

Redesigning My Brain

Sunday, November 14, 2021

Work and Love

Is my work the only thing that will get me out of the house?

Will only work "force" me to socialize and see people?

Freud said work and love make the world go round.

I love my work. Does my work make my world go round?

Maybe.

To me, work equals business, being a social director, and people. It is my form of giving, service, and love for others.

Art, and its handmaiden study, equal self, solo, artist, monk, and monastery life. I see art as working (performing) alone. But note: with the ultimate goal of bringing the fruits of my art and learning to others.

Thus, art is really a prelude to service, love, and work. In fact, my art and study are incomplete without their finale of service, expressing of love for others by giving the fruits of my labor to them. (Of course, love for others equals love for self, since All Is One.)

Which means I also love business!

Really?

What is my business?

Leading others, in all its forms.

Now I ask: If I love my business, and my business expresses love, why do I resist it so much? Why do I hate, and feel humiliated by sales, promotion, and advertising?

The inner, monkish/artistic self is ever in conflict with the outer, service social-director, giving self.

Can this conflict ever be resolved?

Resolution is a personal decision.

During my adult life, I have somehow decided these dual aspects of my nature are in conflict. The separation, disunion of art and business is my decision.

I'm supposed to have control of my decisions.

So I ask: Why have I kept these separate so long?

For protection. To protect my magnificent visions, the glories and treasures of my imagination. The outer world has always threatened this inner artistic world. The fear of criticism and humiliation was always too great. I was never strong enough to fight back, to publically challenge the monsters, Instead, as a teenager I retreated into my violin practice room. As an adult I continued my retreat by entering a monastic world of my imagination. So lovely and relaxing.

Well, that was my old life.

But now, after a year and a half of corona life monkish meditation, I have rethought my attitudes and direction and am re-entering the world. I want to return stronger, better, and different.

Am I now strong enough to unite art and business? Fuse the inner and outer, monk and world, solo and inclusive, private practice and public (concert) performance, giving and taking, fantasy and skills, work and love?

Evidently, the only way to return differently is with a different attitude. A united return. Dialectically opposite selves would have to synthesize into a new all-is-one self.

This is a lovely dream.

On one level, I have no choice. In order to grow, develop, take the next step forward, I have to unite them

I can do it.

But will I?

If I do, it means returning with a vengeance: a rage that pushes me out of the house and in the war with my monsters, Mr. Maelstrom Concert and Mrs. Jagged Mountain Performance.

Take my fifty-year resistance to Segovia's "Alhambra Leadership," even though

he knew the way.

Through his playing, he said, "Thumb is the leader; fingers are the followers."

He was right.

I had to make my own discovery. I had to do it, discovery it, my way.

That's one reason I'm a leader. It has to be my way. Luckily, God gave me charisma so I could fulfill my purpose and lead.

Does this revelation make me more secure as a leader?

Did it take so long because I had to mature?

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Stay in Being and Gestate

I'm reading The Body Keeps The Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk. It's about trauma.

Did I ever have a trauma? Somehow, I wish I did, so I can read and relate to this book. Being unable to play "Alhambra" or perform for forty or more years must have resulted from trauma somewhere or sometime. But I can't remember having one. (Yet I must have – how can one go through life without one?)

Perhaps I have redesigned my brain so the trauma has faded, been forgotten, and even disappeared. (Or healed, as the medical people might say.) Perhaps my chosen path of neuroplastic personal change through new thought patterns is working.

It feels like I'm sailing into a new land. The negative term for this new land is "No Trauma Land." The positive term is "Wholeness Land."

My so-called "trauma test" can be found in my ability to play "Alhambra." And each day playing it is easier and more beautiful. (And I'm taking "Leyenda" long with it.)

With each passing day, I'm accepting and believing that my success and new confidence will continue.

So this morning, I have no desire for growth or self-improvement. I only want to stay in being and gestate in wholeness. (I sense it as a three-month process. But I could

be wrong. In fact, it could be instant, even just happened!

Leadership:

Rather than censoring, forbidding subjects, like politics, religion, vaccines, covid, diminishing attention to them by steering the conversation, subtly and skillfully, in another directions.

