



July 2020

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN**

Many of you have inquired after how we are getting on in the current environment. We appreciate your concern. We have been adversely affected and that situation continues but we have received great support from a variety of sources. There have been those who have said good luck, there have been those who have purchased passes without the intention of using them straight away and there have been those who have just kept coming and have filled classes with their beautiful presence and energy. We are grateful to you all.

Regrettably the flow on economic effects of the coronavirus mean that we have not been able to offer the same number of classes to our teachers as was the case preceding the lock down. We regret that and look forward to the time when we will expand our timetable again and return to them the opportunities that were there before.

In similar vein, we are thinking of everyone who has been adversely affected by the coronavirus and we send you our best wishes. We are fortunate as it transpires to be in this country while all this plays out. Better days await us all. Throughout whatever trials you may be experiencing be grounded, present and non-reactive. Choose to accept your situation as it is, as it is not and grow from there. Be well.

### **POWER IN YOUR HANDS WORKSHOP – SATURDAY 8 AUGUST**

Power in your Hands is a workshop to inquire into all the poses in practice where you bear weight in your hands. We will address technique and the tools needed to be light and strong in your hands. We will traverse poses and transitions throughout the practice including floating forward from downward facing dog, crow and its variations all the way up to handstand!



This workshop is not suitable for you if you have wrist or shoulder injuries but otherwise is open to those curious about advancing your practice by being more grounded and confident in the foundation of your hands.

Places in our Power in your Hands workshop are going fast so book now and confirm your booking by paying for your place today! Annual members – 25. Non-annual members – 50.

### **BRING A FRIEND FOR FREE**

**Bring a friend new to Apollo Power Yoga for a free first class.** This offer has been a great success and we have met a good number of new people. Thank you to everyone who has brought in a friend or friends to practice with us. We greatly appreciate you sharing our practice with your community so that, together, we can all form a greater community. **This offer is continuing indefinitely.** So, if you have not done so yet please bring in someone who has not previously practiced with us and their first visit will be free. They can then still do a two week starter pass and really get going with their practice at Apollo Power Yoga.

In the cold of winter you will always find a warm room and a warm welcome at Apollo Power Yoga. Practice often and reap the rewards in connection, strength, mobility and overall health and well-being.

### **YOGA INTENSIVE – 11-19 SEPTEMBER STEP INTO YOUR POWER – THERE IS STILL TIME SO BOOK NOW**

Our yoga intensive, ***Step into your Power***, is proceeding at Wainui on Banks Peninsula from 11 to 19 September. You may attend this programme as part of a yoga teacher training programme or as an intensive to learn more of yoga, your practice and as a process of personal growth and development.

Those attending for teacher training will need to commit to full days with all sessions compulsory. Those choosing to attend as an intensive will be excused attendance at sessions on teaching methodology, anatomy and physiology sessions and the practice teaching sessions. In those times you can go for walks down to the beach at Wainui or in the surrounding bush or nip away to French Farm, Duvauchelles or Akaroa or just hang out and relax in the very pleasant surrounds of the Wainui Park Camp area.

This course has produced all the teachers at Apollo Power Yoga, the core of the teaching group for a studio in Auckland and the leaders of the vinyasa teachers at Dunedin's leading yoga studio as well as others plying their craft throughout New Zealand. Our training enables trainees to be effective teachers and leaders in their communities. We promise you a powerful process of growth, learning and empowerment.

*Anyone that is looking to expand their yoga practice or wants to teach; this is an amazing 10 days away! I can highly recommend it for your personal development as*

*well. Hamish Kenworthy and Margo Perpick are excellent facilitators with huge knowledge, intelligence, discipline and care.*

- Gloria



By participating in our programme you will develop in your asana practice, in meditation and in your appreciation of yoga as an holistic practice and in yoga philosophy.

