



April 2017

Step into your Power:

From Sunday 15 April to Sunday 23 April eighteen yogis from around the country trained with Margo and Hamish at Maruia Hot Springs in our yoga intensive/teacher training programme, **Step into your Power**.

For Margo and Hamish it is a humbling and very gratifying experience to see the trainees undergo tremendous transformation in their physical practice, to experience wonderful insights through meditation and inquiry and to shine with enthusiasm at all that is possible for them. Our students really do Step into their Power.

We run these intensives twice per year. The next occasion will be at Wainui on Banks Peninsula in January 2018. Set time aside now, plan ahead and make the commitment to yourself. It is a truly transformative experience!

"I found the inward looking sessions hugely transformative. I felt that there was a consistent theme, and was really impressed by Hamish's ability to retain what each person had said throughout the week and then re-state it to the relevant participant at a pivotal moment.

The training was incredible. It was transformative. I connected deeply with myself

and the other participants, and found a space in myself that I try to remember and return to whenever I can."

Whether you wish to learn how to teach yoga or whether you wish to undertake a process of personal transformation, this programme is for you!



40 Days to Personal Revolution

From **Sunday 7 May to Friday 16 June** we will be running our next **40 Days to Personal Revolution** programme.

There will be six workshops beginning on Sunday 7 May and repeating every Sunday at 6:00pm. The duration of the workshops increases over the course of the programme from around 75 minutes for the first workshop to around 2.5 hours for the final workshop.

To enrol for the 40 Days programme speak to us at reception or send an email to hamish@apollopower yoga.co.nz. For annual members the cost is \$150 including a copy of Baron Baptiste's book, *40 Days to Personal Revolution*. If you are not an annual member the cost is \$350. For this fee you receive:

- Attendance at all six workshops.
- A copy of Baron Baptiste's book, *40 Days to Personal Revolution*.
- Daily motivational emails.
- Weekly hand-outs.
- For those not annual members, all your practice at Apollo Power Yoga for the duration of the 40 Days programme.



For more information about the programme visit the 40 Days to Personal Revolution page on our website or ask for a handout from reception at the studio.

This is not like a 30-day challenge offered elsewhere where all that is done is 30 days of asana practice. This is 40 days of **meditation, asana practice, personal inquiry** and **nutritional well-being**. Shape for yourself a whole new way of being of vitality, peace and purpose. Do not wait or let this opportunity pass by. Register now! Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Blind Spots:

As drivers we are warned to be aware of blind spots in a variety of ways. We must not overtake another vehicle or in any way cross the centreline when there is a bend in the road or a rise in the road that obscures our vision ahead. When changing lanes or pulling out from the side of the road we must check over our shoulder to ensure we have a complete view of what may be coming from behind us. When reversing we must be conscious of any areas where our vision is obscured. The stakes are high and a failure to be aware of what is in our blind spot can be catastrophic.

So it is in other aspects of our lives. I know of someone who once said "I can't live without my white bread". Shortly thereafter they experienced a diabetic shock and part of the health regime diagnosed for their recovery and maintenance of good health was the elimination of white bread from their diet.

A lawyer was representing a client who had injured a cyclist by entering an intersection and colliding with the on-coming cyclist. It was after dark and the cyclist did not have a light on their bicycle. The lawyer, however, frankly accepted on their client's behalf that the cyclist "was there to be seen". In the case of the diabetic, the adverse effect of too much white bread was there to be seen but nevertheless the person concerned was blind to that effect.

We see this sort of effect all the time. One example is of someone who is absolutely, resolutely committed to a particular form of activity (let us say running) and they repeatedly appear with an injury of one form or another from their chosen activity. Yoga practice is, often, a last resort for such a person and is commenced with the intention of allowing them to return to their chosen activity. Achilles problems, plantar fasciitis, torn hamstrings, low back compression and

pain, labral tears in their hips, knee imbalances and cartilage or meniscus problems, excessively tight ilio-tibial tracts, sciatic pain and so forth are all injuries that stare runners in the face but they remain blind to the adverse effect their chosen activity is having upon their bodies.

