

New Year

Friday, January 5, 2001

Nice "Vacation" But It's Over

I'm also starting out the new year with a fear, a terror, of entering the new year. Part of me is afraid to leave the house. Look what's happening in Israel. Upcoming war.

I'm at war, too. Only I'm afraid to face it. Perhaps I've been home too long.

It's been a nice "vacation," but it's over.

I have no choice but to leave the house, face the fighting, go to war. My inner country depends on it.

Nothing fits anymore: the dances, the exercises, my old mind-set, my clothes, my body.

I need new drawers to put my new ideas in. I need a new mental house with a new address.

I have a strange panic that is sitting on my energy.

Thursday, January 4, 2001

Is there a spiritual component to both my injury, treatment, and cure?

Where did I go "wrong?"

The only thing I can think of is I didn't pay attention to my aches-and-pains body signals. I didn't follow my "guitar warm-up playing" rule.

This all started in September. What has happened since then?

First, as I increased my dance classes, I decreased my dance warm-down stretches. As I increased my leg exercises—squats and one-legged squats—I did not concomitantly increase my warm-down stretches.

Even after runs I neglected to stretch “right away” and then even neglected to stretch later on.

Thus I did not even follow my own rules. Slowly I “experimented” to see if I could “do without them.”

Well, the experiment failed. In trying to “prove myself,” that is, to see if I could live without stretching or at least survive with less stretching, I discovered, through injury, that I cannot.

In that sense, I could call it a hubris experiment. Or I could call it simply stupid. But, of course, it is only stupid in retrospect. Actually, I was trying to stretch, expand my brain, seeing how far I could go. Well, I found out.

Just as the temple that holds the spirit must be cleansed, cared for, and respected, so must the body and its needs be cleansed, cared for, and respected.

Stretching and yogic warm-downs are my methods of respect.

The spiritual lesson: Pay attention. Remember them.

Eating and Diet

I’ve also shown no discipline in eating. It’s part of the same “experiment.” I want to see how far I can go, how much I can eat before I am “stopped” by an injury, digestive problem, weight gain etc.

Well, I have gained five pounds.

Does this injury also signal an interest and serious exploration of foods?

Are foods really important? Do they really “work?” (Marghabanda style, i.e., reverse bunions, instep, etc.?) Can they really affect and effect arthritis and bone formation? Can bunions, instep, etc. really be changed through diet?

Maybe taking care of the temple (body) is the spiritual exercise!

Certainly the one thing I can do with all this is: pay attention.

Folk Dancing Is Being “Bumped”

How about anger at folk dancing for putting me through so much trouble for so little money?

Since September I had increased all my folk dance classes, adding both Friday night in Bedford and Saturday night in Bloomfield. After one great October night in Bedford – which encouraged me to try running the class with registration for an entire year – the whole thing slowly collapsed. Few in Bedford showed up for the November and December classes; even fewer showed up in Bloomfield. I finally decided I would end both classes if I didn't get the twenty registrants I needed.

Folk dancing simply does not pay. It never has. The potential for making a living has always been in tours, weekends, and bookings. Businesswise, folk dance classes have “only” served to feed the other money-making ventures. Perhaps my ankle and “ankle anger” signal a turning point in my view and attitude towards folk dancing. Now that I have decided to put time and effort into calling and selling (sailing) my tours (even weekends) and bookings, my low-to-non-paying folk dance classes are sinking to a distant second. Sure I'm mad at them for doing this to me. But that is their nature. As an activity, they were always fun; as a business, they always stank.

The “bump” in my instep may symbolize the bump in my folk dance classes. They are being “bumped.”

Hasidism emphasized the feeling over the act, the fervor over the deed itself.

I like the word “fervor” better than “feeling.” “Feeling” is a secular word showing connection to a temporary, fleeting, transient emotion. “Fervor,” on the other

hand, is a mystic, religious word showing connection with God Himself.

And it is definitely true that fervor is more important than the deed itself. Why? Because fervor (or feeling) lend motivation! Without that motivation, the deed itself will not be done at all!

Something Is Sitting On My Head And Heart

I Don't Know What

It has been a basically terrible first week of 2001. I just can't get into it. Plus, this bone spur on my left heel and my visit to Dr. McNerney really threw me off.

It seems all I have going for me is plans.

On January 3 I said nothing fits anymore. This is still true. The arthritic bump on my left foot doesn't fit either.

Somehow the spirit has been drained out of me and I don't know why.

I was doing so well in Santa Fe, playing the guitar and reading the life of Vladimir Horowitz. Also, I was doing lots of yoga. And reading, studying Hebrew and Arabic. But since "life started," that is, since I returned to work, to dance classes, tours, and life, everything feels off.

I have to admit, in retrospect, I had a marvelous vacation in Santa Fe. Lots of good thoughts, feelings, and plans. Now the spirit of these thoughts, feelings, and plans has all dribbled away.

I don't know why. Sure, the foot bump is an annoyance; sure I've been thrown off by it. But somehow, I sense my drainage problem is more than that.

It's not death, arthritis, or anything else I can think of.

Something is sitting on my head. . . and heart.

But I don't know what.

Look To My Mind

Instead of my feet bothering my mind, maybe it's the reverse: my mind is

bothering my feet. Not only is my mind bother them, it is creating their problem. How's that for a thought?

Thus, instead of looking at my feet and other physical aches as the source of my pains, perhaps I should look at my mind. What is going on in that cavern? What is bothering me? Why am I being drained?

I don't know. But at least I'm looking in the right direction.

Old Success Syndrome: OSS

99's as the Incarnation of Success

Could it be the old success problem? Could I be suffering from the psychological disease OSS: Old Success Syndrome?

