

## The Price of Confidence

Thursday to Saturday, February 3-5, 2000

### Push-Forward Prayer

It's about stocks:

I can take charge by deciding to take less. I'm paying

Taking charge is painful. It will cost me. I will stand alone. But at least I will be standing!

My decision (as of now) is to sell out at the bottom. My rationalization: A new beginning begins at the bottom. But it is heart-breaking and wrenching. No wonder I am sick and trembling.

Another terrible decision (as of today): sell all my holdings and get out of the market completely. End this chapter of my life. Start fresh.

Is this too extreme? Is it the "all-or-nothing" philosophy? Wouldn't it be better to do it gradually?

Probably.

That is the reasonable approach. The brave, heroic approach would be to sell everything all at once. An extremist view.

Does "brave and heroic" also mean "stupid?"

Good question.

Look at all the mental energy I put into the stock market. This would all disappear if I sold everything.

It kills me to admit I have not talent in finance and the stock market. I've tried so hard to prove to myself that I could succeed not only as a businessman but also with money and finance. These, after all, are the "manly pursuits." Not sissy art. That's for fags and girls.

Yet the last twenty years in stocks, loans, and finance have, in part been, to prove myself and my masculinity. I learned that these areas are not where my talents lie.

I'm a good salesman; I can survive in business. But giant organizational success is not my route.

Artistic success is my route. My talents do not lie in the stock market or finance. They lie in the arts. This "college education," the cost of learning, took twenty years.

I am still berating myself for losing all this money. But education is costly especially when it is done in the school of life.

What do I have now that this money has been spend? I have confidence! That alone may be worth the bucks. I "bought confidence." I paid for it with pain and money. Thus, I may die poor. But I'll die with confidence!

If that's what I've gotten from this long adventure through misery, pain, insecurity, debt, and other sundry hells, that's pretty good.

Ma left me some money to teach me confidence.

She would say, "Don't worry about the money. That's what it's for: to be happy."

I need a good strong daily dosage of hope.

What do I hope for? What would I pray for?

Freedom from fear is the first thing that comes to mind.

Maybe low stocks, no registrations, debt, miserable business conditions, etc. are God's way of teaching me it. And from there, ultimately, how to be free of these fears.

Because, truth is, what good is a lot of money if you're still afraid?

Yes, I want freedom from fear. I want freedom to express my artistic mad shoe soul. But these are mental states. They have little to do with my financial condition.

I'm turning the corner. Just a few moments ago I was on the verge of giving up my dreams and becoming an old man.

But now I've suddenly opted for resurrection!

I'll begin with resurrection of my body. I'll rebuild it from the ground up. This includes exercises, foods, and a voice (singing).

### Praying for Others

I wonder if playing the guitar is my prayer for others.  
After all, when I practice I do see them, as audience, in my mind.

Tuesday, February 8, 2000

### Bliss: The Adult Form of Mama's Milk

An acceptance of Mama's Milk .

Sleeping in the back yard. How lovely! That I could have had such an ability to soothe myself, and dream.

Sleepiness near Ma when the problems get too great. The beautiful distancing from the world at large, the lovely lidded half-sleep, half-conscious, drifting and dreamy state of, well, truly. . . bliss.

It is bliss. Imagine that. But I never recognized it.

### Stocks

Stocks: Leave them alone. I'm not selling them out at the bottom. I'd rather "go down with the ship" if I must.

Part of me refuses to be frightened into submission, cowed, or pushed around by events. I might as well recognize this strength, this stubbornness (stiff-necked Jews, a tough people) as one of my gifts.

It's also why, no matter how much I am battered, I refuse to give up.

### The Paradox

I hoped, I prayed for wealth through the stock market and  
tour business. I never got it.

“Frequently a paradox occurs when we ask for material things. We may not get  
what we ask for, but in the failure to receive what we request, we often receive a greater  
gift.” (Prayer is Good Medicine by Larry Dossey.)

What greater gift did I receive?

1. The ability and desire to work.
2. Fulfilment as an artist.
3. Confidence in my endeavors and myself.
4. Self-acceptance, and even love.

Thursday, February 10, 2000

### He Wore A Suit

(No Talent for Investing)

I've been blasted out of the sky.

No talent in investing. No talent in the stock market. No talent with money and  
finance.

Is this a failure or an awakening? I feel the former but like the latter.

A real man is one who makes money. The more real they are, the more money  
they make. The prime model of malehood is the executive, the business executive. He  
is followed by the entrepreneur. “Followed,” I say, because the entrepreneur is also  
“creative” and therefore not as “high” as the executive, who wears suits, has few mad  
shoe emotions, and is upright, stalwart, looked up to by the community, and respected  
(if not revered). He is buttoned-down and tight-lipped, in total control of most things,  
unflappable, unbeatable, tough, can “take it,” never admits defeat, and of course, he  
wears a suit, white shirt, and tie. A respected upstanding member of the community.

