

Transformation

Thursday, October 24, 2002

Jack calls from two to three hours a day. He makes money with Prepaid Legal.

If I called from two to three hours a day, why couldn't I make money with JGI?

Or should I try Prepaid Legal? Would I even bother?

Or should I do both?

I am temporarily confused, lost, and thrown off course.

Isn't it better to remain an artist and try making money at it? Make money through my creations? At least I know I'm good at it.

But just remember, with whatever hardships I face (really my "hardships" are so minor!), I am so lucky to have been born in 20th century America, to be educated, middle class, and able to be living my dream.

I could have been a coal miner working on my hands and knees in dust all day.

Yes, I have to thank my parents, God, and everyone who had me born in middle-class, 20th-century America. (I could have been born in Iraq!) How lucky I am.

For the few moments I have left on this earth I can do the things I love. What a privilege and blessing!

How Did I Get So Thrown Off Course?

Really I've "got it all." The real question is: Why was I so thrown off course? Perhaps the answer is: I'm trying to avoid the "I've got it all" feeling. . . and the exhilaration that goes with it. Especially the exhilaration.

How do I have the audacity to admit or even think that "I've got it all?" But I do.

How do I have the audacity to admit or even think I know my mission in life and its core center, exhilaration?

How dare I admit I know the answers?

“How dare you, Jimmy boy. You are such a shit, so stupid and worthless, weak like a child. Go back to your room and play the violin. How dare you enter the real world! How dare you try to take part and function in it! Most of all, how dare you think you know the answers to life’s problems? In fact, how dare you think at all! Just go back to your room and shut up!”

With these voices echoing in my head, no wonder it is difficult for me to face my talents, brains, incentives, and victories. And especially to face the fact that I do know the answers!

I just have to admit it to myself. . . and remember them.

And of course I have this present “inner Ma” voice, buttressed by the outer voice of my wife, saying, “You’ll never be loved until you make money!”

Well, fuck all these outer voices! And inner voices, too!

Just remember who I am. That will take care of everything.

It must be the put down, old neighborhood mechanism sneaking in again. The old neighborhood returns. . . but briefly. I’m throttling the fucker!

“I’ve got it all” and Exhilaration are heady thoughts for a mere Bronx boy. That’s why, when Jack called and told me about Prepaid Legal, I jumped at the chance to be distracted, put off course, and find a new way, anyway, to put me down; I jumped at the chance to retreat. It’s such an old habit.

But I’m on to it now. Awareness is helping me kick the habit, kick the fucker in the teeth!

If someone doesn't love me because of my financial problems or because I'm not making enough money, well. . .fuck 'em!

Plus, look what they're missing. I've got it all and exhilaration to boot!

But it is not my job to complain about their petty reasons for not loving, or being dissatisfied with,

If I have this feeling of inner freedom and peace, and I do, then money isn't going to make that much difference. Money to buy me love, money to manufacture security: It's not going to matter that much. After all, what can be better, more loving, and more secure than feeling the way I do?

Money is a poor substitute. In fact, it is no substitute and all. Money is nice, but it is definitely in second place. . . or third or fourth.

But I can see, I am trying to escape from it. Instead, I might try incorporating it into my exercises, into running, yoga, guitar playing, etc. Even perhaps into customer phone calling and sales of JGI. After all, isn't it an extension, and expansive and exhilarating form of JGI Love?

Saturday, October 26, 2002

The Intimate Relationship Between Down And Up

I'd almost rather be down than up. Why? Because down leads to stimulation, and consequently to the greatest up there is: exhilaration! There we see the subtle reason why I want my debt, and perhaps even why I create my depression.

Without down, there will be no up; without depression, no exhilaration.

Thus a good part of me "likes" to put myself in tight spots — likes to make myself miserable, courts the negative. It is a stimulant. An up. It leads to my essence, exhilaration!

Thus the intimate relationship between down and up.

Stimulation: The Eternal Up-Down Energy River

I may sell my Rubio for 15 Gs. I may even get out of debt. Will I feel good about it? Maybe not. Without debt to drive me on, what will stimulate me? Without the misery, complaints, and whining from others, coupled with the nagging of my inner self, what will stimulate me?

How interesting, indeed. That is how my mind works. It craves stimulation. Without push forward, shove back, uppers, and downers, elation and depression, it feels dead. And it will do almost anything to avoid death; dead is the worst case scenario. And not physical death, either. Mental death. The ultimate shut-down.

This is why, so often, a brief yahoo success leads to sadness and a down. What will drive me on now? What will stimulate me?

This is probably the origin of my lids. . . and freedoms. I need a lid; I create it in order to push against it. I strive to free myself from its push down so I can rise up in creative freedom.

Thus the dynamic between lid and open top, slavery and freedom, down and up, depression and elation. Beneath these opposites lies the eternal flow of Stimulation, the up-down energy river.

This means I will never be "happy." Or rather, I will never be happy without being unhappy. I will never live beyond the opposites. Nor evidently, would I want to. Where will I get elation from if I cannot find my depression? Where will I find exhilaration without facing a difficult, even painful challenge?