The signs are all there. Look what I succeeded in over the Santa Fe vacation:

1. Guitar playing. Alhambra success through the 99's
2. New running. . . and yoga direction.
3. Study: a return to it.
4. Even worries about money are becoming "strange."

But it was mostly the guitar Alhambra and the key to that success, the 99's, that threw me off. As I think about it, perhaps it is "owning" the key itself, the 99's.

Through use of, and following the principle of the 99's, I see a (the) key to success, not only in guitar, but in all things! This is an utterly amazing discovery. Did I really discover it? Or am I simply ready for it, and it "appeared?" Well, whatever, it still represents the incarnation of success. And you know how I have, until now, dealt with success. I deal with it by going down; I deal with it by draining off, by knocking my spirit back to zero.

Or, that is the way I have dealt with it. Notice the past tense. Now, through awareness and my new position and gone-public attitude in life, I shall deal with it differently. But before I do, I have to be aware of the problem. Now I am.

Success and Arthritis

Here's another thought: I know how threatening success has been. Perhaps my arthritis, my foot bump, is a result of my success! In other words, it represents the lid on my success, the old neighborhood method of pushing me down. In my mind, success is becoming more and more established. But my primitive, old neighborhood body has not yet accepted this. It remembers the threat of success. . . and reacts accordingly.

Wouldn't it be amazing if this "explains" my other bodily aches and pains, too.

I thought my biggest fear was failure. Perhaps I was wrong. The worst threat, my biggest fear has been success! Arthritis may "prove" it.

I read that there is a definite psychological aspect to arthritis.

Could I get it to push me down and offset my success?

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Play guitar from the belly button, nay, from behind the belly button.

Play guitar from deep within the belly.

Play from the stomach, not the head. No, actually play from the belly, not the head.

The "within the belly area" is the Land Without Judgement. The energy center, the solar plexus chakra. No one is in there but the real, cosmic, awe-filled me. It is frightening and stomach-churning.

Ugh, ugh, ugh I go as I think of my belly button. Twisting and being drilled into my center and within. Ugh, ugh, ugh!

Play from the "ugh" center.

I saw a bagpipe with its sack and chanter, dribble out loosely, spermatic fluid dribbling helplessly and fickle, over the floor. I am somewhere between three-months and two years old. It couldn't have been sperm. Was it urine? Does this stomach churning, belly button ugh have something to do with an early mother-inspired disgust with urinating in my bed. And constantly. Peeing in my pants, a diaper? Nay, a bed wetter, A urine-wet dream? Does my extreme belly button sensitivity have something to do with my infant penis and urine?

My belly button is the gateway to a secret and very protected land. What is there? What I am protecting?

I do not know.

Just (the thought or actuality) of going through the gate churns me up, and turns me into a crumbling ugh-ugh. I crunch up, doubling over in a spasm of self-protection; I pull in my stomach and withdraw into myself.

Dealing with the outside world feel like "nothing" compared with dealing with this inside world. The outside world is merely a pain-in-the-ass world. The inside my stomach (nay, belly), the beyond the belly button land, is the stomach churning ugh-ugh land of unheard traumas and misty tortures.

Sunday, January 7, 2001

Can Taking Care Of The Body Be A Good-In-Itself?

The swelled fog is not at home.

For some reason I am down yesterday and this morning even though I am also up.

Down and up both at once.

Why?

First, I am on my way with my Anti-Arthritis Exercise Program. Once again, I must say, it works. This morning I woke up with hardly any aches and pains. What did I do yesterday to deserve this?

Well, in a back-assed way, I must thank Dr. McNerney. He said I must do the leg stretches intensely, morning, afternoon, and evening, and before bed. To these I've added most of my other yoga stretches. Basically, he said, do the exercises or else! The way he put it was, "Do them or I'll hit you over the head with a baseball bat." And this after I'd asked him how my feet were. His answer: "They stink! You've got bunions, hammer toes, and arthritis." Well, he is not your basic touchy-feely kind of doctor. I walked out of his office quite depressed.

But I am no longer that. As I said, now I am both, down and up. I don't know why I'm down but I do know why I am up. It is "because of Dr. McNerey." By stressing how important the exercises were, he supported, promoted, and pushed what I love doing anyway: namely, yogic stretching exercises, or what I call calliyoga. Only he put it in really stark terms: do them or die! Do them or get hit over the head with a baseball bat. And I added, do them or you'll never dance again. . . or run, or walk, hike, climb, or any of the active things I love doing.

So, Dr. McNerney is what I would call an angel in reverse. He's got the good news only with a terrible way of delivering it. Nevertheless, he does and did deliver.

So as I write this I can see I am on to something. I always wondered: is exercising two to three hours a day too much? Is it extreme? Am I weird for doing or wanting to do it? After all, putting in so much time on "mere physical activity." What about so-called worthier things like art, culture, and intellect? Shouldn't my time be spent developing these? Isn't the body at best merely something to be maintained, something you should ultimately forget about as you move onto higher things? Can taking care of the body be a good in itself?

Great questions, of course. No question I've always liked, and loved, my exercises, the rushing wonderful feelings they bring, and the general feeling of well-

being I am left with after I do them. Wonderful, indeed. What could be better?

But somehow, a part of me, even feels guilty spending so much time at mere physical activity. This value system must stem from my childhood. Why this disdain for the body? Intellectually, I do not believe it. But evidently, emotionally I do.

A disdain for the body. Even a subtle form of disgust. Could it have something to do with my belly button?

Could taking care of the body be (become) a spiritual path?

The key to guitar perfection is focus, and the ninety-nines.

