

TESTIMONIALS

• Car-accident survivor Sandra Groom's testimonial

It is my great pleasure to write this testimonial for Karyn and Tara Chapman, both of whom have taught me yoga and the Alexander Technique on a weekly basis for almost fourteen years in Sydney.

I first attended Karyn's class knowing something about yoga, and nothing about the Alexander Technique—I went to “check it out”! I remember having doubts about the Alexander Technique: Karyn was (and still is!) a passionate advocate of her craft, who enthusiastically described the benefits of this training. It sounded far too simple to me.

I periodically suffered acute pain and lack of mobility in my lower back after a serious car accident some years earlier, although I had tried several methods of healing. It is no exaggeration to say that I was astounded at the results of her training, within a period of a few months. It was also a delight to be able to combine this powerful technique with the focus and fun of yoga.

Karyn is a teacher of teachers. She is skilled at sharing her vast knowledge of the human body and how it operates, in a very simple way to her students. She has a great understanding of diet and the effect it has on the body, which she shares generously. Her commitment, eye for detail and ability to recall minute details about each individual body is remarkable. Her humour, compassion and energy are unflagging. She embodies impeccability, both personally and professionally.

Karyn is a master at what she does, and a living demonstration of what Alexander Technique and yoga can provide for humanity.

A few years ago, Karyn handed over some of her yoga and Alexander Technique classes into the capable hands of her daughter, Tara. Some students expressed concern regarding Tara's youth, and whether she could fill the “very big shoes” her mother had vacated.

Tara took up her position with her own passion, and such confidence that I was inspired to invite Tara to speak to an international IT company with whom I was then associated. She spoke knowledgeably, with clarity and conviction. She is a skilled professional, who teaches with intelligence, and is dedicated to contributing to people. Her warm and vivacious personality are a winning combination, and she demonstrates her love of what she does daily.

My father, aged 81, was one of their students for many years until recently (one of their oldest, I believe!) and he mourns their departure.

Hundreds of people in Sydney were devastated when Karyn and Tara announced their intention to move to sunnier climes. (Many subversive plans were hatched to entice them to stay here—unfortunately, without success!) They are deeply missed, and a favourite topic of discussion at the current yoga class I attend.

I can confidently speak for my many classmates when I say these two women are loved, and that they have contributed daily to the health, happiness, and well being of an entire community with their skill and generosity.

In the forty years I have practised yoga, I have never before encountered their professionalism and skill. Queensland now has two additional forms of National Treasure: Karyn and Tara Chapman. You are fortunate to have them in your midst.

—Sandra Groom, *Life Coach and Trainer, Gordon, NSW, 16 May 2002*

• **Kate Quayle’s testimony, following “successful” spinal fusion because of a ruptured disc**

I am delighted to be able to contribute an article about my experience, with Karyn and Tara Chapman, of the Alexander Technique and Yoga classes.

Quite simply, they changed my life. They gave me a freedom of movement and a joy in exercise that I would never have believed I could attain. I have integrated the “semi supine”, along with a greater awareness of how I “use my body” into my daily routine. Unlike many fads that I have read about or tried, whether they be exercise or diet oriented, I seem to be able to main “semi supine” and some basic stretching exercises. This is probably because I have seen concrete, positive results.

I remember Karyn saying that people can only handle small changes, in other words if you give them daunting things to do, they just give up. Somehow she managed to win me over with “semi supine” and some yoga exercises. Even though I required discipline to do daily “semi supine”, I could manage it and my back and whole body felt much better afterwards.

I seem to absorb the awareness about how I might sit or bend as we talked or worked with stretches in the classes. I mention this because I had gone to Alexander classes many years before I met Karyn and somehow I couldn’t seem to turn the theories into real results, so I gave up. It seems to me to be Karyn and Tara’s unique blend of Alexander principles with Yoga that is so accessible for students.