This because forbidding subjects, censoring them, heighten attention, makes them even attractive (folks love the forbidden). Censorship promotes a push back, a rebellion in the opposite direction.

Where Did This All Start?

Where did this all start? That I am not good enough, and that I always have to prove myself by growing, self-improvement. Learning more, playing better, performing better, and all this has to be sanctioned, not by myself, but by others. Their applause, approval, satisfaction, happiness, even adulation. Others, others, but never me.

I'm reading about trauma.

Did I have traumas, one or several, during childhood, teenage years, or adult life? A puzzle that I'm starting to tackle. This as I'm on the cusp of a new life.

I'm loving my classical guitar playing and its new direction. Having passed through Bass-Gate-and-Thumb-Portal of Alhambra Heaven, I'm taking my first steps into a new life!

Friday, November 19, 2021

Risk

No Risk in Trading

I like risk.

Risk wakes me up, alerts me. It also "relaxes" me by totally focusing my mind.

Does this explain stock trading? Partly.

In trading, over the long term, I always lose money. Thus, I must ask: Is there really a risk in trading? How can there be if for me, loss has been certain? True, I have hope that some day I will win. But long terms over the months and years, I never do.

Thus, if there really is no risk, and loss is certain, why do it?

Well, if I give up trading, where will I find risk?

Another side question: Do I want pleasurable risk or frightening risk?

Answer: A little of both. Some fright is pleasurable.

Okay, so what new risks will wake me up?

Higher goals? In exercise or other endeavors?

I don't know yet and I'm not interested in finding out.

Presently, at least for now, I like living in this pleasant state of homeostasis.

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Normalizing the Gains

Now I know why I ached all day yesterday, especially in my lower back and legs. It was a juncture point, passage into the new life. Old cells died, were being destroyed in order to make room for the new replacement cells needed for the new mind set of my upcoming new life.

Next step is to normalize my gains. my new approach to life. This takes time, along with constant daily repetition.

It starts with the "Alhambra" and "Leyenda" but doesn't end there. This new mind self will change, move, and flow into other aspects of my life.

Self-Improvement as a Good-in-Itself

Why is self-improvement the best road for me to follow?

Because the constant challenge of self-improvement, of daily working, trying, rising, climbing higher on Jacob's ladder, stimulates, excites, and focuses me!

Without this challenge, I slip into depression, lack of energy, a directionless

existence, a meaningless life. However, I'm now in a new place. I no longer want or need to improve to "some day prove myself to be good enough" by seeking the approval of others in a future concert. Those days are over. Self-improvement is for internal personal reasons. My mental landscape has changed. Yes, others will benefit. They do with any self-improvement. But I have had a slow but cataclysmic mental shift. Through many months of monastic training, aided by the Covid retreat, my thinking has slowly reversed direction, moving from outward to inward. Thus confidence through personal revelation has solidified. Now I know self-improvement is good. And I know why! It is simply a good for me. Period. That's it. During this eighteen month Covid transformation period, a new, focused and personal, inner starting point has been born. And that is good!

The challenge of self-improvement is a good-in-itself.

Knowing, feeling, and being on that road is good!

Normal is Now

I can tell from the pains in my lower back and legs that I am angry.

But at what?

The fact that I cancelled my margin account and am no longer trading stocks.

And this means there are no more excuses, distractions, and time wasters. That I have to finally face my talent! Use it, grow, expand, work with it, dive into it no holds barred?

Am I angry because this talent dive-in would be so scary, and I have tried to avoid it for so long by distracting myself with stock trading? I am totally exposed, naked, but, strangely not feeling vulnerable.

No doubt I am ready to dive in. That's why, after so many years of distraction and losing money, I have finally given up trading with the finality of death.

Friday, November 26, 2021

Guitar philosophy or message: The world is off-beat. Meaning the world is up beat.

Meaning: Life's emphasize or accent is off-beat. Thus think up-beat. Express this off-beat philosophy through guitar. And paradoxically, do this even when the music of your life is on the beat!

Such as in Sor: Etude Number 12

3/4 time. Emphasize first beat. On the beat! Sor Study emphasizes: Relentless, persistent, never give up.

