

Agony and the Ecstasy

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

The Agony and the Ecstasy of "Going Social"

"We rely on the connections with other people for our emotional stability." So says Daniel Goleman in Primal Leadership. He calls it the "open loop" system.

Whatever he calls it, the above sentence made me cry.

Why? If this is so, and it no doubt is, then I am daily faced with the old trauma as soon as I leave my house. I may even be facing it, or avoiding it, at home, too. If I rely on connections with other people for my emotional stability, and I am constantly expecting a whack from depending on such connections, then I am constantly being exposed to my primal trauma. It is indeed so sad. . . so I cried.

This, of course, is the life trauma I have discovered through therapy and am now working on. Trying to open up my life, go public, work, etc. Although I have not completely come to terms with it and probably never will, I have definitely gained on it. The fact that my new present and future life's project is projecting my vision onto the world through the promotion, expansion, and advertising of JGI shows how I am dealing with it much more successfully.

And yet I cried as a reminder.

I taught folk dancing last night. My body is killing me in so many places this morning. And after last night, too. Is it old Arthur? Or am I scared to reenter the world and responsibility after my wonderful Cape Cod vacation? In other words, once again I ask, is Dr. Sarno right? Are my pains mostly emotional, expressions of the primal trauma as it constantly revisits me? If true, how should I handle it? Isn't it time to write and then reread Dr. Quack?

Maybe I'm also crying for the beauty of the concept, crying for joy! After all, on

the other side, I do love doing things with people, fooling around with them, playing with them. I love banter, etc. I'm "good with people," a social kind of guy. Otherwise, how could I have been a social director? So, publically, everything points to not only my social skills, but my love of "going social."

Where does the trauma fit in? It "enables me" to escape into my room, the creative chamber of my imagination, where I can create all kinds of wonders to eventually bring to the world, bring public, go public, to "go social with them."

The Joy of Expanding JGI

So perhaps some of my aches and pains, my "visits with Mr. Arthur," are due to repressing the joy of going social. This relates to the joy of expanding JGI.

Or perhaps, better expressed, the joy of going social is the joy of expanding JGI.

Can I face such a thought? It would mean facing the joy of sales. Well, look how I jump with happiness when I receive that love-in-the-mail check. My joy from sales is obvious. No question it is there. I "simply" have to face it, recognize and say hello to it, and then welcome it!

Thursday, September 19, 2002

Stand Up For The Vague!

"How will I pay off your debt?" That is the constant question she asks. Since no matter how I answer the question she keeps asking it over and over again, I end up feeling helpless.

I am not helpless. I am gaining on it. But it is a difficult, long-term problem, and may take a long time to solve.

How I pay it is unanswerable in specific terms. Generally, however, my answer is: "Slowly; by trying; by focusing and making the effort." That's as specific as I can get.

Some might call it a vague answer. But I'm a vague kind of guy. I don't usually know where I'll be in the future; I don't know which way I'll turn at the next corner.

But I'll know when I get there.

Result: Stand up for the vague. Embrace it. Be proud of slowly focusing and making the effort. It's a true method based on the here-and-now. Others may not understand or accept it, but at least I do. It's the best I can do. And that's pretty good.

Attitude Practice

Do I dare play St. Louie Tickle at my tempo and have fun? Practice, practice. But practice, in this case, means practicing the JGI Love attitude.

That's why having fun takes so much courage and fortitude. It means doing things at your own pace, following your own rhythms, playing guitar your way, not being pushed around by the pace and rhythms of others.

No easy task. But definitely worth the effort! Otherwise how will you discover and get to know the real you?

My Bar Mitzvah

Ever since my Cheerios experience at age thirteen, I have been blessed with the ability to feel this majesty.

That was my bar mitzvah. Indeed, it was my first experience of religious ecstasy and heaven.

Is this why I have a slight disdain for money and material concerns? Although both are necessary, there can be no comparison between the breakdown experience of melting into the majesty of heaven and the down-to-earth, warm-cuddly security of receiving money.

Saturday, September 21, 2002

Starting out low again this morning. This seems to be such a regular statement it's almost hardly worth saying. I hate to be boring. But perhaps, even though I start

out low almost every morning, since every morning is different, every low is different. So, on the surface I am repeating myself and am boring, nevertheless, each low is new and “refreshing.” Plus it is often a necessary prelude to writing.

And the process of writing picks me up. Soon, after the words pour out, like now, the way is smoothed, I start to feel better and am on my way again – once again, the magic of the writing process.

More concretely, why am I down? Could it partly be I am ready to face the Evening with Jim Gold “booking chasing”? Sure, there’s JGI love. But how and where to chase bookings is the question.

Could it be the no-one-will-ever-buy-my-books syndrome? Or I’ll soon be dead? Naw, the possibility of death is an everyday occurrence, low books sales a daily excuse. Also, I on a JGI Love kick. Perhaps I’m not even down after all.

So what the fuck am I talking about? Perhaps being down is just a way of getting myself to write and pick myself up. Besides, a hidden part of me might even “welcome” the downs as a pick-me-up.

How strange is the human mind.

Now that I look at it again, I’m neither down or up. I’m nowhere.

Perhaps nowhere is where I truly start out every morning. Feeling down (or up) is just the disguise. It’s the forced-feeding writing mechanism.

Some good Willie Nelson quotes:

1. SUCCESS and FAILURE – Same number of letters.
2. His own quote on luck: “Give a man a little luck and shit will do for brains.”

