



September 2016

### Yoga Lunchbox – Best Up-and-Coming Yoga Teachers:

The Yoga Lunchbox (YLB) recently ran a survey inviting nominations for the ten best up-and-coming yoga teachers in Australia and New Zealand. A total of 93 teachers were nominated. From this list YLB did their own research about those nominated to produce a short-list of twenty-two teachers. Those twenty-two were then asked to answer three questions about yoga in their lives, their own personal yoga practice and their teaching. From a consideration of the answers provided a final ten teachers were chosen and formed the basis for an article in YLB: <http://theyogalunchbox.co.nz/the-best-up-and-coming-yoga-teachers-%E2%80%A2-new-zealand-australia/>

Hamish has been named in that final list of ten. Thank you to those of you who nominated Hamish and for the comments you passed on to YLB about Hamish's teaching and the influence it has had upon you. Hamish teaches yoga because of the way the practice has changed who he is rather than how deeply he folds into *uttanasana* or how long he can hold *chaturanga dandasana*. Hamish's teaching seeks to share inspiration, self-discovery, exploration of potential and letting go of limiting beliefs, all the while in a physically transformative practice. Through strengthening and cleansing asana and

empowering and uplifting awareness the classes at Apollo Power Yoga can aid you in your journey into power.



The nominations for Hamish are not just a reflection of Hamish but of the methodology used at Apollo Power Yoga by Hamish and Margo and taught through our training programme, Step into your Power, to James, Alice and Rachel. We draw that methodology from the Baptiste Power Yoga Institute and its founder, Baron Baptiste. Hamish and Margo have trained directly with Baron and, together with William, who teaches for us when he is in Christchurch, with other senior teachers from the Baptiste Power Yoga Institute. We trust in this methodology and believe it gives a universally physically transformational practice taught against a background of timeless principle.

Thank you all for your support of Apollo Power Yoga. We are blessed to be associated with you all.

### **October/November Month Pass Special:**

Our special on monthly unlimited passes has been very popular this month. At just \$100 for an unlimited month of practice it is no wonder. The special runs right through to the end of November 2016.

You may purchase these passes as a gift for a friend. With Christmas looming you may want to treat a friend or relative to a real gift of love – a gift of yoga. If you do so the month pass must be used by the end of January 2017.

### **Space at the Studio:**

We're thrilled to see so many people coming in to the studio for our powerful practice recently, but we're also very sorry that it's resulted in people being turned away from classes that have reached the capacity of our practice room.

We've been asked whether we've considered implementing a booking system so that you can be assured of having a space reserved for you. We have considered that option, and we do understand that, particularly if you've hauled your carcass out of bed at 6am, it's disappointing to be turned away.

However, booking systems create just as many problems as they solve.

In order to make them work, we would need to implement a rule that if you've booked in for a class and didn't show up for it at least 15 minutes before the class, you'd be charged for it. Otherwise we're turning away people who would have paid for the class, and leaving the

“no-show's” space empty. And given the way the central city is right now, with so many roadworks and lack of parking spaces, sometimes it's not people's fault when they haven't been able to show up for a class they've booked.

So we would end up charging people for classes they haven't attended. And in order to make it fair between those people on annual or monthly passes and those people on 10 or 30 class passes or who pay casually, we would have to charge a casual class fee to annual/monthly members who don't show up at least 15 minutes before classes that they've booked in to. All of this would create quite a bit more friction than that which is caused on the relatively rare occasions when we need to turn people away.

The situation should be resolved soon, as we're planning to move to bigger premises in the new year - still in the central city, but at a location where the parking situation is easier, and where we'd have a practice room almost twice our current size, and bigger change rooms as well.

In the meantime, if you have any flexibility in the times you can practice at, aim to get to classes other than the 6:15am classes on Wednesday, and the 5:30 or 6pm classes weeknights. We all have work and family commitments which make early morning and after work classes the most obvious ones to aim for. But if you discuss matters with your workplace, you may find a bit more flexibility as to work times than you expect. We know that many of the government departments and commercial organisations whose staff practice with us are relaxed about their staff attending our 7:30am, 12:15pm, and 4:30pm classes, as they know it's important that they're healthy and happy.

One of the pressures on our 6:15am classes for the next few weeks is the addition of the Christ's College rowing teams at that time. A big thank you to all of the 6:15 am regulars who've been so welcoming to these young men, and have provided them with great

examples of mental discipline and focus. We've noticed a big improvement in those qualities amongst the rowing team members since they first joined us last year, and would like to think it was a factor in the senior team winning the Maadi Cup. But more importantly, their coaches have reported a significant decrease in the injuries that the lads were experiencing as a result of their tough training regime, and we're very pleased to be a part of that.