Alhambra: 3/4. Emphasize/accnt second and third beat. So much easier, right, and meaningful.

Leyenda: 3/4. Emphasize first beat. On the beat!

Heart-beat of the universe ringing out on the first note of each measure The bell of the universe ringing, driving and relentless, sounding out the fundamental meaning of the world (universe.)

Self-Expression and Guitar

The guitar is a means of self-expression. I am so lucky to play it!

These classical guitar pieces are my pieces. I express, press out, my moods through them now, at the very moment I am in the mood. When I do that, I submit to the healthy freedom of expression, the truth of here-and-now, its vitality, excitement, and dynamic of seizing the moment. I bow to carpe diem.

The only remaining question is: Do I have the self-knowledge and awareness of my feelings. And if I do, dare I express them through my guitar, right now, here, in the moment?

Monday, November 29, 2021

New Leaf Journal is about turning a new leaf every day. Which also means making a new breakthrough every day. Turning a new page every day and writing a new chapter on it every day.

So what is today's breakthrough.

I'd say it's the discovery of the up-beat in Gavotte en Rondeau, and playing it in the new and dynamic focus (mental emphasis) on the up-beat way.

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Organization

Five Pillars of my Miracle Schedule

As I'm organizing my new, post-pandemic day, here's what I've come up with so far:

Morning:

1. Study: Wisdom readings. My form of meditation. Still new. But so far love it, yes, okay.)

2. Guitar (1 hour). Love it, yes, okay.

3. Writing???

4. Exercise (2 hours). Love it, yes, okay

5. Business???

Breakfast/Lunch

Afternoon:

6. Study: Languages (two hours), Love it, yes, okay

7. Business: Folk dance practice

Writing

My post-pandemic writing view still suffers from a "must."

Where does it belong?

Business along with email, is my social connection. Both connect directly to others.

Could writing also be connected to others?

First I need to examine the "must" killing my writing urge.

I love writing my journal. I do it naturally and easily, want it, and most important, need it.

Thus there is no “must” in journal writing.

What about fiction? (Does Barry’s class put pressure on me to write fiction? And this because my fiction must be edited? No, it does not. I need to edit my fiction. (Sometimes I even like it.) Barry’s editing recommendations simply encourage me to better do what I want. Thus no must in fiction writing.

Result: No obligation problem with writing.

So the only remaining writing question is, “When?”

When to write?

Where in my schedule does it “fit in?”

Truth is, I can’t find a place for it anywhere that feels right.

Perhaps writing has a different and unique place in my miracle schedule.

Perhaps that place is no place and every place.

Perhaps writing is my scattered, unfixed form happening anywhere at anytime. Thus there is no exact spot or timing for it. It’s my everywhere and nowhere form.

Indeed, although journal ideas pop up mostly in the morning, they also can appear anytime. Same with fiction.

Journal and fiction writing are connected by the fact that they must be written down immediately! As soon as I get them. Otherwise, I forget them.

In order for this spontaneity to occur, writing has to happen naturally. It is my anywhere-at-anytime form, scattered, wild, and free.

Fascinating, indeed. Writing, as a scattered and scattering agent, may well be the hot, flowing lava that cements my entire miracle schedule together.

There’s now a writing purpose at a new level.

Growing Pains

Now I know why my body ached so much after Monday nights folk dance class.

That was when this new business/folk dance connection idea was born. My body, especially my legs, ankles, and feet, ached from growing pains. My new ideas of folk dance/business growth and expansion rearrange its molecules, pushing/forcing it to change in order to fit my new mind set.

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Happiness is Depth Practice

Do nothing new.

Go slowly and deeply over the old.

That will make it new.

Why a headache this morning?

Could it be caused by the happiness syndrome?

Do I have a happiness headache?

I think I do.

What do I have to be happy about?

So what is a happiness headache?

It takes place when I'm split between the old and new neighborhoods. One foot in the old, the other in the new. A Gemini split. But it's Gemini okay.

Gemini okay means the split between opposites is okay and right for me. The Both Life is the Gemini life. And it's okay for me.

Depth Practice

I just played the loudest Alhambra note ever. With the index finger. A first.

It stems from the deepest of right hand relaxation.