It is no different to the way we see ourselves and others or, more importantly, the lack of awareness we have to our patterns of thought and behaviour. A woman Margo used to swim with had a black toe nail that would not repair itself. The woman concerned was encouraged at one point to stop smoking. In the period that she was not smoking the toe nail gradually recovered and the blackness disappeared. However, the woman lost her commitment and resumed her smoking habit. Her toe went black again. For whatever reason she was drawn to smoking and was oblivious to the evidence that the habit was killing the cells of her body.

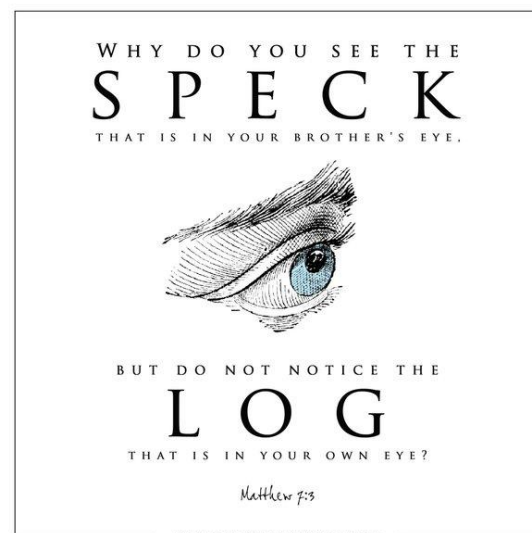
One of the students who recently trained with us in our **Step into your Power** programme was asked to complete an exercise in the January portion of the training and had difficulty answering the questions involved. The same exercise was repeated in April. The student said they had been reflecting on those questions in the intervening period and had been struck by the answers. The student had clarity and certainty about the answers when the exercise was repeated in April. The answers were there to be seen but, no matter how important and significant, they had been in the student's blind spot.

Once the student allowed their own truth and patterns of thought to reach their awareness they gained power in respect of a pattern of thought that had been hurting them.

In my own case, I spent many years of my life going out of my way to dislike and disparage

other people. In February 2010 during a teacher training with Baron Baptiste the matter that had been in my blind spot was revealed to me. It was not that I disliked others. The issue was that I disliked myself!

A world of possibility opened itself up to me in that moment. If I could like myself and forgive myself for the way I had been, I would have no need to disparage and sneer at other people. That technique was simply a means by which I sought to put others down in order to put myself up. From the standpoint of liking myself I could value and appreciate others, celebrate their accomplishments, drop resentment at their successes and have compassion for their trials. Immediately, the world seemed a brighter place.

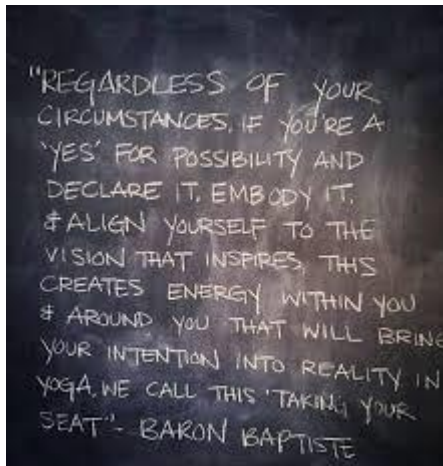


This is true power in the sense of being able to be and to let be. I am a long way from the state of contentment I seek and I slip often but overall there is progress in my way of seeing myself and, therefore, my way of seeing the whole world.

What is right before your eyes but is nevertheless in your blind spot? What can you be free of if only you will allow yourself to acknowledge it? What is possible if you come to terms with the elephant in your own mental living room? Forget the splinter in the other

person's eye. What about the log in your own? From my experience and from witnessing other people realise what inhibiting, limiting and disempowering thoughts and behaviours lie in their blind spot, I can only emphasise the value of getting to awareness now.

From Baron Baptiste:



Asana Spotlight:

Last month our focus was on pigeon pose. This month, it is dragon. This is a wonderful pose to release tension and relieve long-term patterns of tightness in the deep hip flexors of the psoas major, iliacus and ilio-psoas groups.