The junior team will continue to join our Wednesday morning 6:15am class until mid-November. From the first week of November, the senior team will be on study leave and will have greater flexibility to join our Tuesday and Friday classes at times later than 6:15am. And we hope that by the time they join us again in the new school year, we'll be in premises big enough to fit everybody in.

On the subject of our involvement with sports teams, we're very pleased to also be involved with the St Margaret's and Rangī Ruru rowing teams, and to have provided yoga instruction to both of those schools' physical education and wellbeing programmes during the past year. If only schools had been providing yoga to their students when we were those kids' age!

We're very much looking forward to working with the Crusaders again this summer. Hamish will be taking the boys through their yoga paces every Wednesday morning as part of their off-season regime. Again the issue of our studio space arises, though – we had trouble fitting the whole team in when we last worked with them, as some of the big front-rowers need a double width mat and others, such as Dominic Bird, burn their fingers on our heaters! So for this year Hamish will be working with them off site.

We are very grateful to all who are turning out in such large numbers to our practice, and thank you for your patience while we work through the "growing pains" of a practice getting too big for a studio that, just a few

years ago, seemed way too big for the number of yogis coming in. Namaste.

### From Baron Baptiste:



### Presence:

"Be present" is something of a yoga community argot. We like the idea of it. We bandy the term around frequently. We do not always, however, hold to the essence of the term in our behaviour. If the yoga community is poor at being present, the wider community as a whole is equally as poor at the practice, if not worse.

What does it mean to be present? Why is being present important? How can we become present? Good questions. Here are some ideas about the answers, stated not as truth but as interpretation of one person. Your views are highly relevant and you may use this piece as a point of reference for your

own deliberations on the meaning, value and practice of presence in your life.

**To be present** is to have your conscious awareness focused on whatever or whoever you are interacting with in a particular moment. If you are speaking with someone your attention is fully and without distraction upon the person with whom you are speaking, hearing their words, seeing their body language and feeling their energetic and emotional state.

If you are washing the dishes your mind is concentrated upon the handling of the dishes in the soapy water, the movements of the dishcloth or brush upon the dirty surfaces and all other aspects of the process without your mind being engaged in other thoughts extraneous to the washing process. If you are sitting in meditation your mind is in a completely calm state of observation of the sensations you are experiencing now – the feel of the floor beneath you, the curvature of your spine, the flow of breath in and out of your body or the tingling warmth of energy in your hands. It is not involved in worrying about bills, analysing past conversations, thinking about sex or any other form of mental distraction. The Bhagavad Gita states that the person who sits in an attitude of meditation and still thinks about things outside of that moment is deluded and is a hypocrite!

In *The Power of Now* Eckhart Tolle asserts that to stay present in your everyday life it helps to stay rooted within yourself. Explaining the expression “rooted within yourself” he says:

*It means to inhabit your body fully. To always have some of your attention in the inner energy field of your body. To feel the body from within, so to speak. Body awareness keeps you present. It anchors you in the Now.*

Sometimes presence comes upon us when we are engrossed in an activity. In work sometimes we become so utterly absorbed in what we are doing that there is no separation between our awareness and our thoughts and actions. As a former litigation lawyer there were times when I would experience presence in court. I would lose any sense of self-consciousness (what I looked like, how straight was my tie, what did my voice sound like) and would be utterly engrossed in the exchange of words with the witness or the formulation of argument with the judge, drawing upon the legal research and knowledge I had and the detailed understanding of the facts of the case. Everything else would drop away. I would lose any sense of the passage of time. I would tune out from what other people were doing in the room – the coming and going of people from the courtroom, the movement of the court attendants around the court would all fade out of consciousness.

The conscious mind can only hold one thought at a time. When you hold one point of awareness that relates to what is in existence in a particular moment for a series of moments without your mind seeking to swap thoughts or without your mind moving into a different time frame (past or future) then you are present. The idea of multi-tasking is not concerned with presence. Multi-tasking essentially involves you juggling thoughts and swapping your attention from one point of focus to another in rapid succession. As the conscious mind may only hold one thought at a time, to multi-task you must let go of one thought and exchange it for another to attend to several different tasks. Like the juggler, there is a limit to how many balls you can keep in the air at one time and how many thoughts you can keep within your general field of consciousness without one falling.

When we are busy and have a lot of things to attend to we are more likely to forget something. The simple weight of keeping track of information, tasks and responsibilities becomes too much. I had a personal assistant who was not successful at handling high workloads. She tried to emulate another personal assistant in the firm who was, by contrast, highly effective at handling demanding workloads of a variety of different jobs from a variety of different sources. The less successful PA would run from one thing to another. As each new job came up she would leave whatever she was doing and start on the new task. All she ended up with was a long list of unfinished jobs. This was a model of distraction dressed up as multi-tasking.

