What is asking me to "take a day off" from something I love?

Fear. Fear of what? Fear of hurting myself through overuse.

Why am I afraid of hurting myself? Because if I do, it will incapacitate me. What does incapacitate mean? It means I will be unable to do what I love.

What do I love? Following my invented two-hour morning routines of running and calliyoga on alternate days. I feel I must take a day off, give my body a rest in order to continue this routine.

I am stopping what I love in order to do what I love. Is this wise? Is it right? Am I right to be afraid?

I am checking out my body, aware of its fatigue, aches, and pains. I realize by pushing myself I may be crossing the line, making myself vulnerable to long term injury.

Yes, I am afraid and hesitant. I am standing at the edge hovering over the abyss; I am at passion's gate wondering how far to go.

Am I wise to give in to my fear?

What exactly is that?

The passion itself?

What about the aches and pains I'm feeling, the ones Bernice calls "arthritis?" Does my routine cause them, prevent them, make them worse, cure them? Is it besides the point? Will my pains appear, on and off, no matter what I do? If this is so, then why not simply continue my beloved routine?

It seems my biggest fear is not of the pains themselves but rather that, by recognizing the pains, I will have to "give in to them," I will have to cure them first before I can go on. How will I cure them? I will have to rest. What does "rest" mean? It means stop doing the things I love.

Who used to say “Oh my dear, you’re tired? Rest. Oh my dear, you’re trying, pushing, growing, breaking barriers; you’re in pain because of it. My poor thing, you must rest.” My inner Ma, of course. Rather than encouraging me by saying how heroic and wonderful are my efforts, rather than cheering me to fight on, grow, keep expanding, stay on the process road of this glorious enterprise, I’m so proud of you and your effort, she would instead obliterate all these glories with the frightening push-down word: “rest.”

It seems my biggest fear is the attempt at destruction of my passion, the obliteration of my spirit of growth, the crushing of my innate desire for expansion and adventure. That is my life’s blood. The little aches, pains, and so-called “arthritis” attacks that take place on the road are mere footnotes along the way. They are not worth that much attention. How to handle them? The best way is to look them straight in the eye, say hello, then pass right by. Give them their due with a good morning, a nod of recognition, then move on.

Go for the passion. All else is transient poppycock.

Left Elbow Again

Could it also have something to do with the stock market crash (in May I sold all my stocks)? This meant I would now have to make my living not only through folk dancing (left foot pain) but now through guitar playing as well (left elbow pain). On the one side, is the trauma pressure of earning a living; on the other side is the freedom of release: Now I can and finally “should,” nay “must,” play the guitar in public again. For money. This is a slide back into professionalism again, but it is also a slide forwards into freedom of expression on and through the guitar. (I haven’t been practicing for twenty-five years for nothing.)

These two forces, the forces of freedom and the pressures of earning a living, may be meeting, colliding and, until a decision is made, paralyzing my left elbow.

Working all this out, straightening out the forces, is a long-term process. That’s

why my elbow has hurt for many months.

Tours

Since the pains in my feet and elbow come from my brain, I will also have to use my brain in this cure. How? Running, organizing, and selling tours.

Funny how I see my organizing and sales skills as part of my brain, whereas my arts – guitar, folk dancing, even writing – are part of my soul, my artistic soul.

Tuesday, September 10, 2002

Resurrection Dream

Was my Don Kmetz dream a resurrection dream? It was strange but not frightening.

Who were the characters? Who did they represent? Could Don Kmetz have been my father? He did have a small beard and resembled my father in a certain way. Also his mother did visit him. Was his mother really my mother? A third person, a woman, also came up to visit. Could she have been my sister?

I was off to the side in the whole dream. Not happy, not sad, not involved, not uninvolved. I was somewhat of an observer.

I was going to take a bath, too. The bathtub was in the kitchen. Also I had to climb (five?) flights of stairs to reach his apartment. Could the apartment have been my Greenwich Village apartment on St. Marks place, a fifth floor walk-up?

If all this is so, then it could indeed be a resurrection dream, one of rebirth, redemption, rejuvenation, and the beginning of a new life. I even saw some kind of bird on the roof. I believe it was a chicken. Laying some kind of egg. Hatching of an egg, birth of a new life. I climbed to the nest on the roof and was about to stand on it, on one leg, but I was afraid of the heights. I was afraid I might lose my balance and fall to the street below. I was afraid because I said or thought to myself, "I am old. I can't stand on one leg and balance like I used to. I'd better not try else I'll fall and hurt, even kill myself. Too dangerous to balance way up high. But I had climbed up and was

there nevertheless.

I stood on the nest; I saw the bird (chicken) in it. I even saw the egg. And I dared to climb even though I hesitated, was afraid to balance on one leg. But although I explained my fear by saying I was old, I didn't rule out standing on one leg for the future. I would just have to first think about it, then practice it more.

When I climbed to the roof I left my father (Don Kmetz), his mother (my Ma), and (I suppose) my sister in the apartment below. Also they were all using the kitchen so I never got to take a bath in it. My baptism took place on the roof.

What a strange dream. So out of place for Cape Cod. Yet in the world of symbols, the world of resurrection, I could be right about its meaning and interpretation.

Guitar

Where and how does guitar now fit in to this new soul work, to this new life?

It is a new life. Shouldn't it also be a new guitar? Yes. What will be new?