To put my experience into perspective, I had a spinal fusion ten years ago because of a ruptured disc (L5 S1) in my lumbar spine. The operation was very successful but I still developed back pain afterwards and needed to find some on-going relief. I went to a rehabilitation unit where I had physiotherapy and some Feldenkrais therapy. I learned how to re-establish my kitchen so that I did not have to bend or strain myself.

All this was positive in its way, but I was only 35 with two small children, and I wanted to have freedom from stiffness and discomfort. I also loved exercise and was unhappy to limit my movement at such an early age.

I came to the conclusion that I needed some sort of coach and after a bit of a search found Karyn Chapman. I liked the way she gave me clear, logical instructions and the confidence to work with my back and to believe that I could make a difference. I admired her great knowledge and interest in physiology and anatomy. I particularly liked the “down to earth” approach to yoga. I also loved Tara’s open-mindedness and great sensitivity to my particular body type and willingness to discuss what we did.

All I can say in conclusion is that I wish they were here in Sydney but their spirit is with me when I do my daily routine.

—Kate Quayle, Warrawee, NSW, May 2002

**• June Hurwitz’s tertiary study “wreaked havoc with my back and neck”.
Her testimonial:**

The many hours of studying at uni in the process of my becoming a clinical psychologist wreaked havoc with my back and neck. By the time I met Karyn, I had accepted that some pain was a normal part of life. Learning about the Alexander Technique from Karyn changed my life. I know this sounds dramatic but I consider finding the Alexander Technique, Karyn and Tara to be one of the most important events in my life.

I then went on to do yoga with Tara. This yoga has been modified so that it is consistent with the principles of the Alexander Technique. Tara knows about and understands how every muscle, ligament and bone works so that you will never sustain injury in her classes.

She is a wonderful, warm teacher who lives what she teaches in all parts of her life.

As well as teaching yoga, through the classes Tara also helps you understand how you can apply the principles of Alexander Technique to your life. I promise you, this is life-changing stuff that allows you to live your life better and happier.

I consider anyone who encounters Karyn and Tara to be incredibly fortunate—they are irreplaceable. I can vouch for that now they have left Sydney!

—*June Hurwitz, Clinical Psychologist, Chatswood, NSW, 26 May 2002*

• Former pupil inspired to become teacher of Alexander Technique and yoga. Beverley Garlick's testimonial:

I was attending weekly Yoga classes in Johannesburg, South Africa. When we immigrated to Sydney, finding a Yoga class was a priority. I enrolled in a Yoga school on the North Shore, close to where we were living. The teacher was very warm and welcoming, the classes most enjoyable and I was so keen I attended every class I could.

The Principal of the Yoga school organized a special events day for pupils, partners and friends. One of the guest speakers was KARYN CHAPMAN, who was not only a highly qualified Yoga Teacher, but had recently returned from London as a qualified Alexander Technique Teacher. Karyn spoke passionately about the Alexander Technique. We were all fascinated — Yoga students, husbands, wives and children. The interest in the Alexander Technique as a result of Karyn's talk led to her running Alexander Workshops which were so successful that Karyn joined the school as a teacher.

I immediately transferred to Karyn's Yoga classes. Her style of Yoga was so different to anything I had experienced before. Her understanding of the body — the structure, each person's body, their strengths and weaknesses, how we should move and how to adapt the Postures to our needs. Her skills of observation and method of teaching were an inspirational combination. Within weeks there was a waiting list to join her classes. The need for her to start her own school was very pressing.

The more I was exposed to Karyn's way of applying her in-depth understanding of the Alexander Technique to her incredible knowledge of Yoga — the more I wanted to learn. I was so motivated by Karyn's unique work and her dedication that I undertook my Yoga Teachers Training, which was then followed by my training as an Alexander Technique Teacher. I was one of many to be so inspired by Karyn. Many Alexander graduates started out as pupils in Karyn's Yoga class.

Karyn's success grew and grew. People travelled from all over New South Wales for Alexander lessons and to join her Yoga classes — for which there was always a waiting list. Karyn is renowned for her compassion and dedication. Her Yoga students and Alexander pupils have benefited from her knowledge, care and commitment.