- Begin in downward facing dog. Step your right foot forward to your right thumb and lower your left knee to the mat. Step far enough forward (for some people it takes several movements) such that your front knee stacks vertically over your right ankle.
- Many people find lowering their left knee to the floor uncomfortable on their left kneecap. Feel free to use a folded up towel or cushion beneath your knee. At Apollo Power Yoga we have a large supply of

cushions in the meditation room which you are welcome to use for this purpose.

- Angle your right foot outwards, about 45° off centre. Open your right thigh outwards towards the right wall and roll your foot onto its outer edge.
- Dorsi-flex your right foot (flex your right foot back towards your right shin). Avoid collapsing your right ankle outwards. Align the metatarsals (the long bones in the body of your right foot) with your right femur (thigh bone). Maintain an anatomical stability at your right ankle.
- Relax the weight of your hips forwards such that your hips do not stack vertically over your left knee but release forwards of your left knee.
- If possible, lower your left forearm to the floor and then your right forearm to the floor. Again, not everyone has this range of movement. Resting your forearms onto blocks is a good mid-way position allowing depth without strain.



- The notion of depth without strain is important in these hip opening poses. The purpose is relaxation and stretch for deep muscles rather than hyper-extension with your body shuddering at its absolute limit.
- Relax your neck, breathe deeply and evenly and watch as your body gradually allows concentric tension through your left quadriceps and hip flexors into your right groin and adductors to be released.
- Some people also experience a strong stretch through the ilio-tibial tract down the outside of the right hip and thigh and even a stretch into their right buttock.

- To advance the pose, rotate your torso towards the right side of the room. Use your right hand to gently open your right knee a fraction wide to the right, then reach your right arm straight towards the back of the room.
- Bend your left leg at the knee and lift your left foot towards the sky. Catch a bind if you can with your right hand to the outside of your left foot or ankle. To do so effectively, externally rotate your right arm. That is, as you reach your right arm towards the back of the room draw your right shoulder-blade in towards your spine, open your right palm to the right side of the room and have your right thumb pointing up towards the sky.
- Taking a bind in this way is easiest if your left hand is on the floor and your left arm is straight. It is more challenging to take this bind with your left forearm at the floor. Meet yourself as you are and proceed carefully. Again, it is not an occasion for violent force or strain.
- Once you have the bind create opposing energies between your right hand and your left foot. Pull your right hand forwards gently and kick through your left foot towards the back of the room.
- In response to these energies, rotate your torso even more such that your chest turns away from the floor, towards the right wall and even up towards the sky.
- Many people, in trying to catch a bind, drop their chin to their chest and look towards the back of the room. This tends to lead their whole spine into flexion – forward rounding. Resist this tendency.
- Keep your chin lifted off your chest. Hold your drishti gaze at a point forward of the front edge of your mat. Elongate the front side of your torso from your pubic bone to your throat.
- This elongation can be taken when the student is ready into an extension of the

spine – a back bend. Move with care at when your spine is in both rotation and extension there are significant pressures at play on your spine and these should not be forced or overdone.

- Another caution is for the more mobile students who go very deeply into their dragon lunge. Avoid collapsing your left hip towards or onto the floor. If you cannot maintain a degree of lift and buoyancy at your left hip, place a block under your hip to hold you up.
- Some very mobile students find it hard to get meaningful stretch in this lunge. It may help in that case if you place your front foot on a block. Extra lift at your front foot can create extra stretch through the target areas of the pose.



- An alternative variation that we call fire breathing dragon involves keeping your left knee lifted off the mat and your right foot pointing straight forwards with the sole of your right foot flat to the floor. In this variation, maintain engagement through the front of your left thigh and tone into your left hamstrings and buttock. These contractions under stretch enhance the eccentric stretch of dragon. They are tiring and the duration for which you will be able to hold this variation is shorter than for the standard variations already described.

Once you have done one side, repeat on the opposite side. Do not assume or try to force an equal degree of depth on each side of the pose.