One-Man Show: An Excellent Sales Device

One of the reason I woke up down this morning might be because I’m getting cold feet. Rejection memories are returning. Why? Last night I went through my to-do list. I had finished some promotions: I crossed off Folk Dance calls, Weekends, put

writing into another category, and did something else I forgot. Finally, though, I was down to my last two promotions: Tours and Bookings. Well, tours I know how to promote; I know who to call and what to do. The killer was bookings. That's when the memories of former rejections from the old performer's life started coming back.

I divided Bookings into three categories: Klezmer (bar mitzvah and weddings, etc. with the Klezmer Connection Band); my own An Evening with Jim Gold, and finally, School Shows. I asked myself, "Where should I start?" I took a walk to think about it. My conclusions were:

1. Klezmer jobs: Let Michele handle them. It's her band. She's been doing it anyway. Obviously, if there is a way I can promote it, I will; if someone wants a Klezmer band, I'll book it. Otherwise best leave it in her hands.

2. School shows: I'm not ready to return to them yet. I don't know if I ever will be. We'll have to see. Meanwhile they are in the category of "Not yet."

3. That leaves: An Evening with Jim Gold. I decided my time, efforts, and energies should be spent selling, promoting, and booking my one-man show. Here's where memories of former rejections came in. My whole life as a performer was full and fraught with both victories and rejections. The rejections were the hardest to take, although the victories were hard to take too. In fact, so many aspects of the performing life were hard to take that I eventually gave up. . . for awhile. Now I'm ready to return.

Then I thought: I'm up to my last two promotions, tours and bookings. They are potential biggest money makers. Is there a way I can combine them? How about doing Weekends, one-man shows, etc. out of town, in local or far away communities? Mini-residencies, really. I could start with Oneonta (Audrey Shields), Binghamton, etc. My one-man show is the perfect vehicle to enter "foreign" communities, get money for my performance, and, at the same time, promote and sell my tours, weekends, books, etc. My one-man show is the perfect sales device. I can also combine it with folk dancing.

I tremble with the thought of using it. But there is no choice. Use it I must. . . and will. It is the perfect expression of JGI Love.

Strategy

Strategy: How to begin? I'll call my tour customers, ask them if they want to go on tour. Then, I'll suggest doing a one-man show in their community. They can be part of booking it. . . if they like. As tour fans, they can participate, promote something they believe in and love, and be part of the "sales force."

I'll be going with my strengths.

This gives me another reason to call my customers. I could expand this by calling folk dance customers, too. Suggest my one-man show for their communities, clubs, etc. to spread the "folk dance gospel." They too, can thus participate in and promote something they believe in and love. They can make themselves part of the JGI Love force.

Is that egotistical? Yes and no. True, they are promoting me and JGI. But ultimately, they are promoting their love and themselves. . . through me.

The Fun Motivator

Will I make the effort to call these people? Will I even make the effort to do the bookings?

The key is: It has to be fun!

Fun seems to be my prime motivator.

Calling the people has to be fun; calling for bookings has to be fun; doing the bookings has to be fun. If it isn't fun, I know I won't do it. I'll sit at home and read.

Fear simply doesn't work as a motivator. It makes me very stubborn; my rebellious mind set kicks in. "I refuse to be bullied!" it says. "I refuse to be kicked around by fear or anything or anyone else. I'd rather do absolutely nothing than give in." The fear of bankruptcy, poverty, being thrown out on the street, awful as they may be, do not motivate me to work. They only bring up the "Never!" in me.

Fun, expansion, profit, beauty, these are my real motivators.

So I'd better find some fun in my new JGI Love life. Otherwise, it will consist of staying home and reading. But no problem. JGI Love life is about having fun. It lives and thrives on beauty, profit, and expansion. The expression of this inner, running-wild-on-the-lawn me is what it is all about.

Her caustic comment: "You only want to play. Do you want to be a child all your life?"

"Absolutely."

Two Wrong Paths

During the past twenty-five years I have followed to wrong paths:

1. Find wealth through the stock market.
2. Find self-worth and freedom from stage fright through improvement of my classical guitar playing.

Neither path has worked. Now I see why. They were incorrect. Only it took twenty-five years to discover this. The mistake of the stock market is now obvious. But let's talk about performing. Now that I want to return to it and find fun in the process, I ask: "Why should I perform? How can I have fun performing?"

The "obvious" answer is through singing. Group singing, ad libbing, kibbizing, talking to the audience, etc. Sure I have musical ability. But ease in public, charm, smooth speaking, the gift of blarney, nonchalance, these are my nature talents. I am so at ease with them I hardly notice them.

Performing, in my new mode and latest reincarnation should start with singing. Even group singing. A group song is social work at its best.

Mine is really a new performance emphasis based on fun. But, in reaching this point, my whole world had to be and has been turned around. Perhaps I needed therapy and had to go through my trauma to arrive. But whatever, I am there now.

Time for a change.

1. Minimal to no stock market.

2. Performing starts with singing. A group song is probably – no doubt – best.

Irene, Goodnight. Or other.

Thursday, September 26, 2002

The Love Catapult Call

Writing and Publishing: Not A Bad Thing

I wake up around 5:00 a.m. almost every morning. Sometimes earlier. But recently, instead of getting out of bed, I turn over and sleep until about 6:00 a.m.

Why don't I get up at five? Because I am not enthusiastic about getting up. Why? I have nothing to do that I absolutely love so much I can't wait to get up and do it, can't wait to jump out of bed and begin. I need the love catapult call.

I used to jump out of bed. Often I would wake up at 4:00 a.m. with enthusiasm. Why? What was it I couldn't wait to do?

Writing, of course. The process of writing woke me up; it gave me purpose, meaning, and enthusiasm. Recently, however, that enthusiasm has diminished. I won't let myself have it.

Why? It has something to do with publishing.