Commit now to the most rewarding week not just of your year but of your life and sign up for **Step into your Power** now. Visit our website for more details: <https://apollopoweryoga.com/step-into-your-power-yoga-teacher-training/>

Feel free to speak with Margo or Hamish to discuss your part in the programme. Call Margo on 027 2272026 or Hamish on 021 0551884 or arrange to chat with us at our studios. You will not regret your choice to be part of an amazing group of people engaging in an amazing process of meditation, asana and inquiry.

### **POWER IN PARADISE RAROTONGA RETREAT – NOT PROCEEDING UNTIL...**

Our trip to Rarotonga for our Power in Paradise retreat cannot proceed because the borders are not yet open. However, our hosts at the Ikurangi Eco Resort are keen for us to visit when international travel is possible. On that positive note, keep your eyes open for future notices about this retreat. It will be a great experience of yoga asana, meditation and philosophy coupled with sun and relaxation in the laid back atmosphere of the Cook Islands.

If you have any questions, email [margo@apollopoweryoga.com](mailto:margo@apollopoweryoga.com)

## THE POSE IS INFINITE

On a daily basis I see students in yoga practice making a fundamental mistake. As a teacher I consider it my responsibility to bring students to a point where this mistake may be made and to then give guidance with respect to that mistake. Regrettably there are those who are resistant to guidance, who remain un-coachable and who, like the deaf adder, block their ears and heareth not.

The mistake is that of trying too hard, over-efforting and trying to prove something by doing more even if it comes at the cost of alignment, composure and regular breathing. There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the process of yoga asana and what constitutes “yoga” in those prone to these errors. If the effort you put into a pose causes you to screw up your face in agony or strain, you have gone too far. If the effort you bring to a pose causes you to be left gasping and panting for breath, you have gone too far. If you lose essential alignment in order to do something extra in a pose then you have gone too far. If you are driven by what your pose looks like and what others will think of you when you are doing your pose then you are operating at a level of mistake. If you are motivated to do something that you perceive as better than or superior to someone else then you are mistaken.

You have all heard teachers say in yoga class that breath is the most important thing and that it is fundamental for you to maintain an even rhythm of breath, in and out through your nose, throughout class. And yet, in every class, there are students who force themselves from a focus on trying to do the pose well or better than others to a point where they lose presence to their breath. At that moment of loss of presence they either hold their breath as if they were under water or they open their mouths and gasp for breath.

There are students who need forward bends because they are imbalanced in their bodies and are, relative to their strengths, rather tight in their hamstrings. Yet these students will, in straddle leg forward fold, take tripod headstand. In doing so, they avoid a stretch for their hamstrings, of which their bodies are in need. Instead, they take what they consider to be a superior pose, due to a mistaken agenda. Yes, if in straddle forward bend you easily rest your head to the ground with your legs and spine straight, you might choose to expand your practice with a headstand. But if there is still challenge for you in lengthening the muscles at the back of your body, meet that challenge with calm patience, instead of avoiding it. There is a phase in our practices for inversions so you will get a chance for headstand later.

There are students who, in extended side angle pose, disregard the cues to align their front knee over their front ankle and to rotate their chest towards the side of the room and to lift their chin away from their chest and lengthen their spine. Instead, they go searching for a bind of their arms leaving them with their front leg angled inwards, their chest turned towards the floor and their chin on their chest with their gaze towards the back of the room. By trying to take a bind because they think it is better or because their friends take a bind they lose the safety of good alignment and end in a disempowering tangle rather than an empowering opening.

The style of practice we teach at Apollo Power Yoga is Baptiste-style power vinyasa yoga. Baron Baptiste has two books that we sell through our studios called *Journey into Power* and

*40 Days to Personal Revolution*. In these books Baptiste identifies some important principles that we all need to carry with us as we practice.

In *Journey into Power* there is a list of what Baptiste calls the seven most common mental mistakes made by yoga practitioners. Two of those mistakes are highly relevant for present purposes. One is, falling into the trap of comparison and competition. The other is, not understanding when less is more. In each case the student laboring under the mistake is driven to over-extend and over-effort in an ultimately fruitless exercise to keep up with or to outdo other people or to accomplish one pose at the expense of their overall appreciation of the practice.

