

## New Approach

Friday, May 7, 2021

### Art and Me

Do I really care about my audience?

Or do they just annoy me, pull me away from focus on my art, by “forcing,” pushing me to focus on them?

Of course, they are not forcing me. A noxious element in my mind is forcing me to focus on them, distracting me from my main purpose, which is my art. If I do, of course the audience will be included. But most important, they will come in second. It is up to me to create the light, which, once created, will fall on all those around me.

So art, God, creation, are first; audience is second.

The challenge is how to remember and actualize this every day?

Sunday, May 9, 2021

### Flowering of my Monastic Self

Yes, I want to retire from my old damaged self-image!

Yes, I want to dump it in the ocean.

I want to transition into appreciation. Grab the glory of yesterday’s moment when my fingers flew through over, across, above the ancient Alhambra and Leyenda clouds. .and soared!

Yes, soared.

That moment can be remembered, but never repeated.

My job is to remember the glory of it, absorb it, forget it, and move on.

But isn’t this true of all yesterday’s moments? And past life moments? Absorb them, forget them, and move on.

So I can also give up my past self-image, with its damaged arpeggio views, and move on.

I can transform myself,

With my monastic self stepping out of the closet, cleansed of ancient damages, purified, and embracing glory, I can enter a new world.

Sunday, May 16, 2021

### I Need Sales

I need sales. But this time not necessarily to make money. (Although money is always nice, and a measure of how much I am actually serving. Yes, money, whether people will pay for my service or not, tells me if they need it or not. In other words, if my services are actually serving, if people will pay for it, that means it is important to them.

So money measures importance. It is one measurement of whether I'm doing my job or not. If others do not buy it, it means I am not offering them a service they want or need.

Sales equals business; business equals sales.

Business gives me the connection to others. Business does not, cannot exist without sales.

### Sales/Advertising/Promotion

What will I sell?

Advertising and promotion are part of it. Thus, although my videos, and even books, bring in no direct money, they are part of the effort.

So is my Dance of the Week.

So are personal appearances.

In other words, just standing there in public can be part of my advertising and promotion campaign. I like this. It constantly connects me to others. giving my meaning and purpose through my business.

I've become a walking business, which means a walking forever salesman, which means continual meaning and purpose.

### Tours and More

All my sales, everything I do, focuses on tours. They play the central role in my sales life.

What does my folk tour business mean to me? How important it is to my psyche, to my life?

Evidently, more than I realized.

Excitement and dynamism of tours, of sales, of book sales, booking sales, weekend sales, folk dance class sales, boutique sales. . . . Excitement and dynamism are the common thread.

Could I “sell” Hungarian words to my customers? Or for that matter, unedited journal entries? Or my computer learning process?

Probably not.

So what is it?

Perhaps I am selling excitement and adventure, along with a touch of exotic risk.

I am selling the hope, feeling, and dream of travel – and this whether to a foreign country, a book, or dancing in a circle.

### The Gospel of Enthusiasm

I sometimes avoid dealing with sour folks in the outside world because I’m afraid they may squash my enthusiasm.

Well, those days are over. They may try to squash it, but I have the confidence and strength to know they will fail! Nothing will squash my enthusiasm ever again! I will not let it. Enthusiasm is my best quality, my center, the essence of my gospel.

My sales process is enthusiasm focused on others. It used to require their agreement. (How could I be enthusiastic, or remain enthusiastic, if they weren’t?) But this contingency is now over. My enthusiasm remains, independent of the reactions of others. Sure, I love it when customers respond with similar enthusiasm. But if they don’t, if they just walk away unaffected by my efforts, my enthusiasm remains.

Yes!

The Leyenda three-fingered arpeggio is moving beyond maintenance. This means I can improve! I can even become sensational! A sensational guitarist! And this physical improvement can occur “even at my age.”

If the mind can conceive it, the body can eventually do it. But first the mind must believe and envision it.

Why shouldn't the ability to improve and become sensational be true in other fields as well?

I'm sure it is. But each field takes time, energy, focus, years of training. Obviously, there's no time to do them all. But, I could focus on the few fields I know and love.

Risk and Motivation

By trying to warm up faster on the guitar or running, and yoga I'm taking the risk of injury. But it is the risk itself, the fear and excitement created by standing at the edge, that may inspire and motivate me.

Monday, May 17, 2021

Fear and Respect

What good is studying languages?

Is it a useless but fascinating and challenging pursuit. Like climbing a mountain.

I need to put my mind on a pole. Let it move up and down even in meaningless, silly movement. Without focus, it will eat me up, devour me alive.

