



June 2015

Workshops:

Walk the Path of Yoga had to be re-configured late in the piece as a lack of numbers enrolled meant we lacked the critical mass necessary to make the afternoon group sessions work. However, a small group of awesome people came together on a clear, frosty morning at Russley Golf Club and we spent a great three hours in meditation and in asana, working through some foundational poses and some challenging variations including inversions.

As one participant said, *"It felt luxurious to have such focussed and personalised coaching"*.

Another said, *"It was interesting to think about the headstand and handstand moves, it will take me awhile to get them incorporated into my practice, but good to know how they work. It was also nice how all the workshop attendees were introduced to each other and how we each took turns doing 'demonstrations'. That was a nice way to keep engagement going throughout the class. I hope that another workshop session comes up again soon."*

Thank you to those who came along and made this workshop a fun and successful occasion. Hamish had a great time teaching it!

40 Days to Personal Revolution will run again beginning on **18 October** with weekly sessions

on Sundays to and including **22 November** and an optional final session on 29 November. Diary it now and make the commitment to your personal revolution.

Margo is away for the first three weeks of July. Hamish has an increased teaching workload in that period and there will not be another workshop until early August. We will keep you posted about what that workshop will be closer to the time.

Luxury Marlborough Yoga Retreat 12 and 13 September

Hamish is partnering with the Sounds Retreat, a Marlborough Sounds Luxury Lodge, for a two-day yoga retreat on 12 and 13 September 2015. You may book 5-star accommodation at the Lodge or at the venue of the Retreat, Old St. Mary's Vineyard Estate. (www.convent.co.nz)

Alternatively, arrange your own accommodation and attend the practices and discussions only. Accommodation prices are available on request from your hosts, Anne and Tony Brooker. The cost of the weekend's yoga and discussions is \$250.00 per person. Only 22 places are available



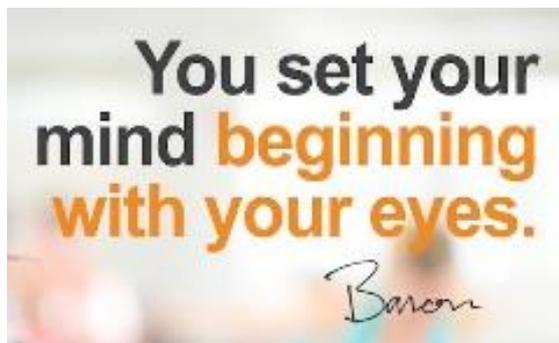
so book soon.

Hamish is teaching on Sunday with a two-hour session with meditation and power vinyasa yoga in the morning and a 60-minute restorative session in the afternoon together with two hour-long discussion sessions concerning identity and self-esteem. Marlborough teachers James Wvinna and Carmena Su, and Wellington teacher Russell La Monte will be taking the Saturday classes and sessions.

A gourmet Marlborough gift bag will be presented to each student after the retreat. Massages and beauty treatments can be pre-booked to enjoy on site after the afternoon sessions and gourmet lunches may also be ordered as an extra.

To make your booking contact Anne at 03 5742965/0278649176 or anne.brooker@gmail.com

From Baron Baptiste:



Asana Spotlight:

Handstand. In Sanskrit handstand is *adho mukha vrksasana* – downward facing tree pose. After a succession of inverted poses we come to handstand. Handstand is not a feature of most yoga classes. As much as anything else that is because of its difficulty for the large majority of people, the potential

for injury and the fact that it is more an aspect of gymnastics rather than yoga.

At Apollo we tend to offer handstand in the context of workshops and may create the opportunity in regular classes for students who are working with handstand to try one while the rest of the class is in a more stable variation, such as standing splits.

Handstand is something to be worked up to and is most successful when you lay strong foundations. It is not simply a case of flinging your legs up in the air and hoping to find a balance point.

- Like learning to sail a boat or drive a car where one needs to know how to stop before one gets going, it is good to know how to come out of handstand before one goes up into handstand.
- If you do not go up far enough to reach a balance point you will simply fall back down to your feet. If you go up too far, past the balance point, you will fall over onto your back unless you let go of the floor with one hand and make a quarter turn and a little cartwheel allowing your feet to return to the floor. This simple quarter turn action transforms falling over backwards into falling sideways.
- A critical aspect of handstand is to remain strong, stable and integrated through the upper and lower torso. Typically, students disengage at the core, allow their pelvis to drop forwards (anterior tilt) and collapse with a sway back. You do not, ideally, stand upright on your feet like this so you should not expect to hold handstand like this either.