That has been my financial model macho man for twenty years. Of course, the executive type was a whiz with money and investment “skills” like borrowing and “handling debt.” He could “take it” when and if the stock market collapsed and his stock investments fell in half or lower. That’s because he was “tough,” real tough, a macho man.

And, of course, he wore a suit.

It is absolutely incredible how long I chased after this illusion, which totally isn’t me. Perhaps that is the wake up part of this no-talent-in-finance realization.

In accepting it, I see flickering a tiny light, a seed of inner peace growing inside me. It comes in the nascent form of “What a relief! I can at last give up this stock market, make-a-lot-of-money, ‘investment’ chase; I can get off this financial torture rack and go ‘back into my beautiful room’ and be the artist that I am.

But I will go back differently. Perhaps with a deeper appreciation of the talents and gifts that I have. I’ll not “waste more of my time” chasing the will of the wisp, fighting and trying to be the financial giant that I’m not.

There’s no question I can support myself financially – even as an artist. Before I entered the market and decided to learn all about investment, debt, money, and borrowing, I always not only supported myself but was even able to build up a small savings account. And this all before I “decided to get rich.” My finances then, although precarious, were simple and steady. I could return to that former mode. In fact, I will no doubt. The other path, the get-rich-quick-through-the-magic-of-the-stock-market approach has been utterly destroyed.

There are benefits from this destruction. But I can’t or won’t go into them now. First, I have to recover from the tremendous blow to my old ego.

No talent in investing.

It’s a hard pill to swallow. And its cost is not even covered by my HMO, though its acceptance changes everything.

How, I don’t know yet.

Twenty years ago I thought that, since I was successful as a musician and was able to make a living giving concerts – a truly “impossible” accomplishment, making money in the stock market would be easy. After all, I was a smart person. If I put in at least ten percent of my time studying finance, why shouldn’t I have success in investing, too?

This has been a twenty-year (probably longer) fight to be free of fear. Although I feel I am now broke and starting all over, I am free of fear. (At least the old fears. We’ll see if new ones are up ahead.) And, I must admit, this was the original purpose of my search!

So maybe it was successful. . . but on a completely different level.

How I hate to give up the stock market and investing. Part of it was so much fun, especially when my stocks went up.

Perhaps I don’t have to give it up.

Perhaps I can still be in it.

But instead of putting all my money in, I can play with a couple thousand dollars or so.

At least I would realize that I am playing around.

There’s another aspect: investing, at least investing in the traditional sense (of “merely” making money) was just too boring. I wanted excitement, mad shoe excitement! I got it first in penny stocks, then small stocks. They had the potential for zooming (in both directions, of course.)

The name of my life game is Excitement versus Lids. In the stock market it is the excitement of a stock rising versus the lid of it going down. Recently (the last couple of

years), I've been surrounded and covered by lids.

Fear and greed, and the "excitement" they engender, are the main emotions of the stock market.

But how about investing for serenity?

So I can do my work in peace.

Certainly I have plenty of thrills in the rest of my life. Do I really need more from the stock market? Could I learn to live without them?

Chasing money in order to be free of money: does that make sense? Seems it makes you even more of a prisoner.

Friday, February 11, 2000

### The Dangers of Hope

The crashing of hope for making money in the stock market and tourism. My two big ones. Both down.

Tourism has been down for the last three or four years. The stock market. . . probably the same as tourism.

My peak year was 1995. In the spring, I had twenty-four people on my Budapest tour; in the summer, thirty-eight on the Bulgarian tour. The descent began in 1996. I remember asking the Diamonds about raising my prices, since the tours were so small. In 1997, the descent began to move more rapidly. In February of 1999, my stocks crashed. By September, I was still at the bottom, but I began my ascent. Since then, I have been coming up.

Now, today, February 2000, here's where I am: Total and "final" loss of all hope for both stocks and tours. Paradoxically, this loss of hope is accompanied by a rising self-confidence.

Is all this an awakening? A failure? Or both?

Probably both.

It is certainly a recognition of failure. Total failure. (Yes, I like beating myself with this word!)

Until now I covered the failure, masked it with hope. Hope that my stocks would go up, hope that people would register for tours and even weekends.

But the more I hope, the more registrations and stocks seem to go down. It seems there is an almost equal and opposite relationship between my hopes and economic failure. As they rise, my business descends. What can I conclude from all this? That the worse thing I can have is hope. For me, it's absolutely dangerous. Giving it up, having no hope, miserable as it is, is the realistic place for me.

Hope is my drug. I'm addicted to it. My addiction masks reality.

Can I live without hope? Can I live without my beautiful but destructive drug?  
Can I give up all my hopes and still go on?

Give up my hopes, I say, but not my dreams.

