



February 2017

### Step into your Power:

We are fully subscribed (in fact over-subscribed) for our yoga intensive/teacher training in April at Maruia Hot Springs.



Our next intensive/training will be in January 2018. Plan ahead now and when applications open later this year be in early to secure your place in this life-changing experience.

### Getting Started Workshop:

On Sunday 19 March 2017 at midday we are running a **Getting Started workshop**. If you are new to yoga or seek guidance about some of the most foundational but often repeated poses in our practices this workshop is for you.

**Time:** Sunday, 19 March 2017, midday to 2:00pm.

**Venue:** Apollo Power Yoga studio.

**Cost:** \$30 (half price for Apollo Power Yoga annual members).

### Class Cancellation:

There will be **no Budokon® Yoga class on Saturday, 11 March 2017**. Hamish is out of town teaching power vinyasa yoga to students from the Hot Yoga Dunedin and Hot Yoga Invercargill studios.

### From Baron Baptiste:



### The Four Agreements:

*The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz offers a way of being. They are called "agreements" because there is an element of the social contract about them. The four

agreements can be adhered to by one person alone but they start to be truly impactful in a society when they are adopted and observed by couples, and small groups of friends and colleagues and families and ultimately the whole of society.

In this summary I shall address the four agreements and seek to demonstrate how they may play out.

### Agreement 1 – Be Impeccable with your Word

In the first agreement Ruiz echoes the *yamas* and the notion of *satya* (truthfulness) as well as the golden rule. Being impeccable with your word means to be truthful but also thoughtful in what you say. It means to speak not just from one's own point of view but to be conscious of the recipient of one's words and how one's words will land with them.

Our thoughts, our words and our emotions become our reality. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

For me, words come easily in a constant stream where there is no apparent separation between the awakening of an idea and the verbalisation of that idea. My work is to establish filters between the idea and the statement so that the ideas that have harmful potential can be censored.

Censorship is no bad thing. In 1516 Thomas More wrote *Utopia* in which he described an island with a system of government and religious and social customs that he cast as being ideal. Censorship was one of the features of this ideal world.

To be impeccable with one's word one must be present, aware and must come from a state of connection with the person/people with or to whom one is speaking.

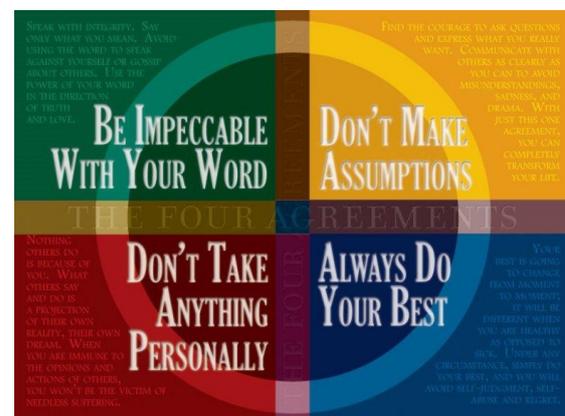
### Agreement 2 – Don't take anything Personally

The second agreement works hand-in-glove with the first agreement. The second agreement acknowledges that not everyone will, on all occasions, observe the first agreement. When they do not, or when we hear something that we do not like or something is done to us that we do not like we must not take it personally.

What others say and do does not need to affect you. You can choose where you focus your thoughts and ensure they are coming from your spirit and not from external influences.

Some of you will recall Cameron Shayne, the founder of the Budokon® Yoga practice. Cameron is a provocative person and will, deliberately, make statements that trigger reactivity in others. When they do he just fixes them in the eye and says, "That's just your story, sister".

It is important that we understand our own reactivity, our own fragilities and raw nerves and not allow someone else's words or actions to cause us unhappiness. Easier said than done! Being aware of our weaknesses and the way we behave when our weaknesses are threatened is the ground work of not taking things personally.



With awareness build the fire of your inner spirit such that when external factors impinge

upon you, that inner fire is strong enough to withstand the external forces, that the inner you is bigger than anyone else's words or actions.

### **Agreement 3 – Don't make Assumptions**

The third agreement addresses our tendency to remove presence and short-circuit thought processes by way of assumption, prejudice and stereotype.

It is easy to use assumptions. They are a substitute for actual knowledge. That person is short so they must have a chip on their shoulder. That person is Asian so they are good at mathematics. That person is physically attractive so they must be a nice person. That person has that job so they must be... That person went to that school so they must be...

Be curious. Doubt your preconceptions and be prepared to ask questions. Assumptions are often at the root of miscommunication. In a Hollywood depiction of this concept the Peter Weir movie *Gallipoli* shows officers agreeing that a bombardment of the Turkish trenches would commence at a certain time and finish at a certain time. With the Turks driven from their trenches or hunkered down defensively in their trenches the ANZAC troops would go over the top and attack. What was assumed was that everyone was operating on the same time. Watches were not synchronised with the result that there was a time lag between the cessation of the bombardment and the order to go over the top and attack. In that lag time the Turks recovered their positions and the infantry were massacred by machine gun fire. The assumption was disastrous.