- Begin in downward facing dog. Create a strong abdominal engagement, hollowing out your belly somewhat and puffing out your low back slightly.
- Where should you look? Look to the floor between your hands or perhaps just forward of your fingers. Seeing the floor will help give you a reference point for balance throughout the duration of the pose.
- Keep one leg firm and straight and take a half step forward with the other. Do not lose the abdominal engagement.
- Press actively through your hands into the floor and roll your shoulders forward somewhat looking to stack them over your hands.
- Pressing off the ball of the foot of the bent leg that stepped forward, kick the straight leg up towards the sky. It is easy to lose engagement through your inner thighs here and let your legs externally rotate from each other. Avoid this outcome. Tone your inner thighs and maintain an inward rotation and hugging.
- Start your handstand practice by trying just a split-legged handstand first. As your straight leg extends to the sky, let the bent leg float off the floor so you have a moment, or longer, of inertia balancing on your hands.
- The next step is to work to extend the leg from which you pressed off, creating a split-legged handstand with both legs straight.

- The final stage is to extend the second leg up to the sky next to the first leg – maintain strong abdominal engagement, resist collapsing into an anterior tilt of the pelvis with a sway back. Maintain, also, strong inner thigh engagement with no external rotation of your legs.
- Press your feet straight up and reach vertically. If you lose upward press through your feet and legs, gravity will begin to take over and bring you down. Defy gravity and tone your body, reaching upwards to feel light and powerful.
- Should I practice against the wall? Using the wall will keep you in your fear of falling over onto your back. It will keep you in the weakness of releasing abdominal engagement because your tendency will be to collapse your low back and flip your feet over your head to touch them to the wall. This banana back shape in handstand is neither stable nor very rewarding.



- With so much to remember and with the effort of supporting your body on your hands it is easy to hold your breath and end up straining and not feeding your muscles the oxygen they need. Bring *ujjayi* breath to this pose, as to your other poses, and be victorious.

What a fantastic, liberating position handstand is to be in – even if only for a moment. In defiance of fear, in defiance of gravity and in defiance of the lie that we lose playfulness and adventure as we age, handstand rejuvenates you and lets you shine with your fullest expression.

Bhagavad Gita:

Chapters 17 and 18 are the last in the Gita. Chapter 17 is a short chapter called “Yoga of the Threefold Faith”. Chapter 18 is a summary of the whole Gita called “Yoga of Freedom Through Renunciation”. The first of these two chapters introduces a concept known as *Shraddha*. *Shraddha* is implicit faith. Krishna advises that one apply one’s will toward that in which one has faith.

Krishna then distinguishes between three types of faith characterised by the three *gunas*. The faith of each person is in accordance with their nature. Those who are pure/*sattvic* in nature worship one form of god. Those who are restless/*rajasic* in nature worship greed, wealth and power. Those who are unenlightened and are ignorant/*tamasic* in nature worship spirits and ghouls.

Rajasic people may try to make bargains with god: If I get good exam results I shall make a sacrifice. They want evidence of god’s goodness to them before they will show god respect. *Sattvic Shraddha* starts with faith in god and a willingness to devote oneself to god without first seeing the benefits of so doing. Some people engage in extreme or cruel austerities that hurt their body (flagellation for instance or extreme diets). Krishna tells Arjuna these are not signs of true *sattvic Shraddha* as god is in them and when they hurt their bodies they hurt god also.

The three *gunas* are reflected in foods and diets also. *Sattvic* foods are ones that increase vitality, health and well-being. They have natural flavours and are locally grown. *Rajasic* foods are spicy or hot, extra dry or extra salty. These foods ultimately create discomfort, pain and disease. They bring dismay too as people reap the harvest of what their diet has sowed. *Tamasic* people choose stale, tasteless food lacking in vitality and nutrition. They do not choose local foods that are suitable to a people in a certain region.

Yajna (worship) can be distinguished by the three *gunas* too. Any devoted action offered without desire for reward and with the mind focussed purely on the act itself is a *sattvic* form of worship. Offerings made in expectation of a reward or done for show to earn the respect or admiration of others is *rajasic* in nature. Supposedly devotional actions done without any active belief and without the appropriate prayers or offerings is *tamasic* in nature.

Other examples of pure *sattvic* behaviour are speaking truthfully and pleasantly with kind words that do not agitate others. The mental disciplines of tranquillity, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of thought are *sattvic*.

Actions done out of a desire for respect, honour, admiration or wealth are *rajasic*. Austerities practiced so as to hurt oneself or another or from foolish obstinacy are *tamasic* and are based on ignorance. This ties in with the *yamas* from the *Yoga Sutras*. The *yama* of non-violence (*ahimsa*) begins at home with oneself.

The three words that represent the absolute god are *Om*, *Tat* and *Sat*. “*Om*” is chanted when undertaking spiritual disciplines and making devotional offerings. Those seeking enlightenment repeat “*Tat*” to clear their actions of any personal attachment. “*Sat*”

means reality or truth and its repetition confers an action with auspiciousness.