What is the difference between a hope and a dream?

Well, for one, I realize that a dream is in my mind; that it is "only" a dream. A hope is rooted in the outside world. It is really an expectation. Thus I expected my stocks to go up; I expected my tours to succeed. Worse than that, I just "knew" they would. How could they not? God was on my side. What a joke! And all on me. Who ever said God doesn't have a sense of humor?

On the other hand, I could say that during the past three, four, even seven years, I have been "coasting" on my past skills. While I did, I focused on inner development, straightening out my inner life. Now that it has been largely straightened I am ready to move on, to re-enter the outside world.

#### A Very Kind To Myself View

I could also look at it this way: I knew little about finance and the stock market. I

was curious. I wanted to learn about it, to see how it works. So I started to experiment with my money. I experimented for twenty years. The results of this experiment are now in. I have learned what I needed to learn. There is no reason to continue this experiment. My curiosity has been sated. Time to move on.

Saturday, February 12, 2000

### Parenthesis

Take charge. Anxiety. Stock decisions. Guitar audience.

I start taking charge today. Forget the yesterdays. I'm taking my first trembling, anxiety-ridden infant steps on the Take Charge Road.

Yes, it's fifteen years (and more) of letting other people do it (Joel, etc.), of wanting others to do it (Bernice, Joel, etc.). But I'm starting afresh. First, I have to "excuse myself" (forgive myself) for my past. (Can I do that?) Then I'll be free (freer) to move on.

(Lots of parentheses here.)

Stocks are one of the battlefields on which I am fighting to take charge of my life.

### Residues

I hate to admit it but: I wanted Joel to take over my stock decisions; I wanted him to "know" when to buy and sell, which stocks were right and wrong; I wanted him to know the future. (In all fairness, he always said he didn't. Plus, part of me always wanted to "be involved" with making the final decision. In other words, I wanted it both ways: I wanted to make the decisions, but I wanted him to make the decisions, too. It was a fifty-one-to-forty-nine-percent deal. But when the final decision came, I always leaned towards his. (He phrased it with "This is what I'm doing.") That's because the forty-nine percent was mine.

Same with the guitar audience that lives in my head. They are making the final

judgements on whether I'm playing well (right) or not. Yes, perhaps it's the same deal. But again, until now it is they who have had the fifty-one percent.

Stocks and guitar are related. (And so are many other things and decisions, too.) (More parentheses, here.)

### Making Decisions

Have I made my own decisions in the stock market? In a torturous way, perhaps I have.

First, I have decided to "go with Joel's decisions." I have decided not to sell my stocks. I have also decided that, when neither holding nor selling seems like a good decision (both are lose-lose situations) to "do nothing." Doing nothing, waiting, is also a decision.

Now all of the above may turn out to be bad decisions (although who knows what the future will bring? Perhaps they will turn out to be, in the long run – the longest of runs – a good decision), they are nevertheless decisions.

I am just continually second-guessing myself.

So perhaps it is not so much a question of making decisions, but of making the "wrong" ones. But since no one knows the future, only I can decide whether they are wrong or right.

Sure, I get lots of criticism for my decisions, and I go through a lot of personal suffering trying to decide what to do, what is right or wrong, but nevertheless, I am.

This is all an interesting point.

Maybe it is not so much a question of whether I am making decisions or not, but rather, whether I am taking charge of the fact that I am the one making the decisions.

I am (or have been) deciding to go with Joel's "intuitions."

I am (or have been) deciding to let the audience guide and control my thoughts as I play guitar. And all this is because taking charge brings me great anxiety. So by "letting

others take charge" (of my thoughts, etc.) I am (have been) avoiding an even deeper trauma: taking charge myself. That is why, up to now, I have lived this kind of life. We're talking self-preservation here; we're talking residues. Yet the residues exist.

In a sense, I was "smart" to let others decide for me. Facing the "take charge" trauma would have been too much for me; it would have overwhelmed and "killed" me. I just wasn't ready to face it.

But now I am.

The above is the explanation that will help "excuse me" for my past. It will help me forgive myself. After all, how bad could I have been if I was "smart."

Monday, February 14, 2000

I may not want to take charge, or rather, I may not want to admit that I take charge, but I do anyway.

This is true even in stocks. That's why, in my heart, I really can't blame Joel, though I would love to. He never pushed me to buy or sell anything. The best he did was simply tell me what he was doing. And since I held the same stocks he did (and, deep down I hoped he knew what he was doing), I ended by imitating him. But I made that decision. I took charge of my own mind.

When all my stocks descended into the abyss, once again I took charge by deciding not to sell. This despite all "suggestions" by others that I should. It is I who decided to get into debt, it is I who decided to stay in debt, who decided that things might get better in the future. On that basis, I decided to hang in there even though the market was pushing them down further and further. Am I right? Am I wrong? Look at what happened to Job. God just "decided" to let Satan take all his wealth away. It was His celestial game. He decided to just about destroy Job, and He did. What could Job do about it? Nothing.