In the same book Baptiste describes eight universal principles for stepping to your edge. One of those is, don't try hard, try easy. Again, in every class there will be students who are clearly straining, struggling and over-efforting. These students, rather than achieving congruence and harmony within themselves, end up fatigued, frustrated and disenchanted with themselves and the process. There is so much more to be gained by, as Baptiste says, letting go the physical tension caused by struggling and the mental strain caused by fighting. Rather than straining to create a pose, just be in the pose in a relaxed, present way. This does not mean to collapse or go floppy in a pose. It does not mean effort is not required. It means there is a point in each pose where you will be confronted by the challenge of the pose and the way forward is through a willingness to relax and flow rather than struggle and fight.

In *40 Days to Personal Revolution* Baptiste lists what he calls twelve laws of transformation. Two of these are, again, highly pertinent to the present discussion. One is, don't rush the process. The other is, be true to yourself. It is my experience that trying to force outcomes in yoga practice is inadvisable as it leads to strain, injury and frustration. A woman that I have met at several Baptiste programmes recently posted on social media a short video of her taking handstand and then arching her back to bring her feet to her head in a pose called scorpion.



She notes in the caption to the video that it took her 24 years to develop the strength, balance, mobility, courage and technique to do this pose. A quarter of a century! And she is very adept at yoga. Do not feel there is any hurry for you to do any advanced postures. Take your time. Be responsible. Growth will reveal itself if you are patient.

The idea of being true to yourself is very important. To be true to yourself means to acknowledge your strengths and your limitations and to work with those attributes. It means to respect the hand that you have been dealt in terms of your anatomy and your life history and to concentrate upon what you can manage rather than what someone else is doing. For me, I have to remind myself that, notwithstanding that I am adept enough at asana, I came to yoga relatively late in life at the age of 40. I do not have any background in gymnastics, dance or the movement arts. Each time I get on my mat to practice I am still learning about myself and the postures. I remind myself there is nothing to be gained by pretending to be someone I am not. The lure of fancy poses and extreme variations can be strong but those radical expressions are not for me right now.

Underpinning all of this is a truth that I believe it is important to acknowledge now and every time you come to practice. That truth is that the poses are infinite. It matters not how many times you do a pose, the pose is still there. It is inexhaustible. No matter how long I can hold a pose, it is always me who comes out of the pose. Never has the situation occurred where a pose has suddenly declared itself to be beaten, completed and spent and therefore unavailable. All the poses are there for everyone at any time and for all of time. Ultimately, your pose is not greater than anyone else and you are not greater than any one pose or than the poses collectively.

Be humble enough, be grounded enough, to recognise that the practice is not there to be defeated or mastered but is there as a vessel for you to learn and grow – to learn about yourself including any tendency to be driven by pride, ego and competition and to attain a state of “yoga” in which you are free of the distractions and suffering of your mind. Always the poses will be there to provide you with an opportunity to discover more of yourself because the poses are infinite.

### **ASANA SPOTLIGHT**

In our power vinyasa practice we reach a point where all the strengthening work is done and it is time to flow with the residual heat in your body to create length, ease and relaxation. Pigeon pose (*eka pada rajakapotonasana*) is an excellent pose for releasing tightness and tension from around your hips and creating length in your buttocks, outer hips and thighs and in your groin.

- Begin in downward facing dog. Step your right foot forward to your right thumb. Creep your right foot across your mat towards the left hand side of your mat. Lower your right knee to the floor.

