

New Neighborhood

Leyenda Barre

Mischievous equals rebellious, dissident. Look into the foundational guitar structures. Example: "Leyenda" barre: Blow it up, destroy, re-examine, start over. Ask and explore new questions. Can my left pinky, through deep relaxation and focus, be stretched further during the barre passages?

I'm choosing "barre."

Why?

Its double R is thicker, needs more power and strength to pronounce. Same with barre: the word needs more power and strength to press and play. Even though more power and strength can often be found through relaxation.

The "barre" name itself is thus a reminder.

Index Power

There's looking into my (right) index finger, plucking it slowly, deliberately, with deliberate focus, and seeing my strength and confidence in it, and trying to speed up, which causes me to deny all my strengths, by pushing, forcing myself to get faster.

(This is also true on my left barre index finger.)

When I consciously try speeding up, playing faster, trying to "improve" myself, it causes me to slip, creating a lack of confidence, and "conscious" diminishment of my index power.

Thus speeding up, unless organically happening, is a diminishment rather than an advance.

It is a return to the old neighborhood, an old fashioned, archaic attempt at Proving Myself.

Trying to prove yourself never works. It only inhibits and diminishes you.

Instead, look for organic strengths, which are found in relaxation, concentration,

and focus (on the present, of course).

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Business people take risks in the real world.

Are there risks in a monastery?

Maybe. But I don't know what they are,

Standing Up To Hysteria

Standing up to hysteria is part of the new neighborhood.

Should I speak out against hysteria?

Probably not, since hysterics won't and don't listen.

On the other hand, maybe they (eventually) will.

In any case, the best approach is stand firm for reason, even though your standing may be solid and silent.

Exploring this further, I'd say speaking out is good even though it seems no one is listening.

Actually, you never know who is listening, including the hysteric.

And speaking out is good for you. It's good practice. You become familiar with the feeling of total rejection. When you do, you can stand alone more easily, with more confidence.

Standing up for your way strengthens arteries, heart, and soul.

The Trauma of Going Slow

Dealing with the trauma of going slow is my gateway into the new neighborhood.

It's also the key to creativity in my classical guitar playing.

And my personal slow trauma is found in my index finger, and thumb hypothenar muscles. (Also speaking slowly in public.)

Watch them tighten, cramp up, become incapacitated, and collapse as I play classical guitar (especially tremolo).

Going slow, loving slow, is my key.

Daily practice is turning it into my road.

A New Neighborhood Approach to Trauma

Agile Fighting Power

When I am threatened, yelled at, my first reaction is retreat. I become quiet and tighten internally as I withdraw. Silently churning, I try figuring out how to deal with fear and anger, muscles tight until I know what to do next.

Guitar-wise, my index and hypthenar muscles tighten when I've withdrawing from audience judgement threat.

Could I learn to withdraw into a place of relaxation, looseness, and agile fighting power?

Folk Dance Pay Off

Another goal: Move from trying to folk dance fast to avoid the arrows, escape the evil, malignant eye of the negative and critical audience, to dancing around (slowly sometimes) free and wild, expressing the mischievous, rebellious, irreverent, beautiful, off-beat, creative, magnificent self.

Monday, January 3, 2022

Guitar

Start (right away) with a "performance."

Performing life begins. Always and ever a performance. This means including the audience in everything I do. But include them in my fearless all-inclusive, All-Is-one, in-the-moment feeling.

See the audience in front of me. Then practice total daring. Play exactly how I

feel in-the-moment. (Slow and soft as it may be.)

I just did it with Bach Gavotte in D.

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Alhambra: Best ever. Face and admit it.

The bad boy needs to return periodically fed through visits to the old Alhambra neighborhood.

What is “bad,” and what is “boy” about the mischievous, playful bad boy? Well, actually nothing. He enjoys lots of naive, playful fun. A good thing.

Hopefully, the mischievous bad boy needs to be fed less and less as one becomes adult and gets more mature.

Pop is guiding my from above.

Thank you, Papa!

Eighty-four is the family age of death, rebirth, and life.

How scary, bone-chilling, and beautiful.

Impressing Others: A Source of Motivation

Got an email from Hope Player. “I’m so impressed by your line-up of tours,” she said.