Same thing with my stocks. God and satan probably just decided to destroy my financial base. (After all, my stocks could have just as well gone up; my tour registrations, too.) But God decided either “No!” or “Not now,” and down I went.

Is there any answer for this? Can one second guess God? Can one even understand his decisions? The Book of Job says no.

It is beyond the scope of man.

I’ll have to agree. That is my way of taking charge. It is my decision.

I am deciding also, for some deep, unknown reason – which is beyond my comprehension (only God knows), not to leave.

I am taking charge by saying no. Why, however, i am doing this, I do not know.

I don’t like my decision. It is embarrassing and humiliating. But I’m making it anyway.

Just because I’m taking charge doesn’t mean I have to like it.

I’m holding on to my stocks and my sperm. I’m holding them but I do not (yet) understand why. Nevertheless, it is my decision. All along I am, and have been, taking charge.

Could it be that deepest of deep down I know what is best for me?

Who is this “I” that knows?

Perhaps deepest of deep down is where my “I” and God meet.

What does having faith mean?

According to Job, it means having faith in a Design, God’s Plan, even though you will never (fully) understand it.

I agree.

If the purpose of suffering is transformation, and the purpose of transformation is to put yourself closer to the divine presence in you, then it seems that personal suffering will never end. After all, you never fully approach God; nor can you ever appreciate, understand, or unite with your divinity (even though it may be done momentarily). Since this is so, and, through suffering we move to different (hopefully higher) levels of understanding, suffering will and should never end.

This is the bad news. But it could be the good news, too.

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

On Playing the Arpeggio in Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4

No question my desire to improve is a lid.

No question this lid is (was) a source of motivation.

No question this idea of improvement-lid-as-motivation is coming to an end.

No question I am learning to live in the present “without motivation.” It is the relaxed well-being present.

But it feels so strange. It needs getting used to.

It’s playing the arpeggio from a quiet calm place.

I wonder if this could be done with yoga. . . and running, too.

Give up improvement. Go for the calm.

This is it. This is the only moment. This is the first, last, and only time I will play this piece. This is the only playing I will do.

Holdings

I feel so weak. Maybe the “strength of holding” inside me is starting to collapse.

With the sale of Agnico my stock holdings are collapsing.

Maybe my other holdings, my inner holding, is collapsing, too.

Holdings in my shoulder by crunching up my head (and creating “holding” shoulder pain.) Perhaps holdings in my feet, too. And legs.

I’m letting go.

Letting go of “Never, never!” and “No, no!” At least the beginning, a commencement.

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

### Destruction and Ruin

Let’s face it: I love to ruin things, too. Is that so bad?

It couldn’t be too bad. After all, it does have the word “love” in it.

“Love to ruin things” also means I love to start over, to have the energy of a new beginning. But before the new can begin, you first need to destroy the old.

Destructive phases can last days, months, years. . . just like creative phases.

Discouragement and pain are part of the destructive process. Can I learn to accept them as part of what I do? Part of loves to ruin things?

Maybe my stock market and tour business debacles are long-term ways of destroying everything I once knew in order to build a new base, create a new way of doing things.

Maybe my body’s aches and pains, my right shoulder pain, and even my new foot and leg pains, are ways of destroying the old patterns – folk dance, running, yoga, etc. – before I can start building the new. Of course, I am so personally involved with myself, so close to my body and mind, that most of the time I cannot see these slow changes. Thus I fall prey to fear and panic and short-range thinking. But naturally, this does not change the truth of Creation: the back and forth flow.

I may well love to destroy things as much as I love to create them. Its just that wanting to, especially liking, even loving to, is not very politically correct. You're supposed to love not hate, be good not bad, create not destroy. But fuck all that. I have to admit there is often as much pleasure in destroying, smashing and breaking up, as there is in the socially more acceptable beauty of making it.

Thus are bad and good twins in the daily creation of the world.

What have I been doing destructive-wise these days, these years? Well, I have been destroying my stock portfolio, my financial base, my tour business, my relationships, running, and body (through its aches and pains), and probably some other things I can't think of.

But I also ought to remember and focus on the fun aspect of destruction. Look how my ten-year-old self enjoyed setting fires. Now, as an adult, I'm still setting fires. Only in other areas. My basic love of destruction is still there. Thank God!

What have I been destroying lately? My right shoulder. It may be due to computer mouse overuse, or I may actually have a mouse in my arm gnawing at and eating away my sinews. Whom can I ask about this? Certainly not a doctor. They would laugh at my notion. "A mouse in your arm? You must be mad. I recommend four mouse pills a day, along with forty private sessions with our mouse psychologist, Dr. Aiam A. Rodent. If your shoulder doesn't improve within four months, try rat poison."