It's somewhat scary to think, nay realize, I have that key.

"Mi"

Note of the Real Me

I started to scream. It turned into a long high note. Very pure in tone. I checked it out on my guitar. I was screaming, nay presque-singing, the note E. What is name of E on the solfeggio scale: mi. Do, re, mi

What is mi but me!

Perhaps this is the note of the real me, the real "mi," the central note of my existence hidden behind my belly button way back in my belly. It is the authentic note of screaming for release of the real, long-suppressed, hidden behind walls of incredible anger and rage, me!

Could this be true? It feels right. But it is so new. Have I hit a deep visceral truth? It feels like I have.

Uncovered is the key: I'm afraid if I, or someone else, touch my belly button, a hornet's nest of incredible rage will be released. It has been suppressed and hidden in

my belly button in the form of “Don’t touch me!” Nausea, disgust, and ugh-ugh are related to anger and rage, and are my ways of protecting myself from it, pushing it “down my throat” so I will gag on it, ugh ugh it, pushing it through my belly button deep into the bowels of my earth, my hidden central belly (umbilical) earth core.

Monday, January 8, 2001

The Anti-Arthritis Program Continues

So far each day I’ve done the McNerney Method, the Anti Arthritis Exercise Program, I have gotten better. This morning I woke up with almost no aches and pains, and even walked up the stairs almost “normally.”

I think I am onto something here. I hope I am. Only time will tell. I have yet to folk dance. That starts tonight. We’ll see where am at the end of this week.

The heart of the McNerney program is doing the exercises four times a day. Actually, he said two: morning and evening. Then he said do them before and after you exercise. But I exercise every day. Plus, even on the rare days that I don’t, the idea of four times a day is a good one. That means early morning, before lunch, late afternoon, and evening before bed. Or, when I exercise, that is, run, I do them early morning followed by a run, then do them again after the run, once more in the late (or middle) afternoon, and finally again at night before bed.

The “before bed” may be very good in itself. It puts the mind in an exercise, anti-arthritis mode. You fall asleep in this mode and wake up the next morning with good anti-arthritis, healthy thoughts in your mind which, in turn, affect the body and make a smiling, up-the-stairs, wake-up walk.

Also, my guitar is rolling through the ninety-nines; so is (although on a lesser level) my Hebrew and Arabic. So is my yoga, and calliyoga. I’m thinking about how to add it to business, sales, and sails: I’ll call it the Calling Ninety-Nines. Phone Sails on the Ninety-Nines.

What does this mean? Repetitive phone calls? I'm not sure, but I like the idea.

I wonder if touching (focusing on) the hornet's nest energy rage (rage of energy) behind my belly button at the center of my belly will release me from the staggering walls of depression and the mental push-down prison box.

I think it will because you can't be enraged and depressed at the same time. Plus, the rage held in my belly button (behind it) is really a form of energy.

This center of energy and rage (energy rage, raging energy) also has a touch of beauty in it.

I wonder if the belly button is raging to protect that?

Beauty and rage both in the ploughed and furrowed land beyond the aaahing and aieeing doorway of the belly button.

Crunch, crunch, draw in, double up, and bend over.

I came into the world so beautiful and pure. . . .Could it be a birth trauma?

The umbilical cord (to the beautiful world) was cut. All that was left was my belly button. Now I recoil and cringe. I double up to defend it, to protect the beautiful core center of that ancient but still extant, pure and beautiful world.

Tuesday, January 9, 2001

Raging Infant!

Again I am down this morning. It's like the guts have been ripped out of me. And perhaps they have.

Perhaps it is my entry into Bellybutton Land. I am feeling such nausea and disgust—and with myself. I'm revisiting the old self-loathing but this time, on the most primitive of levels. Basically, I see myself around zero to three months old (maybe up

to six), screaming helplessly as I lie on my back, my arms flailing in the air, my legs kicking like mad. And all to no avail. My mother will not come. And when she does, she still doesn't satisfy me. No one and nothing can satisfy me. I scream into the day, and cry into the night, I rage and kick. And all to no avail. Finally, my mother comes in and says, in her primitive body language, "Stop screaming!" My infant self hears it as "stop complaining," and worse: "something is wrong with you for complaining! Something is wrong with you for wanting, for needing, something is wrong with all your primitive wants and desires. Now, shut up! Be patient! You'll get your turn as soon as I'm through with your sister."

But my turn never comes. And when it does, it is too little and too late. By then, perhaps weeks or months later, I've already defended my screaming needy core by retreating into myself. I've put up the belly button walls, retreated behind the closed doors of my newly former room.

But I am left with feeling awful about myself. Disgust, rage, and terror. Part of me wants to kill! I hate, hate, hate! I'm screaming mad, and still nothing gets done. I can't stand the frustration so I protect myself by disappearing into the maw of my self-enclosed chamber, and covering myself over with a coat of disgust and nausea and my raging killer instincts, which want to pulverize and destroy these outer forces that have so hurt me by never giving me what I want.

Yes, in my belly button, I'm so mad I want to kill! This raging hornet's nest is ready to burst with sun-filled stingers and flaming darts. It is swirling, and stinging, and angry, angry. Its surface form is "Do not touch me!" But deep behind the lines is the killer's cry: "Kill, kill, kill! I can't stand it!" And deep behind that lurks the limp, whimpering refrain, "Who will love me? Who will love a killer? Who will love such a raging, screaming, noisy infant?"

Get away, get away! Don't you tie me down! Don't you tie down my anger!

Are fantasies of bondage, bondage of my anger? Are fantasies of whippings and beatings, the whipping and beating down of my anger?

Probably.