What an understanding!

I will never be "free." And although a secret part of me wants to be, evidently another secret part of me does not.

Evidently I want some misery and pain. I need it, even crave it. Without it, I am dead.

That's why I don't want psychologists, wives, friends, and other people to tamper with my mind, to fix, cure, or "help" me. Deep down I realize that, although the pain and miseries I create and live among, are indeed, difficult and challenging, strident and awful in their unabated misery, they are nevertheless, vital centers of growth; they are needed to discovery and demonstrate the core of my vitality.

Monday, October 28, 2002

So I am looking for my freedom again. Perhaps that is the next stage of "going public."

Somehow I have to incorporate my freshly born, gone-public self with a new freedom mode.

Somehow I have to go back into my room, the inner artistic chamber of my imagination, and dream again. But it seems part of, much of, or most of this chamber has gone public.

How can I dream in public? The old public used to kill my dreams. That's why I created them in private. But that trauma is over. My mind is comfortable and free in public. I am just bored with my "successful" existence. I still need sparks and fire and dreams. Only now I can create them in public. It's okay. I just don't know what they are.

It seems I have lost my desire to learn these things for myself alone. It has run its course, served its purpose. Now somehow the kick is in bringing it to others.

Could I "study" for others? Could I say, learn Hungarian "for others?" What does such a question mean? Does it mean teaching what I know about Hungarian to others? Maybe.

Is teaching the new word I am looking for? Will I become a teacher? A teacher of the benefits of following the miracle schedule in general, and of learning, say, Hungarian, in particular?

Would trying to figure out how to bring my learning to others, bringing my knowledge of whatever “public” be the source of me new energy inspiration? Would it reinvigorate my studies? Is that what I need now to lift the cloak of boredom and bring new life to quest?

How to teach others: yoga, languages, whatever, writings, even guitar. The essence of my miracle schedule. Bringing the gospel home.

Will all my accumulated skills, loves, and learnings funnel into the word “teacher?” Will this be how I make the miracle schedule manifest? And reinvigorate myself in the process? Sounds good to me.

Truth is, I can’t even do my exercises the way I used to, in the old way. The old way of thinking just doesn’t work anymore. That’s what the boredom is about. It’s “I’ve got to do the new way, I’ve got to try the new way of thinking, or else!”

Don’t reduce the miraculous to a mere “explanation.”

The bottom has fallen out. Total emptiness and internal blasphemy. Is this the cosmic depression? It certainly feels like it. The internals, my innards have been carved out. Total inner emptiness and collapse.

What could it be but cosmic depression? The answer to this emptiness is write, write, write.

Accomplishment is one of the roots of this emptiness. Guitar and book accomplishments. But basically, it doesn’t matter what I accomplish. Or not accomplish. Cosmic depression means I am not writing enough. Why even as I write, right here in the process, I can see the cloud slightly lifting! Yes, indeed, writing is the only way. Amazing. Cosmic babble might even be best.

Saturday, November 2, 2002

Now What?

I'm writing this morning because I feel I "should" write. I Where am I? I should try understanding myself. What has happened over the past six weeks to two months? No doubt, I am at an ending of some sort. And a transition.

Everything feels wrong. And the bottom feels like it has fallen out. Nothing works in the old way anymore. I stand, and have been standing in awe, since September with its birth and realization of JGI Love. Added to and included in this were successful guitar playing, a beautiful and flowing "Alhambra," a relaxed and lovely attitude towards performing, and even a somewhat acceptance of the power and goodness of my writing, the appreciation and admiration by some others of my New Leaf.

Even financially, although things are, on the surface, "awful," I nevertheless feel hopeful, steady, confident in myself. and on the right track.

Thus, if I look at the over-all picture, I must admit I see success and confidence brewing and bursting forth in every endeavor. After years of struggle I have broken through my personal barriers. JGI Love blossoms everywhere. I luxuriate and celebrate in my well-deserved and glorious successes.

And yet, right now, I feel so down, lost, confused, empty, energyless. What has happened to me? I know it is related to the success syndrome. But knowing this does not help me cope with it or make me feel better. In fact, success itself, after the shining, explosive glory of its manifestation, eventually makes me feel worse. Somehow it vitiates and removes all my energy. I hate it!

And yet I love it, too. A contradiction. Indeed. So, I cannot stay paralyzed in contradiction. I want to move forward. But to where? And how?

First, I must recognize that I stand in awe of myself and my accomplishments. I have been standing in this awe circle since Cape Cod, the beginning of September. Look how well I finally play; look how relaxed and confident I am; look what I finally

accomplished over so many years of guitar struggle! A major victory, indeed.

Partly paralyzed, blinking in wonder, I stand in awe of myself. This is true mostly in the guitar world. It may be true, is partly true, it true, in the writing world as well. But, as I say, this is mostly about guitar.