A lack of awareness of the people with whom we communicate can cause us to assume that they will understand what we are speaking about. At Apollo Power Yoga we have a two-week starter pass for \$25. I used to often refer to this pass as being a "fortnight pass" and

assumed everyone knew what a fortnight was. In fact, many people do not, especially people from other countries or people for whom English is not their first language. I have abandoned my assumption and now refer to two weeks for the sake of clarity.

Communicate clearly. Make yourself understood and choose to understand the people with whom you are communicating.

### **Agreement 4 – Always do your Best**

Always doing your best does not mean always being the best. We know with respect to our asana practice that there are days when we show up lower on energy than others. There are days when we are carrying an injury or when we are tired.

Even when we are not feeling at our best we can still do our best with what we have. We can put a knee down to reduce the impact of crescent lunge or side plank. We can take child's pose rather than downward facing dog. We can do bridge instead of wheel. But whatever we do, we do our best.

When we do not do our best we abdicate responsibility and inevitably break the first and second, and quite probably also the third, agreements. Avoid regret by doing your best. I can recall a running race when I was at primary school when a fear of not winning caused me to not try and I chose to be well out of the race. I finished back in the pack with my schoolmates and I rue to this day, 40 years on, not having given my best.

No one, most importantly yourself, can fault you for doing your best. It is only when you fail to show up as best you can that you let yourself and others down. It is only when you do not give your best that you lay yourself open to negative self-criticism and judgement.

The Four Agreements are simple enough. Living them in real time is less easy. Be present, reflect rather than react and carry the Four Agreements with you to create a powerful shift in your way of being.

### Asana Spotlight:

Our asana spotlights have tended to focus on some of the more dynamic, strength-oriented poses. This month will be the first in a series of poses about some of the opening poses used later in the Baptiste Journey into Power sequence.

Deep hip openers are a feature of the power yoga practice and are situated towards the back end of the class when your body has been thoroughly warmed and energised in a flowing way and is fully prepared to go deep.

This month we look at Frog pose (Madukasana/Bhekhasana). If you look up frog pose in yoga books or on the internet you will find different variations that can look quite different from one another. As ever, we do not say that our Frog is right and the others wrong. We simply say that this is the variation we use and we value its qualities to target your adductor muscles, to release the front of the ilia and to free up your pelvis and, consequently, your low back.

- Begin by turning to face the side of the room and separate your knees as wide apart on your mat as they will go.
- Separate your heels to the width of your knees and turn your feet outwards to right and left.
- Dorsiflex your feet such that the toes of each foot are flexed towards your shins and the inner edges of your feet are resting on your mat.

- Bend your knees to right angles and position your hips such that they are on a line between your knees, as high from or as low to the floor as the width of your knees requires or permits.
- Elongate your torso and rest your elbows at the floor directly beneath your shoulders. Maintain a gentle toning of your abdomen, *uddiyana bandha*, but not to the extent that it inhibits the next action.
- Create a slight up-tilt to your tailbone. To do this, anteriorly tilt your pelvis by rolling your pubic bone away from your ribcage and allowing your lumbar spine to relax inwards in a gentle inward curve. Neither over-emphasise nor neglect this action at your pelvis and low back.
- Keep your upper back broad but allow your spine to melt gently into your torso. This is not an action of collapse but rather of conscious relaxation of your spine. Some people who over-do this action and collapse the weight of their upper body experience strain in their shoulders. If this occurs to you, bring a little more *sthira* or strength stability to your upper body.
- Relax your head, still your *dristhi*/gaze to a point (closing your eyes is fine) and maintain a long, even rhythm of *ujjayi* breath.



Frog is not child's pose. If you narrow your feet, if you point your toes in plantar flexion and if you allow your low back to flex and

become rounded you will lose key elements of Frog.

Frog is a profound pose in which many people feel tremendously challenged. In being brought to the edge of your physical limitations by this pose you are confronted with your mental limitations in terms of courage, resolve and concentration.

Choose to accept yourself as you are and as you are not and stay to allow Frog to work its magic on your body, mind and soul. It may be a pose that is very uncomfortable but it is also a pose that it is possible to hold for a very long period of time. Stay and discover what lies within.

### **Giveaway Time at Apollo Power Yoga:**

Giveaway time! Our yogi Greer Quinn of Hot Tresses Hair Care has generously provided us with a Giveaway Rehab Pack of Hot Tresses Shampoo, Conditioner and Leave-in. Hot Tresses is an organic and vegan hair care range, inspired by Hot Yoga, which aims to cut chemicals, cut dependency on heat styling, and cut frizz. It combines organic botanical ingredients with easily absorbable vegan proteins and vitamin supplements to give hair the nutrition it needs to look great. Like and share our Facebook post about this by 10 March 2017 to be in the draw to win the Rehab Pack.



Opening special for Apollo Power yogis at Soul-full Superfoods. Just let them know you

practice at Apollo, and you'll get a fabulous Acai Bowl for \$11, a Protein Smoothie for \$8.50, and a combo Acai Bowl plus regular coffee or house made iced tea for \$14. Soul-full is plant-based, whole foods, organic where possible and uses compostable take-away packaging. Opening Special runs until 10 March, so don't miss out.



Namaste

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