I thought that by tying down and gagging the woman I was tying down and gagging her anger. But now I think I was tying and gagging down my own (to prevent myself from screaming (at her!)).

And this because that tied down and gagged fantasy is me. "She" is a reflection of my tied-and-gagged anger.

Wednesday, January 10, 2001

Once more I'm being overwhelmed with the sheer amount of writing I am doing. Who will read it? What will I do with it?

What does "overwhelmed" mean?

Does it mean no one will ever recognize my wild, inner self, the screaming, arm-flailing, mad shoe, belly button baby that is my real self?

Is that arm-screaming infant really my real self?

Up until now it has been covered by shame, hidden behind nausea and disgust, and has retreated to the innermost corner of my belly.

But now it is screaming for air. From "Don't you dare touch me!" it is beginning to shout "Dare, dare!" The boiling hornet's nest rage is solidifying. Knowledge of belly button rage in the form of slow acceptance is crossing the patio, gingerly passing through the gates and coming in.

I cringe at the thought. But I also flail my arms and fight.

What Is "Overwhelmed?"

If let loose, my wild self will flood the pages and flood the market. It will truly "run wild." No one will appreciate such wildness, certainly not my mother. "Be nice,

Jimmy boy. Stop screaming. And stop acting so wild! Calm down, be quiet. You'll hurt yourself. You'll get sick."

So that's what the "overwhelmed" feeling is all about. If I run wild on the pages, I'll be "bad". And no one will recognize a "bad" person, a bad boy. So restrain yourself. Do less. Write less. Pull yourself back. . . into your belly button!

What is "overwhelmed" but a lid on the wild feeling, another clamp on the true self.

Another brilliant insight. Can I stand it?

Now there's an interesting statement: "Can I stand it?" What does it mean? Can I stand the wildness? Can I stand standing in the cauldron of my true self? Can I stand the lifetime of rejection? Can I stand the indignant and righteous rage this engenders?

Can I stand it? Sure, I'll try.

My writing is dribbling and running all over the place. It is running wild and wooly. Who can stand such a wild kid?

Sit on it; clamp it shut; kill it; shut it down. Now I see the origin of "Kill 'em!" I really want to "kill myself," that is, kill the boiling wild energy at the center of my belly, kill the ancient killers of my true self.

Today these killers lie within me. They live in the housing project near my stomach.

Love of the Wild Self

The wild self, my wild self with its sacred, flaming, radiant, mad shoe, infant energy, is what I want to protect. That is the "beautiful thing" behind my belly button. It retreated so far back I could hardly recognize it. And I cringe whenever anyone comes near it, whenever anyone, including me, touches my belly button.

Maybe that is my nature: that I am wild!

But somehow I wanted to “protect” it. Could the wildness be sensitive? Is it “delicate?” Can there be such a thing as “sensitive, delicate wildness?”

Or was I simply too young, too helpless to protect my essence outright, and thus had to resort to the “powers of an infant,” namely, sleep, screaming, and finally, total retreat.

Thursday, January 11, 2001

The Enjoyment Place

Perhaps I am at the “last stage.”

What does the “last stage” mean?

It means the last motivational stage. This is the stage of motivation without motivation. In other words, the stage of getting someplace by going nowhere, arriving by leaving, being there even as you are on your way.

It is the enjoyment stage. It comes once you have succeeded in everything you want to succeed in; it comes when all doors open and you have arrived.

I must be at the enjoyment stage. Where else could I be? The former motivational tools of pain, suffering, competition, longing, self-improvement through self-beating, inferiority, and more, have all fallen away. Their slow death has left me flat and motivationless for four months. Since September I have been flattened out and blank. Without my former suffering, I asked, what will motivate me? Even though I continue, and even worked harder than ever, and, parenthetically, improved in many areas, I found no answers.

With the death of these former attitudes and approaches, truly, there is only one thing left for me is enjoyment. I say this, not so much with joy but rather, with resignation. Perhaps joy will come later. Right now, I stand in the field of shock, or rather, stunned, or rather, surprise, to think that I have arrived at this place: the enjoyment place.

Indeed, to do things and simply enjoy them, is challenging and difficult. To do

things with no other purpose but self-pleasure has been, truly up until now, out of my league.

But there is no other place to go. I am there just as I am here. I can do nothing but walk into the maw of this new “challenge.”

In fact, I am walking into the enjoyment place through the the jaws of hell, the doorway of my belly button!

What are the benefits of being “insatiable?” Insatiability is my mind’s way of stimulating itself, of finding motivation. Thus insatiability creates its own high. And I am addicted to the endorphin high.

At least I have been up until now. Perhaps a new “enjoyment” horizon is coming. Or perhaps “insatiability” is my enjoyment horizon. (Or at least it has been up until now.)

Friday, January 12, 2001

Creating My World

Even though I’m still mad as hell with a hornet’s nest anger, I seem to have turned a corner.

I’m not mad at anyone in particular, just mad as hell, or at hell! Perhaps it is the hell I’ve gone through to make these personal belly button discoveries about myself.

In any case, once again I am looking at the idea that I make up the world; I create it anew every day. And this, especially with, in, and behind my belly button center. Yes, the “bad” feelings I invent may well be my mental tools, inventions by my own mind, created in order to put me in touch with the wild, fabulous energy – hidden and exploding – sitting deep in my belly behind my belly button!

This idea that I create my world of “badness,” self-misery, even rage, torture, and more, in order to “turn myself on” utterly amazes me. My mind uses every magician’s trick to turn on the central solar plexus spigots in order to hide or release my

pent-up, behind-the-belly-button energy.