The more successful PA was very astute at determining priorities. Once she had decided what tasks there were to be done, how much time they were likely to take and what their relative urgency was, she would set to and start completing one job after the other. Her attention was not distracted and split between different jobs. It was focused on what was in front of her. She ended up with a series of timeously completed tasks that had been given her full attention. This was an example of presence giving the appearance of the ability to do many things all at once.

**What value does presence have?** For a start, it is not argued here that one needs to be present every waking moment of the day. There is time to dream, to imagine and to let one's mind wander and be drawn into fancy. However, unconscious behaviour that occurs when we are not present can be detrimental – e.g. over-eating when watching television, over-imbibing at social functions when your glass keeps getting topped up and you lose awareness of how many glasses you have actually had. The first benefit, therefore, is in ensuring that we behave as we would choose to behave rather than behaving reactively or

in a way that will cause regret later. **Presence helps us make good choices.**



**Presence builds relationships.** When you are present in your dealings with someone they feel that. You convey clearly your interest in someone when you are present. They notice that you are really hearing what they are saying, really understanding your meaning and really engaging with them at an energetic and emotional level. That builds bonds. Whether it be the bonds between a husband and wife, between a parent and child, between an employer and employee, between a coach and a player or whatever, the investment of being engaged and present with someone bears fruit in the strength of the relationship.

**Presence improves efficiency.** In the manner of the two personal assistants mentioned earlier, the absence of presence and the tendency to flit from one job to another deprived one of efficiency but the quality of attention and presence in the other made her very highly functioning. There is an exercise you can do in which you take pen and paper and time yourself writing down the alphabet and then the phrase “Multi-tasking disengages the brain”. Then time yourself doing the same but this time alternate letters so write “a” on one line then “M” on the next line, back to “b” on the first line and “u” on the second line and so on. You will see which is the most effective way of operating.

**Presence improves quality.** Teaching yoga is but one example of any number of contexts in which presence fuels quality. A yoga teacher can wander into class distracted by the cares of their life and call poses without ever engaging with their students in the moment. The students will have had a class but not a class given to them. On the other hand a teacher can tune in and be fully present to their class and students and tailor make a practice that has holds of just the right duration to test the students and variations of just the right difficulty to test the students and resting poses at just the right moments to keep the students energised and in the flow. In one the teacher's words will be impersonal and in the other each student will feel that the teacher is speaking just to them. In very general terms the two practices may bear many similarities but one will not be of significance or meaning to the students and the other will have the students walking out of class saying what a great experience it was.

**Presence brings Perspective.** At times issues in our lives swell to enormous proportions. Angst over a harsh word from a boss or a demeaning comment from a loved one or concern over a looming problem can all seem to be overwhelming. Slow down. Be still. See things as they are without the lens of panic, fear or reactivity. In the stillness of presence the reprimand from the boss can be seen as that person's thoughtless reactivity, thrown out because they were stressed and not coping. The seemingly cruel put down from a loved one can be seen as a careless piece of sarcasm rather than a genuinely felt feeling. The change in circumstances that is approaching (sale of your house, move to a new town, your children's exams etc.) can be taken in your stride because you have the necessary inner strengths to take right action at the right time. Festering over issues just causes them to take on a greater significance than is necessary. Being present allows you to see things dispassionately, from a critical

distance, and in so doing, put things in their proper perspective.

**How to acquire presence?** Our minds are powerful tools of thought, imagination and creativity. We are surrounded by a tremendous array of stimuli at all times. Given these factors it is easy for us to be distracted from the moment. Presence is, therefore, not always readily available. Try sitting for meditation and watch how relentlessly your mind will try to pull you off into the labyrinth of thought. The key is to focus. Become engrossed in one thing that exists now. Your breath, for instance, is a great anchor to the present moment. If you take off your shoes and socks and concentrate your awareness on the feel of the carpet or grass or sand or whatever surface is beneath your feet you will become present. At a recent workshop for the group doing our 40 Days to Personal Revolution programme, participants shared that they felt completely present when, in the case of a dancer, when she was dancing, in the case of a mother of a small child, when she was engaging with her daughter, and in the case of a woman who enjoys yoga, hiking, running and travelling, when she is engaged in those activities that are for her and about her vitality.

Commit yourself fully to being aware of something tangible now. Watch as distractions endeavour to pull you away but hold fast to your commitment to simple attention to what exists in the physical world now. Practice this on your own and then apply the practice to your interactions. When speaking with someone remove the distractions. Do not look at your phone! Look the person in the eye. When in conversation, rather than seeking opportunities to say what you want, listen so as to truly hear and comprehend what the other person is saying. Give them your undivided attention. Use the practice of presence daily to dispel negative behaviour and tendencies, to enhance your efficiency, to build relationships and to put things in perspective. Let being present be more than just a clichéd phrase more dishonoured than observed and turn it into a

practice that lets you be the person you want to be.