With all these poses the duration of hold is at your discretion. Your hips are strong, well-designed joints bound by powerful muscle groups. Long holds are possible and necessary to have the desired rehabilitative effect. Remain awake and aware during these poses and come out if the sensation you are feeling passes beyond a good strong, stretch into strain.

Dragon will bring you to the edge of your physical capacity in some way and as it does it will trigger your mental resistance. Use this experience as an occasion for meditation. Relax with what is. Stop fighting with yourself and allow the yoga to do you. The great teacher Mr B. K. S. Iyengar said the pose begins the moment you want to come out of it. Notice your resistance, physical and mental and transform, physically and mentally on your mat.

Yoga Therapy:

Article by Rachel Gilker: LPN, Yoga Teacher and Yoga Therapist
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Yoga therapy is yoga that suits you, so you don't need to worry about suiting yoga. Over the last three years I have been formulating my own definition of yoga therapy based on practice, study, and experience. Yoga therapy (YT) is the removal of obstacles to achieve freedom from suffering. Obstacles can be anything from physical illness and ailments in the body, psychological beliefs i.e. "I am not good enough", "I am not loved", or the inability to attend group yoga classes for whatever reason. YT restores the responsibility and power of healing to the individual rather than relying on others to provide treatment. It teaches you the tools necessary to gain more

comfort in your yoga postures and because it is unique to you, there is no need to worry if you will be "good enough" or "flexible enough" because you can just be yourself!

Yoga therapy has been around for hundreds of years, but it is more recently being recognized and utilized alongside other Western medicine techniques, due to pioneers such as Swami Kuvalyananda, Mukunda Stiles, Larry Payne, Richard Miller and Gary Kraftsow. With the help of research and scientific evidence on the benefits of yoga, we are seeing more medical professionals referring their patients to a yoga therapist for help. People with heart disease, traumatic brain injuries, chronic pain, depression, anxiety, and many other health conditions have started to seek yoga therapy for relief, and research is starting to show that it is working.

The International Association of Yoga Therapists defines Yoga therapy as "The process of empowering individuals to progress towards improved health and well-being through the application of philosophy and practice of yoga".

To better understand YT, we need to travel back more than a hundred years ago to the birth of Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya is known as the inventor of modern yoga and whether you practice power yoga, Ashtanga yoga, Iyengar yoga, or therapeutic yoga, chances are he had an influence on the style you're practicing.

In 1933, Krishnamacharya was asked to open a yoga school in Mysore India where he began teaching primarily to active young males at a gymnastics centre. Using the knowledge he gained from yoga, gymnastics, and Indian wrestling he created the Ashtanga Vinyasa yoga sequence as well as the sun salutation, the movement in and out of poses that we know today as "flow". The style of yoga was very popular and classes remained consistently full.

When a young woman named Indra Devi entered Krishnamacharya's class, things began

to change. Even though she studied with Krishnamacharya during his years in Mysore, the style of yoga she learned and eventually came to teach, was much different. She was taught in a much gentler way, and Krishnamacharya accommodated yet challenged her physical limitations.

By this time, due to political changes Krishnamacharya lost funding for his school and it eventually closed. This forced Krishnamacharya to seek students elsewhere and eventually he left Mysore. As students started to come to him he began seeing all sorts of people, many were much less active than his previous students and some even had disabilities and medical conditions. He adapted yoga postures to suit people's needs and provided them with support not only physically but spiritually as well. This style of therapeutic yoga became internationally known as viniyoga. Krishnamacharya's son, TKV Desikachar continued to adapt the viniyoga tradition to suit anyone's needs and it is studied by many yoga therapists worldwide.

So this is where I come in to the story; my journey to yoga therapy has been sculpted and moulded over the last decade as I have been searching for the right role that suits me. I have always known that I wanted to help others through my work - I just haven't always been so sure as to what that looked like.