Energy then, is truly the center of my being. A wild, creative, mad energy at that. It is expressed or “depressed” in countless forms. Worries about customers, fears of falling sales, terrors of dying and living, wild dancing joys, thrilling runs, chilling tours, high-anxiety concerts, linguistic turn ons, business turn offs, personal shut downs and openings, hatreds and loves, the list goes on and on. But all are creations of my own mind. And all are created in the service of this higher (or “lower”) energy center deep behind my belly button.

Has my new awareness now put me in a truly different place? By opening up my hornet’s nest, has this wild energy become unstoppable?

I hope so.

But progress is never straight upwards. Some form of forgetting, slowdown, or softness will probably show up. However, I now stand at the center of the storm. Let me squeeze out as many hornet benefits I can.

Why do I have a slight headache this morning? Why am I at the borders of rage? Sure I had a couple of tour cancellations yesterday; I’ve been calling steadily since last Sunday; no checks have come in; business is very slow. Although all this is frustrating and annoying, I still don’t think it is why I have the headache. That has more to do with the personal discoveries I am making. After all, I have stirred up a hornet’s nest.

It is full of disappointments, and surrounded by protective walls that have hidden seething anger, screaming fury, and explosive rage. I raise my fist against my oppressors, those put-down queens who, for no other reason than ignorance, pushed me back into my belly button, stuffing my true self down the toilet of my throat, forcing me to gag, suffer, and whip myself into retreat, sending me back into my room, into the deepest corner of being, the land behind my belly button.

Gag, suffer, and whip became so much of my inner life. Do not give it your all. Hold back, hold back, restrain, restrain, careful, careful, danger, danger. I’ve run much

of my life with the brakes on, lurching forward even as I skid into a rut. I hate, hate, hate it, but I know no other way. If I ever broke free, a strong intrapsychic hand pushed me back. As screams of exploding energy and joy struggled within me, grappling to leave my throat, that hand shoved them back. Down my throat they went, down my esophagus and into my stomach to lodge in the deep belly recesses behind my belly button. I could not win. As I released, I recoiled. One hand gave, the other took away. I went round in perpetual circles, never facing or even knowing about the inner storms surrounding my belly button center.

What makes me think things will be different now? Will my new solar plexus, belly button, high energy center realization free me?

Stay tuned to find out.

Staying In Touch With Your Energy Center Through Worries And Complaints

Why do people worry and complain?

Often unbeknownst to them, it is their way of reaching and open up their energy center. It is a subtle form of “turn-on.” That is why they never want to be “cured.” They never truly want their problems solved, and if, for some reason, they get solved, they find new problems to worry or complain about—because people want to be in touch with the wonder and awesome beauty of their energy centers. But the power generated there is so overwhelming, strange, mysterious, and subtle they don’t know how to handle or what to do with it.

Thus they create their worries and complains to both stay in touch with their center and keep it in check.

What is the thrill in horror movies? Just look at your own life.

The Nature of the Energy Center

This energy center is, by its nature, free, uncontrollable, and “uncomfortable.” It is limitless, unbounded, and full of wild emotions. No wonder people hesitate to enter. Yet, like moths to the light, they are forever attracted to it.

Saturday, January 13, 2001

Business stinks. It’s starting to get me mad.

Also I see my belly button origin. I’m three months old and lying with Miki in my (our) crib. Ma is there paying attention to her, but not me. I’m second. Somehow, it started there. Hazy, hazy, but coming into view, coming into focus. The pain of need, the pain of asking for something, the pain of rejection when I need and ask for something: it started there. I’m crying, screaming, but to no avail. “I favor your sister,” says my mother in her, evidently, not-too-subtle body language. My three-month-old-self (or is it three-day, six-month, or all of the above?) Reacts violently by screaming, kicking my feet, flailing my arms. But all to no avail. Finally, in pain, anger, frustration, and disgust, I retreat, through my belly button, establishing a hidden, protected room in my center at the core of myself.

Hard to believe all this psychoanalytical stuff, but it feels right.

Now, in the present, business stinks. I’m being rejected right and left. Why am I thinking these thoughts now? Does the present pain of rejection with its concomitant anger harken back to those prehistoric three-month-old times? Does this harkening back, through the revival of ancient memories, intensify the pain?

Good questions on this chilly Saturday morning.

Return to the Womb

It all feels so hopeless. My desires will never be satisfied. I will never get what I want.

I’m not even sure what I want.

Is it a return to the peace, security, bliss, and safety of the womb? The stabbing

pains of want and desire only started after I left. Birth must have been a trauma; so was screaming for my mother as my birth-three-month-old self lay next to Miki.

Nothing proves it better than life, which is desire and need, if thus filled with unrequited love, unfulfilled needs, and bouts of suffering. Who would want such a thing? Who would consciously desire it? Birth is not a choice. It is “forced” on us. We have to then make the best of our frustrating “life” or living situation.

Of course one would be insatiable. Why would one not be, especially if the nightmare of life is to fulfill ultimately unfulfillable needs and desires. When one understands that this is ultimately impossible, one wants to permanently return to the bliss of the womb.

The insatiable struggle seems only to end in the womb. There, on the most physical, visceral, and gut level, every need and desire, is immediately satisfied. Not a bad place to be.

No wonder I have a pain in my belly button. Who wouldn't?

Returning to the womb is the impossible dream. Yet one dreams it, nevertheless.

Monday, January 15, 2001

Crazy Land!

Everything has become so straight and boring. Where are the stars shining in the dark pre-pubescent sky? Where are the lacerated turnips slicing their way into the gillicutty of dew-dropped marshmallow time? Where is the illuminating spark bursting the water melons of existence?