- Align your right thigh straight forward up the length of your mat and rotate your inner right thigh outwards towards the right side of the room.
- The angle of your lower right leg very much depends upon how easily you can turn your inner right thigh outwards. If you can do this action easily then you may be able to position your lower right leg close to parallel with the front edge of your mat. If you are less adept at externally rotating your right thigh, you may need to angle your lower right leg back from the front edge of your mat such that your right foot is not as far forward up your mat as your right knee.
- It is very important to not strain your right knee in pigeon pose. If you struggle to create any angle at your front knee that is comfortable, place a yoga block under your right thigh and elevate your right thigh. Doing this will relieve the lateral strain on your right knee and give you greater ease of access to pigeon pose.
- Align your left leg straight back behind you towards the back of the room.
- Rotate your outer left hip forwards and downwards. Avoid collapsing your weight onto your right buttock or the outer edge of your right hip.
- Flex the toes of your right foot towards your right shin (dorsiflexion). Either dorsiflex your left foot and practice pigeon with the toes of your left foot tucked under or rest the top of your left foot flat to the floor (plantar flexion). The dorsiflexion option for your back foot can sometimes relieve discomfort in your left knee cap.
- The orientation of your torso is at your discretion. You may begin the pose with your torso as upright as you can manage. This generates a strong back bend in your lower back, similar to that in upward facing dog pose. In this position, draw your hands back alongside your hips and elevate yourself on your fingertips. Draw your shoulder blades in towards your spine and press your thoracic spine into your chest. Extend your neck long and reach the crown of your head towards the ceiling.



- You may then choose to lower your torso down towards the floor. Slowly lower your abdomen and navel towards the floor, followed by your ribcage and chest. You may rest your forearms at the floor and stay there or you may lower your torso as far down to the floor as you can manage and stretch your arms out in front of you.

- If you rest on your forearms, beware hunching or tensing your shoulders. Be as relaxed and neutral around your shoulders, neck and jaw as you can be.
- Rest your head to the floor, or the backs of your forearms or on your hands or a block. Relax your neck and allow the weight of your head to rest on one of the supports I have mentioned. There is no need to hold your head up from the mat.
- Put your awareness in your hands and relax your hands to rest limply at the mat. I regularly see students with their hands clasped or clenched tightly. This is counter-productive. Relax your hands.

There are many variations of pigeon pose. In this piece I shall identify just some of them:

- From pigeon lift your torso away from the floor and reach your right hand back towards your left leg. Bend your left leg at the knee and bind your right hand to the outside of your left foot. In order to catch the bind you will need to rotate your torso to the right. Once you have the bind, turn your chest back towards the front of the room. If you hyper-extend your joints beware locking out your right elbow. Maintain a slight bend in your right elbow while you maintain the bind of your left foot.
- A second alternative is to bind your left hand to your left foot. Again, once you have bound your left hand to your left foot, rotate your chest back towards the front of the room. You may be able to advance this bind by catching the top of your left foot or ankle in the crook of your left elbow. If you can do this then the next step is to bind your right hand to your left hand in front of your chest and then lift your right elbow over your head to rest at the back of your head.



- Another option is called double pigeon (*dwa pada rajakapotonasana*). In this variation, sweep your left leg around in front of you and cross it over the top of your right leg. Overhang your left ankle outside your right thigh and flex your left foot towards your left shin. You may find it helpful to support the outer edge of your left foot with a block.

- Align your two thigh bones straight forward from your hips and rotate your two thighs outward, away from one another.
- Draw your buttocks outward and backward and tilt your pelvis forward slightly.



- A final variation is a seated half pigeon which is a good option if a regular pigeon is too intense or places an undue load on your joints. Begin in a seated position. Bend your legs and set your feet flat to the mat with your knees bent at roughly at a 90° angle.
- Set your hands a little wider than shoulder width behind you with your palms facing down and your fingers pointing to the back of the mat.
- Cross your right ankle to the outside of your left thigh. As with double pigeon, overhang your right ankle bone to the outside of your left thigh bone a few inches above your knee. Dorsiflex your right foot.
- Draw your spine up into your torso and avoid any slump or collapse in your body.
- If you need more intensity and a stronger stretch draw your left foot closer towards your left hip and/or creep your hands further forward on your mat. To decrease intensity do the opposite.

Once you have created the alignment of your pigeon pose the doing is done. Now receive the pose into the tissues of your body, into your nervous system and into the essence of your being. Abandon the desire to rush for the next thing or force outcomes or be entertained. Relax and receive and be a calm witness to the present moment.