### Bras for India!:

As many of you will have noticed, Rachel has had notices up seeking to collect unwanted bras for her to donate when she travels to India. She has now left and will be away for November at an ashram and is taking the bras over for women in the area who need them. Thank you to those who have donated. It makes a big difference to the recipients.



### Asana Spotlight:

Coiled Dragon. Coiled Dragon is a point in the Budokon® Yoga sequence. Coiled Dragon uses the technique of taking one's body as far in one direction as possible before reversing the flow and creating a new expression in the opposite direction. Coiled Dragon appears in the middle of a series of vertical twists.

- Begin in Warrior 1 with your right foot forward and your hands clasped in sword mudra (that is, with all but your index fingers interlaced and your index fingers extended and pressing against one another).
- Begin to draw your hands down in front of your chest, still in sword mudra, and as you do so rotate your body towards your left. In so doing begin to crouch somewhat so that the level of your hips does not lift from what it was in Warrior 1 but, rather, the level of your hips stays constant throughout the transition.
- Keep rotating to the left with your torso facing to the back of the room and ultimately to the right hand side of the room. As you rotate, keep your left foot on its original spot from Warrior 1 but pivot on that foot allowing it to rotate to the left side, then towards the back of the room and finally towards the right side.
- As you twist, initially turn your front foot, the right foot, towards the left and then slide that foot along your mat towards your left foot as your twist deepens and your chest turns to face the right side of the room.
- As you complete your twist, have your left foot flat to the floor and well-grounded and turned to face the right side of the room. Have your left knee bent somewhat as you must still be crouching somewhat. Draw the front of your right knee into the back of your left knee and press down into the ball of your right foot but lift the heel of your right foot off the floor.
- Finally, release the sword mudra of your hands, squeeze your left fingers together and press the palm of your left hand down towards the floor alongside your body. Squeeze the fingers of your right hand together and press the palm of your right hand up towards the ceiling such that there is 180° between the angle of your two arms.
- Throughout this rotation let your drishti gaze follow the direction of your twist but in the final moment when you extend your arms in opposite directions, rotate your head towards your left shoulder and look down along the line of your left arm towards the floor.



Dance-like, Coiled Dragon follows the natural, organic flows of your body and gives them some artistic expression. Hidden within the grace is a threat – in the elegant spiral is the latent power to burst out and unleash. That is Budokon®.

#### **Teaching Personnel:**

Those of you who typically practice in the mornings will have noticed that Hannah is no longer on the roster. Hannah has told us she does not feel aligned towards power yoga and that her practice and teaching has gravitated to more restorative styles. Hannah started teaching for us about 2½ years ago and with one or two hiatuses of greater or lesser length taught throughout that period. We are grateful to Hannah for her work. For her part,

Hannah says, “Really grateful for what I have learnt from you over the years and the great friends I’ve gained from teaching at Apollo”.

Echo Widmer has joined us. Echo is from Austin, Texas, has taught plenty and is re-connecting with power vinyasa yoga with us. Echo leaps out of planes, likes hip-hop dance and is a bad-ass photographer. Welcome Echo – it is great to have you on board as part of Apollo Power Yoga!

And quietly, we’re hoping to see William back for a time from mid-November to mid-December and through some of January as well perhaps.

#### **Step into your Power:**

Make the commitment and **BOOK NOW** for our Yoga Intensive/Teacher Training called ***Step into your Power*** in January 2017. Registrations close 30 November 2016!

Whether you wish to make advances in your physical yoga practice or learn about meditation or undertake personal growth and development or learn more about anatomy and philosophy as they relate to yoga this program is for you.

For eight days you will engage in an intensive experience of living and breathing and learning yoga as a way of being, all in the beautiful surroundings of Wainui on the Akaroa harbour and in the company of like-minded people undergoing a similar search to yours.

**Dates:** Saturday 14 January to Saturday 21 January 2017 (both dates inclusive).

**Venue:** YMCA Wainui Park Camp, Wainui, Banks Peninsula.

**Cost:** \$1999.00 including meals and accommodation.



For more information or to get an application form contact Hamish by phone or email (021 0551884 or [hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz](mailto:hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz)) or visit [www.apollopoweryoga.co.nz](http://www.apollopoweryoga.co.nz) and refer to the Yoga Intensive/Teacher Training page of the website.

A participant from our trainings earlier this year said:

*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.*

Register NOW and make the commitment to yourself that will cause you to ***Step into your Power!***

Namaste

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