Let's look at guitar: since I have succeeded in playing "Alhambra" . . .and with it all the other pieces fall into line, all I really want to do is play, play, play. I've worked so hard to play it. After the awe that comes with the realization that I finally can, I now want only to luxuriate in my achievement. Play, play, play! Guitar, guitar, guitar! Play guitar, play Alhambra, play all the others! That's all I want. And truly, that is all I have done during the past six weeks.

But an ending is in sight. I am beginning to accept the fact that I can play; I am beginning to "feel at home" at and in my new level. That means ultimately, I am getting ready to "move on."

The awe phase has passed; or at least it is fading.

I am getting ready to face the next question: Now what?

It's A Beauty Thing

It's Saturday afternoon and I find myself sinking into a few moments of deep depression. I haven't been in something like this for a long time. Amazing how this new leaf started off with exhilaration, and how now, ten days later, I have sunk into this low state.

I'm looking for explanations. Will I find them? It hit after the mail came; again no registrations. I did receive a check from the Teaneck Board of Education for folk dancing. Truth is, money is trickling in, although not at the rate I would like. I have only five people for the LOV Weekend. I may have to cancel that, too.

So, things are not awful, only low. And the old "explanations" – no checks in the mail – feed but do not "explain" this depression.

And I have lots of new ideas in the works.

Is it possible it's really due to my exhilaration? Am I really so sick, so down on myself? I've just about returned to square one, flat back into the old neighborhood. Whack and whack. Again, part of me simply can't believe it. But another part of me does feel real low.

Probably I'm down because I can't really get hold of a new start. But I don't believe that either.

Am I down because I should be celebrating? What a puzzle!

Entering The New Land

This depression is definitely a beauty thing. And it stems from my exhilaration, the victory I have had over myself, the successful conquest of all those years of obstacles preventing me from playing, and thoroughly enjoying, the guitar. I can't stand the beauty of my playing! I can't stand the breath and scope of my victory. I'm pushing myself back, down, denying, avoiding, doing anything I can to escape from the incredible beauty, and the tearful meltdown that I will be experiencing from my beautiful guitar playing. . . of, this time, Travis picking "Railroad Bill."

I can't stand my strength and the fact that, no matter how much I try to make them or give them importance, the ups and downs, the gyrations and vicissitudes of life, really don't bother me that much, and that, actually, an essential part of me doesn't even believe in them anymore.

This mental fortitude and ability to see through the illusions of life, to dance in the flow, coupled with the amazing freedom and beauty of my guitar playing, have simply been too much for my self-image and ego to take. For respite, I've taken a momentary retreat into the old neighborhood.

So I'm sitting here hold my face in my hands, crying with happiness over my sadness, bawling over the good fortune of my hard-won victories. Such and so do I enter the new land.

MONEY

Sunday, November 3, 2002

This is a secret book about money. It is not for publication. It is only to figure out how to get out of debt and make money.

I don't want the public to know about this. It is simply bad for my image. Also, I may have to admit things to myself that I don't want to admit, either to myself or anyone else.

Also, this book is very uni, very directional, and narrow in scope. It is only about money. It is only about ways to earn it, make it, create it, find it, and more.

So. . . onwards and upwards: How can I make money?

First thing that comes to mind is recognizing why I can't, or rather, why I didn't want to. A lifetime conflict about money: dirty and disgusting on one hand, necessary and vital on the other. A bane and insult to an artist's existence on the one hand, a necessary support system for the artistic mind on the other.

In any case, these conflicts have largely ended in my mind. There is no doubt now that I want and need money. No conflict there whatsoever. I am more disgusted, furious, and haunted by my constant thinking, worrying, concern, and mind use over money than about the whys of my conflict over it.

So how can I possibly make some of the stuff? How will I earn or create it? Let me count the possible ways.

I say "possible" because some of these, writing, for example, do not make me money; they only cost me money. But they have the potential of making money. A vague potential, yes, but a potential nevertheless.

So maybe I should divide my money-making list into definite and historic money makers, and potential money makers.

Definites:

1. Guitar:

a. Bookings and guitar lessons

2. Folk dancing:

Teaching and bookings

3. Weekends

4. Tours

5. Boutique

Potentials

1. Writing

This would be a wonderful thing if I could promote it.

2. Stock market??? (So far, only loss here. But it is “possible.” But perhaps I’ll need a miracle. Certainly, my “confidence” in this area has been shot. But I still creep back to it. Is this because the gambler in me is not yet dead? Or do I secretly believe (hope?) I can someday learn to succeed here? Trading is the only thing I am interested in. Do I secretly imagine that I can learn to succeed as a trader? My only hope here is to put stop losses on everything, also to be thinking defensively. What does that mean? It means thinking, not, “How much money can I make?” but rather, “How much money can I lose?” It means avoiding losses at all costs. Or certainly limiting them.

I never want to lose all my money again. I did it once through the stock market. Have I learned my lesson? We’ll see. I’m creeping back. . . but with, I hope, mucho caution. Is that enough of a difference to make a difference?

Perhaps all of the above, both the definites and potentials, should be seen as money makers. Again, the real question is: How to go about it? How to do it?

Except for the stock market, my skills for the above are all in place. Thus the “How to do it?” is “all” a question of getting the word out. Of publicity, advertising, promotion. The gospel.