SYDNEY'S LOSS IS BRISBANE'S WIN!

—Beverley Garlick IYTA, AUSTAT, STAT, Double Bay, NSW, 28 May 2002

The Alexander Technique made me aware of how to perform daily activities with less effort and tension.

—Brad Garlick, Director, Brad Garlick Motor Group, Double Bay, NSW, May 2002

• Life-long neck injury responds to Alexander Technique. Frank Hanson's testimonial:

From early youth I carried a sporting (boxing) injury to a cervical disc which gave me a painful and stiff neck—sometimes very painful indeed!

Medical practitioners had prescribed either extreme traction or anti-inflammatory drugs. Neither had lasting effect since they addressed more the symptom rather than the cause and only later did I learn how dangerous was that form of traction. For years I relied on exercises I learned from books acquired and dealing with neck pain.

I retired in June 1991 at 61 years of age and looked forward to playing more golf than work had previously allowed. The one problem was that a sudden, sharp stab of pain in the neck and shoulders really put paid to any smooth rhythmic swing.

Fortunately, one of my daughters had met Karyn Chapman at a Yoga course and was greatly impressed by her knowledge and commonsense; she urged me to consult Karyn in her role as an Alexander Technique teacher. I had read of the benefits of the Alexander Technique but had no practical experience of it.

My wife and I commenced lessons with Karyn in October 1991. The result was a miracle. My neck problem has been completely controlled and all-over mobility improved vastly. And with no drugs or dangerous manipulations!

I can thoroughly recommend the Alexander Technique and Karyn Chapman as a superb teacher of that technique.

— *Frank Hanson, Strathfield NSW, 30 May 2002*

• **Peggy Hanson shows it's never too late to develop flexibility**

I was 65 years of age when I commenced the Alexander Technique on a 1-to-1 basis with Karyn Chapman and only stopped when Karyn left Sydney earlier this year. The relaxation techniques have really kept me supple and are a delight to do with very gentle stretching and particularly the semi-supine exercise. Karyn is almost impossible to replace; we wish her well in Brisbane.

—*Peggy Hanson, Strathfield NSW, 30 May 2002*

• **Yoga teacher learns how to avoid injuries in yoga classes. Mary Durkin's testimonial:**

In 1989, after qualifying as a yoga teacher, I began attending advanced yoga classes. After sustaining a back injury at class, I had several chiropractic sessions. These sessions did not help my back, and the chiropractor was unable to clearly explain the problem I had or the treatment. I had met Karyn Chapman as a lecturer on our yoga teachers' training programme, so booked in for Alexander lessons. After just a few lessons my back problem had gone, and there was a great improvement in my posture and awareness of my body. I then began attending Karyn's yoga classes for teachers, where she was applying the Alexander principles to the yoga poses. I was delighted to discover how safe yoga is when the principles of the Alexander Technique are applied, and continued to attend the classes weekly over several years. I also felt compelled to train as a Teacher of the Alexander Technique and graduated after the three years' training in 1995. I now work full time teaching Alexander Technique lessons one to one; and yoga classes, applying the Alexander principles.

Discovering yoga, then the Alexander Technique, have been major positive milestones in my life. I am grateful to Karyn for her pioneering work in the application of the Alexander principles to yoga, and always thoroughly enjoyed attending my Alexander lessons and yoga classes with her. I learnt a great deal from her excellent work and now run my yoga classes with the certain knowledge that I am teaching well and safely.

Karyn Chapman is a very dedicated teacher of the highest calibre. I recommend her excellent work unhesitatingly to students seeking Alexander Technique lessons or yoga classes, and to yoga teachers wishing to deepen their yoga knowledge and learn the art of teaching "safely".

—*Mary Durkin, Chatswood NSW, 27 May 2002*

• One yoga teacher appreciates another’s incorporation of Alexander Technique for added safety. Mary Durkin’s testimonial:

I met Tara Chapman in the early 1990s when we were both attending yoga classes at her mother’s teaching studio. Tara was always attentive and dedicated in the yoga class. In the next few years Tara went on to complete her training as both a yoga teacher and a teacher of the Alexander Technique, and continued to attend her mother’s classes where she was learning the art of applying the Alexander Technique to yoga practice and teaching.