How’s that for a source of motivation!

My source of motivation is to impress others!

It’s so base, crass, and egotistic, but it may work!

And I sure need motivation!

Maybe it has been the right source all along. After all, impressing others is simply another way of saying I’m making them happy. And making others happy is a total blessing for both of us.

So impressing others may well be the right way to go, it might put the right

bounce in my spring.

Being a total egotist, I would never admit this.

But now I will.

This is scary, risky, frightening.

But fear is a big motivator.

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

I Like Speed!

A Day of Fasting

Now that I can do it, I like speed!

Guitar days of brilliant sunshine.

I'm fasting today; my diet is speed.

Yes, now that I can do it, I like fast!

Watch my "Alhambra" roll!

And from there, my Sor "Etude Number 12," "Bach Bourree in Bm," even "Gavotte en Rondeau." Roaring out at breath-taking speeds. Faster and faster. A giant train on the move.

Even "Leyenda" teeters on the brink. Now it falls! Ah, rolling down the track at exuberant speeds! Lightning on the frets. Ah, it is glorious, exiting, exuberant, exhilarating!

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Problems

Yesterday's problems are not today's problem. Most of them get solved, or are in the process of getting solved, when I write about them.

Plus you can never go backward; you can only go forward.

This means that I actually solve my problems! I don't have to worry about

forgetting my solutions since one can ever go backward.

Yet most of my problems keep returning.

Are they really the same ones?

They may look the same, but they are different. They have matured, changed, been transformed, and now present as new and next level problems.

Thus although the sun may rise every day, and always looks the same, it is, daily, totally different.

This is very optimistic. It means you can actually solve your problems!

Saturday, January 8, 2022

Love and Joy

New Neighborhood Tools

Love feels like a melting into the Magnificence.

Joy feels like excitement, a bubbling-up and dramatic.

Different feelings but forms of the Same.

Art ex-presses them.

They are great healers but as higher vibrations, they are harder to see.

When (and if) I see them, they become powerful positive motivators. Learn their secrets.

I'll start out by putting Love and Joy in my left-hand "Alhambra" barre muscles. "Leyenda," too. While I'm at it, I'll send hot currents of Love into my stiff left shoulder.

The battle between fear versus love begins again. It's taking place in my left-shoulder "Bach Gavotte in D" muscles.

Warming up means sending currents of hot love into my warm-up muscles. In this sense, stiff muscles are "cold with fear" and must be warmed up with love so they can thaw, soften, and begin to flow.

So the battle between Love and Fear takes place on the battlefield of Stiff Muscles. Fibers cramp and hurt during the fight. They stiffen periodically and must be

taken off the battlefield. Then, after rest, relaxation, and healing, they can fight again.

Monday, January 10, 2022

I had a fabulous morning in the gym. I came out feeling light, airy, and happy as a feather.

Part of being tough and resilient is being able to accept a great day!

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Guitar Lips

The most courageous thing in giving a public or private concert would be to open, to present myself, by feeling each string before I pluck it, then listening to the round, beautiful tone of each note that comes out. This, of course, means playing guitar so so so slowly.

How do I imagine the audience would react?

“Boring! Boring!” they scream. Or politely, they think to themselves. “When will this fucker end? When will this concert ever start? I paid all this money and look what I’m getting? A big nothing!”

Yes, that’s what I hear them saying. First to themselves, then to others around them. A complete disaster.

And yet, in this imagined courageous concert, I’d keep playing. I’d keep aiming to feel each string before I pluck it, then continue to listen to each note after I play it, one note at a time. Slow, slow, slow. Tone is the word. So is meditation. Tempo is besides the point. Sure, eventually, I may play faster, and naturally and easily move into a fluid up-beat tempo. But again, maybe not. It would all depend on how I feel. The courage part is daring to give the concert, forget the obligation to the audience, and focusing solely on how I feel.

Is this possible? A good thing to do? After all, one “gives” a concert, one doesn’t

“take” it. And focusing only on my feelings means taking the time from the audience, forcing them to sit there while I do what I want. Somehow it feels “selfish.”

That’s because it is selfish.

Can one give a selfish concert?