Loud equals strong and confident.

Loud, deep, and clear is the next guitar playing level. I'll call it: Depth Practice.

Saturday, December 4, 2021

The Next Level

Fake it.

That's today's discovery and addition.

What is the next guitar level? I've got it.

Fake it, and have a great time!

That is indeed the next level for everything else.

"Fake it" means dive in.

"Great time" means joy.

Seize the moment. Joyfully dive in, dance, sing, create calligraphy, run, play, and all b'simcha, with joy.

What else could be important in life?

Joy is even a commandment from the Grand Faqir Himself.

Thus, three new rules from the Great Hymn (Himself):

Dive in, fake it, and let it rip.

Grateful means acknowledging a Higher Power.

So does celebrating.

Could I have done it without the help, encouragement, energy, and even wishes of Higher Power?

This power is not distant, separate, but belongs to me.

Acknowledging myself as belonging to Myself, and vice versa?

It feels like hubris.

But maybe I'm just not used to feeling grateful and celebrating.

Family Tradition

I'm quite surprised, and even a bit embarrassed, that these pages keep filling up with words like God, religion, and spiritual, so distant from my upbringing. In fact, they were never mentioned, even scorned. Religion was the opiate of the people. And

talk of God? Forget it? No such thing as this illusion, phantom, ghost. Only for stupid people.

So here I am following and believing the exact opposite of what I was “taught” when I grew up.

Was it really the opposite? I want to think not. Because I want to belong to a good family tradition. But, truly communism, with its shallow atheism, sucks. And that, unfortunately was my family tradition. Thus, I am the ultimate rebel. Quiet, smiling, and friendly, but rebel nevertheless.

But rebellion was also part of my family tradition.

So maybe I do belong. In my family, artists and intellectuals were worshipped; they were the gods. And artists especially (along with some intellectuals) were rebels. And admired as such.

So as an artist, and rebel, a rebellious artist, I belong to my family tradition, and my artistry can be admired as such. But never my anti-communist, pro-Trump, so-called “conservative” (once called liberal) political views! Total anathema to my family and friends.

So I stand alone. I’m definitely out of the family and friends main stream. No one in my family agrees with me. Friends: maybe one or two. But strangely, my position is not so bad. I know I’m right, at least for me. I’m just a bit quiet about it, especially in public, since I don’t like being hit.

Sunday, December 5, 2021

Real It, And Have A Good Time

Yesterday I said the next level was: “Fake it, and have a good time.”

Today is say, “Real it, and have a good time!”

“Real it” with everything. Every miracle schedule event. Everything. That is where I am. . .and my next challenge.

It’s actually not even a challenge. Why? Because that is where I am and who I

am. Period.

So, truth is, I can be nothing more or less than who I am. So, in reality, in “real it,” there is really no place to reach or go to, no challenge at all. I am already there. It’s simply who I am. Period.

I just have to keep breathing.

So, real it in front of others, and have a good time.

Real it for others, and have a good time.

Real it with others, and have a good time.

It means others and me, me and others. The total application of the together word.

“With” is the optimum All-Is-One word.

Real it, and have a good time.

The Wisdom of Walking

(Running, Exercise, Whatever)

or Attitude in All

A beautiful sunny day today. I took a long a walk.

In the beginning, my legs hurt. Quads especially very tight.

Here are some random thoughts on pain, pleasure, power, and relaxation that came up en route.

Walks are about transforming pain into pleasure. Or, put another way, transforming pain into power!

How to do it?

You can transform pain into power through deep relaxation.

Pain hides power; power hides pain.

Thus pain is power; power is pain.

Deep relaxation removes the pain cover, the power lid. In the process, it (miraculously) makes pain disappear.

Thus I suggest beginning each walk (or exercise) with a deep focus on relaxation.

Even though sometimes you have to fake it to eventually feel it and make it real, deep relaxation is a skill that works.

Pain creates power; power creates pain.

Although the feel totally different, deep within they are the same.

Thus, attitude is all.

Monday, December 6, 2021

Overwhelmed is a stimulation and motivation.

But it is a negative because it is too much

It's a matter of degree. The middle ground, the ancient Greeks Golden Mean is best. How to reach it is always the question.