As I ask this question, I feel resistance in my left elbow. I know part of new guitar is going public with my playing. But that is a relationship change, a new approach to the outside world. But what about my inner world? What about internal creative and dynamic changes in the guitar playing itself?

This is hinting at a fundamentally new way of approaching the guitar. I have no idea where it will lead. But it is part of the New Life.

I guess yesterday the A string also broke for a symbolic reason as well. It busted up my old guitar world. After all, it is the "A" string, first in the alphabet, the primal letter of strings.

Wednesday, September 11, 2002

The Gospel: Spreading the JGI Good News

The Jim Gold International Good News

That's what the Don Kmetz dream was about: afraid to jump and fly. . . into the richness of marketing. Of promoting, selling, getting out the gospel for all the Jim Gold International events and products. Ah, the joy of spreading such a gospel – if only I could have it. That would be getting off my shaky leg, leaping off the roof, flying through the air, singing the Jim Gold International song of expansion.

As I told Bernice, why would I ever retire? I have a glorious life, I run glorious events, I create glorious music, write glorious books, lead glorious folk dance classes, organize and lead glorious tours. . . and more. Why would I ever want to retire from such richness? My soul is expanding in every direction. . . except sales, marketing, public relations, and promotion. These latter have always been my nemesis.

But no more. Part of their threat was my lack of confidence. To actually go out there in public, proclaim my song, my gospel, full-throated and in full volume, unabashed and proud, why I just couldn't do it.

But now I can. And I will. I just have to get used to this new twist in my life, this new revelation.

Can the soul thrive in gospel? Can my soul thrive in the full expansion, promotion, marketing, and sales of Jim Gold International? Well, even though it is contrary to everything I have thought in the past, why not? Just because it is new and different doesn't mean it can't be done. It is a step into a new land, a new tour, a new adventure.

The sales adventure, the marketing adventure, the promotion, public relations, and full gospel adventure. And it is centered around everything I believe in, every event, product, and creation I love.

I have broken the back of the money ogre. Spreading the JGI gospel may be, in itself, just so much fun!

Should I change the name of my company to JGI? Somehow I just love saying

the name of my company! Imagine being so possessive and jealous. My company. Not yours or someone else's. Mine! I created it. It expresses me. It is my walking reality and fiction simultaneously, my dream world in concrete, and concrete world in a dream, all my love expressed to the fullest. Fly with it! Bring it to the world. What glorious fun and Beethoven joy it will bring to spread my wings, fly over the earth, and drop these JGI expansion bombs upon the populace!

Is JGI Tours a better name than Jim Gold International Tours? Is Jim Gold Tours, a branch and product from JGI better?

JGI is certainly easier to say. Less words and syllables. It is also more abstract, more Wall Street sounding. It feels like a big company, more substantial and professional sounding. Plus it may mean something to me I don't quite understand yet, something about sales, promoting, and marketing for "another" company. I don't just work for myself. I work for a company.

"Who do you work for, Jim?"

"Why, JGI, of course."

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Work As A Lover

Thomas Moore says there is a relationship between work and the erotic. "If our work doesn't have an erotic tone to it, then it probably lacks soul as well." Work and the erotic. Now there's an interesting relationship! I like it.

Work as a lover.

I love my work. My work loves me.

It's a whole new dimension, a whole new way of looking at work. There is an erotic, sexual quality to my work.

Fuck the audience! What does this mean? Love the audience. Ram it to them. The audience loves me, too. They fuck me back.

What about tours, weekends, business, sales, marketing, etc.?

In sales don't I fuck my customers, push into them and ram them on the phone and in person? Isn't that what sales is all about? Wooing, convincing, pushing, touching their soul, touching their heart, massaging their minds, sensually caressing their pocket books. . . .Indeed, if I look at it, the erotic quality is everywhere in my customer relationships, in all aspects of my work.

There's a certain amount of fun in hurting others and there's a certain amount of fun in hurting yourself. On a sexual-erotic level we call this sado-masochism.

What's wrong with it? Why is it so "bad?" Naturally, if carried to an extreme, I can see how it is harmful to society, of which I am a member. But carried out on a lower level. . . . Why not?

If I could learn to take pleasure in my aches and pains (masochism), and even translate these energy malfunctions into the public arena (sadism), using them for sales, guitar playing, performing. . . wouldn't this be a good way of using the pain/pleasure combo for public good and private fun?

Maybe I should just start off with masochism, liking even "loving" my pains. Turn them into sexual/erotic energy outlets and let their flow "cure" me. I've got them anyway. They'll probably never go away completely. Isn't it better to enjoy my pains rather than dislike and reject them?

Micro-Runners Workshop.

Our motto: "Slower than a snail's pace." Or "Slower than a sloth."

Can you keep up with us?

Our racing philosophy: The last shall be first. You win by losing.

Our resting pace is faster than our running pace.

Monday, September 16, 2002

As Plato said, love is a madness, a divine madness. Can I find divine madness, a running wild on the lawn, in loving JGI?

As Thomass Moore asks, is my love related remotely, if at all, to the "person" who is the apparent object of my love? Does my desire to love my work and its object, JGI, have anything to do with the object itself?

What is love, after all? Ficino, through Moore, says, "It is the desire for union with a beautiful object in order to make eternity available to mortal life." Not bad. I like it.

So ends a New Leaf.