Nothing new in this idea. I just have to commit myself totally and utterly to it, to do it. Certainly I am as ready as I ever will be.

Except for the stock market, all my businesses are tied together by the same theme: publicity, advertising, promotion. The gospel.

Yes, I am very down on myself for losing all my money in the market. Part of me feels I should punish myself for my misdeeds. Well, I am being constantly punished by my incessant worry about money. The furies and harpies of mental anguish are pursuing me night and day. Isn't this enough punishment? They never go away. In that sense, the punishment problem is solved. It's happening already; I'm constantly tortured and twisted by money worries anyway.

There are only two things that keep me from constantly thinking and worrying about money. One is getting enough of it, having financial stability, this has not happened at all. . . or ever. The second is when I throw myself totally into the money-making process by selling at full speed with great intensity. Then I am so involved there is no room left in my mind to worry about money. Ergo, total involvement in the sales process is now my only answer and solution to money worries.

There is also the dream of trading stock market success. But so far that dream has only turned out to be a nightmare. Have I changed enough, learned enough, am I cautious enough now to trade differently?

This money question is now the big and overriding question and problem of my life. It must be solved before I can "move on." But to what?

The process of solving it is the "moving on" process itself.

Spend money (energy) in advertising.

Money is energy.

I can either be defense or offense. I like an offensive approach. I also think I operate better offensively.

Defensive means “saving money” by tightening my belt and pulling back. It signifies more caution. This may, at times, be necessary for survival. But it is certainly not me at my best.

My best is to be on the offensive: indeed, my best defense is an offense!

How can I take one? By spending time, effort, energy, and money (which is energy in disguise) on advertising, sales, public relations, and promotion.

Bottom line: What am I selling? Why JGI, of course. JGI Love. Yes, what is the best way to lead my life, spread its gospel, advertise, promote? By spending my money on these things.

Thus am I spending money. . . on myself!

Wednesday, November 6, 2002

On Repetition

It is impossible to repeat anything.

A repetition is not really a repeating but rather a deepening of previous knowledge.

Thus it is really impossible not to be creative. With each “repetition” you create a deepening. It is, and can never be “dull”; only the mental perspective makes it appear so.

“Dull” and “boring” are illusions. They are cover-ups of an ever-dynamic process of growth and discovery.

Thursday, November 7, 2002

Guitar

Fast or slow guitar (Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4) based on how I feel at the moment. Hmm.

No, this is not a “hmm.” It is a wow! A perfect fit. Perfect for rebirth.

This is like a “too good to be true” idea. The next level of freedom.

Saturday, November 9, 2002

Folk Dance and Tour Career: An Ending

It feels as if, long range and even short range, certain careers are ending. Could this be true? Is it my interpretation of a lull? Or is it a certain lack of energy and creativity because my purpose has been accomplished? Or is it a combination of the two?

Whatever, it seems that my tour business, and even folk dancing business is, in some form, reaching an end.

In tours: I've traveled to all of the countries I've planned to. I have now no interest in studying language. Does this mean I've accomplished my purpose?

Folk dancing, too: I have no interest in reaching out to find new customers. (Same is true of tours.) Doesn't this signify the ending of a business, the closing of a career?

Part of me even wishes this were true. It would free my mind and time to pursue something new, something different. At least, in my mind, I would know these careers are, if not over, at least fading out. I would then “give up” on them, put no more mental or physical time in promoting or pursuing them. My mind would be free to “move on.”

Well, if I am secretly hoping this is true, perhaps I might as well simply believe it here and now. What would happen if I did?

I am indeed going through a transition. I am wanting, ready, willing, and even

able to move onto something new.

But to what? Do I have to find the answer today? Maybe I can just be satisfied with posing the question or even making the statement: I am approaching, near, at the end of my folk dance and tour career.

Sure I'll piddle in them. But my direction is towards something unknown and new.

What new fields could I possibly pursue? The only ones I can think of are computer and publicity.

Monday, November 11, 2002

Morning Sadness

Part of me is ashamed of my morning sadness? I thought I had this down, I think. I thought I finally understood things, and had it made. After all, yesterday was a good day. Etc.

Yet almost every morning when I wake up, I face this a meaningless, purposeless, an empty sadness. All is so transient. What good really is everything I do? It will all pass away; it will all die.

Can facing the transience-of-life realization, whose encapsulated essence is found in my morning sadness, bring me strength?

Is there strength within sadness if I surrender to my morning lows?

By daring to go slowly and deeply into each note I could be entering a hitherto unknown and undiscovered essence; I could be dropping into the dark wonder of an awesome beauty.

Realm of baffling poetry, the stifling exotic haunts of the wild cactus bird, Amazonian mystic flower, dark South American caves perfumed with dark Asturian

mountain, Leyenda ambrosia.

The poetic core of slow guitar playing.

On The Nature Of Why I Want(ed) To Play Fast

I wonder if I have been wanting to play fast in order to cover up this core which is so frightening to face and enter. The desire to play fast would then have been my camouflage. This may also be true in dancing and running, even calliyoga, and the general desire to “improve.”