So I'll have to cure myself through inner explorations I learned at the Flying Bat and Rodent School of Psychotherapy, of which I am a member. These healing methods include visits to the Inner Mouse Cage Zoo located on the road to Medulla, just north of Cerebellum. Here, through intensive workshops with former inmates, usually rodents from rough neighborhoods, you too can learn to release your inner mouse.

Thursday, February 17, 2000

### Holdings and Flow Place

Now that I'm "sick" with my shoulder and admit to needing a doctor, where will my "mother downs" go? These come as:

1. I can't function until I am better.
2. I'll never get better.
3. Until I get better I must stay in the down, subservient, do-nothing, I-can't-do-anything, immobilized, paralyzed etc. position. If I try to do anything I'll injure myself more, it will get worse. Etc.

What to do?

1. Continue with mild exercise. I love it too much to stop. Stopping makes it through the depression it causes: the push down into the grave, powerless, functionless feeling.

I have to "go to Dr. Richie" for help, go to others for help, ask others for help. I cannot do it, no longer do it, alone.

How does this realization and place relate to "giving up my holdings?"

One of my recent holdings is: "I am right. Only I can know. No one else can really know or help me. It is all up to me. I am orphaned and alone in this motherless, fatherless world. Their physical, mental, and even spiritual protection has left me. I have given it up. I have given up my dependence on these old forms. Along with this dependence I have given up my hopes – and some fears. Only I can know me. Etc.

These are my "new holdings." Perhaps they are my old ones, too. In any case, they are still holdings.

I am at the border of giving them up. (Whatever that means.)

Instead of being an island I will now flood into the world.

Sure I'll lose my old identity in the process. But I'll gain a new one, too.

I've gone from total dependence of the words of doctors, mothers, and others to no dependence on them (only depending on myself), to this newest of upcoming

phases: dependence or listening to both.

This is a new place.

But it is not necessarily a form. It doesn't feel like a form. A form stands separate, off to the side. It is alone but shapely.

This new non-holding place has no form. It is beyond, has nothing to do with, New Form, old form, or any form. It is form-less.

It's "shape" is more one of flow.

I am flooding out of myself, out of my New Form. I am flowing into others. In this new place I am allowing them to flood into me. It means I can stand on my own; they can stand on their own. We can (all) stand together, flowing, giving, and sharing (in the best sense of the word).

The name of this volume is New Place or Flood Place, or Flow Place, or New Place, Flow Place or Flow Place, New Place, or Flow Place. . . . or simply Flow (because it is not a place.)

It is also not necessarily a flood place. Flood is overwhelming. I am not flooded or overwhelmed but rather standing (on my own) next to others. There is a flowing between us but not a flooding.

What does this have to do with Dr. Richie and my shoulder?

Part of it is in "handing my pain over" to "them." And allowing them to take it. Naturally, they can't take it all. But I am letting them in, allowing them to take some, to share the burden, to share my burden.

Will they accept? Why should they bother? But whether they do or not is their issue. Mine is in allowing them into these deep and vulnerable corners of my mind; mine is in letting the walls down and saying, "Come in. The water is not necessarily fine, but it is mine. You can have some."

I'm not saying, "Please, have some." (Pleading and begging.)

I'm not saying, "You can't have any." (Denial and push-away)

I'm saying, somewhat calmly, you can "have some." You can share my pain. It

is partly my “gift” to you.

What chutzpah?

Isn't that a Sanskrit word?

This is about giving my pain to others. Handing it over. Giving up my holdings.

It's about taking the pain off my shoulders (Wow, look at this metaphor!) It's about giving my burdens to Dr. Richie or anyone else.

It's about reaching the place, giving myself over to the realization that holding (in) my own pain only makes it worse. It is realizing that one of the best ways – perhaps the only way – to free myself of pain is by sharing my burden.

(And this whether others like it or not. Of course, this is imposing my burdens. Such a statement comes from a sudden drop in faith, a sudden fear that that others will reject both me and my pain; they will only like the “loveable, laughing, happy, singing and dancing Jim.” But once he reveals his darker colors, away they flee. But this “vision” belongs in the old neighborhood, to the Old Form)

Of course, another reason I have been hesitant to “share the burden of my pain” with others is because I'm afraid they will impose their own solutions on me. They'll want to “solve my problems,” “make me better,” etc. They can't stand the fact that I'm in pain. It hurts them too much. When I'm in pain, they're in pain. Therefore, they want to free themselves from pain as quickly as possible. They do it by imposing a solution on me. “Here's what you should do. Etc.”

Sometimes their solutions are good, sometimes not. But I rarely thought I had the right to decide for myself. I suffered from an ancient residue: the “After all, mother is always right,” syndrome.

I'm at a different stage now. It's called the flow place. A paradoxical name because flow cannot, by its very nature, stay in place.