Can I put myself first in one? I don’t think so. It is my natural instinct, when I stand before an audience, to please as I play for them. I, my ego, my self, and besides the point.

I’d love to focus on my slow tone-creating self only. But that would not be a concert.

What to do?

I don’t know. Maybe never give one again.

Maybe I can only play for my alter egos. But even in this scenario, before I can wow them with fluidity, tone, and speed, I probably still have to bore them to death with painful but beautiful touch-slow plucking, majestic sound, round, gorgeous, the soft strong tone emanating from my guitar lips.

I hate to say it but the above is just bull shit. Truth is, I’m just finding new excuses to avoid giving a concert.

I’m taking the cowards way out. First step is to simply admit it.

Do I have the right to be a coward? Yes.

Do I want to be a coward?

Thursday, January 13, 2022

Maybe anonymous is the way to go.

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Have Faith

Muse is spirit. Spirit is muse

The spirit muse floats in and out
It's fickle that way
What to do?
Persevere
Perseverance counts
Stick with it no matter what
Do it anyway, even without spirit
Go through the motions
Have faith
The bird will fly again

Happy Fingers

4:40 p.m. Afternoon Alhambra: My fingers are so happy to play loud, slow, and strong. They are totally loving it!

In fact, I'm thinking that they never were this happy! First time, such unabated, whole-hearted, and total happiness. No pressure, no place to go, no nothing. Just singing, flowing, relaxed, sinking, and diving into the finger moment!

Eternal Life

I am looking for God and Eternal Life.
That's what my journal is all about.
Perhaps that is my job:
Bringing my vision of God to the world.

The magnificent melt-down vision I had playing the violin when I was sixteen.
How to bring it? This has been my question and my quest.

I hear gratitude is good.

But I rarely feel it. And this, even though I often say "Than you."

It's a privilege plucking these Alhambra beauties.

Is this the first sign of gratitude?

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Awe-and-Wonder Guy

Maybe I deserve the good things that I'm thinking and are happening to me.

Deserve? I've never used this word before.

Am I grateful? Or am I entitled?

Perhaps a bit of both?

Entitlement has fear behind it. The word is usually applied to government. If given by government, it can be taken away by government. Thus, entitlements are not truly mine. If I am entitled to the good things I'm thinking, doing, and getting, I could lose them all.

Of course, on a larger level, nothing I think, do, or get is really mine. It can all be taken away by fate and its Higher Powers.

Gratitude is a better word for the gifts I am getting.

"Thank you Lord for the good things I am finally thinking. Thank you for the quiet, peaceful, fruitful, creative, fulfilling life I am now living."

Then in reality, long term, I really don't own a thing. Even my mind and feelings are on loan.

But I do have a choice of attitude.

And the one I choose is Awe and Wonder.

End of Corona

Strange, but suddenly I don't mind wearing masks.

It started when the gym re-instituted mask wearing with the advent of the

omicron virus. Suddenly, I didn't mind it. In fact, wearing one felt familiar, comfortable, even comforting. Now I could hide once again behind a mask, in my cocoon of self.

I also wonder if there was some sadness in this "enjoyment and acceptance" of the mask. I sense that this corona period, along with its mask wearing, social distancing, strange rituals, and all its other craziness will eventually be ending.

I feel it, sense it in the air, like a season coming to a close.

A bit wistful, part of me will regret it. This wild, unhinged, frightening, enraging, isolating period has been rich in challenges and personal changes. I've grown and developed in surprising new ways. And strangely, part of me will miss it.

Friday, January 21, 2022

Imagination

Meeting Big Me

Is it my imagination?

Or is it the Universal Imagination filtered through the small "imaginative" me?

I lean toward the latter. To reach this peak, little me needs expansion to Big Me.

When this enlightened state is realized, then yes, there's no question that playing guitar "solo or alone" in my living room reaching All. This because there is no such thing as solo or alone.

Saturday, January 22, 2022

The Fun And Joy Life

Cleaning out the Closet

There is nothing final.

Yet this is, or at least feels like it "should."

What is final? The new neighborhood dive-in life.