By defining myself as a linguist, I'm pressuring myself to become better. I need to live up to this new self-image.

Do I need pressure? Perhaps. Pressure keeps me focused, attached to moving up and down on my pole.

I hate to think I need such pressure, but maybe I do.

Pressure creates fear.

With fear comes energy.

So a little bit of fear never hurts. It may even be good. No question it motivates me.

I miss my financial fear. Somehow I'm vaguely lost without it.

How about a fear-replacement program? Replace my fear of financial failure with a fear of not living up to my new self-image!

Not bad.

But do I want to be afraid all my life? Do I need it?

Maybe.

I like to think I'm brave. I hate to think I need fear.

Yet just because I hate it, that doesn't mean it isn't true.

I'm creating my own garden of fear as an energy source, a self-motivating tool. I'm scaring myself for a "higher" purpose, to keep my mind securely moving up and down on its pole and thus prevent it from running wild and eating me up.

Respect is fear in a more subtle, softer, socially acceptable form.

So fear (especially in the form of respect) is a good tool to harness the wild, destructive, unhinged power of the mind.

But instead of using fear to energize and motivate me, could I ever replace it with love?

Love to energize and motivate me?

Would it have the same power? Less? More?

Socially, it certainly sounds better.

But just because it sounds better, that doesn't mean it is better either, or truthful, or even realistic.

Truth is, I don't know.

Maybe they're both true, both have their realms.

Love goes with fear, just as wonder and awe go together.

But wouldn't that be dualism?

Isn't the greatest truth All is One?

Anger is also energizing. That's probably why I like it, and why so many others do, and use it, too.

I haven't been angry for a long while. I've given up, lost several of my anger-and-creation distractions like stock trading.

This has created a huge hole, a flat space in my personality, a blank field, a vacuum that somehow needs to be filled.

Yesterday, language study stepped in to fill much of it. Okay, so I'm replacing stock trading (all of it?) with language study. And that is good.

But evidently, it is not enough.

How about finding, manufacturing, creating a little rage, to lift me out my depression?

But what would I be angry at?

So far I can't find anything I actually believe in.

I could return to anger at losing all of my business. After all, nothing has really changed since the pandemic started almost a year and a half ago. And the stock trading replacement distraction has run its course. So I have nothing dynamic and engrossing to fill the vacuum.

Can I get back into dancing, choreography, writing, and guitar? Add video and Zoom? Give it a total anger commitment?

Anger commitment. Now there is a new term.

What does it mean? Am I on to something needed and "new?"

Can I use rage to fuel all my expressive work?

I used to use it in business. Anger at my customers, or lack of registrations, was once a constant. But business, at least for now, is over.

I also used to be furious that no one bought my books. Should I, can I, use anger to fuel sales? I doubt it, but maybe, even hopefully, I'm wrong.

Or can I use it to fuel creating new art. This idea seems novel and new.

It would lift me out of my depression.

Do I dare give myself that gift?

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

### Transformation

To disappear, hide, work in secret, with a new identity, new name – is this a new direction?

Is it attractive and freeing?

Or depressing and alienating?

Both.

It means returning to childhood, to the beginning, and a fresh start.

Is my next step, the daring adventure to step out of the world, become anonymous, give up everything, and see what happens?

Is it what transformation (and retirement) are all about?

Scary, but freeing as well.

Soft and very soft guitar playing seem to open up the fast passageways. I wonder what that means.

It means that, on one level, as I get older, instead of slowing down, I am speeding up.

Fear of injury making a mistake have kept me slow, hesitant, and somewhat fearful of going fast. But those days are over. Much of slow has run its course. Fast leads to new roads ahead.

This is so fascinating and opposite so-called traditional, getting older (“aging”) values.

Friday, May 21, 2021

Now that the pandemic is slowly coming to an end, and the a return to work, to my business, is in sight, I ask: Is flirting with disaster and destruction part of the creative

process?

You have to destroy the old, create a clean slate, before you can begin anew.

If the above is so, then the fact that I keep thinking about “retiring,” of giving up my business, of dropping my folk dance teaching and tours, have been part of a creative process.

Yesterday got an email from Goldens Bridge saying they will definitely have folk dancing this summer! That means I will definitely have my folk dance teaching job back again. And it’s only about a month away!

I feel happy and energized, but also split.

The thought of returning to work energizes me. But it also depresses me, saps my energy, and, on a philosophic level, makes me wonder about my purpose here on earth.

