



February 2019

Our New Ferrymead Branch:

We have begun teaching classes from our new branch studio in Ferrymead.

The address is Unit 2, The Estuary, 21-23 Humphreys Drive, Ferrymead. Our studio is two doors along from Café Metro.

We are delighted to offer this beautiful extra facility to our existing students, both regular and irregular attendees, and to new students who have not yet had the experience of practicing with us.



We have 20 classes per week at Ferrymead, a mixture of power vinyasa and power restore classes, so there is plenty on offer. Until 15 March bring a friend to our Ferrymead studio, and if they haven't practiced at Apollo before, their first class with us will be free. Spread the word, make a yoga date and bring our system of yoga into the life of someone you value.

Our branch studio does not have room for you to store your mat so please bring yours from home or hire one of our rentals and remember to take yours with you when you leave.

We also do not have showers at Ferrymead so please plan accordingly.

Timetable Matters:

With the opening of our Ferrymead branch we are now offering 60 asana practices and a meditation practice per week!

We have great attendances at many of our classes but there are some time slots on some days where class sizes remain consistently low. We are reviewing our timetable and we may choose to cancel classes that are not well-attended and create new classes in more popular times.

If you like to attend classes at times that are typically small in numbers then be the change and commit to attending regularly yourself and bring along your friends and colleagues to plump up the numbers and keep those class times viable.

New Website:

Please remember that we have upgraded our website and are now using a .com site.

To check out what is on and to get all the information you need about us, our people, our practices and our programmes please visit www.apollopoweryoga.com.

Dan Fanthorpe Workshops:

Thanks to Dan Fanthorpe for visiting over the weekend of 16 and 17 February to bring us workshops on Pain- Free backbends and Hip and Back Opening. It was good to draw on Dan's experience and to have a new set of eyes and a different voice express principles with respect to asana.

Thank you to everyone who came to either or both of the workshops. These workshops are for you and we value your participation.

Forthcoming Workshops:

Apollo Power Yoga – On Sunday 24 March from midday to 2:00 pm at Ferrymead we are holding **Getting Started**. This workshop is intended for those new to vinyasa style practice or for those who seek to refresh their basic foundations. The primary focus of this workshop will be the poses of the sun salutations and ujjayi breathing together with alignment principles for twists and back bends. All are welcome. The fee for this workshop is \$40 (\$20 for annual members). Book at either of our studios.

Hot Yoga Dunedin – Hamish will be at Hot Yoga Dunedin on Friday 5, Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 April. On Friday he will teach the 4:00 pm vinyasa class. On Saturday he will teach a 3 hour workshop, Foundations of Power. On Sunday he will teach a 3 hour workshop on Hands-on Assisting. This workshop is for

teachers or for students interested in learning more about alignment and mechanics. Book through Hot Yoga Dunedin: <http://www.hotyogadunedin.com/>

If you live in or near Dunedin, come along. If you know someone in or near Dunedin, let them know so they may come along.

Step into your Power:

Plan ahead now for Step into your Power 21-28 September at Wainui. This programme is for you:

- If you feel stuck where you are in your practice or your life.
- If yoga is sparking curiosity in you and you seek more in-depth knowledge with respect to the practice as a whole, our practice in particular or yourself.
- If yoga has impressed itself upon you as a lifestyle and you wish to teach yoga.
- If you are ready to be all you can be in your yoga practice and in your life.

Make a commitment now, reserve the leave you may need, save the training fees you may need to put aside and choose to step into your power!

Think the Opposite:

In the 1990s television series *Seinfeld* there is an episode in which George, one of the four principal characters and one prone to misfortune and failures decides that all his poor outcomes have occurred as a result of him doing what he thought was right. As a consequence he decides he must act against his natural inclination and against his first thought in any situation.

As if by a miracle he suddenly finds himself gaining an excellent job, creating a relationship with a great woman and he experiences good fortune in all his endeavours.

I knew nothing of yoga when I first saw this episode over twenty years ago but I now see in that episode an expression of a principle discussed in the Yoga Sutras; *vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam*. A translation of this principle is, when your best thinking produces poor outcomes and when disempowering thoughts present themselves, one should counter these by cultivating and impressing upon oneself the opposite principles.

Like George, when negative thoughts present themselves to you, cultivate and think the opposite thoughts with feeling and create a new experience of yourself and yourself in relationship with the world.

In class the other day I suggested to the students that they ought not to define themselves by what has been but, rather, they should use the power of their minds to create a new experience and a new reality. I likened this process to the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King lived in a world where racism was endemic, discrimination was a fact and injustice and inequality abounded. He refused to allow those circumstances to define what his future would be. Instead he had a dream.