Along with it comes: Fun and Joy are my credo. Yes, the Fun and Joy Life is my

new neighborhood credo. It sounds so shallow and easy. But is really so difficult and hard to get there.

I can practice it. But “practice” is now just another excuse to step away from “just do it!”

Cleaning is a better word. As I play “Alhambra,” I’m cleaning out the remnants of trauma and, one barre or measure at a time, sweeping them out the door.

Sunday, January 23, 2022

Depression rises like a chemical wave. It keeps coming for no apparent reason. In fact, at this point, even the reason for its existence, if I can find one, is besides the point.

What to do?

Accept it? Or forget it?

I lean to the latter. Like a cloud, depression passes almost by itself. Not much I can do but watch it enter my bones as it floats by.

But in passing awareness, as I watch it, give it a little attention. And while watching, divert my view to my next activity. Yes, even while this cloud is thriving, sinking its poison fangs into my bones, dive straight in to my next activity. Strangely, diving itself helps the cloud pass.

Monday, January 24, 2022

Qualitative Leap Day

Reach High

Joy and glory are good.

But ecstasy is best!

Aim for ecstasy

It’s the ultimate union

It could be my measure of attainment and success

The ultimate aim of union.

No halfway measures here.

Reach high

Go all the way for the Big Guy.

Guitar

Ecstatic muscles

A tight (left hand) muscle is an un-ecstatic muscle.

How to bring ecstasy to each muscle: Focus on relaxing the fibers, bring blood flow in. Let it surge. Fill the fibers with ecstasy.

Next Level

Combine (folk) dance and classical guitar.

The whole body is involved now. (Through the fingers, of course.) I rock (as I play).

Dance as I play guitar, play guitar as I dance.

It's easy, too. How amazing, wonderful, and beautiful! What a way to go!

Dance as I play guitar, and vice versa.

The dancing guitar.

Leyenda

Count of 6, if seen as 6/8, upbeat on 5

Or, if seen as 3/4 time, up beat on 3.

Gavotte in D

As a dance, it's totally different.

Gavotte en Rondea: Same

Soleares

Slow 3/4. Solo, so low (sad) dance.

(See it on YouTube.)

The Vibrational Truth

The vibrational truth is: my vibrations reach everyone in this world, whether I like it or not.

So, whether I like it or not, whether I am aware of it or not, what I think affects the world.

This is an amazing and awesome truth. Even in the privacy of my room, even alone on a mountain miles from others, even alone in a cave, what I think matters!

There is no escape. We are all One Vibration. Or rather, we are all scattered vibrations, all rolled into One.

What does this mean for me personally?

As a start, look at my yoga exercises. I'll now call this my Unification Yoga, and this tautology pushes my brain even deeper into oneness, since the word Yoga itself means Union.

So, I am healing the necks of the world through my shoulder stand. This happens whether I think it or not. But, if I do think it, and consciously direct the vibrations outward, these now unblocked vibrations are more power, and thus heal others and myself better. Thus since, on a vibrational level, and others are the same, awareness of my power channels it more easily, makes the transmission stronger, and thus the helps me and others even more.

What is the vibration connection? It is aided, enabled, and strengthened by ecstasy.

Thus in yoga, focus on the body part being stretched, and as you feel it, imagine I am sending out the feeling and healing vibrations to everyone else in the world. A hamstring stretch stretches all the hamstrings in the world; the blood rushing to the head in a headstand or shoulder stand brings blood to the brains of others as far away

as Africa, the moon, and Mars, helping to create new brain cells and even healthier thoughts.

Even my folk dance classes are transmitted to the world.

So whether I believe it or not, what I do and think are important. They affect others.

How to put this new awareness into practice?

Begin by thinking it.

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Grateful and Ungrateful

But first, an ungrateful grateful sideline break.

Note: My creations are for others to enjoy and appreciate, but not for me.

I wonder why.

Am I ungrateful for these HaShem gifts?

Maybe.

Somehow I think I created them along, on my own, no help from others. (Total ego here.)

This instead of We created them, HaShmem and I working together. That's the Jewish partnership way.

If I am ever to be grateful, it must be to God. He is, after, running the show. But I am involved, play a role, as well.

Strange, but somehow feeling grateful to me feels like I'm giving up, giving in, defeated.