For six years I worked as a paediatric nurse at the Alberta Children's Hospital in Canada where I specialized in neurology and orthopaedics, and more specifically, with kids who were rehabilitating from brain injuries and other neurological disorders. I learned a lot about traumatic brain injuries, chronic pain, epilepsy, cancer and the like, and how it affected not only the child but the rest of the family and the caregivers as well. In 2007 my father suffered a stroke and I watched him fight his way back through years of pain, frustration, and rehabilitation. I saw how his injury changed him and how it impacted my mother, the caregiver, so intensely. I wanted to

be able to do more, to be more but I never quite knew how.



Rachel Gilker

After I became a yoga teacher in 2012, I started to look into ways that yoga could help the families I worked with, including my own family. I was beginning to use my nursing knowledge as well as my understanding of yoga philosophy and practice to help my patients, and I was seeing impressive results. I wanted to do more of it, so in 2014 I left my full-time position as a nurse to pursue a career in yoga therapy. In June of 2016, I graduated from the Mount Royal University Yoga Therapy Certification Program.

I feel like I finally know the right thing to say or do, and since graduating I have worked with people of all ages. I have worked 1:1 with people with cerebral palsy, whiplash, back, neck and shoulder injuries, and I have led group classes for people with back pain, chronic pain, headaches, and brain injuries. Here are a few testimonials from people I have worked with:

"I feel more relaxed and I can sleep better after I do yoga" reported a female, 17 years old with chronic back pain who attended yoga two mornings a week for six weeks.

"He has a noticeable (to his Dad anyway) 'I can do it' spirit and he is acting on this by taking on new activities. His grades at school have shot up 30 grade points into the 90's and he is voluntarily participating in after school

activities- and loving it- for the first time in 7 years..." a father shared his excitement for his 17-year old son who had suffered from chronic pain for a long time.

"My sense of balance, fine motor coordination and left side strength was "broken" after my stroke. The yoga classes I took forced me to work on my balance in an effective but gentle way. The stretching movements also helped me with my balance as well as calming my body during a stressful and depressing period in my life. Over time as I have regained strength and balance, I have found the yoga classes to be very encouraging and confidence building. As I've seen myself able to do various movements more smoothly, with better balance, it has given me encouragement to keep focusing on my recovery." my dad, a stroke survivor, whom I taught yoga to throughout his recovery.

So what do I do? Well, I provide customized yoga treatment plans for each of my clients based on their abilities. I usually begin each session with a visual body assessment followed by an adapted yoga sequence that follows the principles of the physiotherapy Functional Movement Screen (FMS) which tests imbalances in mobility, stability and coordination. After the first session I then create a unique yoga sequence for my client based on their needs whether it be physical, or psychological. Yoga is a dynamic practice so I am always looking at the bigger picture and empowering my clients to determine their stress triggers and imbalances within their daily routine. Each sequence includes not only physical postures to practice but also involves a breathing technique, and or a guided meditation or mantra. I follow my clients closely and check in regularly, offering adjustments to their sequences as well as recommendations for other healthcare treatment options. I believe that working as a team is very important so I keep an open line of communication between myself and my clients' healthcare team.

I am currently working on a yoga program for people who are recovering from brain injuries, minor or severe, and their caregivers, to attend classes specifically structured for their needs. I

recognize the struggles that brain injury survivors and their caregivers are faced with and I want to create a sense of community and belonging for them. The program is designed to help increase balance, endurance, coordination, and strength, as well as improve focus and awareness, memory, and overall quality of life.

If you are interested in private yoga therapy, or you would like me to offer group classes regarding a certain condition, or you are interested in the brain injury yoga program please contact me. I am excited to work with you and I look forward to meeting you.

Staff Changes:

Echo's time in New Zealand comes to an end this weekend. She heads away for new adventures elsewhere around the globe as of next week. We thank her for her work at Apollo Power Yoga and wish her well.

You will see the familiar faces of some Apollo students taking their place as teachers at Apollo Power Yoga. Several of the students who have trained with us in our **Step into your Power** programme will be bringing their training to bear in the near future. Christina Rabe, Emmalee Bevan, Jim Small and Karen Stevens will all be teaching classes and we are excited and pleased to have them joining us.

Namaste

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