



December 2016

### Gratitude:

As David Steindl-Rast says in his TED Talk, gratitude creates happiness. Margo and I are happy as we are grateful to all of you. When we first started Apollo Power Yoga our class sizes were tiny. Often there were only three, two or one students at our classes. The classes when no one at all showed up were upsetting. Every person who came in our doors we were grateful for. Our gratitude has not diminished and we continue to be grateful to everyone attending our classes – whether you be new students, students we see occasionally over time or students we see at least once per day.

Nothing came easy for us in our first two and a half years. We worked very hard with very little custom and lived off savings. In 2016 we went from running a business that we were trying to build to a point of profitability to running a business that was starting to return us an income and was still growing. When evening classes became busy, even to the point where on a handful of occasions we had to turn people away, we understood the feelings of those students who were discomfited by the proximity of other people on their mats or who were disappointed at missing class. However, at the same time, we felt a sense of achievement and accomplishment as it has been a long, hard path to build up Apollo Power Yoga to that level of popularity.

Next year promises to be one of further growth for us. The prospect of new premises is exciting. Our inaugural teacher training programme went very well in 2016 and will build further in 2017. We have 17 people registered to work with us in January at Wainui. The emergence of new teachers from that programme ensures there are fresh faces and new energy teaching at Apollo Power Yoga.



The essence for us is doing our core business well – teaching Baptiste-style power vinyasa yoga. In that, we believe we are the best in the country. The Yoga Lunchbox survey which named me as one of the 10 best up-and-coming teachers in Australasia is confirmation of that. I am also being called upon to take seminars for teachers in other parts of the country to help lift their standard of teaching.

Power restore is a good complement to power vinyasa and Budokon® Yoga is a strong, transition-based practice that gives lift and

extension to your regular vinyasa practice. We cannot be all things to all people. We do not intend offering a wide variety of different types of class as that will dilute what we provide. Nor do we believe it necessary to offer too much variety. Baptiste power vinyasa yoga (emulated by many but not always with success) is a fantastic practice for all-round, functional strength and mobility. You do not need to go to a gym to do strength work if you practice this style of yoga. The sequential intelligence of the Baptiste Journey into Power practice ensures you get a great range of poses with appropriate ordering and energy each time you practice.

Margo and I look forward to seeing you all over the summer and through 2017 as we continue to share this wonderful practice together. We praise and bless you for all your work on the mat this past year and we wish you health and happiness over the holidays and into 2017.

### **Africa Yoga Project:**

Through 2016 I have been mentoring a young Kenyan yoga teacher, Kriza. Kriza is deaf and has special challenges in teaching but is resisting the path of crime that draws so many young, unemployed people in the slums of Nairobi. He has trained as a yoga teacher, is part of the Africa Yoga Project which trains teachers over a five year period to not just have teaching skills but the skills to run a business too.

During this five year period your contributions through the Sunday morning contribution class and through your purchases of the AYP clothing we sell, pay Kriza's salary. At the end of the five years Kriza will step into his own business and he has plans for an entertainment centre that will provide a safe, drug and alcohol free venue for young people to attend and practice yoga, play games and socialise.

Kriza was recently a subject of a Brazilian photographer's project to capture the Power of Yoga in Kenya. Two images from that project are shown here.



To see the whole range of images visit <http://patriciaesteve.com/THE-POWER-OF-YOGA>.

### **Power in your Hands:**

Thank you to those who attended our workshop, Power in your Hands, taught by William. Willz is back in New Zealand until around the middle of next year. He will help us considerably in January while Margo and I are leading our fully subscribed teacher training programme, Step into your Power, and will be picking up classes with us throughout his time in Christchurch.

### Christmas Gifts from Apollo Power Yoga:

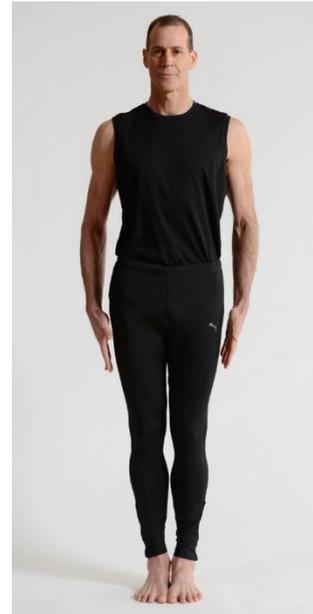
- Vouchers – any sum is fine. We will tailor-make a voucher to meet your needs.
- Lululemon Athletica yoga mats. These mats are just the best for the style of practice we have at Apollo Power Yoga.
- Growth and Greatness. Our new recorded class is just \$45 for a fantastic flow of 65 minutes of power vinyasa yoga.
- Yoga Wear. We have Africa Yoga Project tanks and pants for women and tanks for men. All the profit from these items is donated to Africa Yoga Project.
- Yogi Tea. These great teas come in a wide variety of flavours and are great value at \$10 per box of 16 tea bags.

