

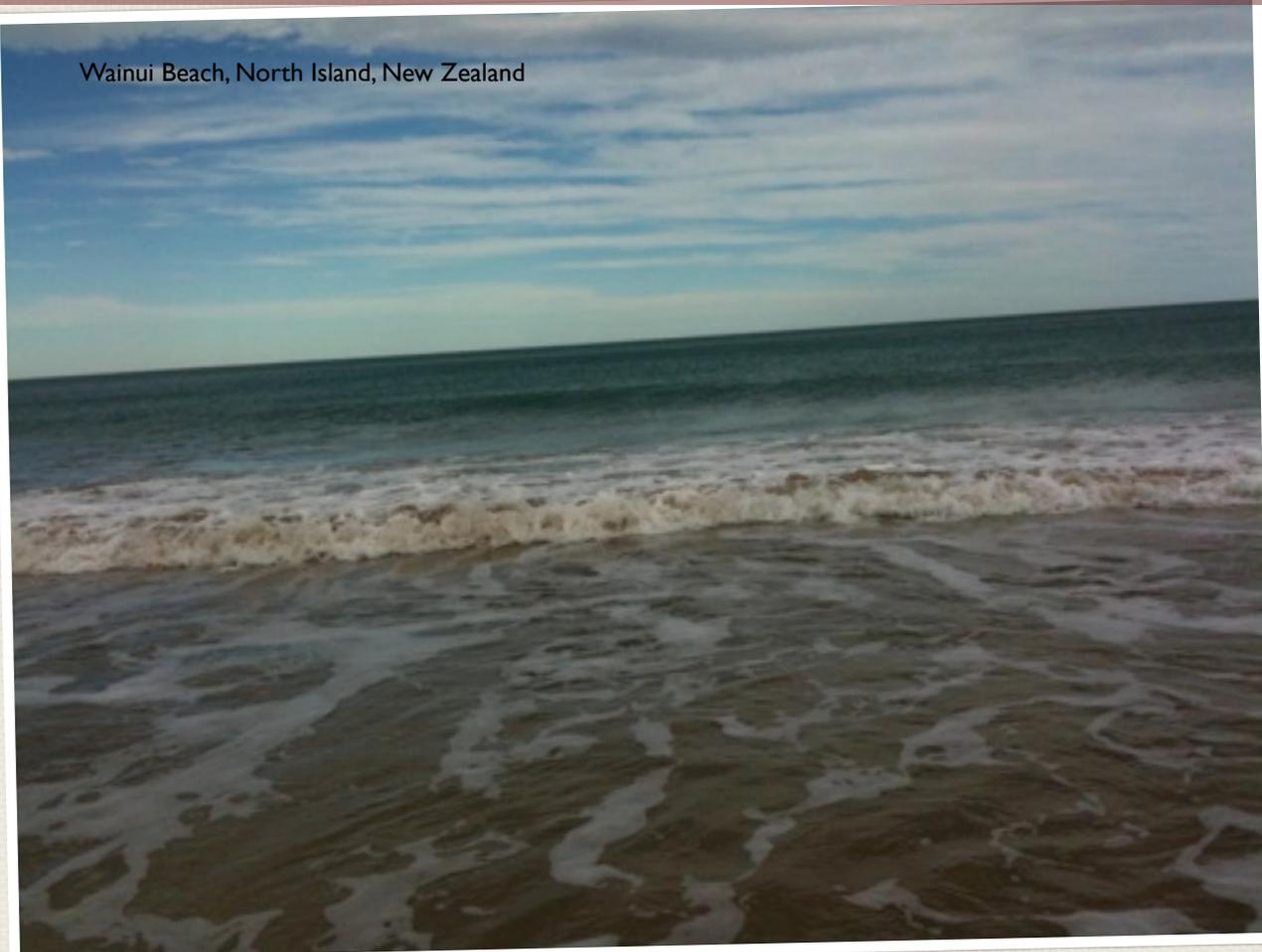


GISBORNE

NO. 7



Wainui Beach, North Island, New Zealand



Monday, January 4, 2010



YOGA ON THE BEACH
WAINUI BEACH, NEW ZEALAND



ME & REN BEFORE BDAY
DINNER



REN & NOAH AFTER BEACH
TIME

Ashtanga Yoga January 4, 2010 continued ...