The most frightening of all is facing the mystery and the Mystery. Facing and realizing that, at every moment, I face the void. I know nothing. This is a horrible frightening thought. If it's true, isn't it “easier” aiming to play faster?

How about the aches in my body? Isn't it easier to ache than face the ever-terrifying abyss of the Unknown?

Addictions to the Fun High

Without the emotional highs and lows would I even be interested in the stock market, my chancy career, or life in general? Good question. Without my juices flowing is it all worthwhile?

Or can I get my juices to flow in another way? Can calm and striving for competency get the juices to flow? Can a non-addictive life achieve the fun high? Do I need or want the “fun high”. . . and is it even “fun” when I lose so often?

What Is My Challenge Now?

At this point in my life I have managed to combine artistic success with financial failure.

What do these opposites have in common? Both have created a lid. Success and/or failure: It is hard to say which one feels worse. But, no question, neither feels

good.

The excitement of expansion and growth is where I want to be. Artistic success (guitar success) puts me at a plateau; it is safe, easy, flat, and fluctuates between vaguely pleasant and unpleasant. I'm biding my time here until something happens, something breaks.

I can't figure out financial failure yet. I still have a "How could this happen to me?" attitude.

Could financial failure be a twisted success in reverse? What the hell does that mean? I know I have more trouble with success than failure. Failure, even while it hurts, does stimulate me. In that sense, it makes me "happy." In that sense, failure can be a success; it can be my form of "success."

But I really don't believe this. Maybe, at best, failure is really another challenge in disguise.

But what is my challenge now? In areas of success or failure? Guitar? Money and finance?

I must also ask: Why is my body falling apart in this process? Is it at the end of a breakdown or a breakthrough? What, on a deeper level, is the difference?

My legs, my support system, have never felt worse. I can hardly move them without something aching. Is this from overuse, mental collapse, or something else? Is it really new or a subtle repetition of old patterns?

Could It Be Time For A Change?

If this is all so, then the love of money, and its measurement and procurement, must (sadly?) become a central part of my life. Money is my central energy source!

That's why low paying jobs and even lower paying folk dance teaching so often depress me. Sure, the activity is great. But where's the dough? Nowhere is the answer. And yet I keep doing it, teaching it, being disappointed by it. (Last Friday night's class

at Bedford with its pittance of a turnout, was such a down.)

Could it be time for a change?

Naive-Stupid-Dumb and Hero Live Side By Side

I never thought that the worst could happen. . . but it did. I feel so embarrassed. Here I am, an adult, and I was so naive, so fooled. It is totally embarrassing to have been so “taken,” so fooled by the markets, so totally thrown by the vicissitudes of life. Plenty of opportunity here to beat myself: How stupid could I have been? How stupid can I be? How naive. How dumb!

Well, the answer is: very stupid, very naive, very dumb. Ah, it hurts so to say it. But it is true nonetheless. What can I do but learn from my naivete, pick up the pieces, and move on?

But give up, I will not. Giving up is somehow not in my vocabulary. Learning is, but give up is not. What this quality is, I do not know. Why I have it, I do not know. But I do have it. I’ll even venture to say it is a heroic quality. It’s hard to say “hero,” and that I’ve got heroic qualities while at the same time admitting that I am (was) so stupid. But hard as it is to admit, it is true.

These qualities stand opposite each other, spitting in each others faces.

Evidently, I can’t get rid of either. Nor would I want to. Naivete is childlike and beautiful; so-called stupid is part of the growing, and endless growing up process; never giving up represents the heroic aspect of the life force ever challenging the pull down, push-down, suffocating aspects of death.

Defensive Strategy

Yoga three times a day as a defense against decay. Actually, by actively defending what I’ve got I am not only taking charge but I am on the offensive! On a

deeper level, defense is offense. They are twins.

But I do feel better. Could my attitude have something to do with it?

Sunday, November 16, 2002

Great Weekend!

Great concert, reading, show, people.

Headache this morning for that reason. Also a new "toe pain" cramp. Is the toe pain, in reality, my headache just "shifting around?" It's possible. With my mind, anything is possible.

I'm basically blank this morning. Is it the push down of the positive, of a great weekend realized? I've done it. Yes! Rescued my mind from the oblivion feeling, from anger at the downs of small weekend registration. A victory.

My headache is really due to the success of my "Mitsubishi Madness" reading. Three comments keep going through my mind: After I read it Carl said, "Great reading." Ellen said, "I've never heard you use language like that," and Audrey was falling off her chair laughing. All incredible compliments to me. A total success. Leading, of course, to a headache.

Great audience, though. What a winner.

It's just been a great day and a great weekend. (Even as I say this I feel the jab of headache pain.) Even my stocks went up.

Enjoy my victory. But remember to put a stop-loss under it. Don't forget: be defensive even in victory.

"Death" Of My Performing Career

I wonder if the feeling of death I've been having has to do with the death of my guitar-performing career. Since I can now play Alhambra, slowly and at my own pace, I not longer have the need to prove myself. As that need has dribbled away and

disappeared, so has my need to perform. With the end comes the end of my performing career.