The Birth of Holdings:

How Holding On (to pain and anything else) Gave Me Strength

I don't like to admit to having any pain. It's a throwback to childhood. Back then, if I said I had a pain, my mother would pounce on me and impose her solution. She would cure my pain whether I liked it or not. Telling her I hurt, that something was bothering me, that I was in pain, was an open invitation to the slaughter of my imagination and initiative. I lacked knowledge and was too weak; I didn't know what to do or how to handle it. So I gave in to "Mother knows best." But I didn't give in completely. Slowly I learned to "hold on" to myself and my deepest nature. I sensed part of me "knew something" my mother could never know. It remained my deep dark secret. I resisted her intrusions, her health-solution impositions, by withdrawing, by retreating into the studio of my imagination. In other words, I held back. Mostly, I held back my pain. Then I added the mad shoe aspects of my jumping mind.

I gave her less and less of myself. Slowly I occupied the world of my imagination, which contained, not only pain, but lovely sceneries as well. These often had the power to cure my pain. Soon I thought, why go to my mother or a doctor when I could go to the medicine corner of my imagination and get musical and blissful cures for just about any disease? On the outside, I gave lip service to my mother's nostrums and to the advice of the doctors I visited. But internally, I demurred. "No, no! Never, never!" were my cries. Some pains disappeared into my violin playing; others went away on the escapades of my wild imagination. Still others entered my body, to appear as physical pains in my leg, back, eye, and today, shoulder.

Fascinating is the human mind. And this includes mine.

Friday, February 18, 2000

Putting Myself in the Hands of God

Suppose I did nothing.

Suppose I gave up and gave in.

Suppose I put myself in the hands of God.

Let Him handle it.

True, I would still have to move my arms in order to swim. But I would do that anyway. The question really is: how would I move them if I gave up?

What is my greatest act of courage at this moment? Once it was writing, playing guitar, running weekends, and tours. Now that challenge has descended to mere marketing. Of course you need customers. But finding them should not be my major challenge.

I need a new challenge.

Giving up, putting myself in the hands of God, is my next challenge.

Does it mean that I will continue what I'm doing but with a new attitude?

What about fear and awe? It is more frightening. . . nay, most frightening, to drop the ego along with its hopes, fears, expectations, joy, and sorrows, and put it all in the hands of God.

I'd be giving up a lot. Can I even do it?

But I must also admit that nothing seems to work anymore. I'm swimming in thick soupy water. Everything I do is a push and a struggle. Nothing flows easy. I'm stuck. My stocks don't go up. Registrations are a squeeze. Something is wrong somewhere.

Doesn't this all point to trying something new? Like putting myself in the hands of God.

Of course, God is within, so, on another level, I'm putting myself in my own hands: invisible, massive, and extremely powerful. My Own Hands (capital letters emphasized). I'll also have to accept that I don't know where they'll lead me. That is the fear and awe part.

But it is also the wonder.

What about all those pains in my body? Where are they leading me?

From the outer doctor to the inner doctor. From Dr. Richie to Dr. God.

I am a visionary. I don't want to give up my dreams.

Many visionaries struggle all their lives. They have "trouble" with reality. They pay for it with poverty. But the ultimate joy, nay moments of ecstasy, of their vision, offset the pain.

Their love is stronger than their fear.

I love my visions. Let them win. They are God's calling. Listen to them.

My purpose in life is to bring joy and inspiration to others through my art. Financial woes and bodily pains, although they exist, are secondary. It's part of the "deal."

Thus, although I may have these pains, the worst pain of all is not following my vision.

My penis is a microscope exploring the vast, fathomless, and awesome spaces of the inner realm.

Monday, February 21, 2000

There is no such thing as old age. There is only giving up and working less hard.

Wednesday, February 23, 2000

On playing the arpeggio in Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4.

Twenty years in the wilderness; twenty years to play it the way I used to play it twenty years ago. But with only one difference: now I play it with confidence. I know it's the right way for me.

And that's quite a difference. It's worth twenty years.

### Love Affair with Pain

I have a love affair with suffering. I both hate and love it. I don't want to lose it, and yet I can't wait to get rid of it. I think something is wrong with it, but I also think something right.

I also think it is temporary, that will go away. But it never does.

I always think, even hope, that the pain I feel now is my last one, my final learning pain. Now I've got it! I finally understand. So I won't need pain anymore as a teacher. But, unfortunately, or fortunately, there is always more to learn, so there is always more pain up ahead.

Should I simply accept this? Can I? What about permanent long-term bliss, enlightenment, and union with the divine? Will that ever be open to me on a long-term basis? Or will suffering and pain be part of my growing pains and artistic lot forever?