What of the lumpkin, off-the-wall characters? Where are the dark-suited, ill-prepared, stiff, see-through hollow men once peopling the dark corners of my upper storied existence? Where are the crazies, psychos, and dipsticks?

All has become so straight and boring. Upside down belly button fears have

washed away all salad dressing. Even the All have lost its topping, dribbling into mere plain ice cream that any of the vast collections of anyones can eat.

Is it not a wonder that the small, cat-springing ego sleeps late in the morning? Shutting the eyes, especially early in the morning, is indeed a cowardly way to the answer room. Beter would be to leap out of bed with mind reverberating with a plenitude of enthusiasm for projects as crazy as loon fish.

Where has craziness gone? Fried among calls, sales, money-making, but mostly lost among the belly button back sliders.

Perhaps my visit to the sad confines of Belly Button Land is drifting, sliding, skidding, and puttering to an end. Perhaps I have traveled as far as I can deep into the confines of this garbage can where sliced psychic traumas dwell, and willowed vacant lots cast their spell. Perhaps the wastes of this ancient existence has been opened to its maximum; its contents have poured their purloined, powerful, and putrid limits into the sewers surrounding the catastrophe that sits on my former home. Perhaps gliding, slipping, sliding, sloshing, witnessing, whitewashing, grinding, and grunching have reached their umbilical limit.

It may be time to move on.

Ah, but it is not so simple. One does not simply annihilate the rear guard and "move on." Better to enter Crazy Land. Aha, that's where I want to go. Who is this "I" who wants to go there? Luckily, I have no idea. It is too crazy to even find out. What is the land that lives, glides, and slides beyond Belly Button Land? Crazy Land! It is always written with an exclamation point! All roads lead to Crazy Land. It is the final destination. Actually, I would say, it is the only destination. Roads across all other lands, even the traumatic land of Belly Button, merely lead to its brilliant, illuminating, dancing, crazy gates. Open up, you wide-eyed labia! Open your wide-legged gates! I am coming into Crazy Land where turnips live upside down and pea pods dance on starlight, where the ancient prisoner of "I" can scream into the night, cry on a lemon peel, roar into the shredded atmosphere, sing on a dew drop, sit on the point of a hot

star, and dip toes into the blissful, self-fulfilling annihilation waters.

Ah, Crazy Land, the only place beyond Belly Button Center. Nothing on this earth can give one greater freedom, starlight, and dancing pleasure than to pass through its rational annihilating gates.

Perhaps it is the beginning of the finale tour, my longest yearned for voyage, trip beyond trips, psycho beyond psycho, the ultimate return to Crazy Land where the only tours are Mad Shoe Tours.

Tuesday, January 16, 2001

Making Real Money Is So Much Fun!

The Birth of (Jim Gold) Folk Dance Clubs

Reaching the deepest levels of disgust.

The ugh ugh screamer.

Touch of anger, too. Anger at myself for being disgusted. But can't use it as a self-motivator anymore. I'm too aware. It casts a vomit-filled nauseous spell over everything.

Masculinity, assertion, sperm, nausea: look at the incredible folk dance idea that came out of it (I hope it did; I hope I'm right; I hope I'm on the right track). Folk Dance Clubs. The Jim Gold Folk Dance Club of Bedford: or the Bedford Folk Dance Club, led by Jim Gold. I don't know what title is best. But whatever I come up with, it could expand to all my folk dance classes. In concept, it is a totally new idea and a totally new beginning.

The registration fee will include membership. The Jim Gold Card. It entitles you to a certain number of classes, say ten, and/or a year's worth. Plus you get other benefits: \$100-\$200 off on a tour (depending what card you buy), \$25 off on weekends, 10% to 20% off on boutique items (quarterly up-date mailings of "newsletter" etc?), a Jim Gold book. . . . Maybe that's it. Or maybe I'll think of something else.

The registration card would cost around \$125 (\$150? less?) for ten weeks, or a

semester. (Or maybe \$135 or \$145 for twelve weeks). One could also take all and any class during that ten-twelve week period. I would also offer a one-year membership at say \$500 (\$495), which might include \$200 off for tours and all classes!

My idea would be to try to get everyone in all my folk dance classes to register.

Naturally, I won't succeed in getting everyone to register. For those who do not, the one-time people, the visitors and occasional drop-ins, I would charge \$15 at the door. This fee would be credited toward their registration.

The beauty of all this is obvious. If it works, there is the possibility that I could actually make a living teaching folk dancing! If it doesn't work, then I can spend my newly created "free time" promoting and selling things that do make money such as my tours, club dates, and concert bookings. Folk dance teaching would become a sideline, a "hobby."

But why even bother thinking this way. Truth is, part of me does not see how this can possibly not work! It is such a good idea. It is a wonderful motivating idea! First of all, it would motivate me to actually go out and sell folk dancing! It would be worth putting in the effort. It would be worth spending time writing press releases, placing ads in the paper, even calling potential folk dancers and asking them to register! This because I would be selling registrations, which cost actual money, namely ten-twelve weekers at \$125-\$145, or annual memberships at \$495. I would be putting my efforts into building something worthwhile, worthy, and worth money. I would be supporting my survival. Best of all, I would not resent my efforts but rather, love them, be enthusiastic about them, find even some joy and ecstasy in them. And this because making money, real money, is so much fun!

Thursday, January 18, 2001

Land Beyond All Belly Buttons

Sue Budabin called to ask about whether the Bloomfield folk dance group would continue. I told her, "We are resurrected. The group exists!" Also about my new

pricing thoughts and why they exist. Then she told me how much she enjoyed my concert evening at the Cosmo Club in Montclair, and how talented I was. This created a warm, wonderful, gushing in me.