But maybe I’m asking another question: What importance I actually attach to my choreography, folk dance teaching, and folk tours business?

Organizing and running these has, on one level, always been simple for me. Yes, they require hard work and mucho time, and they certainly challenge me. But I they, as part of the material world, are transient, a “throw away,” easy, only done because I have to make a living.

And now that I no longer have to make a living, we have enough money to retire, why bother doing them?

So called “retirement” means I now have the time and freedom to do the important stuff, which for me has always been being and becoming an artist.

And what does this so-called artist do?

Writing.

And classical guitar on the side.

Somehow, since college graduation, I have seen writing as my most creative, artistic, and thus important means of expression.

Compared to that, my business seems to be “not that important.”

So should give up my business and write full time?



And practice and play guitar on the side?

Thanks to the pandemic realizations, I could fulfill that “dream.”

But is my dream really a nightmare?

Have I been dreaming the wrong one?

Could my folk dancing and tours be more important than I thought?

Many people love and admire my folk dance and tour work. Their appreciation encourages and inspires me.

I need two legs to walk well. Could affecting others be one of them? Seems totally reasonable and right.

Why am I even bothering to wrestle with these questions? The answers seems so obvious.

But I still don't know.

And with no answers in sight, I have a stabbing headache and heartache from asking them.

The questions are all about my relationships with others. In other words, how important are others, compared to me alone?

Obviously, I cannot exist without them.

But somehow, my narrow mind cannot exactly see this. How did such a disease occur? It has to do with my teenage physicist vision of the artist alone in my attic garret, studying, writing, and researching, like Einstein, the secret of the universe. Alone in the attic, with only a desk and table lamp illuminating the pages of my research.

Why am I alone in this grand vision?

Why are others not included? Why do they seem secondary and besides the point?

I need inner and outer, alone and other, monk and community, both.

### Meltdowns and Magnificences

Maybe I don't want to recognize, accept, appreciate, and love the pleasure I get when

someone loves my work.

Why is it so hard to accept this warm, wonderful, overwhelming inner glow, this feeling of love I get when someone says they appreciate what I've done?

It is a glow as warm and wonderful as the Great Magnificence Meltdown, but the Public Meltdown is warm, material, physical, earthy, and guttural, whereas the Grand Beethovenian Meltdown is more cerebral, mystical, and ecstatic.

Different, yes.

But both are overpowering in their own way.

And maybe they are really not that different.

Maybe they are the same All-Is-One, only wearing different clothing.

Saturday, May 22, 2021

### Leadership

Every morning (at least since the pandemic started) I have been waking up with a desperate "loss of purpose" feeling. And somehow, after coffee, I somehow regain it.

But the wake-up is really empty.

Why am I ever trying to improve? So that I can "eventually," some day, stand before others as worthy, someone of value, someone who is important to them.

So ultimately my self-importance is only measured by others.

And that's where my social-director ease, talent, skill in leadership comes in. It is "no problem" for me to stand up before others and say "Let's go." And when I say it, most of them follow.

I think nothing, or at least very little, of this skill. In fact, I basically take the whole thing for granted. I focus mostly on what I think I can't do well, namely, play classical guitar. And I also subtly demean my leadership skills by placing them in the "business" category, which is, note, outside my expressive life, which makes a direct connection to the higher forces. And it is a one-to-one relationship. As a hermit monk to the lord, it includes no concern, interest, or connection with others.

Could that be my mistake – where I went wrong, and still am.

No question when I focus on others, and what I have to do for and with them, I do not get depressed or think about meaning, purpose, or direction. I am totally involved, nervously focused, on how to deal with my clients, my followers, my others. I am their leader. And although doubts may pop up, my grand responsibility to them dispels any whiff of depression. Evidently, it also fills me with meaning and purpose.

Business, sales, marketing advertising, public relations are all words tainted by my past disdain for the material world. So maybe I should drop them as I move forward. I need a new vocabulary to enter this new land.

Maybe “leader” and “leadership” are the right words.

Maybe I should add leadership to my miracle schedule.

There is a glory and magnificence to the words “leader” and “leadership.” They have a magic power. Unlike the word business, which wreaks of crassness.

Sunday, May 23, 2021

Meanwhile, HaShem is constantly pointing out my talents, which I often run away from, and deny.

One of them is selling. Much as I resist the process, selling comes smoothly to me. It's easy for me to smile, and I enjoy easy banter with others. In fact, dealing, talking, smooching, with others comes naturally to me. Through no effort of my own, I'm good at them. No question it's a talent HS dumped on me when I was born: natural leadership talent, gift of saying, “Hey, let's go! Let's do it!” and most others agree and follow.