### Asana Spotlight:

In preparing this month's asana spotlight I had thought of offering a range of poses to help you stay calm in a mad season where pressure and stress can rise. Financial pressure can squeeze us as we feel compelled to provide one another with gifts and buy the foods that we like at this time of year. Emotional pressure can build as we group together as families and some of the tensions that exist within families cause strain. We can feel like we have the deadline of the end of the year pressing to "get things done" and perceived time pressure builds stress. To that end I had prepared thoughts on child's pose, savasana, various gentle inversions and forward folds. That would have been good and such poses do allow us to restore calm in times of pressure.

However, I then had a glimpse of another line – an idea glinted at me through the forest of my thoughts. In this festive holiday season it is customary to offer and receive hospitality in the form of food and drink with our friends and family and to celebrate by way of sharing meals and parties with our work colleagues. It is also common for routines to be lost such that we

do not provide ourselves with the activity that serves us well. Enjoyable at the time as these occasions may be the sequelae can be utterly unappealing in the form of feeling over-fed, hung over or simply sated with a sense of distaste at our excess. What can we do to maintain, strength and vigour but a clear and present mind at the same time? Sun Salutations!



*Stand tall and proud – tadasana. Raise your arms to the sky. Press your feet to the earth and stretch your hands to the heavens.*



*Draw your palms together in prayer and bow forward. The essence of this is the work at your hips. Bend your knees to whatever degree you must to tilt your pelvis forward and run your spine free towards the floor.*



*Lift halfway up. Draw your hands to your shins and your shoulder-blades together and down your back towards your hips. Reach the crown of your head forward towards the front of the room and rest your drishti gazer at the floor just forward of your toes.*



*Jump your feet to the back of your mat. Make your thighs and belly very firm. This is dandasana – staff pose. Make your body firm like a staff.*



*Rock your heels forward, grip with your fingertips and pull your chest forward and lower your chest halfway towards the floor. This is chaturanga dandasana – four-limbed staff pose. Hold a bed of air beneath your body.*



*Flow forward and upward with your chest. Roll or step onto the tops of your feet. Through the tops of your feet and through your hands bear down. Through the crown of your head reach up to the sky. Upward facing dog.*



*Lift through your inner thighs and as your thighs lift hug up at your belly to pull your hips up to the sky. Downward facing dog.*

*Spring lightly forward to land your feet together between your hands. Lift to halfway lift.*

*Bow to forward fold. Rise tall and raise your arms to the sky.*

*Repeat until you are flushed with vitality and purged of toxicity.*

### From Baron Baptiste:



### Apollo Power Yogis in Business:

Leigh Pickering has established a business called Idideyewear – an on-line business (that also has regional stockists) selling funky, fashionable sunglasses. Her website is <https://idideyewear.co.nz/>



Leigh has a long interest in fashion and has worked for various local clothing/fashion

stores. She now has a new lease on life and is running her own business.

Leigh has both women's and men's sunglasses in a cool range of styles to accessorise your casual and more dressed-up wear.

Leigh credits yoga with having helped set her on a positive and productive path that has seen her establish her Idideyewear business. More power to you, Leigh.

### Money Can Make it Worse:

When I was younger I put a lot of stock on things. I felt I lacked cool belongings as a child and wanted clothes and toys that I saw other kids with. I experienced upward socio-economic mobility in my lifetime as my father moved up through the levels of the civil service to more senior positions and as I took work in the professions as a lawyer. Margo was also a lawyer. We did not start a family until we had both become partners in our respective law firms and we were a well-off couple.

With that increased financial wealth I enjoyed having things that I felt I had lacked in my childhood. At Christmas time I felt I could demonstrate affection for my family by giving them more expensive presents that my income allowed me the opportunity to buy. I liked nice things and assumed that giving nice things would make my family members happy too.

I belatedly discovered that my family members felt under pressure to match the sort of presents that I was giving them and a form of Christmas arms race took place. With my father retired, my mother in part-time work and my brother the sole income earner in his household, this escalating process of providing ever more expensive gifts was simply placing a financial burden and a stress factor around

Christmas that caused unhappiness rather than happiness.

Now, our family has dispensed with gifts. We get together to celebrate Christmas and share a lovely meal (duck this year). Absent the presents we can focus on relationships, bonding and love that is expressed from the heart not from the wallet. Financial wealth is not a bad thing. I do not believe that austerity and poverty are necessary prerequisites to spirituality. But I do believe that money can obscure the intended message.

Buying and giving a present to someone needs to be understood as an expression of love, affection or gratitude not a matter of obligation or tit-for-tat. Where the gift creates a sense of imbalance or shame that there is not an equal exchange of monetary value, the gift has not served its purpose. Ultimately, I would rather now be surrounded by love than by things. By removing things from the equation there is room for love to be fully present.

### Charity Movie Night:

Peter and Janene, two of our yogis, are participating in the Pork Pie Run to raise funds for KidsCan. They will be driving their Mini from Kaitaia to Bluff at Easter 2017 collecting funds for the charity.



They are also having a fundraising movie night for the charity on **2 February 2017** at Hoyts Cinemas Northlands at 8:00pm for a showing of the remake of **Goodbye Pork Pie**. Tickets are

just \$20. To order contact Peter by email, [petermwalters@gmail.com](mailto:petermwalters@gmail.com) or by phone 021678747.

Namaste

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