This is difficult to explain. But I will try. Somehow I feel most of what I write should get published. The world of "others" inhabits my mind; others should be involved in what I do and see; they should read about me. Truth is, just as I am others, others are me. We are one. By writing and not publishing, half of my brain has been left out. Instead of walking down the street on both legs, I am merely hopping on one. The public has to somehow be part of my work.

How can I accomplish this? By publishing what I write. But it is so expensive. And selling it, although possible and necessary, is time-consuming and difficult. But mostly, focus on publishing alone misses the main purpose: the necessity and personal fulfillment of writing.

Thus publishing what I do is a must. If I don't, I am just writing for the closet or basement. My books will pile up unused. But at least in the basement they'll have the possibility of some day being read. If I don't even publish them, they'll remain in boxes of printed pages on the floor, and never even have the possibility of being read.

Worst of all, if I don't publish, I won't wake up with enthusiasm.

The message is clear: I must write, and I must publish. This will help me return to the 4:00 a.m. wake up enthusiasm days when turning out page after page was my main purpose. What will be new about this process now? I realize how important publishing is, how it vitalizes my writing in particular, and creates my early morning wake-up enthusiasm in general.

So I'll go the route of self-publishing. It is expensive. Therefore, I must find a cheaper printer, a less expensive quality book producer. I'll look for companies outside the metropolitan New York area, companies in the mid-west. They're often cheaper.

I'll also publish all of my journals. And this (here's the new one) even if nobody ever reads them! I'm now publishing for myself alone! For the self-satisfaction of having and owning a completed work, for the knowledge of being able to say "My books are out there. I've done it!"

I can't tell what the public will buy. I can't know what others will do. But I can certainly know what I can and will do. Publishing for myself alone, for my own self-satisfaction and promotion and flow of my own enthusiasm, is the absolutely best reason for me to do anything. Now I am applying this principle to writing and publishing.

Writing is private; publishing is public. By combining them I have actually merged private and public.

Another factor here is the realization that chronology in my journal might be best. It shows the day-to-day development of my ideas, how they fluctuate, change, and grow. The only prerequisite in this new chronological approach is: The writing style must be good. Grabbing the reader by the kishkas is the only guide line. How will

I know if it grabs the reader by the kishkas? I won't. I'll only know if it grabs me. That, plus Barry's editing help, is ultimately how I'll make my decisions.

What have I learned from this morning's stay-in-bed, lack of enthusiasm?

Writing is the center of my vitality. Return to it with a vengeance! Make it the most important part of my day! As it once was. Then publish it all. . . as cheaply as possible.

Finding my reading public, my fans, selling my books, will be secondary. . . a distant second. But publishing them. . . for myself and my own satisfaction. . . will now be primary. I see publishing now as an integral and vitally important part of the writing process. Will it ever bring me worldly success? Who knows? But there is no doubt it will bring me private satisfaction, fulfillment, success, and happiness.

And that certainly is not a bad thing.

Why Knock Sadness?

Why knock sadness? It is such an important part of the creative process. Evidently, part of me still believes there is "something wrong with it," and that it should be "cured." Throw-back to the past, no doubt. Ma liked happy people. If you're not happy you get the "What's the matter? How can I help you? What's wrong with you?" Along with the more subtle "I can't stand your unhappiness. It reminds me of my own. . . and I can't handle that. So shut up and be happy!"

Yet I love my mother.

Wednesday, October 2, 2002

Folk Dance Clubs and Wedding Bliss

I sank after Barry's class. I really haven't been this strangely down in awhile. Yet it had nothing to do with Barry's class or the writing meeting. I've been trying to figure it out all day.

This morning I think I've got it. Naturally, the down is due to an old pattern: the smash-down. What happened this time? How did I smash myself down?

I think it is all a reaction to David and Jennifer Donson's wedding. What a marvelous event! I met old friends and more. But the real more, the best of all, was when I was called on to lead folk dancing. Using a two-fourths "Miserlou" (instead of seven-eights) beat from the band, I got everyone in the usual circle and gave my basic how-to-folk-dance lesson. First walk left, then right, into the center, and back: That's folk dancing. From these basics, which are so brilliantly simple that no one is threatened and everyone says, Why, I can do that! I moved into the "Miserlou" teaching. It was "the usual" brilliant. The whole room danced and had a great time. I again felt like a closet genius and ended up feeling subtly ecstatic. I haven't stopped feeling it since. . . well, since I sank after Barry's class.

So that's the bottom line reason I am down: psychologically I couldn't stand all the joy I gave myself, so I pushed me back into the old neighborhood place. Nothing new here. Only these push-downs are getting rarer and rarer. I am so aware of my mental patterns, so aware of how my mind treats me, that I catch these knock-downs quite early and squash them in the bud. So too this one. After all, two days to realize it isn't too bad.

Now that I've crossed the river, passed through the gate, let's look into this joy, the folk dance joy factor.

Actually, it started Friday night after great dancing and registration in Bedford. We've got almost fifteen people registered for the year at \$95 for eight classes. For a while, I finally felt I was "making progress" in the folk dance business, that I was onto something: registration for the folk dance clubs. A brilliant move. And I'm tough, too, insisting that everyone must register. Tough love. If they are not registered, they cannot join the club. I love it. And it worked. Plus we have a great group of dancers.

In my mind, the idea of total registration and the creation of folk dance clubs is a brilliant concept. And this, followed by the Donson wedding folk dance teaching coup, simply made my soul sing. Then I knocked it down after Barry's class. . . or maybe it fell by itself. But that period is now over. Onwards and upwards!