My Way

Am I thankful and grateful for this life?

Strangely, those words rarely enter my head. Indeed, it is a privilege and a pleasure. But part of me, indeed most of me, feels that my fulfillment and happiness is a right.

How can I claim this right is a good question, and one I always ask.

Not only a right, but also a responsibility! My responsibility.

Because I have the choice. I can choose the route of fulfillment. Or not. It is within my personal power. Fulfillment makes me happy and complete.

And choosing it, or not, is an attitude. And I have control over my attitude.

Who do I have to thank or be grateful to?

Me.

So the really big question is: Who is me?

Is it me?

Or Me?

I choose to think on a grand scale. So rather than choosing the smaller, minuscule lettered, alone, and separate little "me," I choose to identify, and work toward, with the grander, capital lettered, together, and all is one, big Me.

If I can reach, through meditation and action, an identification with all things, then there is nobody left to thank. All-Is-One is all that's left.

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Dealing with Fame and Fortune
or Diplomacy Wins

The well-known Zalmen Mlotek emailed me. He asked about joining my folk dance class on December 20 with his wife.

His email flattered and frightened me. (His wife coming somehow softened the blow. I wonder why.)

The glitter and glamor of fame camouflages the human element.

I must remember he's just a person.

I hate my feeling on this matter. But nevertheless, I want to explore them. So here's the story: I feel ashamed that even now, after so much experience in the world, I am still awed, cowed, and diminished by the fame and fortune of others.

Will personal insecurity, weakness, and vulnerability never go away? Will human fragility never cease?

Probably not.

What's the best way to handle this?

These feelings certainly humanize me.

Zalmen probably feels the same way, perhaps not about me, but no doubt about other things, and other people.

Would talking about it with him help? Make him uncomfortable? Or humanize both of us?

Or should I just remember it, keep it to myself, and deal with it on my own? And once I have recovered, diplomatically go about my business?

Probably dealing with it on my own is the best. After all, why should I burden him with my problems?

Best to know my own mind, perhaps discuss and share it with my wife, and not burden strangers with it, especially my customers!

Bottom line, discussing my problems with my customers is simply not wise, realistic, or good for business.

Asking myself the question "Is this good for business?" is a smart way to keep me objective, realistic, and protect my interests.

Leo Barbauta says, celebrate the above victory by being grateful.

What should I be grateful for?

First, the writing process itself. Simply by writing in my journal, I figure out what to do, how to handle this fame and fortune problem. So I can thank myself for writing, for daily making entries in my journal, and thank the writing process itself. From there I can thank those wise folk in the past who invented writing! I can thank the art of writing.

So, in the things I do, I'm finding reasons for thankfulness and gratefulness. It's a beginning.

Thursday, December 9, 2021

(Jewish) White Man's Burden

I am a Jew.

And I am a white man. (These days color is popular).

Is there such a thing as a Jewish white man's burden?

Do I have it?

This came up when I asked myself the question: What good would improving my calligraphy and singing be?

Then I asked: "Why add them to my burden?"

How surprising the word "burden" came up.

Do I have a burden?

Maybe.

What would it be?

A duty, an obligation.

Maybe.

To what?

To be the best I can be.

How is that achieved?

Perhaps by adding calligraphy and singing to my repertoire of activities, studies, and improvements.

Evidently, self-improvement is a duty, an obligations. (I also hear a vague calligraphy and song calling.)

Is it an obligation?

I'm afraid it is.

Afraid? That's another question.

Or is it?

I hate burdens.

On the other hand, I love them.

Love and hate go together, especially for a Gemini.

What to do?

Obviously, both.

Work on (study) calligraphy and singing, which I love.

But study them while I hate them.

Friday, December 10, 2021

I Need Romance

There's no romance in simple body and muscle questions.

Evidently, I need it.

I need a flight of imagination to inspire me.

What is romance but a flight of imagination?

What is imagination but eternity?

The body is limited but imagination is limitless. It can go anywhere! And anywhere is exactly where I want to go.

So I need to stay in touch with my imagination every day in order to motivate myself to go anywhere and do anything.