Happy New Year.

My wish for everyone, everywhere is acceptance, full and complete acceptance, to be where you are; to know what you don't know; and time to reflect on what is and make it what you want it to be - one breath at a time, one moment at a time, one possibility at a time.

Practice has continued to be a process of letting go, softening, breathing, accepting and being in the moment. Deep fatigue set in this week. Saturday I practiced the primary series. It felt good to fold inward, forward, tend to my nervous system. It felt hard to be quiet and inward.

I learned something new in garbha pindasana. I learned how to rock up and back with ease while keeping my arms threaded through my lotus position. Most times when I am rocking back and up, I have to take my arms out to assist my rocking.

However, Paul, Peter's assistant, was helping someone next to me and I heard him say to use the arms to help with momentum. When rocking up, pull the arms and when rocking back push the arms. He kept saying over and over, "push. Pull. Push. Pull. Push. Pull. Push. Pull." This was the first time I had heard anyone describe the action in the arms in this way. I tried it and it totally worked. Sometimes things really are that simple. Push. Pull. And move with body's momentum.

The help I have been getting from Peter is not about the technicalities of the postures. I am making progress and I am learning, just not about the physical. I am still learning so much about letting go. I am learning about the focus of the mind

and what can be done when the mind is purely focused.

I arrived to practice on Sunday feeling completely wasted. Manomay spent a good portion of the night before awake and crying. The mind's response to the body was, "there is no way you can get through this practice today." The mind started having all kinds of responses - "too tired, not enough energy, nope can't do this ..."

I decided to start my sun salutes and see what the body was actually capable of, instead of listening to the thoughts of the mind, and what it *thought* the body was capable of. I started by stilling the mind on the breath, then bandhas, then dristi, and then the sensations. One moment at a time; one breath at a time; one asana at a time; and then I will see where I am.

Not only did I get through the whole practice, but I got through it with steadiness and ease. The body began to get energized by the practice. Maybe because I was tired and had no expectations, I was soft and open. This ended up freeing the spine, hips and hamstrings. Dena's voice came into my mind, "if you lose your focus you drop the baby." My focus was impeccable in Sunday's practice - impeccably, humanly focused on the inhale and exhale. Best Pinchamayurasana ever and my butt is still staying off the ground in karandavasana.

My yoga practice continues to be a struggle at times and spaciousness at times. Either way, life continues to move along. Time continues to move forward. My children continue to say "Mama, can I ...?" at least one thousand times per day, and I continue, most of the time, to hold it

all in the moment with grace, patience, love, acceptance and an open heart. This really is the best I can hope for.

Today's practice was incredibly energizing. I am really starting to get Mayurasana without falling over every time. Peter added Nakrasana today. Happy Birthday it seems. Nakrasana is another incredibly difficult posture. From chaturanga you are to pop/jump your hands and feet off the ground without coming all the way down. 5 breaths/jumps forward and 5 breaths/jumps back. Nakrasana translates to crocodile posture. It takes an incredible amount of upper body and core strength. Peter said, "it is coming. Good Effort."

This trip: complete letting go of the end result and being amidst the process; being right in the middle of imperfection; being right in the middle of struggle; being right in the middle of the beginner's mind. It is in the beginner's mind that everything is possible.

Today is the last morning Amna will be watching Noah and Ren for me while I practice. She and Manomay leave this afternoon for Australia. Later today, Ren, Noah and I will head out to Wainui Beach and rent a house close to the ocean. Noah and Ren will come with me to the yoga shala for the rest of my days here.

This trip is coming to an end. It has been a true celebration. It has been a celebration of my life here on this earth so far. I have ached for this journey for many years. Today I turned 40. That too is a journey in many ways. A transition into the next decade of my life.

Om Shanti