Let's stick with folk dance registration and folk dance clubs. After the Bedford victory, I decided to finally create the Jim Gold Card for the New Jersey groups. This is a twelve-lesson plan good for one year. Owners of the card can join any class and have their card punched. It's kind of a half-way measure for the New Jersey local groups. But now I'm wondering: should I make New Jersey folk dance clubs as well? Something to think about.

In any case, things are going very well in the folk dance world. That's why it was a bit of a shock to have such low attendance Tuesday night. It helped solidify my down of the day. Tuesday is always a small group anyway, but last night was ridiculous. Only eight people! If this keeps up, I'll have to do some kind of radical surgery.

I Love Being Tough

Also I love being tough: tough on Iraq, tough by insisting that all Bedford and Darien people must register. No exceptions. If they can't make all the classes, I can give them credits towards tour and weekends. That's the best I can do. But everyone must register in order to become part of the club. I love this new toughness! I wonder why.

It means sticking to my principles and to what I've always believed in. No wishy-washy. Maybe that's why.

I used to fear admitting my beliefs publically. Being tough means I am no longer afraid to stand up for them before others.

In others words, in public and private, I can really be me.

Ecstasy has nothing to do with speed. There can be slow or fast ecstasy. Play guitar slow or fast; either way can be ecstatic. It is a mental state.

Pain As "Bunched Up" Energy

The pain in the back of my left upper thigh: the pain is the ecstasy. But it's energy is all "bunched up." When it is straightened out the pain will feel like pleasure.

Thus ecstasy, although it contains both pain and pleasure, is beyond pain and pleasure. It is meta-pain and meta-pleasure.

Saturday, October 5, 2002

Making Money Teaching Folk Dancing

We had our opening folk dance class at Darien last night. I introduced the Folk Dance Club idea. One must join our club. Membership for one year is \$95.00. This entitled you to eight classes. Missed classes can be credited towards Weekends or tours.

Only members can dance. This also entitled you to dance at our Bedford Folk Dance Club for \$10 a class.

How did this Folk Dance Club work out? Brilliant! I absolutely love the idea. And the more I think about it, work with it, the more I love it.

When I say "brilliant," I mean the idea is brilliant. Tough, too. Here's what actually happened at Darien: At eight o'clock when the evening started, only Marjolein, Tom, and Beth showed up. We danced with three people until about eight-thirty. By then I was getting mad. I thought about calling a few of the regulars who hadn't shown up and telling them, "threatening" them (and I mean it) that this class may actually be canceled. Then Bob Scrofani came in, followed by Ellen. Finally, at nine, Al and Eulala showed up. Thus we ended up with seven dancers. All of them paid the full \$95 and joined the club. We had a fine night of fun dancing. What a pleasure it is dancing with dancers! That, in fact, was one of my reasons for forming a club. I was sick and tired of having two or three new people drop in every night, changing the tenor of the group, and forcing me to adjust the evening teaching down to accommodate them. By forming a club, I figured that, if I'm not going to make money, at least I'll have fun.

But after last night another absolutely radical idea entered my mind: not only

could I have fun dancing with the dancers of my folk dance club, but I could also make money!

Now this is an absolutely radical idea! No one in folk dance history, recent at least, has ever made money teaching folk dancing. Oh sure, they have survived with “additions,” like selling records, running weekends and tours (me), or holding down other jobs. But by teaching folk dancing alone? Nobody has ever done it. Inconceivable.

But I am now conceiving it! How? Through a combination of the folk dance club model and the methods of the other dance schools in the area. Al told me about how they operate. Not that I haven't known. It's just that I never paid much attention to it. I just “assumed” I'd never be able to make money in folk dancing. The only means of survival was to use my folk dancers as a customer base for Weekends and tours. On those, at least, I could make money.

But through registration only, by creating folk dance clubs which is really another name for a folk dance school, I see the possibility of making money, and even growth!

Amazing, indeed.

What should this be called? North Jersey Folk Dance Club? Gold Folk Dance Club? Golden Foot Folk Dance Club? Other.

This pulls all my businesses together, puts all my JGI Love into place. It's the result of mentally going public.

For the New Jersey groups, I'll aim for January 1st. A new year. I'll charge \$95 for eight (or ten?) weeks. I'll include all the Jim Gold Card benefits ideas: Missed classes can be credited towards Weekends and Tours; 10% off on all boutique items and Jim Gold books. And, here's a new one: how about private folk dance or guitar lessons with Jim Gold at 10% off (private lessons at \$75 per hour, or \$65. I can't think of other

benefits at the moment, but maybe I'll find some. Basically, this "Jim Gold Card-folk dance club idea is, among other things, a new sales method, a new way of promoting all my services.

Wow, what an idea! I am really cooking!

I guess I could ask: Why am I getting all these ideas now? It is a fruition of going public as expressed through JGI Love and Expansion.

Weekends and especially tours are an important part of your Folk Dance Education! I am looking for people who will attend these events. I want such customers. This rationalizes charging \$95 for eight weeks rather than \$95 for ten weeks. Plus, of course, there are all those benefits!

Sunday, October 6, 2002

Awareness of Death

This morning I feel an acute awareness of the presence of death: my death.

Also with the brand new concept of making money by teaching folk dancing, the idea of folk dance clubs with registration, I feel a new life is beginning.

Basically, I feel like I'm starting over in almost everything I do. The old way of life has died, a new one is beginning. Yes, there is a new awareness of death; but this goes in tandem with the new attitude in the new life.

Perhaps that is why I felt the acute awareness of death this morning.

And when my body dies, will the process also bring me a new awareness? Probably.

The "Natural" Method

I wonder if I haven't been making the process and act of obtaining money my main distraction. Suppose I totally focused on following my bliss, doing the things I love, and letting the pursuit of money "fall where it may?"