We'll see where the speculations lead.

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New Guitar Reality
(The Matter-of-Fact Life)

Is this the matter-of-fact new guitar reality?

I think so.

The fast approach, light, easy, hardly touching the strings (flying over the strings).

It certainly works.

A wow amazement. But today, also matter-of-fact. No getting away from it.

This is the reality.

Relaxing deep into the fingers as I roll.

Guitar warm-up: Very light, fast scales. Hardly touching the strings.

New Career as a Classical Guitarist

First Concert to be Given on Mars

I can do it. Start from zero.

What does such a creation look like?

What will be its new and unique aspects?

Plan a fantasy concert on Mars, with fantasy date, place, time, location, audience, etc.

Funny, off-beat, off-the-wall, wild, crazy. (I'm rolling down the lawn laughing already!)

1. No audience
2. Empty concert halls
3. No pressure except from the air around me.
4. First performance scheduled for flight to Mars.

Concert performance name: Looking Over the Abyss

Location: Edge of Hellas Basin crater (twice the size of Alaska, so lots of space for the non-existent audience.

Parking in local garages.

The program:

Concert free for Zany fans! What a bargain and deal!

Zany tour group to visit Mars to attend the first Zany concert. for free. Zany's next step. Life in his new neighborhood.

Thursday, January 27, 2022

New Neighborhood Macho

Everything is going so well.

So why have I been strangely down, aching, and without energy the past day or so?

Got it. Yesterday I had a check up at Hackensack Hospital Urology, not cardio. Nevertheless, all the old cardio memories return. Sadness for all I lost. Including the partially indestructible image of myself.

At the time, in July, I was so involved with survival that I could and didn't process the loss. Now, months later, I'm in a new space. And from this new distance, I can mourn my past.

Mourning loss of old self and neighborhood.

Time to consolidate with the new self.

Emasculation leads to emancipation. Mourning leads to a new morning.

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Light

Light comes before fast.

The invisible creates the visible.

Thoughts create the world.

Practice light.

The lighter it is, the more in imagination it is, and from the imagination you can go almost anywhere!

Fast is more concrete. It is of the material world.

The combo of light and fast is dynamite!

So practice light. Fast will emerge by itself, with little or no effort. It will come out as a by-product.

How to apply light to folk dancing, exercise, learning languages, writing, singing, and of course, guitar?

I don't want to be too ethereal. If I do, I'll lose my way on earth. The balanced combo of light and fast, ideal and material, cogitation and concrete, reason and imagination, is best.

Sunday, January 30, 2022

Choose Faith, Confidence, and Neuroplasticity

It all had to do with the idea that, if I didn't get it right, I'd be rejected.

But if I am never alone, I will always "get it right." So, since I'll "always get it right" or rather, since I am never alone (All Is One), no matter what happens or what I do, then why lose faith and confidence?

Truth is, there is no reason to. Giving up my faith and confidence was a function of the old neighborhood.

Faith and confidence are the new neighborhood. There is no reason to lose or give it up. Faith in the higher vibrations, confidence in their eternal existence, the knowledge and wisdom that I am never alone, are part of that. And when I play guitar in my living room, it reaches every thing in the universe.

The only thing I have control over is my attitude.

The next challenge is to constantly remind myself of this.

The New (Guitar) World of the New Neighborhood

The place where I hope and plan to live.

I move in today.

A good start: Full of faith and confidence, I played a beautiful Bach Gavotte in D.

To be accepted and loved forever, no matter what.

Do my guardian angels do that? I'd say yes.

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Purpose

This morning I hit bottom when I thought about endings. I realized I needed new starts to fill the holes. Truth is, while I'm in this world, I want to influence it in a hands-on manner.

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Business

February is the month of management.

I am the head of a folk dance tour company. (I'll organize and manage the tours, but I will no longer lead them.

Filling the large hole with small management.

Languages

But an Ipad? So I can have an electronic keyboard and easily switch alphabets from English to Hebrew to Greek to Bulgarian, and even Spanish.

It means I'd be serious about learning three-four languages.

Retirement

Redefining Retirement as Victory

This is all about retiring.