## **APOLLO POWER YOGIS UP TO BIG THINGS**

### **Bryn, Christine and Grace Sparks – Sleep Well Clinic**

Apollo Power Yogis, Dr Bryn Sparks, Christine Sparks, and Grace Sparks (yes, one of our Apollo teachers) help people sleep well through their work at the Sleep Well Clinic.

Disordered sleep can be associated with many common health problems:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Daytime sleepiness
- Obesity
- Lowered immune system
- Decreased libido
- Increased irritability
- Increased pain sensitivity

Poor sleep may be a consequence or symptom of many health problems, but it can also be the underlying cause for some of them. Sleep has an impact on so many of the body's metabolic processes because they all need sleep to restore, repair damage, and recalibrate ready for the next day.

Bryn, Christine, Grace and the rest of the team at Sleep Well help people overcome sleep disorders such as:

- Snoring
- Sleep Apnoea
- Insomnia

Sleep Well also offers Nasal High Flow services, to deal with daytime chronic breathlessness/cough, including that resulting from:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Asthma
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Croup
- Post radiotherapy
- Tracheostomy

Your Apollo Power Yoga practice has probably already improved your breath and your sleep, but if you or someone you know needs extra help, get in touch with Sleep Well <https://www.sleepwellclinic.co.nz/index.html>

## **APOLLO POWER YOGIS IN BUSINESS**

**Now that we're out of lockdown, take the opportunity to support your fellow Apollo Power Yogis as their businesses get up and going again.**

You might not know that the yogi on the mat next to you runs a restaurant, a building business, or an interior design company. So we're creating a forum for Apollo Power Yogis to connect with each other's businesses and support them as they rebuild after the lockdown.

Going out for a great meal or a drink? Try one of the Dux restaurants, owned by **Richard and Lisa Sinke**. You can take your pick from [Dux Dine](#), [Dux Central](#) or [The Terrace Tavern](#). Other fantastic options are [Smash Palace](#) owned by **Johnny and Juliet Moore**, and [27 Steps](#) owned by **Emma Mettrick**. For a healthy smoothie and other vegan treats, head to [Pure Pulp](#), owned by **Sara-Fae Foldesi**.

Have a building project in mind? Along with **Anthony Leighs** of [Leighs Construction](#), your fellow Apollo Power Yogis include **Ben Collis** of [Protec Projects](#), specialising in residential builds, commercial fit-outs and design builds, and **Alastair Miles** of [Miles Construction](#).

Thinking of buying, selling or leasing property? Go to **Alison Aitken** of [Harcourts](#) for your residential real estate needs. If you're looking to lease or buy commercial real estate, see **Karen Collis** at [JLL](#).

Need legal assistance? Philip Sewell and his team at [Godfreys Law](#) can help you with a wide range of legal expertise and experience.

Whether you've built, bought or leased residential or commercial property, make it your own with specialist Interior Design. **Susie Paynter** of [The Duchamp Collective](#) or **Lisa Sinke** of [Lisa Sinke Design](#) can give you the benefit of their impeccable taste and wide knowledge.

For gardening advice and assistance, contact [Jenny Jones Gardening](#). She can advise you on which plants will work best in your garden, and help you with planting and maintaining your outdoor space.

If you seek an experienced, knowledgeable and skilful massage therapist and/or naturopath contact Karina Thorpe at [KarinaThorpeNaturopath](#).

And as we know, lockdown deepened our appreciation of the skills of hairdressers. See **Tracette Owers** of [The Lounge Organic Hairdressing](#) for great haircuts and colours using organic hair products.

Do you have a business that you'd like your fellow Apollo Power Yogis to know about? Contact <mailto:margo@apollopoweryoga.com>.



**FROM BARON BAPTISTE**



*Put your thoughts, effort and resistance aside and let the universe work on your behalf.  
If you are relaxing you are receiving.*

Namaste

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