What would happen if I did this? Would I search for bookings and do my “sales thing” if I didn’t have to? By “only” following my bliss would I simply drift into solipsism? Or would I eventually get bored with just staying home and doing my art, and then “naturally” drift out of my house and into the world, “naturally” start wanting to make contact with real outside people, “naturally” start making phone calls, sales calls?

I think I would. Truth is, I can stand two or even three days totally alone, doing my inner artistic things. But then I can’t anymore. I must “see people,” get out of the house, etc. Thus, there is a natural rhythm to my creative life. It has its “in” period where I stay home alone and create, and its “out” period where I must leave my inner sanctum and make contact. The latter is really my “sales self.”

Thus there is a part of me that would and will sell naturally. Without effort. I only have to time it right. If I do, and did, selling would become part of following my bliss.

Using Tough Love On My Mind

What is the “lesson” of the stock market?

My entire search for money through the market, debt, etc, was based on lack of confidence. I wanted to get rich so that I could live and lead my life as an artist without having to worry about money.

The lesson of the stock market is to have confidence in yourself. . not to put your “bliss” is the vicissitudes of others, namely, vicissitudinal stocks. History tells me that whenever I depended on myself I not only survived, but I made enough money.

What is worry but another distraction from following the road of bliss.

Wednesday, October 9, 2002

Life Conflict

Her miserable comments, plus this incessant focus on money, have cut off my boldness. At least this morning. They have pushed me into a corner, narrow, dark, and dreary in scope. What happened to my vision, miracles, spark, and glory? Vanished down the drain of narrow monetary concerns.

I don't want to give up my visions. I don't want to "wait until I pay off my debt" before I can dream again. Dreams are my life blood. Without them I will slowly wither and die. And not even so slowly at that. It's dangerous for me not to have visions, not to imagine or dream. I'd better dream or else!

So I'd better put aside these petty worries about making money, paying off my debt, pleasing my wife. Sure it would be nice if she were happy, just as it would be nice if the UN supported the United States on Iraq. But they don't, and she doesn't. What can I do? Put on narrow blinders and focus only on the bottom line? Ha! I'd better not. As I look at it, become more aware of what's bothering me, I realize I couldn't give up my dreams or visions if I tried. They are an integral part of my life's driving force. It would be a form of suicide.

There is no reason for me to sit in the mud contemplating blackness. What happened to JGI Love? Well, it got temporarily squashed by my wife's narrow financial fears. True, I partly believe them. But only partly. Financial problems are, evidently, my life's biggest problem. Well, maybe not. Maybe they disguise my biggest problem. What would that be? Why, belief in myself, of course! Confidence in my vision, bed rock stick-to-itiveness in the unique way I do things, courageously following the crazy, mad, and wild road of deepest personal beliefs, formed in the crucible of my imagination, and doing it no matter what!

Truth is, I can do nothing else. When I do and it comes to the basic question of life versus death, I always choose life. And what is life to me but following my star? Yes, it is a road based partly on fantasy. But that was the same visionary road that Columbus took. Although he died in jail, unrecognized and unrewarded, he nevertheless discover a new continent. What will I discover?

Maybe I should give up, or rather forget about, earthly rewards. Chasing them is okay and gives me temporary relief. But the heroic road of dream chasing brings glory! Won't I choose that over a narrow prison life of sucking up to earthly rewards?

Finding a balance and living between heaven and earth, spirit and matter, is indeed my life conflict.

Me, A Healer?

Me a healer? By healing others, I heal myself. I heal myself by healing others. Isn't this the way the process goes?

Doesn't that make me a healer?

Why resist the definition? Too high. Me? Little, modest, humble me? A healer is lofty. Could I be that lofty? Wouldn't it be a form of hubris?

And yet there is no question that folk dance teaching heals. So does guitar teaching. Even writing heals. They heal me while they heal others.

Vibrations of thoughtfulness, caring, and presence, heals. Subtly.

I know this to be true. Yet call myself a healer? Isn't it too much?

But, on the other hand, why not?

It would be a way of publically acknowledging inner vibrational power. Since my violin discovery days I have always know it. But is has always stayed "in-room." By calling this power (renaming it) healing power, I change my public definition. But in private, it has always been there. In private, really, nothing has changed.

Barry's classes heal me. He is a writing healer. If he can be, why not me?

I like being called a healer. It is so worthy. No question I administer its power through subtle and not-so-subtle vibrations.

I'm just not used to such a self-definition. But myself that way would energize me; it might even help me focus on healing.

Friday, October 11, 2002

Embarrassment, Humiliation, And Anger

Is embarrassment a form of anger in disguise, a rage turned against oneself? After all, it often (always) stems from humiliation. Humiliation comes from an attack. Rather than responding to such an attack by fighting back, the humiliated person retreats into himself, pushes himself down by saying "What's wrong with me?" and thus feels humiliated.

But suppose, instead of retreating and giving in, he fought back! (No animals get embarrassed or humiliated. They know only rage or retreat, fight or flight.)

Fight Back!

Self-Awareness Is My Sword

Would stage fright, fear of public embarrassment and humiliation, also be a form of anger turned on oneself? Why not? The imagination says by putting myself on stage I am placing myself in a vulnerable position; the audience could criticize, dislike, "attack" me at any time. What can I do to handle this? How can I fight back?

1. I can use the turtle protection plan by retreating into myself, creating a protective shell of embarrassment and humiliation, otherwise known as fear. A disguised form of fear.