I don't want to give up growth. But I would like to give up pain. But part of me does not believe it is possible to grow with pain. Aren't these the famous "growing pains" everyone talks about? Sure they only take place in childhood and teenage years but I have yet to outgrow these states. And part of me never wants to outgrow them. These are, after all, where so many of the creative juices live.

Can one ever be free of pain? Or must one die to reach that state? And, by the way, is there pain after death? Perhaps there is. After all, death is another stage or growth.

So my love affair with pain may go on forever. There may be no escape from it. I may simply have to learn to accept pain as "not a bad thing" even though it feels so miserable. That acceptance alone might lessen the effects.

Maybe pain is like a wake up call to remind you you're still alive. It is life's alarm clock. You hate when it rings and startles you out of your lovely sleep. But what can you do? You have to go to wake up, go to work, and face the day with whatever ups and downs it brings.

Thursday, February 24, 2000

Fear and Suffering: Addictive Painful Stimulants

I have somehow learned that fear and suffering are a good way to deal with the world, a “good” way to survive.

But suppose I dropped them. Suppose I saw them as simply learned behavior, as learned attitudes. (Is this possible?) There is another way based on Being (in the present) and living without the addictive painful stimulants of fear and suffering?

If this is true, it is a total reversal of my whole (former) life’s attitude.

Fear and suffering have been both motivators and lids.

Could they be dropped as those? Can they be replaced by other motivators and lids?

In this case, motivators mean energy suppliers and lids mean energy controllers.

Friday, February 25, 2000

Are The Pain and Suffering I Create Useless?

There is pain and suffering in the world. That is a fact. At least one I read about.

But I can’t really “know” this fact unless it happens inside me. Otherwise, it is an intellectual fact, something I hear about, study, and memorize. Through compassion I can “know” the fact better; still, I can never be completely sure of it, since I can never completely know the thoughts and feelings of others.

However, I can know my own. And I can know about the pain and suffering I have. Much of this comes, is imposed on me, from the outside world. Nevertheless, it is I who interpret it as pain and suffering. Even more important to me, personally, is to look at the pain and suffering I create in my own mind in order to motivate myself!

Do I really need such pain? Is there another way to motivate myself? What about putting myself in the mad shoe hands of God? This way, things will happen “by themselves,” whether I suffer or not. Looked at this way, the pain and suffering I create in order to motivate myself is a total illusion. It will not create the results I want. All it

creates is pain and suffering, and it may even be useless pain and suffering.

Something to think about.

How much effect do I really have on results anyway? Sure I have to “move my arms”. And I will. What else is there to do?

Moving my arms may even help get some results. But there is no guarantee. Doing nothing may get just as much results. (It may even get more.)

So all the worry, anger, frustration, pain, pushing, pulling, tumbling, back and forth whipsawing, turmoil, fumbling, trying, yelling, screaming, falling into deep depression, shouting wahoo! with elation, are all, in one sense, besides the point. Some are enjoyable, some are painful but in terms of “controlling the world,” affecting outside events, they are, by and large, useless.

This is quite a thought.

Sunday, February 27, 2000

### Back to the Future

I am sick of my life. I miss my depression and my jumping highs and lows.

I used to write, run, and create; I used to function.

Now I'm getting too leveled out. It's even making me sick. Aching, too.

I need to jump start my life again.

Looking forward, I see nothing.

It's back to the past for me, to find my roots again. Worry and out-work have destroyed my health.

Even debt is better than the state I'm in. So are jumping stocks.

Dive backwards into stocks again. Back and backwards is the way to go. I had hopes and plans then.

It's back to the future for me.

I need the stock market.

It's the gambler in me. Plus, buying individual stocks is just plain fun!

There's a mad shoe element to the stock market that I have refused to recognize.

That is the element I not only love, but need.

Research individual stocks, learn on-line buying and selling. Individual control a la Fuchs is what I need. That's how I started twenty-two years ago. That's what I need to get back to now.

Why? Because it's just plain too much fun to give up. But, in order to have fun, I need some successes.

How to get success in the stock market on line? That is now my question.

The stock market has returned to my life – with a vengeance!

Monday, February 28, 2000

### Mad Shoes

Mad shoe language approach:

1. I don't have to master a language or even read the whole Torah.
2. I can dabble, jump, and have fun. Jumping words and scripts, from one language to another.

What about the mad shoe body approach? Mad shoe yoga and mad shoe running? What is it? I don't know yet.

Is it a mad shoe that is kicking my right shoulder and breaking through? My ankles and legs, too?

What about mad shoe singing?

What about mad shoe history and mad shoe travel?

Mad shoes are breaking out all over. An overall mad shoe attack! I am being assaulted from within and without. Is that why my right shoulder, ankles, and legs hurt?

I'm making a mad shoe leap upward, outward, and inward. Everything is blowing apart.

Shoulder, legs, even chest cold pains: are they a result of fighting to "hold myself together?"