Chapter 18 begins with Arjuna asking Krishna to explain the essence of renunciation and non-attachment. Krishna distinguishes the two concepts by saying that renunciation is giving up all personally motivated actions while non-attachment is giving up the desire for the fruits of your actions. It is a subtle but important distinction.

One should not renounce all actions. Instead one must retain those actions that contribute to self-sacrifice, selfless giving and self-discipline. Non-attachment should come from a desire to do one's duty simply because it is right to do so. If we recall Arjuna's state of mind at the commencement of the Gita, he was quailing at the thought of fighting his relatives even though the war was a just war. His behaviour was *rajasic*.



Krishna says that when one renounces all personal attachments you become pure and have neither attraction for nor aversion towards pleasant and unpleasant duties. Those who do not achieve a state of non-attachment have *karma* and upon their death that *karma* remains attached to them and they are required to be reincarnated to live out their *karma*. Those who let go all desire for the fruits of their actions are freed of *karma* and become one with god.

The interplay of five things makes everything happen: the body (which is the seat of action); the ego (which is the agent of action); the sense organs; the functions of mind and body performing actions; the various aspects of god that correspond with different parts of the body. Without wisdom people imagine that the ego is the sole doer or that the True Self is the same as the ego when the True Self is actually separate and independent from all the doing. When one is free from the ego sense of separateness the discerning intellect is untainted and you realise your True Self can be freed from *karma*.

Sattvic knowledge is that there is one eternal reality that pervades all things. *Rajasic* knowledge comes from a perception that all things are distinct and separate. *Tamasic* knowledge comes from perceiving one tiny part of the whole and mistaking that tiny portion for the whole. Characteristics of *sattvic* understanding include knowing when and when not to act, knowing what is right and what is wrong to do, knowing the causes of fear and fearlessness, and knowing the paths of bondage and freedom.

Those with *rajasic* knowledge do not distinguish between virtue and evil and err in deciding what and what not to do. An example is an able athlete who seeks to fulfil his/her potential through competition but becomes obsessed with the idea of winning and the rewards of adulation and wealth they will receive from winning so they become performance enhancing drug cheats.

Those with *tamasic* knowledge see the world as if through a distorted lens and fail to accurately perceive right and wrong.

Sloka (verse) 33 states:

Yoga meditations make the mind pure, steady and strong. With that sattvic will one can

control and regulate the prana, the senses and the functioning of the mind.

There are three types of pleasure. The *tamasic* pleasures are those like over-sleeping, laziness and intoxication. They are delusional from start to finish and result in a listless and sluggish state of mind. *Rajasic* pleasures seem good and sweet at the outset but are ultimately toxic and harmful. For example, earning money may feel good at the outset but can progress to unprincipled avarice, fraud and the unethical pursuit of wealth heedless of the effects upon others and oneself. *Sattvic* pleasures may not seem so at the outset but with persistent practice they lead to the joy and clear mind of self-realisation.

Chapter 18 then discusses the concept of *caste*. This concept came to be usurped by those of *rajasic* mindset and became a form of racism and social division. However, as enunciated in the Gita, *caste* distinctions were a form of universal inclusiveness. The idea was that everyone could, by pursuit of their own natural tendencies and abilities, attain perfection, free themselves of *karma*, and join with god. This is the idea of *dharma* in the sense of having a destiny and a life's duty. As we live in this life we attract *karma* and carry that *karma* to our next mortal incarnation. At each step we have it within us to renounce wrong action and to detach from the fruits of our actions. Thus a member of the royal family who is a hedonistic tyrant attracts bad *karma* which will affect their next incarnation. Similarly, a rubbish collector can live a life of devotion, performing their duties diligently and without complaint or desire for any other way of being and will be freed of *karma* and will join with god.



If Arjuna, due to *rajasic* influences, were not to do his duty and fight the just war his vow not to fight would ultimately be hollow and he would feel bad as his true nature as a prince and a warrior requires him to wage this just war. His dereliction of duty would gnaw at him more than his fears and uncertainties about fighting his uncles and cousins.

Sloka 49 summarises the position thus:

When the discerning mind is no longer attached to the fruits and the egoistic self no longer predominates because personal desire is gone, by this renunciation you rise to a supreme state of perfection which is freedom from the effects of all actions.

Krishna advises Arjuna to live in a state of solitude, eat sparingly, control his thoughts, words and actions, engage in yogic meditation and take refuge in non-attachment. By so doing he will free himself from the egoistic sense of separateness and, therefore, will no longer be afflicted with the tyranny of my and mine. He will overcome aggression, possessiveness, arrogance, personal desires and anger. He will peacefully be prepared to accept oneness with the Absolute.

In that oneness there is no sorrow or anxiety, there are no personal desires. There is just serenity and a feeling of the same regard for all creatures.

Arjuna will rise to a state of supreme devotion to god and through such devotion will know god truly and will enter into god's infinite being.