2. I can fight it through awareness of the self-protective, "What is wrong with me?" put down nature of stage fright.

3. I can't think of anything else to do.

But one thing I know, I will do everything in my power to never, never retreat into these old time fears again. Anything but fear. I didn't spend thousands of dollars on therapy just to end up fearing the same things I used to. Or rather, I may not be able to be unafraid. But I can certainly handle my fears differently.

The Biggest Victory

An excellent way of fighting back is to keep your eye on the prize, let your train

leave its station, and pay no attention to the barking dogs.

Remember why is your train so important. Remember the beauty of creation and all the divine sparks it is carrying. Dogs of criticism, fear, narrow-mindedness, jealousy, and envy will always bark. Put your mind on your train of purpose. Focus. Pay no attention to the dogs.

Yes, pay no attention. Focus on your calling, on the creation of higher beauty, would be the biggest victory.

The Mad Shoe Meditations

of Swami Jimananda

(Mad Shoe Meditations with Swami Jimananda)

Presented by, through, and with Jim Gold

A vibrational wizard! "Vibrational wizardry!" quoted the New York Times reviewer, critic, sophist.

For mere money you can own (get) this program for your, get this, a word invented by the Swami after his virtual collaboration with James Joyce for fourteen years in Hungary, barbatmitzvachurchsynagogueweddingcorporateprivatepartyschool anniversarycelebrationspecialevent.

Bargain, bargain! Take advantage of our schizophrenia. Get two shows for the price of one! You can have both the Mad Shoe Mediations and World of Jim Gold for the same price! Two shows for the price of one!

Who is Swami Jimananda:

Swami attended the Vibrational school of higher wizardry in Madras, India, then studied at the infamous Russian School of Celtic Geophysics under the renown Vladimir Peabody Barometerefsky, inventor of the hydrognome which measures the underwater heart beat of sturgeons (and sardines) in and out of their cans.

Creating Aches And Pains As Protection

Perhaps I created these aches and pains as a protection.

Protection against what? Self-confidence, freedom, released energies, running wild on the lawn, complete abandon, releasing and becoming my true self; perhaps I created them as an ego defense to “protect” my old self with its tiny ego against the incredible, unworldly, transcendent power of God Himself.

But that’s all over now. I’m giving up my defenses; I’m shedding my iron protective clothing; I’m jumping into the sea; the unfathomable ocean of infinite power. I’m dissolving to be born again.

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Back To The Joy Of A Disciplined Life!

I reread “The Joy Of A Disciplined Life.” I wrote it myself in 1996. I should, and will, take my own advice.

Back to disciplined, pushing myself, and progress. Back to the joy of the disciplined life!

I’ve never really given up my discipline, but it has recently been soft and “gone liberal.” I don’t quite know why. Perhaps I was experimenting with various aspects of looseness and expansion.

But I have given up pushing myself and the idea of progress (and improvement).

Why?

First, during the past few months, (even year?) I have been hesitant to push myself; I’m afraid I’ll get hurt. My body has been hurting a lot lately; slowly these pains have made me hesitant, then afraid. Result: I’ve slowed my discipline and stopped pushing myself: result, no joy or exhilaration, no fire and ecstasy. And hold back in this manner has not decreased my pains either.

Now however, I see this whole body pain period as one of transition. These were “growing pains.” I didn’t realize that growing pains could last so long. . . more than a year. Indeed, I was growing a new body to fit my new mind; I was rebuilding my instrument to hold and express my new life, new neighborhood, gone public attitude.

Yesterday I realized the building has been completed.

Thus there is no more “reason” for my aches and pains. They are over. So is my old attitude towards guitar playing, performance, and money. The old neighborhood, inward, hiding in the room of my imagination days are over; it has been replaced with a new neighborhood, outward, gone public expression of my imagination. This direction’s growing pain days are gone. My body is now ready to take it.

Perhaps I had to give up my discipline, push, and my drive for self-improvement and progress. My deepest inward desires for the more had to be temporarily held back. But now the goal has been accomplished. I stand firmly in the new neighborhood; the light of new mind shines on a new body.

With full confidence I am ready to return to discipline, push, and progress.

Can business and sales really be part of the mystic kabbalistic sparks of my miracle schedule?

This question has already been answered with a hearty “Yes!” Sales and business have become a gone public expression of my artistic chamber, the inner room of my imagination. The gone public, running-wild-on-the-lawn sales aspect has now become a part of me.

Friday, October 18, 2002

Betrayal

The Dangers Of Naivete

I have been basically betrayed by the stock market. Yes, I’ve personalized it. And I still can’t believe it. Why would the market do this to me?

And who is the market? My father? Probably.

Why would my father betray me? He never did before. Why now?

No doubt this is where I went wrong. But I still can't believe it. Such a fundamental sabotage. And on top of that, to realize that the stock market is not my father! Why, it is too much, too much for me to fathom or accept.

Can the market really be so cold and cruel? Does it really not care two shits about me, my desires and feelings? And is it not the slightest bit like my father? Who could Joel have been but a metaphor for my father, a kindly hopeful figure who would ultimately bring me financial security and personal happiness? How would he do that? Why, I am almost ashamed to say, through rising stocks and their concomitant, vast wealth.

First the left betrayed me, then the stock market; first the communists betrayed me, then the capitalist gambling system.

And both these systems existed and still exist "outside" my brain, that is, outside the room of my imagination. Once I took them in as boarders, I let these public ambassadors into my house, they immediately began eating away at my foundations; slowly they began to destroy me.

First the communists offered me the beauty of utopia, total "fairness," paradise right here on earth. Little did I realize their utter intolerance, and that I would have to give them everything I own in return for my infant faith in their straight-jacketed, narrow ideology. I was so naive. The communist system was basically a fancy way of robbing the "rich," of appropriating their money for the party leaders personal power and use—supported by lots of intellectual rationalizations, a fancy way of stealing.