But for some strange reason, I run away from these natural gifts.

I wonder why.

Maybe that's just the way it is. I'll never know why.

Perhaps the “Why?” doesn't matter.

It “merely” a question of knowing and accepting what it.

And this morning, I think I'm ready to accept the big "never."  
What does such acceptance do for me?  
It frees my mind from many years of burden.  
And with this loss of weight, I can start a fresh and lighter path.

Monday, May 24, 2021

"Some Day" Never Ends

I'm fooling myself. Evidently, "some day" never ends, though it does speak to a very deep need: Some day I'll be able to connect with others, my audience; some day I'll be able to perform.

This need is blocked deep in my desire to perform the "Alhambra." I don't know why.

So "some day I'll be able to perform it for others, to connect" never goes away. And I keep practicing no matter what. Maybe the "some day" is meant for my next life.

After all, we need something to look forward to.

And though we need alone time, periods of retreat, space for reflection, the desire to connect never goes away. Even for a hermit.

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

This morning I am totally sick of me, sick of my constant complaints, pains, and questions.

I know what's good for me, and what is right.

Just do it. . . and shut up!

And add "think young." It's better for my mind, soul, and body. As for aches and pains, I had them forty years ago, too. Some were the same, some different. But the concept of hurting and complaining was always the same.

So old or young, complaints remained constant.

And this morning, I'm sick of it. Thank God.

Dive in and shut up.

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Classical guitar

Lagrima (Tarrega), and Romance D'Amor: For deep tone and connecting body to mind: Focus on the first joint of the right ring finger (annularis) as you play the rest stroke. Relax as you watch it sink into the string.

Gavotte en Rondeau (Bach): Play more slowly. Milk each note.

Alhambra: Years of practice down the drain. Focus must be completely on the thumb and bass. Tremolo only as an "after thought," and thumb. (Then it will magically appear, begin to sound through the fog. Probably caused by deep relaxation.)

Sunday, May 29, 2021

No Choice: Just Do It

My old performance anxieties, depressions from impending doom, visions of purposelessness and meaninglessness, worries about my physical pains (knees, etc), and inability to function, etc. are all keeping me in an old safe place.

They are allowing me to avoid stepping out of old habits and attitudes, of changing my world and taking the big risk of moving on, hovering over the abyss, and diving in!

If I changed my attitude and instead said, "I'm a great guitarist. I've got a unique approach to playing. Others would benefit from listening to me; they would enjoy, nay, love it!" I'd take a leap into a new and daring world.

Perhaps, knowing this, it is not even daring.

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

Birthday

At this age, part of any birthday is scary.

But, on the other hand, only the many years put me in this place of getting better, going deeper, seeing solutions to old time problems, psychological knots unraveling, visions clearer, old road blocks disappearing.

As a start, my guitar playing feels better and freer than ever.

The psychological liberty is immense, and I am even happier with my depressions! Or at least more in tune with them.

My body, even with all its aches and pains, feels more conscious and tuned up, whatever that means.

My attitude toward money feels “better,” again, whatever that means.

And my art forms are moving toward “expression.” I like them.

Although I don’t like hearing my birthday number, the aging process is doing good things to, through, and for me.

So what is there to complain about?

Maybe just the fun and freedom of complaining.

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

All yesterday’s smart guitar stuff has dropped out of sight. Gone.

It was all good while it lasted. Fascinating, relieving, interesting, freeing, truthful. . .but for yesterday.

Today is a new day. Everything from the past has either been absorbed or simply been forgotten. Or both.

In any case, today is a new day. I’m starting over.

### Accepting Success

Money will not protect me from anxiety and performance responsibility.

Seems I fear success more than failure.

Sure, I feel bad when I fail. But the payoff is: failure frees me to go wherever I want, to wander easily, aimlessly, and forever through the fertile fields of potential.

Success, on the other hand, comes with big responsibility. People expect things from you, a repetition of your brilliance, more success. This means mucho work, focus, concentration – stuff which I like. . . I think.

So, if I like it, what's the problem?

I no longer know.

Maybe there is no problem.

Maybe I'm moving into a new place.

Getting ready to accept success, and all the responsibility, focus, concentration, and work that comes with it.

I like this focus-and-concentration stuff.

Maybe there isn't any problem.

What does success mean to me?

It means not only that can I play guitar but that I'm good at it. Very good. Even excellent! And I have something to say.

Why has this eluded me so long?

Seems that, if I can accept my success as a guitarist, then all the other success problems will go away.

