



GISBORNE

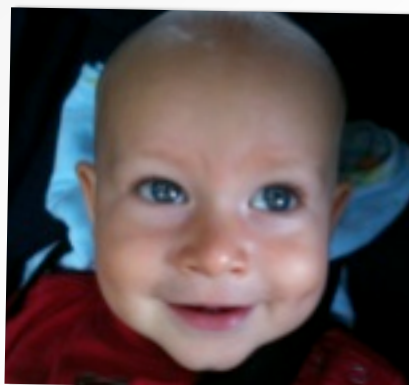
NO. 6



Tuesday, December 29, 2009



THE YOGA ROOM
GISBORNE, NEW ZEALAND



MANOMAY



NATIVE TREE TO NEW ZEALAND

Ashtanga Yoga December 29, 2009 continued . . .

Day two practice in Gisborne, New Zealand is about letting go.

Adjusting to a new yoga space, new teacher, new students, new culture, new country, new living space, new time zone, etc.

This lesson of letting go is one I have to relearn over and over again. There is a saying, "it is not the letting go that is difficult, it's the holding on." And yet, it doesn't feel like it much of the time. Why is it so difficult for us as humans to let go? Why is it so difficult for me to let go in back bend? Let the spine soften, the legs steady, the feet ground and just let the body bend? This difficulty in letting go is true for me in my practice. It is true for me in my daily life. I want to be in my life with my palms open so that I am not grasping, but instead allowing my experience to slide right through.

If I can not let go of my experience in Byron Bay, I will not be able to fully take in my experience here. If I do not fully let go of my experience with Dena, I will not be able to learn what Peter has to offer.

Practice with Peter is a slow steady process of breath, posture, listening in, dristi, bhandas and dedication. Nothing fancy. No frills. No ego.

Year after year, students of all different levels come together in

this tiny little yoga room that fills with 16 students. Peter started this yoga school in Gisborne many years ago. Since then, not much has changed. He now lives in Hawkes Bay, three hours south of Gisborne. He still comes back here every December to teach this yoga workshop for three weeks. People from all over the world come to practice with this gentle teacher. This week there are students from South American, Portugal, America, and New Zealand. Next week even more are due to arrive.

These past two days I have noticed how quickly I relax back into old patterns and habits. Without the poking from Dena, I am able to back off the practice and coast a little. A different way of getting to the same place - stilling of the mind and purifying the body.

With Peter, I am left to my own comfort zone of practice. I am left with my critic. I am left with my doubt. I am left with the unknown.

These are the things Peter has said to me the past few days during practice:

Better.

Much better.

It's coming.

Are you breathing?

Let go.

Open the heart.

That's enough for now.

I find myself missing the poking. I find myself missing the edge of Dena. I find myself missing the container. However, I know this is also a place for me to learn and grow into myself. It is a place for me to either hide behind the old patters or emerge into something new.

I am remembering just now what Dena said a couple of weeks ago, that "every ending is a beginning of more of the same or the beginning of something new." My time with her has ended, and I want this time with Peter to be another chance for me to begin something new.

In this ashtanga yoga practice I come face to face with myself every day: my fears, my insecurities, my ego, my body, my fatigue, my weakness, my strength, my limitations - whatever is present for me at any given moment will rear its head in my yoga practice. It's like looking in a mirror. It is the mirror. Aside from my children, it is my biggest teacher. For that I am forever grateful.

Om Shanti