With imagination, I can do it all. And this includes calligraphy and singing. No need to be overwhelmed by my monkey mind. I can fit it all in.

Hard to believe what I'm saying and writing, but this morning I also believe I've completed my guitar task. There is no more reason for me to play guitar, at least in the old inferior-and-I- must-practice-to-improve way.

So I need a new reason to play guitar.

Limits and the Limitless

I ask again: Who am I? Who are we? . . . Really?

My "job" here on earth is to remember and experience my sacred and divine nature. Everything else will take care of itself.

I read that, in one of her songs, Carly Simon said: "Horizon is the limit of my sight." I like it.

What about age and body decay?

Can I maintain what I've got, even move ahead?

Can I get better, even with advancing age? Is this possible? Can I actually improve the vehicle?

What a great, inspiring, daring, frightening question!

Suppose my answer is "Yes."

Okay, then what am I doing differently? What is my cause for optimism, even for daring to ask the question?

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Absolute Truth

Truth is experienced in the moment.

Being here-and-now, in the moment, is when it happens.

Asking myself how my activities will heal the world means I have already stepped back, moved out of the moment, am a step removed from the truth. Asking the question is already an abstraction, a step toward falsehood.

Perfect Alhambra

I just played the perfect Alhambra. Relaxed, slow, easy, my mind in a sublime state.

And this after the beautiful discovery that Bach's "Gavotte en Rondeau" is based on a melody, a theme of only three notes! Same for his Gavotte in D. Three notes, sprinkled around and hidden in so many unique ways. Simple and complicated at the same time.

Now I move on to a slow and focused "Leyenda."

When my focus flags, one of the ways I move away from the truth, the truth of the moment is by asking, "What's the purpose of my guitar practice?" And I give

myself answers like: Give others pleasure, play for others, perform for them, give concerts, heal the world, etc. All grand abstractions.

Due to fatigue, I enter the world of abstractions.

Can anything be done about this? Is it even worth the bother?

Perhaps becoming aware is enough, simply accepting fatigue as part of the human condition. The magic of self-awareness slices through many problems, softening their harshness, dropping the remnants into Land of Forgetfulness, and allowing you to move on.

Relish the Focus

Learn to stop at the right time. What a mental skill that is! How to stop (at the place) where focus ends and fatigue begins. And how to relish the focus!

Love Conquers All

Language and Memory

Drop my desire, attempts, and efforts to memorize foreign words.

Rather, focus on my love of their sounds, the feel of holding their lettered form in my mouth, the sensuality of pronouncing them.

Do this and remembering, memorizing the words, will happen naturally and easily by itself.

This "method" is wise, smart, and easy. Whether it works or not is actually beside the point. Does it really matter, anyway?

After all, love is what counts.

Love the language.

Love its feel, taste, touch, and smell. Love the form of its words. The rest will take care of itself.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

My pre-Covid attitudes, especially about language study, writing, and guitar, have splintered. The old neighborhood question of "Why bother?" has entered again.

I realize it has to do with success. After most (all?) successes, I feel down and empty. After all, I'm at the top of the mountain. Where do you go from there?

To the next top!

But evidently, the nature of the emotional cycle is such that, before you find the next mountain, you first must descend into the valley, there to recover, rest, and meditate—perhaps on illusion, the short-term pleasure of success but its long-term emptiness and disappointment. Then, after walking in the valley of despair, you eventually come upon the next mountain. Once that climb begins, despair dissolves in challenge as the next peak comes into view.

And in truth, all mountain climbing, whether in public or private, has the sun of All-Is-One shining upon it.

But of course I, as a humble human, lose sight of this vision. Our search is ever to find the next siting.

Guitar: First Steps into Public

First guitar steps into public. Quite amazing. I want to show my slow side, my (former) weak and weakest side, No one has ever seen it before. It's new, dynamic, vital, important. I want to sShow, demonstrate, flaunt it to the world. First time ever. Quite amazing. Not only is the pressure to play fast off and over. It is not even that interesting! Everyone plays fast. But no one or almost no one, plays slow!

Where will all this lead?

My most vulnerable, hidden, weakest side is becoming my strongest, most interesting, valuable, unique, most fascinating gone public side.

So ends a New Leaf.