The heavy freedom of failure is the secret brake I've put on myself for years, perhaps for most of my life.

But it seems age has whittled it away. Another advantage of aging.

### Success Pains?

What about the pain in my left "guitar" shoulder?

And the pain in my left "folk dance" knee?

Where (if anywhere) does success fit in or affect them?

Could resistance to success increase the pain?

Will acceptance of success diminish the pain?

Watch them and find out.

Responsibility pains weigh on me.

But with its excitement of focus and concentration, responsibility pushes me beyond myself, to be better than I think I am.

And, if I like it, maybe I'll like my shoulder and knee pains, too.

Thursday, June 3, 2021

### Dealing with the Success Feeling

A good day yesterday, and a good preceding week. Bookings and registrations are drifting in, business is picking up. And more successes on the horizon, I'm beginning to feel a bit overwhelmed.

Maybe that's why I "avoid" success. It's stressful, overwhelming, with too much responsibility to fill orders and demands.

And yet, If I can somehow get past the overwhelmed-with- responsibility feeling, if I could radiate in the luxury of success....

Maybe it's a question of organization. I know I'm organized, and a good organizer. That's a plus. Whenever a booking, new registration or email comes in, it knocks my brain on its side, disorganizing my mind. I need to mentally regroup, and somehow put my mental furniture back in order. I'm upset, and momentarily, in chaos. Very uncomfortable. I hate that state.

So, on one level, success brings temporary chaos, mental disorganization. That's why I become overwhelmed.

Can I use my powers of organization to fight that? Evidently, I've always succeeded in the past. I am still alive, after all. And I know organizing is something I'm good at.

### Arpeggio Happiness



The trauma of guitar success was located in my right hypothenar muscle – the thumb muscle.

A hornet's nest in my hypothenar.

That's why it tightened up, became paralyzed, when I felt the pressure to play arpeggios fast – which was always.

But those days are over.

So, release the stinging hornets of failure.

Arpeggio happiness is in sight.

#### Relax the First Joint

Relax the first joint of each finger (anular, medio, indice: ami) when playing scales or arpeggios, rest strokes, or free strokes.

It's a big deal.

Friday, June 4, 2021

#### Back In Business

Last night I went to bed with a slight wake-up flutter in heart

Why? We have four new registrations for the Greek tour in October. Suddenly, instead of seeing a small tour or no tour at all, I envision the possibility of a big one, even 40 people!

My business head is a whirling, foggy mess after a year and a half pandemic lethargy. I'm starting the wake-up-and-be-alert, function-in-business process.

Sunday, June 6, 2021

#### Improve My Life By Thinking About Death

How to improve my life by thinking about death.

Business is picking up.

Now, unlike the peace and free time of the pandemic, I have lots of emails to answer.

Receiving them often annoys me because I have to answer them. This takes valuable time away from my so-called “important” activities, ultimately performed so I can stand before others well, whole, complete, as a good and improved person. Of course, in the search, I am never good enough. So I have to always keep improving in hope that, even posthumously, people will understand and recognize my worth.

But suppose I end this loser view of the world.

Suppose I could see answering emails as a way of leaving some of myself in the hearts and minds of others, improving the world with a bit of good will?

By thinking about my death, which chains me to the importance of living in the here-and-now, I might be able to improve my life, and help others in the process.

And an added bonus would be, I might begin to enjoy answering emails! Now that would be an amazing feat.

Death could even give me a good reason to make more videos, publish and promote more books, run tours, even give a concert.

An ultimate reason to promote, not to make myself famous (the idea of death makes that concept useless and meaningless) but rather to help others.

How does this help others? By standing as an example of how to face death with dignity, courage, and generosity.

### Motivation in the Flesh

A new reason to send my book or books for free to Walter and Louie (and anyone else): Because I believe they will be good for them.

Is that why my body is aching so much this morning? A new source of motivation is in the process of being born, and my body is going through its birth pangs.

I hope so.

(Note: This “I hope so” sentence shows lack of faith.)

Deep in my heart I sense, believe, even know that it is.

So why don't I say it?

Perhaps a period of self-doubt is necessary before certainty arises.

Or maybe, since every moment is different, certainty is never truly certain.

So my process, or method, of moving from "maybe" to "surety and yes," moving from doubt to certainty, is the right one, at least for me.

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

### The Truth of Motivation

For years, ever since I started to think about it, growth, self-improvement, learning, and curiosity have been my prime motivators. Other people, rarely, if ever, consciously came into the picture.