If physical reflects mental, this must be so.

How about mad shoe writing? (Where did that go?)

How about mad shoe editing?

Mad Shoe list: Stocks (money), language, body (running and yoga), singing, history, travel, writing, editing.

Mad shoes or die!

Actually, life without mad shoes is death.

Maimonides Hebrew concept of righteousness. I believe in mad shoe righteousness. So says Madshoeides.

Mad shoe sales. What is it? How does it work?

I wonder if my right shoulder is a "translation" of my guitar right index finger, and thus a "resistance" to a mad shoe Villa-Lobos Number 4 Prelude breakthrough.

Ankle and legs pains could be resistance to a mad shoe folk dance breakthrough.

Never underestimate my ability to hide, disguise and transform my mental anguish into physical symptoms.

I'm tired, disgusted, and fed up with holding back. Let me at it with a mad shoe!

Was my chest cold a prelude to mad shoe singing!

By thinking the thought, I'm doing the deed. . . Now!

Not quantity (number of push-ups, etc.), but quality. . . mad shoe quality!

I went to the soft, underside, sensitive, heart-and-marrow center of the storm. I exposed, entered, and looked at it. I stood in my most sensitive soft-core mad shoe center.

I am at my mad shoe center now!

Are my body's aches and pains attempts to push me off it?

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Drift back to yoga.

Could my new ankle and foot-top pains be a reaction to folk dancing?

The pressure is on (folk dancing) to make a living through it. Make a living through my feet. This has always been impossible. Perhaps the pains in my feet are pointing out that I am going in the wrong direction.

Make a living in something else. Guitar. Other.

What about my shoulder pain? It remains a puzzle.

Or my right index finger has moved to my shoulder.

The answer to all these problems is to put myself in the hands of my mad shoe

God.

He is my soft, underside, sensitive, heart-and-marrow center. His arms are in my heart. I am not yet strong enough to let Him hug me completely; not strong enough to relinquish my ego and accept His embrace.

But I'm moving. . . . In that direction. It is the only way.

It does take a kind of strength to survive all these blows.  
I could at least congratulate myself on that.

Each new pain is a test on the road to self-knowledge.

Can I still be proud of myself as a man with business so bad, money so tight, and physical and mental pains swirling about me?

I could at least be proud of my courage in the struggle for survival as a folk dance teacher and artist. It is truly embracing the impossible dream. Constant hassles and hardships.

Proud of my decision to fight the financial dragons using a toothpick instead of a sword.

I certainly have adopted the brave gutsy life.

I just know what it is: my right index finger has moved into my neck and shoulder. I realized it playing the Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4.

I broke down and cried.

Stay in the mad shoe center with all its pain and glory!

Is the Mad Shoe Center a shopping mall?

I must be right about my ankles and folk dancing, too. Or at least I'm on the right track.

A hysterical reaction.

All are ways of staying out of my mad shoe center.

Rolling my right index finger through Villa-Lobos Prelude Number 4 is just plain fun!

My mad shoe center is so much fun!

It is amazing how much courage you need to have fun!

My right index finger, my mad shoe finger, must have been a fun finger all along. But it had to be uncovered, opened up, unmasked, discovered.

Therefore, my right shoulder must also be a fun shoulder. My neck, too: a fun neck.

Are my ankles fun ankles? Why not?

These are my mad shoe body parts.

Mad Shoe Shopping.

Mad Shoe Sales Center.

Mad Shoe Fun Singing Center.

Thursday, March 2, 2000

I may have lost interest in stocks as a fun center.

Were they ever fun centers? Only when they went up. Same for business: fun only when I get registrations.

Is it an "I've done that, gone through that?" The final word isn't in on stocks yet.

My relationship with money is usually based on fear. And, of course, the excitement that comes when I make it.

My relationship with money has been a giant lid covering my Mad Shoe Shopping Center located in the Mad Shoe Shopping Maul.

Don't let my chest cold or my stocks throw me off.

Open up Mad Shoe Fun Centers all over. Start with my body, then mind, then the world.

A New Form: (8).

Start with my body. Right index. . . and neck. Throat. . . and singing.

"Final" New Form. . . Either now or after New Form 8.

It will be called: Mad Shoe Centers.

(End of therapy. Home at last.)

Friday, March 3, 2000

Faith in my mad shoe God can heal me. . . and does.

I am there, in the faith, now!

Who and where is the mad shoe God I worship?

He is within me.

That is all. . . . That is All.

My job now is to practice remembering and re-experiencing this.

The idea of a mad shoe God with its mad shoe fun centers is hard to believe. Deep in my heart, I know it is true. That I should know myself so well and be so smart.

I'll just have to get used to thinking in terms of healing mad shoe fun centers.

Thus I am ending New Form 7, and the entire New Form volume. I am starting a new volume: Mad Shoe Fun Center.