I'll perform again. But it is no longer a vital part of my identity. The image of Segovia constantly hovering over me has died in my brain.

This death will indeed give me a new freedom both in performance, playing the guitar, and in life.

Realization of such a new guitar and performing place on which I now stand with its release of inner freedom, is an incredible achievement.

With it I feel absolutely sick. Be aware. Watch out for possible upcoming "achievement" headache.

Parts of the exhilaration of success make me sick.

I'll bet some of the aches in my body come from the repressed exhilaration of success.

So the problem is not so much dealing with success but with the exhilaration it engenders.

Before Monday night folk dancing:

On The Downside Of Success

I'm running wild on the lawn. Spinning, spinning, losing control, focus. . . and discipline. Soon I'll crash. It's the danger in ecstasy, downside of running wild.

If focus and concentration bring happiness, then lack of control, focus, and concentration bring misery. Run too wild on the lawn, and the latter happens.

This is the root of my fear of and nausea with success – and all its forms. Loss of

control, focus, concentration, and discipline. I get sucked into the whirlwind of success; I then fear spinning out of control. Sometimes I do.

That's why there is such peace, security, strength, and serenity in the indifference to success or failure. Do it not for the money but to make a good trade.

Tuesday, November 19, 2002

Risk

Fear of success is my mind spinning out of control. But there is also a certain deadness and boredom in the focus on, and even worship of, success. I stand in, and dwell on, the known. The known world is peaceful. But there is little thrill, risk, and passion in living in it.

I thrive and tremble in the unknown. Thinking this, perhaps I am now ready for some risk.

Tours were once thrilling risks. Can they be again?

To play the Alhambra slowly, luxuriously, and with even with passion is wonderful. I can do it. I have succeeded in playing other tremolo pieces, too. But now I am ready to move on. Can I find new challenges in guitar? Where is the risk?

What's new in guitar? Play only whole pieces. That's not a risk, but at least it's new. . . in the peaceful, serene and successful vein.

Friday, November 22, 2002

A New Me In The Stock Market

It's hard to believe that I may have actually learned something from my stock market debacle.

What have I learned? Here are two big changes:

1. Now I'm defensive. I know my account can be destroyed. I now put stops under every stock I buy.

2. Now I'm working alone. No one is influencing my decisions but me. I'm not working with Joel anymore. More important, I'm not believing that he magically knows more (about the future) than I do.

The above has also been made possible by the technology of the internet. My Fidelity Site allows me to trade, to go in and out of the market with low commissions. Thank you, internet!

But whether I work with Joel or not, my main change is knowing I can be destroyed and, thus, being defensive.

Wednesday, November 27, 2002

Breaking Through The Walls Of Limitation

All this unleashing is really scaring me. I feel like I'm being pushed into a box. I wonder what it means.

The unlashings involve yoga three times a day. . . and some financials. But mostly the physical yoga.

Three times a day. Very intense. Will I fall apart? Will I explode? Or am I touching, reaching into, a higher energy level that I've never been able to handle in the past?

Breaking out scares me, makes me question my identity. If I can follow such a regimen, if I unleash this unknown volume of energy, who am I?

Am I boxed in by my compulsion to follow through on three times a day? Or, by following my compulsion, will I break through the ceiling to touch realms of higher energy? Again I believe it is the latter. But it scares me. Can I really do it? By putting my all into these three-times-a-day exercises, can I really make such progress and improvement? I know the answer is yes. Nevertheless, it scares me.

And it raises frightening questions: Does such potential really exist in me? Am I really that powerful? By doing yoga so intensely, I am moving beyond my “limits.” Where will it lead? I’m in a box of fear. Its walls are my limitations. I’m breaking through them. Frightening. But exciting, too.

Saturday, November 30, 2002

Discomfort and Insecurity Make You Creative

No question that lack of comfort, lack of security – in other words, pain – makes me, nay, “forces me,” to be creative.

The discomfort and insecurity of running tours enabled me to create amazing tour experiences for myself and others. Indeed, this kind of psychological pain is a stimulant; physical pain may well be a stimulant as well. Thus so-called “arthritic” pains cause me to try doing yoga and calliyoga three times a day.

I Need New Goals

Evidently I need a big challenge, a big goal: something that will “scare” me. It will raise up my energy and make me creative.

What would this high goal and great challenge be?

Will there, would there be a few of them, several, many?

They could be, should be long range goals, say twenty-year goals, aiming to be “accomplished” by age eighty-five.

What would they be?

At age forty-five I had a fifteen-country, twenty-year tourist plan. It was fulfilled.

I also had a “timeless” goal of playing guitar well and with confidence. It was fulfilled. . . after twenty-five years.

I also had a “get rich,” millionaire financial goal: a financial security goal. This one was a total failure. But, in all honesty, getting rich wasn’t my deep down, bottom line goal. My goal was really to become an artist. Financial security would simply free my mind to become one. Financial security was really a “sideline.” Well, my artistic aim was accomplished. I am now a guitarist. . . and writer.