King commenced his speech to the crowds on 28 August 1963 in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom by speaking to the state of his people a century after President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Declaration abolishing slavery. He said:

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.

One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

He refused to make that state of inequality and injustice that had prevailed for so long the condition that his people would have to stay in. He said:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

Dr. King eloquently and persuasively expressed his vision for what was possible. Use the power of your thoughts to change the experience you have of life.

As a teenage boy in search of a girlfriend I would hesitate to approach a girl and would think to myself "Nah, she wouldn't like me" and would move away.

As an adult in search of a better firm to practice law with I would think to myself "No good firm would want me" and I would hold back from offering my services to another firm. I spent my entire legal career in one firm. Curiously, after I committed to leaving the law and becoming a house husband when Margo and I

started a family, I received, unsolicited, two really good job offers from other firms.

As a friend of people I did not reach out to arrange meetings because I thought to myself that the other person would not want to waste their time on me.

In each of these situations negative thoughts presented themselves to me and it never occurred to me to replace them with a new thought that would create opportunities rather than deny me opportunities.

The idea that I could intentionally alter my experiences by shifting my thoughts and having a constructive approach with my thoughts rather than a self-pitying negativity is a relatively new one. It is one that has presented itself to me through the practice of yoga, through Margo's reading of various authors (Stephen Covey and Jon Gabriel) and through my own reading of the Yoga Sutras.

I do not consider it possible to control my every thought. I do, however, perceive that from inquiry, awareness and meditation I have the capacity to be conscious of repetitive thought patterns and tendencies. In each of the examples I gave of my own thoughts earlier the fundamental thought pattern is "you are not wanted". The principle of *vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam* would say that every time I become aware of that thought pattern I should replace it with the opposite; you are wanted and you have a role to play.

I have the power to accept or reject any thought that presents itself. The key is to be aware of my thoughts and be critical and skeptical with respect to them. Does this thought represent my truth and is it helpful? If not, then substitute a new thought that represents what my heart knows to be true and that will advance me.

When the pattern of your thoughts causes you sadness or suffering, recognise your power to choose your thoughts. Create a dream and mentally commit to your dream in place of the broken record of habitual disempowering thoughts.

Give up saying to yourself that you are fat and you are not beautiful. Create a new experience of being healthy, happy and connected. Give up the impression that you are a failure and you are not good enough. Create a new determination to purpose and fulfilment.

Be present to your thoughts and the influence they are having upon your experiences. Choose a new pattern of thought and commit to it to harness the power of your mind to turn your experiences in a positive direction.

Asana Spotlight:

Half-moon pose (*ardha chandrasana*) is an expressive one-legged balancing pose that requires both stability and freedom of expression. Create challenge in your balance and spatial orientation and create freedom in your spine and spirit in this great pose from the Equanimity stage of our practice.

- Begin in aeroplane (see last month's magazine for details). Orient your hips and chest towards the floor. Raise your right leg to hip height or higher but with an internal rotation of your right thigh. Turn the toes of your right foot towards the floor and turn the inner seam of your right thigh inwards and upwards towards the ceiling.
- Lift your shoulders to higher than the height of your hips. Before you even begin to take half-moon pose generate extension of the hip of your raised leg.

- Create a foundation you can trust. Press the inner mound, the big toe mound of your standing foot, to the floor and sustain that pressure throughout the transition into and the duration of half-moon pose.
- Strongly contract the muscles of your left leg to their bones. Be strong muscularly but be yielding at your joints.
- Hug the pit of your belly in towards your spine and create stability, vitality and energy potential at your core.



- Beginning at your right foot and working up the length of your body, rotate your right foot towards the right side of the room, your right hip towards the ceiling and progressively your right shoulder towards the ceiling and your left shoulder towards the floor.
- Extend your left arm down towards the floor. Most people like to steady themselves on the fingertips of their left hand. You may do this directly at the floor or at a block.
- A block is necessary if you have difficulty reaching to the mat. Maintain the integrity of your spine in both aeroplane and half-moon pose and hold your spine long and neutral with no lateral or forward flexion/rounding.
- Expand your chest wide and reach your right arm vertically to the ceiling. Make it your intention not to collapse downwards into your left hand but to stretch up high through your right arm and hand.

- Move from your centre and core in all these actions. From skin to muscle to bone, pull into each bone. Then press, lift, move and express outwards from your spine and core to your extremities and beyond.
- Rotate your chin towards your right shoulder and track your drishti gaze across the floor to the right side of the room, up the right wall to the ceiling, and across the ceiling until your drishti is at your right thumb nail.