But now, suddenly, they have.

Why?

Perhaps it's a combination of success and reading about death. Dying has always raised the question for me of "Why bother?" and "What's the use of trying, if everything ends in dust?"

Irving Yalom's Staring at the Suns, subtitled Overcoming the Terror of Death, suggests that leaving a legacy behind softens the blow. Note: It doesn't eliminate, only softens it.

In my annoyance, sadness, and disappointment with the fact that I'll die, I started to scramble, searching once again for posthumous meaning. I ended up consoling myself with the idea that I'll leave a small trail, a legacy behind me for other people.

But truth is, although I'll leave a legacy, naturally and simply through the organic process of living, as for motivation in the here-and-now, considering others still seems to come second. My old value system comes first. And in the natural, shining process, others will benefit. The sun likes to shine. When it does, others naturally receive its light.

When you shine, naturally and with effort, you shine on everyone.

So the big question is: Why does the sun like to shine?

The answer: Shining is what it does. Shining is its nature.

I could say: Self-improvement? Are you kidding? Why bother at this age?

But I know it's simply another excuse to stay home and vegetate. And vegetation is part of the growth process, which, like all things, is transient.

So, enjoy vegetating. While it lasts.

And when growth shoots begin again, jump on board.

Do I have to accept my limitations as I continue to grow?

Probably a good idea.

But with limitations come expansions.

I've grown in wisdom and self-knowledge.

Where does that leave me now? In this diminished and expanded state, how can I improve and grow?

What about

Remember it, but put it aside for awhile.

When it happens, we'll deal with it.

Right now I'm living, and that's a good start.

### Life as a Good Trader and Good Guitarist

Yesterday, my left shoulder and left knee started to kill me.

Why?

Can I relate it to my trading success? I love my trading now! The passion of Wow! success! It's reverse current began in my left shoulder: The suppression of the I'm a good trader excitement.

It's hard to accept these two new facts:

I have become a good trader.

I have become a good guitarist.

In the process, it seems I have “lost” my left shoulder and knee.

But have I really?

I think not. The pain is a temporary, short return to the old neighborhood with its psychosomatic resistance and put down of self and success.

But this time my return will be short.

In fact, it’s just about over.

Wisdom and self-knowledge are now overriding the psychosomatic pains. My left shoulder and knee will soon resurrect.

I’m moving on to life as a good trader and good guitarist.

### Leadership

Like Moses, I am being called to lead.

And it scares the shit out of me. I twist and turn, make any excuse, try to get out of it, run away.

And, just as Moses resisted, I resist.

That’s what I’m doing now. My body aches, my stomach strains, I’m stiff and weary, but I’ll do almost anything to avoid facing the leadership of another tour. Making lots of money will not soothe me, although it used to help push me over the top. Learning Greek is simply another diversion, pleasant and interesting.

Bottom line, I want to escape my destiny, run away from my leadership talent and calling.

But suffer as I do, in the end, I never run away. I am either too embarrassed or too strong. I refuse to humiliate myself. If I ever gave in and cancelled, it would destroy me. Deep down, I must sense and know it is question of life or death. Fight and struggle, and I may lose, even go down fighting. I may be crushed to a pulp— but I’ll never die.

So I must lead this upcoming tour.

Ultimately, it will be my glory.

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

### Leadership Crossroads

If I'm successful at stock trading, what is its purpose?

If you don't really need money to clothe, house, or feed you, or give to a charity, can making it ever be a good-in-itself?.

In my humble opinion, trading in the stock market serves no one. So I do feel a bit guilty making money doing it, devoting so much time to such a "useless" pursuit.

I rarely feel guilt. In fact, I don't even believe in it. Is see guilt as a camouflage for fear. Why then did the word pop out of my unconscious? An old neighborhood thing? I don't know.

But the dominant subject is leadership.

I resist it because it is always preceded by fear. Before I actually dive in, I tremble in struggle. "No, no, no!" my inner gremlin screams. "Please don't make me lead. Don't force me. I'll do anything. Please, stop, stop, stop!"

Yes, I'll do almost anything not to lead. Anything except not leading.

The conflict is between my monkish, retreating, quiet, meditative inner self battling against the organized, smiling, enthusiastic public-service self.

Am I destined to struggle this way for the rest of my life?

Probably.

### Trading Stocks as a Prayer Form

I'm trying to find a way of thinking that would make trading stocks a worthy enterprise, give it value, at least in my own eyes.

How about the fun factor in trading? After all, I'm having fun making money trading stocks.

Fun is the same as joy.