Is this warm, completely cherished, totally accepting of me, love feeling behind the belly button?

Is it the real bottom line?

Could disgust, shame, nausea, and even rage be “mere” gateways to this bottom line, grand love-Love feeling? Could even my anger, kick-them-in-the-gut, whip, beat, tie, drop-them- in-the-oven, scream, yell, etc. be just more gateways to the bottom line? Is even my rage a “fake?”

Is the true me, the True Self, “beyond” these “smaller” emotions?

Have I been “inauthentic” most of my life? And especially during these past years? Does therapy consist mainly in removing the gates of the inauthentic self so you can finally arrive at the real self? And is that real self, that deepest inner core, the Land Beyond All Belly Buttons, really love?

What questions!

Their answers are “obvious.”

Is this really the end of my search because I’m back to the beginning?

This is such a beautiful and pure vision. I hate to have it polluted by the doing, the “business of the world,” or everything else.

Dirt And Pollution in the World

And the first “pollution” is how to “stand up to” Barry about Full Court Press versus Cumberland Press. On the one hand, I want to “give him something” for all his editing and books cover creation efforts; on the other hand, it is my New Leaf book. Who will “own” the rights to it if it is published under his press name? I hate to even

ask these questions, but I suppose I must. It is part of the “dirty business” of the world. Perhaps the most difficult part of this “dirty business,” in fact, the “dirt” itself, is standing up for myself.

This raises the question: is it possible to fuck with love? Are the two mutually exclusive? Or can they be combined?

Is it possible to stand up for oneself (aggressively fuck) and still “stand in love?”

It is the “aggressively fuck” part that just got me nauseous. I hate myself for wanting it. Thus, part of me must hate itself for standing up for itself. It makes me feel disgusted and disgusting. The belly button feeling returns.

Don't I have these rights as a little boy?

Can't I own my own book?

Is this warm wonderful feeling, this love, what they call in Buddhism, loving-kindness?

Is it the foundation of the relaxation I feel in my right wrist when I play the guitar in its most beautiful way?

Is it my center?

I break down crying for the beauty of the thought.

Or am I crying because it is so painful arriving at such beauty?

Clonk! That my rage and anger is a “fake,” a mask to hide, and protect, my innermost warm wonderful loving kindness core. Amazing.

Working from the inside out, from the belly button loving kindness center, out.

Will this soften and relax my movements?

It is a whole new way of thinking.

The Vulnerable Center and Rest-oration

Resting, between yoga exercises, etc., could I be entering the vulnerable center?

If I am, is that where the restoration takes place?

After all, rest is in both words: rest-ing and rest-oration.

This plus the fact the restoration comes from the Latin re-, again, plus staurare, to make strong.

We restore ourselves by eating in a re-staurare-ant.

Monday, January 22, 2001

I really sank yesterday, almost to the bottom. I haven't sunk so low in months. Truly, I am not "used to it."

I started with the collapse of my Tunisian tour. It has been fed by a month of no tour registrations. It has been kicked by Bernice's pissy, fun-destroying "Why are you studying Arabic with such desperation?" statement.

Why am I so vulnerable now?

Working backwards, usually, in the past, I would react with anger to such a stupid statement by Bernice. Who is she to "criticize" me? Yet as in New Mexico, first I felt stunned, shocked, that she would question me in such a way. I also felt furious that she would destroy my fun and concentration. But I also felt, drifted into, and focused on why I felt so hurt, misunderstood, and vulnerable.

When I got home I drifted into a business and financial depression. I haven't felt this way for months either. Suddenly, I saw no future in my tour business. It was over, and had ended just about forever. This meant all my financial hopes had ended, that I would have to sell all my stocks to pay off my debt, and I would have to be satisfied with the small payments from my folk dance, booking, and even guitar lesson work. All my hopes crashed to the ground. I even felt some of the old financial panic return. The "I will be old and dead soon," feeling; the "I'll be poverty stricken and end up in the gutter, a homeless, starving, neglected wretch."

These are not positive thoughts for a Sunday afternoon.

Now it is true that business stinks and that Bernice acted like a pain in the ass, but I could, and have recently, reacted to such things with either rage or a "So what?" and moved on. Why now have I suddenly felt my hopes destroyed? Why have I been invaded by such negativity and hopelessness?

Could it have something to do with my belly button, with my new vulnerability, and even to the opening up of my soft, and beautiful inner core of love?

Am I allowing myself to be more open? Am I allowing myself to feel all the hurts more?

Or am I seeing that my old reactions to business reversals such as fear and panic, or my reactions to personal criticism such as anger and rage, are not at the core of my true self but rather defense creations, walls I set up to protect my soft, mushy, termite-ridden, sawdust strewn, vulnerable, beyond-the-belly-button, sensitive, loving core?

What a question. But, although I can do nothing about my external situation, the "outer" fact that business stinks and that others criticize me, I can always "do" something about my attitude towards it.

Since I am climbing Jacob's ladder and am now at a different place, a vulnerable core place, perhaps that is why I am "suddenly" reacting differently. I am wide open, undefended. The noxious influences are flowing in. I am allowing them in. I want to take another look at them. I want to see how they feel, taste, and smell in the center of my belly button.

I can find no other reason for this sudden collapse of my hopes and dreams, these devastating blows to my motivation, this destruction of my protective walls.

Could business really be so bad? A few days ago I didn't think so. I was full of hope then. Why would my attitude and perception of so-called outer "reality" suddenly change?

How about the pain in my “dancing left foot?” Is that also caused, or at least aggravated, by the “business stinks” phenomenon?