- Let me address some common flaws in half-moon pose. First, many students lose alignment and connection with the earth in their standing foot. Set your left foot on 12 o'clock, and point it straight forward up the length of your mat. Align your whole body to that direction. If your standing foot should rotate inwards (that is the typical default) either come out of the pose and begin again with your left foot on 12 o'clock or realign the entirety of your pose not to your mat but to the line upon which your left foot is set.
- As mentioned earlier, press the big toe mound of your left foot to the earth and be committed to that element of grounding.

- Another common flaw is flexion of your hips. If there is a kink at your hips such that your torso is aligned to 1 o'clock and your right leg to 5 o'clock then there is work for you to do to strengthen your buttocks and back, and to release tension from your quadriceps, hip flexors and chest.
- The work to resolve these issues is not just in half-moon pose but lies in pigeon, dragon and frog and the deep stretching poses of the latter stages of the practice and of power restore classes.
- In half-moon pose reach your right leg straight back behind you towards the back of the room. If you sense that your leg is angled towards the back right corner of the room add intention to align your lifted leg straight to the back of the room. Tighten the buttock of your right leg. Consciously, relax and lengthen the front of your right hip and groin.
- If your torso tends to angle towards the front right corner of your mat start by realigning your head. Lift your chin up away from your throat, set your gaze at a point, whether on the floor, the right wall or the ceiling, that is at least level with if not in front of the front edge of your mat.
- Pull your shoulders and arm bones towards your back, towards the left side of the room. Intentionally lengthen the front side of your body from your pubic bone to your throat. Both engage your spinal erectors to give strength and structure to the back of your torso and relax the muscles of your chest to create length and breadth.
- A third common flaw is for the student's lifted leg to be lower than the height of their hips. Generate power to lift your right leg not just to the height of your hip but to a plane with your spine. Contract your right buttock and the muscle called the tensor fasciae lata on the outside of

your right hip to create abduction and lift of your right leg.

- In the photo of Hamish in half-moon pose you can trace a straight line from the ankle of his right leg, through the knee and hip of his right leg and through his spine to the crown of his head. Create that continuity of joint alignment in your half-moon pose.
- A final flaw that occurs frequently in half-moon pose happens when the student turns their chest towards the floor. In half-moon pose, rotate your right hip towards the ceiling and stack it over your left leg and hip. Rotate your torso too so that your navel and your chest face the right side of the room.
- Consciously turn your left lung and shoulder down towards the floor. Draw your right shoulder blade in towards your spine and rotate your right shoulder up towards the ceiling.
- For greater expression in half-moon pose take *ardha chandrasana chapasana*. For this variation bend your right heel to your right buttock and reach your right arm back to bind the outside of your right ankle or foot with your right hand.



- In equal measure press your pelvis towards the right side of the room and kick your right foot towards the left side of the room.
- *Chapasana* is not a bowing action in a vertical plane like dancer's pose. It is a bowing action in a horizontal plane.
- As you extend your spine in chapasana, draw your shoulder blades towards your spine and take your head back towards the left side of the room to create full outward expression and opening.

I have had teachers instruct me in half-moon pose from a place of restriction: "Align yourself as if you were squeezed between two panes of glass" and "Make your lifted leg and torso perfectly horizontal". I prefer to approach this, as with all poses, from a place of possibility. Create expansion, openness and connection in half-moon pose. Liberate your body and soul.

From Baron Baptiste:



Personal strength and presence of mind is no longer a luxury, it is an absolute necessity.
Our families need us to be present, our communities need us to be present, the whole world needs us to be present.

Apollo Yogis Up to Big Things

He made it!! Isaac Giesen, the Blue Rower, has completed his solo row across the Atlantic Ocean in the Talisker Challenge. He is the first New Zealander to complete this feat and, having been part of a 6-man crew that rowed the Atlantic early in the year he is the first New Zealander to row the Atlantic twice in a year.



Isaac did not embark upon this venture for nothing. People important to him have committed suicide and Isaac's venture is to raise money for suicide prevention and the promotion of mental health.

Please visit his website, www.thebluerower.com to donate to his nominated charities.

You are a champion Isaac.

Canterbury Japan Day:

Canterbury Japan Day is **Sunday 3 March 2019**. The event will be held at the Riccarton Racecourse with entry at 165 Racecourse Road.



The theme for this year is autumn in Japan. There are lots of activities for the whole family (including sumo wrestling, Pokemon café, cultural information, a tea ceremony and a lot more besides) and plenty of great Japanese cuisine to try.

For more information visit:
<http://japanday.jsc.org.nz/inside.html>

Namaste

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