Now, if I went back into the financial world, it would be more to see if I could do it, see if I could succeed. It is not even so much for the money (although that would be nice). But I’ve proven to myself that I can not only survive without the money but can do my art and become an artist in spite of my financial annoyances.

Still, I would like to succeed in the stock market, trading, and money.

Could getting the skill of trading be one of my new goals?

Could learning web design and all its technological ramifications be another one of my goals?

Could running a marathon, and doing yoga and calliyoga three times a day, be another one of my goals?

These are three new goals. Do they have enough challenge, pain, discomfort and insecurity in them?

Of course, one of my long-term goals was not to be scared. I wanted to perform without fear. Well, now that I am not scared, and have “conquered” those fears, do I really want to be scared again? Do I really want to develop new fears because, without them, I won’t be challenged? Can I, will I still be or become creative?

Or is it something to do with “lidded scared,” the fear of (audience) repression versus awesome energy of inner freedom, the dynamic running-wild-on-the-lawn fire, the release of flowing, unbridled, unknown, fierce passion?

I think the old me was fighting lidded scared, the old neighborhood form of frightening audience-customer-mother repression. The new me exploring the new

adventures in the new neighborhood operates on a different level. The “scared” I am looking for on this level is the Hebrew fear in the “awe” part of awesome, the cataclysmic, secret, frightening, unknown, and unknowable energy of inner freedom.

Truth is, I am no longer scared in the old way. Yet I still want to be amazed. This could be found in the awe part of the mystic, cabbalistic “awe and wonder” world view.

Definitely a different level of energy. And I would still be “frightened.”

Yes, I refuse to be scared (in the old way). But I also refuse to give up my awe.

Trading Well

How can I know if I am trading well?

There are three criteria: 1. Not losing your capital. 2. Making small profits. 3. Making large profits.

So far I have not lost any capital; I am also making small profits.

Good is not losing any capital.

Well is making small profits

Great is making large profits.

So far – as of today – I am doing well.

Can I congratulate myself? Not yet, not really. I am still a neophyte. It is too early to judge.

Or should I congratulate myself anyway? Just to practice.

I hesitate to do so. I’m afraid it will make me less cautious and I will forget the bottom line: I can lose everything!

I’m still a neophyte; I’m just starting out. Perhaps such a beginner’s mind is always best in the market. It keeps you humble. . . and cautious.

Yet this is also an intellectual pursuit. I should be able to say I am successful. . .

or not.

Sunday, December 1, 2002

Greed and Fear

Just as you can't eliminate fear, you can't eliminate greed. You can only recognize and become aware of it.

Is grabbing the more an example of greed? Partly. But it lacks the desperation.

Perhaps greed is no more a negative quality than fear. It's only "bad," that is, dangerous, when it gets out of hand. And the "bad" part is really the dangerous part. Overdone, it can cloud your mind and push you into danger, into dangerous directions.

Fear is tightening and restricting; it warns you of danger.

Greed can blindsides you; it opens you, the sky's the limit, expanding into infinity, I can get more, more, more! I can get whatever I want! Greed can cause you to make mistakes on the wide open side. It can blind you to danger.

Greed is expansive. However, too much can blind you to danger.

Fear is constrictive; it makes you cautious. However, too much can shut you down and blind you to expansion.

Like two legs, both are necessary.

Neither can be eliminated. . . ever.

Trapped In Over-Excitement

Everything hurts arthritis style. Bernice says it's because I'm getting old. But I don't believe it. True, I am getting older. But if that was reason for my aching why didn't I ache a few days ago?

No, I don't believe it's age. Rather, as of now, I believe it has something to do with anger, repressed rage.

Anger? Repressed rage? At what?

Well, believe it or not, I feel trapped in and by the excitement of my success! Notice, I do not say trapped in exhilaration. Rather, it is trapped in the excitement. Somehow the excitement of Monday's success – “graduating” from web site school, having the market rocket up to \$2000 paper profit, a new Budapest and Prague registrant plus the possibilities of a few more, creation of a great “Reggae-Romanian-Turkish-Hassidic choreography of Louie Fleck's “Up And Down” – all these successes addled my brain. Over-stimulation, over-excitement, wild running on the ecstasy and energy lawn, and, then, somewhat feeling trapped by all this excitement.

Aching joints and muscles. Instead of a success headache I got trapped in stiffness.

Thursday, December 5, 2002

Goals

Is my goal exhilaration or serenity?

Is exhilaration a kind of, type of serenity?

Does the view, belief, attitude that life is suffering protect you on the downside? In other words, is it like the stock market attitude of Losers Anonymous? If you see yourself as a loser, you'll be aware of the risks and protect yourself on the downside. This will, ultimately, protect you from more suffering and make you “happier”; or at least you will suffer less and not so unhappy.

Protecting yourself from the downside of excitement (but not exhilaration, which is, perhaps, part of serenity) which is depression, protecting yourself from greed (the upside of fear) and fear (the downside of greed) may be the goal of serenity. In guitar playing, singing, trading, calliyoga, dancing, and in life.