So went one illusion. I gave it up about ten years ago. Slowly, in the process, I substituted a belief in the entrepreneur, in particular, and capitalism in general. My personal ability to work, develop, and believe in business was enhanced by seeing myself as an artist-entrepreneur. I liked it. Along with it came my entrance into the stock market. I just "knew," since I was smart, that a study of the stock market, along

with my successful business, would eventually make me rich. This bottom-line belief, based on unbridled enthusiasm, was the one that destroyed me.

Where did I go wrong? I doubt it was my enthusiasm. But it might have been my enthusiasm coupled with my naivete. As an artist, a dweller and believer in the inner chamber of my imagination, I simply “assumed” the outside world would work the same way as my inner one. If I thought, imagined, great wealth, why certainly it would come to me – if not right away, then eventually. What better system to foster my magical thinking than the stock market? Why, it would suddenly, and for no apparent reason go up. . . and make me richer. Of course, it would also suddenly, magically, and for no apparent reason go down and make me poorer.

But, in my mind, it was a magic system secretly supported by my father. With that added factor, I could continue my optimism and enthusiasm. Surely, and eventually, the market (and he) would take care of me. Then I wouldn’t have to worry about money and supporting myself anymore. I would have the time and mental freedom to become the artist I always wanted to be.

This problem is probably created in everyone brought up on utopian beliefs. Communism, the government, will take care of you; others will watch over you; just give up your mind, give it to us, and we’ll handle everything. This naivete is also demonstrated in the modern liberal mind. Well, why not? They are the descendants of the utopians. Their naive anti-war beliefs in peace with Iraq, peace at any price and with any terrorists, their anti-guns belief that evil does not exist, all deny an essential part of human nature. Creation and destruction are central to the universe. All human minds, have both creative and destructive elements. To deny one, in this case, to refuse to see or acknowledge the destructive can be deadly. Ultimately, it can lead to your own destruction.

So, that is my problem: naivete. Yes, I am now going public and dealing directly with the outside world; I’m even running wild on its lawn; I’m stronger and more confident inside.

Has stock market disaster cured my innocence? Will my naivete, denial of the destructive forces and even of evil itself, continue now that I have been destroyed? Stay tuned to find out.

But why knock destruction? It is, after all, natural and “creative” in its own right. One must destroy the old before the new can take its place.

But destruction is frightening! The liberal bias along with its desire to deny the terrifying storms of this awesome inner power is based on this fear itself.

What is the “cure” for naivete? The only one I can think of is experience. Get knocked on the head enough and eventually you may change your mind; someday, you may “get it.”

Licking My Wounds And Moving On. . . To The Next Adventure!

The only “lesson” I can discern from all my past financial and business sufferings is, the next time I enter the adventure, not to be so naive. I’ll have to re-enter the fray with my eyes open. I’ll be more aware of the downside risks I’m taking.

But being aware of the risks doesn’t mean I should stop taking them. I should not kill my sense of adventure by becoming “too aware,” because I’ve had some setbacks, some failures. Failures and setbacks are, after all, part of the game of life.

A little awareness never hurts. And in fact, it comes with lots of pain. But giving up risk, and with it adventure, is somewhat like giving up on life. Somehow I’ve got to go back to it.

Since I sold my stocks, an overall cloud of hopelessness and defeat has been hanging over my head. It reversed itself somewhat after the Cape Cod JGI Love realization. JGI Love gave me some direction and hope.

Nevertheless, I miss the market. . . and the hope and excitement it engenders. Should I give that up simply because I totally failed in it? Yet, if I return, I shouldn’t return with the failed ideas I had in the past.

What were my failed ideas?

1. False hopes in Joel.

2. Never considering or believing that stocks could go down so suddenly, that I could actually lose. I guess I could call it "false optimism." This doesn't mean I have to be pessimistic. But I could stand a bit of realism. What does realism mean? Perhaps it is actions tempered by less naivete, with more awareness of the downside risks involved.

I was so certain more tour business would succeed. After all, it was such an excellent idea. But although it has taught me many things, financially it has had minimal success. I was naive to believe, that simply because my tour business was a great idea, it would succeed.

Same with the stock market. Deep down, I must admit, I believed I really could not fail. Somehow, somewhere, something, would always come along in the final minute to rescue me from certain disaster.

During my upbringing, my childhood, and even my young adulthood, my parents always tried to protect me from bad things. They were there to step in, to act as a shield against the evil, misfortunes, and bad things of the world. This helped create and foster my naivete. Thus when I came the financial cliffs, I usually went wild with delight and fear, and usually ended up falling off. Down I would go, straight into the abyss. But even as I fell, I always assumed that a rescuer would be waiting for me at the bottom. Can I call this a fundamental faith?

A Fool Lost In Love And Adventure

Losing my money in the stock market, experiencing the violent downswing of a bear market, giving up on stocks was a terrible blow. It took me over five months to recover. But now I am in recovery mode. I have licked most of my wounds. I am ready to move on, to return in hopefully wiser (or stupider) form to my former life of love and adventure!

Perhaps the fool shall lead the world. Am I that fool? Maybe. A little "smart, careful, stiff, tight, and caution doesn't hurt. Nevertheless, I'd rather be a fool lost in love and adventure.

What have I learned from these five months of misery? Yes, life can sometimes kick you in the teeth. When it does, pull off the side, lick your wounds, recover. Then return to the life of love and adventure!

A Return To Hope

This means I have to somehow get back into the market. I may even have to increase my debt, too.

What does the above mean? A return to hope. Hope involved the future. Is mine a naive and unrealistic hope? Who knows? No one ever knows what concrete results hope will bring. But no doubt it brings adventure on the wings of love.