At the conclusion of all this, Krishna comes back to Arjuna's original feelings of doubt

from Chapter One of the Gita, The Despondency of Arjuna. Krishna asks, “has your ignorance and delusion been destroyed? Are you ready to stand up and do your duty?”

“Yes,” replies Arjuna. “I remember the way. I am free of doubt.”

What happened then? Well, that is not part of the Gita. You will recall the Bhagavad Gita was just a portion of the epic poem the Mahabharata. Spoiler alert! Arjuna and his Pandava family prevail in the 18-day long battle. However, the carnage is not looked upon favourably by the gods and, like a Greek tragedy, the futures of the survivors is not rosy.

Apollo Yogis in Business – The Lounge Organic Hairdressing

Our yogi, **Tracette Owers**, has a wonderful organic hairdressing business, **The Lounge Organic Hairdressing**. It is located close to the Central City, at 80 Derby Street, Merivale.

Prior to the earthquakes, Tracette ran her hairdressing business out of her lounge, hence the name. When her next door neighbour’s fireplace fell into her lounge as a result of violent shaking, Tracette put a portacom into her garden and did her hairdressing from there! It’s a cute and cozy but very professional space, with views into the garden from the windows, including a charming flock of green finches attracted to the feeder full of birdseed.

Tracette is an excellent hairdresser, with 36 years’ experience behind her. She listens to your views about how your hair should be styled, and has the expertise and equipment to achieve your wishes. Services include: women’s, men’s, and children’s haircutting and styling, hair colour advice, all aspects of hair colouring including tinting, foiling, and conditioning shine, and eyelash and eyebrow tinting.

The organic colours cover greys permanently and also achieve beautiful high lift blondes, rich reds, coppers, and chocolate colours. The Lounge also stocks a wide range of lotions and potions to keep your hair in top top condition at home, all year round.

With The Lounge’s extensive range of **organic hairdressing products**, you don’t have to worry about the effects of putting nasty chemicals onto your head. Organic products are better for you, and the environment. They also feel and smell so much better than chemicals. Make the organic change today!

Contact Tracette on: 379 6368 or 027 661 9454

Health Supplements in Stock for You at Apollo

Power Strips

You’ve probably noticed people at the studio with wordy patches plastered onto them. What is that about?

We’ve been trialling Power Strips. These are a natural pain relief product which has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration as a Class 1 Medical Device for pain relief. They contain:

- Elemental Germanium, which reflects the body’s energy as well as external energy (such as the infra-red heat that we use to heat the Apollo Yoga practice room) into the part of your body covered by and around the patch. This gives a pleasantly warm feeling to that area, helping to relieve pain; and
- Fermented Korean Red Ginseng and Marine Phytoplankton, which provide hundreds of different carotenoids, minerals, amino acids and other nutrients. These nutrients are absorbed into the

area of your body which is experiencing pain, assisting the healing process.

We are now selling the strips at the studio. The cost is \$10 for a single strip, \$25 for a pack of 3, or \$100 for a pack of 15.

Body Balance

This nutritional supplement is an extraordinary mixture of 9 types of sea vegetables in an aloe vera base. Body Balance is a natural, organic, whole food, liquid supplement. It contains over 120 essential nutrients, including the 15 vitamins, 90 minerals (both electrolytes and trace minerals), amino acids, enzymes and fatty acids that our bodies need every single day.

Because of Body Balance's liquid ionic form, its absorption rate is 98%, compared to a 10-20% absorption rate from most pill supplements. Pill supplements are not real food – they are chemical concoctions, and pass through our bodies largely undigested, because of the stabilisers used to construct the pill form. Body Balance is real food – sea vegetables and aloe vera - and contains these important and rarely found nutrients:

- Fucoidan, which is found in the colostrum of mother's milk, and is an essential support to our immune system.
- Glyconutrients, which are necessary for cell to cell communication.
- Enzymes, to assist with the digestion of other food. As we age, our bodies' ability to produce enzymes decreases, so we're not getting as much nutrition from a healthy diet as we used to. Supplementing with enzymes ensures that we get the most we can from a healthy diet.
- Minerals, which are needed for the proper composition of body fluids, the formation of blood and bone, the

maintenance of healthy nerve function, and the regulation of muscle tone including the heart.



Our land-based diet is produced in soils that are generally depleted, so the food produced is also depleted. The 9 sea vegetables contained in Body Balance are harvested from the deep waters of the Arctic Ocean. Minerals and other nutrients have been draining into this area for millions of years, yet it is probably the most pollution-free environment on earth. The aloe vera contained in Body Balance is obtained from a pristine alpine environment at the base of a volcano, the most mineral rich of soils.

We are now selling Body Balance at the studio. The cost \$60 for a single 960ml bottle, \$110 for 2 bottles, and \$200 for 4 bottles.

Namaste

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