Friday, December 6, 2002

Satisfaction In The Stock Market?

Handling Fear And Greed

Market: One difference between now and then is I realize how difficult it is to trade in the market.

Where can I get satisfaction? I never truly know where the market is heading; thus every time I sell I face the fear my sold stock will rise, and every time I buy I face the fear it will fall further. Then, when it rises, greed steps in and I face the fear of selling too early; when it falls, fear steps in and I face the question: is this a buying opportunity, or should I protect myself and sell out? In other words, by judging the market and trying to guess its direction I cannot know what is the “right” thing to do. Thus, no matter what I do, I can be, and am, dissatisfied.

How can I get satisfaction by trading?

The expression is: Bulls and bears make money; hogs and sheep get slaughtered. Perhaps I can begin by getting satisfaction in not being a hog. This means dealing with and “fighting off” my greed factor.

Can I handle my greed? Can I fight it off? Will I be satisfied with small gains? Can I handle the bad feelings, if after I sell, the stock keeps rising? I know I’ll feel awful if this happens. Of course, I’ll feel awful if I hold onto the stock and it falls. Thus again, no matter what I do I’ll end up feeling awful. What kind of game is this?

What an emotional management challenge!

Perhaps here is a way of looking at it: The market, like the ocean, is impersonal. It doesn’t care or think of me one bit. Therefore, the market, “my market,” exists only in my head. I “make up” the market, imagine it as I go along. Since it (along with all of reality) is in my head, a creation of my imagination, how do I handle my imagination and the emotions it creates?

Perhaps pleasure I get from the market can come from the satisfaction of proper emotional management, that I handled my emotions, I managed them.

This might be a good start. What are my main emotions in the market? Greed and fear, of course.

If I sell after small gains, I could take satisfaction in the fact that I managed my greed.

If the stock goes up after I sold it, I could take satisfaction that I'm in the process of handling my fear (fear of all the money I've lost by selling "too early.")

Thus handling my fear and greed may well be the "only" route to personal satisfaction in the stock market. Think about it.

Thus I would have to say that ninety per cent of playing the market is emotional management.

Greed: How Can I Fight It? Do I Even Want To? Fight It?

I'm hoping Nortel will rise. Even though I have a good, nay by old terms, excellent profit in it, I'm hoping it will rise even further! Isn't this the perfect example of greed? Here I have already made more than I ever expected and I'm still holding on to it hoping for more.

Should a trader hope? Alexander Elder says no. As for me, I don't know yet what I say. Yet I sense that my fight against hope, against hoping in stock market, is the right fight. I should learn not to hope. Hope creates and feeds fear and greed. In order to generate serenity, for inner peace, it is better to see myself as a loser, and "retreat" to taking a preconceived profit or loss. That's why I now put stop losses on my stocks. That protects me on the downside. At least I have made up my mind before hand just how much I am willing to lose.

But I have not yet "protected" myself on the up side. How much am I "willing" to make? In other words, when should I sell? I still don't know this answer.

It is a big greed question. My intellect says I should teach myself to fight and

handle greed by “selling too early.” But does and can my emotional self handle this?

Good gut-wrenching questions.

“Personality Change”

Here I am a very emotional person, an artist. Yet in order to play the stock market I have to take emotions out of my decisions. I have to be “unemotional,” and depend on my intellect. Can I learn to do this? Wouldn’t it require a personality change? What a challenge!

Yes, I would need a totally new attitude. Would or could one end up calling this a “personality change?”

That’s pretty strong language.

Developing My Own Method

Thus my success or satisfaction would have nothing to do with the outside, objective market. Rather it would come from handling the emotional products of my imagination, namely, my greed and fear.

What I am saying here is that the market, like the world itself, is a creation of my imagination. Thus, like the world itself, I should handle it accordingly.

This means that I am developing, that I even have, my own personal view of the market, and my own way of handling it. Do I, a stock market loser, dare to say such a thing? How could I, a loser, dare to have my own method and way of looking at the market? Wouldn’t others and myself say: “Yes, I have a method, a losing method.” How can I dare claim I am developing my own method? Is it hubris, naivety, gall? Who am I to say or even think such a thing?

It is the old question of self-confidence. Who am I to have self confidence? And in the market where I have “proven” my skills by losing so much money. In order to say I have self-confidence in myself and my own method, I’ll have to admit that I can

change, that my “personality,” attitudes, and approaches can change. It means that, in spite of all my former losses, I am capable of learning. In fact, my losses and the pains they created and still do create, are my teachers.

So, I’ll have to admit that I have the confidence. Even the stock market confidence. I am indeed striking out on a new path. So far the concrete differences are: 1. No more Joel. 2. A defense approach to the market. 3. Putting a stop loss under every stock based on the new realization I can lose everything.

So I am in the process of developing my own method of trading stocks. It may be based on the New Leaf approach, a realization that control of my life, New Leaf, stock market and my trading exist only in my head.

It feels radical and strange. . . but mine.

Time for a New Leaf.