My five-month cloud is lifting. I'm alive again.

The difference between appeasement and victory is timing.

Terrible things can happen along the road of life. But it is important to remember you can recover. . .and move on.

The fact that one can be hit so hard and still return to the life of love and adventure speaks to the indomitable spirit of man.

What relationship is there between aches and pains and the defeated feeling of giving up of hope, love, and adventure.

Defeated feeling creates, leads to, and equals "arthritic" aches and pains.

Hope, love, and adventure creates, leads to feelings of growth, expansion, and

excitement and alleviates, nay destroys the “arthritic” aches and pains.

The healing power of positive attitude over the human mind.

Suddenly, I see the possibility of feeling good again!

Should I Return To The Stock Market?

After All, I Can Play The Alhambra

I wonder if I could succeed at the market. It is, after all, endlessly fascinating. .and stimulating.

Could I study it and succeed? Once I thought I could. That was twenty-five years ago. What has changed since then?

1. I am not working with Joel anymore. My “belief” in him “as a father” has been destroyed.

2. But I can now play Alhambra.

3. I believe in JGI Love. Truly, I “love” the market; I am fascinated, enthralled, excited, and stimulated by it. True, it is also dangerous. But what else is new? Plus I doubt I would so fascinated, enthralled, excited, and stimulated by it if there was not element of danger.

In any case, fascinated, enthralled, excited, and stimulated are all plus words. They are good for me. By giving up the market, I gave up a great deal of fascination, enthrallment, excitement, and stimulation. No wonder I was down.

Shouldn't I now, in my new reincarnation, return? Wouldn't it be good for me, and a challenge? To really study it. For the fun, fascination, excitement, and stimulation aspect. Am I ready to give it a try?

Well, why not? After all, I can play the Alhambra.

Annoyance Versus Depression: Tours And Markets

This reminds me of when I gave up the tour business because it was so aggravating, annoying, and difficult. Plus I was putting in so much time and effort,

giving it my all, getting few customers, and losing money. So I decided to give it up. Sure I gave up all the annoyances, aggravations, and difficulties. But I also gave up, lost, all the joy, expansions, and excitements it brought. By giving up its prick, the hurts and pains it gave me, I also gave up my spice and zest. I ended up very depressed. So I decided to return to running tours.

Either way I'll be annoyed and depressed. But at least, if I continue to run them, I'd also have excitement, stimulation, and adventure!

Same this with the stock market. Like the tours, it kicked me in the teeth real hard. And this after I had invested so many hopes in it! So I sold all my stocks and gave up on the market in disgust.

I have been down ever since.

Like my tours. Now I realize, by giving up the market, yes, I am giving up potential losses; but I am also giving up my spice, zest, and love of adventure.

Tours and markets: Both kicked me in the teeth. Yet I love both of them.

They annoy me. But without them I get depressed.

Time to return to my loves. Besides, sado-masochism may well be part of the excitement and stimulation equation.

New Victorious, Free, And Joyous Life.

Why am I feeling depressed?

For some reason I am helping my mind to depress me; I am not allowing it to feel the joy of my victories.

And I have had many. Starting with the discovery and development JGI Love at Cape Cod, to my free and beautiful concert program at Hoffman LaRoche, to my newly released ability to allow myself to play fast and fly with Alhambra (and all the freedom that it signifies). These are major, long-term victories that have taken years to achieve. While the outer trappings of my financial life have never been worse, the inner world of trappings, confidence, and energy swirling around my mind has never been better. I

see my financial roadblocks and hurdles as mere annoyances; but my artistic center, the most important, significant, and meaningful part of my essence is radiant and free! It is an amazing victory over the wet blanket forces that have stifled me for years.

Even though I feel depressed, I can see absolutely no reason for it. Could I simply miss my depressions? Could their "loss" be depressing me?

Strange, indeed. But a totally new place for me. I don't know how to react to such victory and joy. . . except by the old way of suppressing, nay depressing it. But that method no longer works and is no longer necessary.

I guess I simply have to get used to this new victorious, free, and joyous life. Somehow I'll have to learn to live with it.

Sunday, October 20, 2002

Guitar Sleepiness

Learning How To Luxuriate In The Fun

I wonder if my "guitar sleepiness" during and after "slow" guitar arpeggios practice isn't a shut down of my energy, an inner collapse, a wet blanket over the energies and running wild born in and of my "fast" (fast playing). Here "fast playing" also means and symbolizes excitement, release, freedom, and running wild on the guitar lawn.

Playing fast like this is simply so much exhilarating fun! No wonder I repress it, depress myself, push my energies down with a wet blanket. Who can stand so much fun? I am simply not used to it.

But I'll learn to get used to it. It is just too good to be true. . . and too much fun!

I'm going to change too much into so much! From overwhelmed by the fun to luxuriating in the fun.

Getting used to it; learning to luxuriate in the fun will be my new practice.

Learning To Live In The Exhilaration

Never mind eighty-year-old Perls' comment "learn to live in the embarrassment."

Instead: learn to live in the exhilaration!

Debt As A Source Of Stimulation

I looked at my debt and discovered that somehow I owe \$2000 less than I thought. I was surprised. . . and somewhat pleased. But then I was even more surprised as I started to feel a twinge of disappointment, even a slight down. Where was this coming from?

Could it be that debt, and the fear, discomfort, and annoyance it creates, is a source of stimulation?

By paying off my debt, by becoming debt-free, I am (will) lose a source of stimulation. An important and vital source. Wow, this is something to be aware of.

The financial excitement of living at the edge.

So ends a New Leaf.