

YOGA NOTES

April 2018

"Families are like branches on a tree, we grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one."



My family by heart

Many of you ...

.. know that I have had the privilege of having my parents in the house for a month. Almost five years since they last visited. Previous visits have been for Christmas and New Year and obviously busy times for me, us, with the Guest House. I've been torn between "quality time" and guests. This probably took a toll on my parents as well, which probably added to their time away. Now we are off the farm and they chose off-season as well ;-)

But as I now reflect on it, it has almost been ten years since I spent "real" time with them. We have talked and seen each other on Skype and had brief moments on the annual occasions I have been back. But those occasions were scattered, a lot of family and friends to share time with. Until now I have neither had the time, nor the attentiveness, to notice the slight, yet obvious and oh so natural and beautiful, change. This time we were able to be together in a "daily life" situation, me commuting to work and yoga. So here I found myself several times this past month, leaning back and looking at my parents from a new perspective. And with a few exceptions, where I fell back into my old behaviour (reptile brain), I was able to meet them where they actually are, not where I assume them to be as my parents.

I imagine it might be similar to the change parents experience looking at their children. One day they are all of a sudden a teen, an adult. Grown up, with individual values, ideas and a life on their own. So not only do we transform from child to adult, we evolve with the beauty of aging and eventually senescence. I am sure all of us feel a certain fear of the process. Some of us, my father for one, are even scared of it. Trying to resist it becomes an unnecessary stressor. It is inevitable and as fears are never productive in any way, it only takes away the very present moment. The peaceful place where we should feel nothing but contentment enjoying the beauty of life. As that is determined from within ...

It is also the change I have been through myself that gives me the opportunity to see them in a different light. The epiphany of finding myself less annoyed by their ways and consequently respecting them more truly.

Everything is subject to change. Both in the environment, in circumstances as well as in an individual. It is the peace we create inside that gives us the strength to find clarity and meet people where they are, not where we are ... thank you for that insight, I love you.

Namaste

Ardha Purvottanasana or Chatas Pada Pitham Reversed or Four-footed Tabletop Pose

The Reverse Table Top Pose, also called Half-Upward Plank Pose, is a great counter pose in-between forward bends, but it has many benefits on its own. It stretches the front side of the body and the shoulders, and it strengthens the arms, wrists and the legs.

Because of the opening it gives to the front of the body, the pose improves posture and gives you a nice boost of energy.

Step by Step

- Start in Dandasana, sitting with your legs straight in front of you.
- Bend your knees so that both your feet are on the ground. Leave some space between your hips and the feet, so that when you come up, your knees would be in a 90 degree angle.
- Place your hands behind you on the mat, shoulder-width apart, fingers pointing towards you, and lean back.
- With an inhale, lift your hips while you are pressing firmly onto your hands and feet. Straighten your arms, and check that your knees are at a 90 degree angle and thighs and torso are parallel to the floor. Your wrists should be directly underneath your shoulders.
- Move your shoulder blades close to each other, and open the chest.
- You can keep your neck neutral, or you can gently begin to drop the head if this feels comfortable for your neck.
- Try to relax the buttocks and keep the pose only with the strength of your legs.
- Hold the pose for 4-6 breaths, and release the hips back to the ground. Straighten the legs back to Dandasana.
- You can repeat this pose 2-3 times.

Tips and Modifications

- If you have issues with your wrists, better not practice this pose. The pressure on the wrists can be heavy as the wrist are bent 90-degrees.
- With any issues or pain in your neck, keep your neck neutral or keep the chin closer to the chest. Do not drop the head backwards.
- You can place a block or a bolster under your hips so you can rest part of your weight on the block. This will make the pose a bit easier to do.