Motivational Aphrodisiac

Look what a potent driving force a check in the mail is. Money is an motivational aphrodisiac. When it stops coming in, especially those giant tour checks, no wonder I am so drained.

Still, I am reacting differently. I am allowing fear, anger, and disappointment to slosh around in my vulnerable center.

Quite

I can't quite cry.

I'm partly nauseous, disgusted, and teary – but none of these quite work. That's because I don't quite believe in any of them.

Perhaps I should laugh.

Laugh? Man plans, God laughs.

Only God laughs.

Perhaps laughter is the only appropriate response.

But it hurts so much. Or rather it hurt. Notice the past tense. I'm passing from 50 per cent to 60, even 70.

Laughter may be the only response to tears.

Irony: I have been “fooled” all my life. I've been in hiding. Now I'm looking at my hiding place, and coming out. I have to appropriate emotion for this new birth.

It is a birth through the belly button.

What kind of birth? An ugh birth? No, I've gone beyond that. A sad, nauseous, disgusting, angry, raging, furious birth? No, I've gone beyond that, too.

A laughing birth? I don't know. It sounds right—but I don't feel it yet.

Isaac means laughter.

But my name is Jacob.

Jacob climbs his ladder to Isaac's laughter. But I am all of the patriarchs, Abraham, my father, Isaac's laughter, and Jacob the twin. . . .

Belly button pain: the worst pain in the world, but I can handle it. Hard, nauseating, ugh, disgusting, angry, but I can still focus and concentrate.

No wonder I'm laughing—for victory! It doesn't get any worse than this.

The Illumination of Impatience

Possible Birth of Patience

I wonder if I rush to get things done, to "finish," because I want to avoid the "infinite" focus and concentration process needed to "get things done." In other words, such focus put me right at the center of my belly button trauma. Thus I rush to finish in the hope of avoiding such a revisit.

Would this be why I am "not patient," why I rush to (get so frantic about) paying off my debts, getting clients to register, learning Hebrew, Arabic, the guitar, etc.?

Good questions.

Yes, to do anything right, to learn anything well, takes forever. But luckily, we have forever.

Knowledge

As for my authentic self: I don't care much about my authentic self. It's okay as far as it can go. Who am I? On one level, the lower one, I am many parts, many "selves." But again, this is a "secular" view. Basically, kabbalistically, I am beyond

many separate, different, “secular” selves. I am an evolving unknown, a mystery both to myself and others. In this vein, others are all mysteries, too. In the real, most primitive and basic sense, the “authentic” sense, I don’t know anybody or anything.

And that’s fine with me.

I don’t want to know (in the secular sense) anybody or anything. I don’t want to confine them in the box of so-called knowledge. Besides, it is not knowledge, anyway but rather the illusion of knowledge. Basically, I would be confining them and myself in a box of ignorance.

Ultimately, nothing can be known. Feeling like you “know” someone or something means it is already dead and gone. And that is fine with me.

Ultimately, I don’t want to be known. And ultimately, I can’t be known.

Neither can anyone or anything else.

And that’s fine with me.

That’s why I dance around the “Who are you?” question. I don’t want to be put in a box. Besides, boxes are mostly used for express mail.

Lovemaking is an advanced way of talking to each other.

My Essence:

Travels into the Unknown

This vulnerable inner core is full of tenderness, adventure, and mystery.

There is no sadness in it.

Sadness comes when it is closed down or neglected. This can happen through external or internal forces. Mostly, however, they are internal, intrapsychic.

But sadness, and even its opposites, anger and rage, have nothing to do with the vulnerable inner core, the true self of mystery and adventure into the unknown that is my essence.

Joyous Laugh!

When that true inner self, my vulnerable core, that beautiful mysterious soul, is stated fully and forcefully, it comes out as a joyous laugh!

Sadness and anger are opposites. Both guard the gate of self.

Most anger is self-righteous indignant rage at the denial, diminishment, and crushing of the true self.

It can also change into sadness at the apparent loss of the true self – or rather, its submergence and temporary disappearance. Temporary, I say, because the true self can never be lost.

Guitar Painting

In the arpeggio middle section of the Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4 I am painting a waterfall of cascading notes with my fingers.

Alhambra painting, too. . . . This is so radical!

A radical, revolutionary change, restructuring, in folk dance pricing and approach; a radical change in the guitar painting approach: that makes two radical, revolutionary changes in my art and business forms.

I am restructuring all my art forms.

Is this the “final” result of entering, exploring, and “being able to handle” the tender, soft, loving and love-filled vulnerable center of my belly button? Am I now starting to “go public” with it, to “express it” through my art forms?

I believe I am.

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Disdain

Disdain is a form of anger. It’s a “step upwards” from under the rock. Thus is it morally judged. But rather than that, see it as a former mode of motivation! A way of

standing up for myself, too: Witness my “disdainful attitude” towards the Teaneck Senior Citizen folk dance job, how I stood up for my fee.

Disdain is a form of power.

Disdain for money, too.

How about playing the guitar with disdain.

As I recognize disdain, its camouflaging power is beginning to diminish. I’m beginning to “see it for what it is.” Amazing, isn’t it, how I “used to” motivate, myself. How clever of my mind.

Disdain For Worry As (a first step in) A Display Of Strength

Does disdain go with the worry free state? Is it the first step in a display of strength made manifest through a disdain for worry?

Disdain for worry about playing wrong notes or about what the audience, any audience, will think.

Disdain is really just another camouflage, another excuse. The bottom line is facing daily living without worry as a motivation. That is the courageous thing to do. But of course, I am at the “no choice” point.

I “see through” my worries. I am at the “no worry” point. I am trying to adjust to a worry free life.

Time for a New Leaf.