In the past, the idea of me "retiring" was so negative.

For me, it meant defeat and shame.

Here I am a hero to myself for creating, sustaining, and, most important, making a living from my own artistic business. And this always in the face of incredible odds.

Yes, I did it both as a guitarist in the concert business, and as a folk dance teacher the folk dance and tour business.

I did them both for many years.

But now I have the problem of any winner. What do I do post-victory? How do I give up my past fields of glory and move on? What is the next level, the next stage? If any?

Well, there is always a next stage. I just haven't figured out what it is yet.

But no question the old stage has served its purpose, fulfilled its mission. To remain on this formerly rich and hallowed ground means no moving on. And if I try to stay in this ancient, and formerly glorious ground it would soon turn foul and unclean. Ultimately, I would be rotting in place.

Rotting is not for me.

Even retirement is better than rotting.

And the retirement vacuum. Like any vacuum, will soon be filled.

So, first face and deal with all my old feelings of defeat, disgust, and shame over "retirement."

Then redefine retirement as victory, winning, achieving, fulfilling my goals. Time to move on, find new goals, new mountains to climb.

Quite a Liberation

Quite a liberation.

It will be easier to "give up" my Darien group, "retired" from it in victory and glory, goals achieved, job well done. Yes, done, finished, over, completed. Time to move on.

I don't even have to teach folk dancing, locally or anywhere, morning, afternoon, or anytime.

What will this do to the pains in my legs?

Maybe they will go the way of hand pains. When I was a professional guitarist, I depended on my guitar hand to make a living. When I stopped, no longer had to give concerts, the pains slowly disappeared. Now they are totally gone.

Maybe the same the will happen with my legs, knees, ankles, etc. Pains are so mental. With mental pressure gone, who knows what will happen?

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Retirement Concert

I have redefined retirement.

Now it is time to redefine "concert."

Would A(ZEN) GUITAR MEDITATION CONCERT be good titles?

I want it to be a type of meditation.

Subtitle might be: RETIRED, BUT NOT TIRED.

How would I want the audience to react to this new type of concert?

With a sigh?

Not exactly.

Would I want them to react at all?

Maybe I'd prefer them to simply sit in place and absorb. Leave out clapping, applause, and approved. It once again separates performer from audience.

Why separate us? The beauty is in the togetherness.

Better even to remain in the corner unnoticed. Play in the background. That way background becomes foreground.

Yes, I feel a bit self-conscious when folks say "Thank you." Although perhaps necessary, this acknowledgment of favor is nevertheless, a subtle form of separation.

Of course, as a human, I have an ego. Like my stomach, it must be fed.

But the Greater Self, home of Magnificence, the place I touch when I really play guitar, stands on its own.

Contradictions between universal and particular never stop.

Friday, February 4, 2022

Serious Pursuits

February is the month of serious pursuits.

It is connected to retirement in the sense of a new definition of re-tire-ment, which means: Putting new tires on my old, former life vehicles as I roll them into the new life.

Just as January set the re-tire-ment pace through visits to the airy, ethereal, astral planes, now I am ready to lay my new claims to the concrete world.

This means new “serious” looks and approaches to languages, writing, and exercise. Guitar and folk dancing are already “serious.”

Saturday, February 5, 2022

The Entertainment Business

The etymology of entertain is “to stretch or hold between.”

Studying languages is my form is entertainment. Self-entertainment. So is playing guitar.

Life itself may simply be about entertaining yourself while you’re here.

What about learning and self-improvement? Isn’t one put on Earth to learn things?

Maybe learning and self-improvement are all part of the entertainment process. After all, when you entertain yourself, you learn something. And vice versa.

So I am in the entertainment business.

Not a bad place to be.

Is Seven th Magic Number?

Is there an optimum number of times to repeat an exercise?

Rick says three time is enough to get its maximum benefit.

But now I'm wondering: How about seven?

What happens when I repeat an exercise seven times? (Or even more? Horowitz repeated passages over one hundred times. And in one practice session!)

But let's start with seven.

Is it the magic number?

What happens when I repeat a guitar piece seven times? Or a yoga exercise? Or any exercise?

I'll try it and find out.

So ends a New Leaf.