And we worship God b'simcha, with joy.

Could then the successful, fun-filled trading of stocks be another method of prayer,

of worshipping God b'simcha? Why not?

### Vacation. . .from Everything

It feels like I've stopped exercising, running, yoga, gym, and folk dancing. My body is stiff and aching, with "pains" located mostly in my left shoulder and knee. I'm also resisting doing anything about them. I'm even feeling "satisfied" in this resistance process.

What is happening?

Am I, in the process of creating a new body to fit my new mind set?

And what is this new mind set? Something to do with accepting stock trading success? I'm not really sure.

Seems like I'm taking a vacation, a break from everything.

And my vacation pleasure is to dive totally into trading stocks. Amazing that I see it that way: as my vacation form.

It feels like I'm on the cusp of changing not only my attitudes, but my profession, my life, life-style, and career.

Thursday, June 10, 2021

### College of Anxiety

### or Pain-in-the-Ass University (PITA U)

Stock trading serves as my secret escape from performing. I use it as an excuse to avoid perform anxiety. Somehow, I feel, that if I make enough money, I won't need to ever perform again, and I can thus avoid this most uncomfortable, even terrible, "stage fright."

But now that the secret is out, front and center, I can see that it doesn't work.

Here's what happened to outdoor folk dancing yesterday:

After the weather predicted scattered storms, I "happily" cancelled our outdoor class. As often happens, the weatherman was wrong. It remained sunny and clear all day! I felt

somewhat humiliated by my decision. But outdoor folk dancing is a “flexible” art form. Changes and cancellations are subject to weather is their very nature. What can you do?

Well, actually, there is something I can do. Say no to the weather man and simply show up for every folk dance class. Then, if the weather man, or woe-man, turns out to be right, and it actually rains, I can always cancel my class on the spot. And if not, if the skies remain clear, we’ll dance. It just means going to the trouble of showing up, which is well within my power to do.

Evidently, I can easily fight weather predictions.

Anyway, back to my subject. As I said, I “happily” cancelled the class. Within that “happiness” lies the problem.

Truth is, I “happily” gave in to my fear, I collapsed before performance anxiety. By bowing down, giving in, not only did I not improve the situation, but I was hit by a never before experienced pain: A terrible sciatic-like pressure emanating from my coccyx and felt in my lower back and butt. It came out of nowhere. I could hardly stand or walk.

This morning, although improved, the pain still hasn’t gone away.

Knowing my mind, I began to suspect this was a Sarnoian TMS pain. Which means displaced anger.

What was I angry at?

Easy to see: The general post-pandemic fact that I have to go back to work. Business is starting up again, with all the worries and work that goes into it. Thursday, June 17, 2021 Add to this that my guitar playing has improved to the point I can and “should” make Youtube videos, even perform! Big stuff.

All my dreams are coming true.

But some dreams are nightmares in disguise. So as I work to fulfill them, part of me tries to escape in the opposite direction.

What do I get for my attempts to escape? A pain in the ass. A “mad back-and-butt.”

So I must never give in to performance anxiety. If I do, fear turns to anger, displaces itself, and, with powerful and debilitating pain, hits me in the butt. A true pain in the ass.



So there is no escape. Only a choice.

Choice one: Avoid fear. Try to escape and I get a pain in the ass.

Choice two: Face fear. The potential reward is a satisfying release, often bordering on joy.

### An Attitude Change

#### The Retirement/Working Both Solution

Can I now fool my brain by returning to work?

Do I really have to give up? Retire? Drop out?

Maybe.

Could I do both? Drop out/retire and go back to work? That would be perfect.

I'd have to go back to work with a total retirement and drop-out attitude. What a challenge!

It certainly is the perfect post-pandemic solution.

The only thing I have control of is my mind (Even that is questionable.)

So an attitude change is possible but very, very difficult!

On the other hand, do I even have a choice?

I have to change my attitude! If not, I'll be sentenced to an eternal sciatic pain in the ass.

It means a new look at performance anxiety.

It means I have to give it up.

Can I change my nature?

Can I change rage into pleasure?

The joy of anger? The fun of fear?

Has anyone in history ever done this? Am I chasing the will of the wisp?

On the other hand, what is a pandemic good for except total transformation.

And if I could actually do this, transform myself, I would be eternally grateful to all the characters that caused this tragic comedy.

So the result is: The Both Solution: I have to go back to work and retire.

I have to do both.

Saturday, June 12, 2021

### Sciatica Walks Away

I hate to say it, or even talk about it, but the big issue I'm dealing with is death. Mine in particular, but then my wife's, and from there, my family, friends, and from there, everyone and everything else.

And this heavy dealing won't go away.

Perfectionists like me have lots of love, also lots of anger and anxiety. And what could be more enraging and create more anxiety than the imperfection of death, which ends all self-improvements projects?

This, I believe, is at the bottom of Wednesday's sudden spasm of sciatica pain in my lower back.

"Why did it happen now?" I ask.

I'm dealing with a heavy issue. That's why.

I'm reading Staring at the Sun by Irving Yalom (means "Diamond" in Hebrew) all about death, dying, and how he and his patients deal with it.

I suddenly feel a warm current of relaxation flow through my body as I write this. My lower back opens up, legs, butt, and even shoulders release themselves into a deep pool of inner peace. Amazing. I know I'm on target.

### Time to Self-Heal with Fiction

Fuck sciaticas. Fuck this pain in the body shit.

I'm sick of it, sick of dripping in misery.

I know the answers to my problem. Just dive into the answers, just do them. This

heavy stuff has gone as far as it can or needs to go.

I need a break.

Sunday, June 13, 2021

Money, and earning it through work or the stock market, make me feel safe, and ground me in this chaotic work.

Thus last week's success is a big deal.

Still, this sciatic lower back pain continues. Last night was terrible, and got worse and worse until I finally decided, rather than trying to find reasons for my pain, to totally focus on it. When I did, the pain first rose, but then slowly diminished, and disappeared! I soon fell asleep. Each time I awoke with the I went through that focus process, and each time it diminished and disappeared. Staying in the moment, focusing on the pain rather than trying to avoid it, worked. Like dissolving a knot. I also realize I go through this process when I run. Little and big pains pop up in my body mostly in my legs, and I focus on them, and they slowly disappear.

This morning I awoke with a new approach: I'm doing nothing until I get better. And I mean nothing. I'm staying in bed until "something" pushes, or rather "uplifts" me and causes me to rise.

And I also have a bit more patience with the healing process. After all, dealing with success, money, and death is a big deal. Healing, which in this case means changing my attitude may take longer than I thought.

I feel much better after writing this.

We'll see what happens when I get up and go through the day.

Is playing "Alhambra" before an audience my secular form of waiting for the Messiah?

It's something I always aim for, keep trying to attain, but never achieve. I always fail, but I keep trying. The hope of succeeding sustains me and keeps me practicing. And I love

to practice, so, in a sense, it ties me to my love, which is a good thing.

Maybe that's always why success, any success, spoils my dreams. It bring the Messiah to my front door and temporarily makes me ecstatically happy. It is the success mountain top, and once I reach it, I have no where else to go.

Then the Messiah goes away. I am left to slide back down and eventually land in the valley of despair. And there, in the pit of hopelessness, slowly a new dream of reaching and seeing the Messiah again is born. Like Sisyphus, I see a new mountain top and begin the long, inspiring, self-energized goal of reaching its summit.

Maybe that's what life is all about: Climbing up and down mountains. Maybe one never reaches the top; maybe one never should. (Of course, there is death. which stops the ascent, at least temporarily).

Writing this journal is my therapy. It's how and where I work out my problems. Everybody should keep one. So good to have and do it.

### Crossing the Bridge

Headache and touch of nausea. Is this the first sign of self-disgust, with anger and rage energy rising? I hope so. Then sciatica cure would be in sight.

I am a poet. I think in metaphors.

I cry at this self recognition of myself as an artist. It's part of crossing the bridge into a land of deeper recognition.

How long and deep are these wounds, these childhood psychological scars that last so many years? Even life time?

Freedom from them through the path of self-knowledge, brought on by only one terrible sciatica trip, certainly worth it!

### Sciatica and Parkinson's Disease

Is there any relationship between sciatica to Parkinson's disease? I think there is. Parkinson's could be a sciatica on a larger scale.

I felt the money anger moving from my lower back and butt into my stomach, the solar plexus where anger-raging, nervous energy dwells. This is also the home of action energy. When I feel it in my gut, I know I'll be doing it soon.

Nausea is anger in another form, hidden and disguised.

Sciatica is also hidden anger, which, when harvested, it yields hidden energy.

I'm feeling slightly better and hopeful.

For those yoga lovers, of which I am one, the Sanskrit word chakra means "disk" or "wheel." There are seven chakras.

Energy is starting to move up my spine, flowing from first chakra (root), to second (sacral) and third (solar plexus).

I'm getting closer.

It's almost a happy day.

So ends a New Leaf.