My further association with Tara came when she taught yoga classes at my studio at Chatswood in Sydney. Tara is a competent, confident and knowledgeable teacher who truly understands the application of the Alexander Technique to yoga. She maintains an excellent standard in her teaching and is very efficient and trustworthy. Tara’s students always enjoyed their classes, liked Tara very much, and highly respected her work, even though many of them were several years her senior in age. I always felt confident about Tara teaching at my studio; I knew the students were literally “in good hands”.

—*Mary Durkin, Chatswood NSW, 27 May 2002*

• A broken back, a ruptured disk—but yoga plus Alexander Technique enabled pregnancy. Lisa McArthur-Edwards’ testimonial:

At the age of 28, I had two accidents one after another which resulted in a broken back and then a ruptured disk, which required a discectomy operation. After recovering from these I continued to live a life of pain and restriction.

I then discovered Karyn and Tara Chapman.

I no longer live a life of pain, and I have a normal if not physically demanding life. Within months of starting my yoga and Alexander lessons, I fell pregnant, even though this was not advised by my neurosurgeon. I had a completely normal pregnancy and delivery, which amazed all the doctors. I never once during my pregnancy suffered from back pain.

I continue to this day to do my semi-supines, which have been invaluable to my life.

If you decide to do one thing in your life for yourself, then it should be to have lessons with Karyn and Tara. I want to thank you both for bringing about the most positive changes to my life and giving me back my freedom.

—*Lisa McArthur-Edwards, Wendoree Park, NSW, 1 June 2002*

• **Orthodontist Dr Maurice Hurwitz's testimonial**

After having learnt to live with constant neck problems and visits to the physiotherapist, I was introduced to Karyn by a fellow specialist who suggested to me that having lessons in the Alexander Technique may be of some benefit. I don't believe he knew the favour he did me, because certainly after having a series of lessons from Karyn my neck and back problems were virtually eliminated.

This relationship began in February 1995 and continued on until early this year (2002) when Karyn chose to move to Queensland. As a specialist in the dental profession, I am constantly having to bend my neck and position myself in difficult and awkward postures on a daily basis, and accordingly, I have found that practice of the Alexander Technique as taught to me by Karyn has been enormously beneficial.

Over the years I have seen Karyn intermittently for refresher lessons and I can only say that I was immensely disappointed when I learnt that she was leaving us. However, I feel sure that given such a fine basis and understanding of how to apply the Alexander principles, I will be able to function normally and not regress to my old pattern of discomfort and visits to physiotherapists.

I also had the good fortune to start yoga classes with Tara about four years ago and I must say that it was always a pleasure and a delight to spend a couple of hours per week at her studio. Tara's knowledge of the Alexander Technique, coupled with her yoga instruction, were for me quite inspirational and I hope to be able to continue the good work that I have learnt and take it with me into my daily lifestyle.

— *Dr Maurice Hurwitz, Orthodontist, Chatswood NSW, 31 May 2002*

• **Mark and Kayo Haywood's testimonial**

My wife (Kayo) and I started Yoga for a number of reasons: to improve fitness, flexibility, relaxation and also to have another common interest together. We have thoroughly enjoyed learning in the very friendly and conducive environment created by Tara and Karyn and we have continued wanting to learn as we become aware of Yoga's benefits in our daily lives. "The Back School" will be very successful because of the dedication of both Tara and Karyn Chapman, and their enthusiasm will inspire all who are willing.

—*Mark and Kayo Haywood, Mt Colah NSW, 1 June 2002*

• **Allen Brown's testimonial**

That deep-breathing exercise you gave me seems to have had the desired effect. I gave up singing in a choir years ago, as I used to get a sore throat and couldn't project properly. [I recently joined a new choir, and] I seemed to be singing quite freely, and no sore throat!

The damaged thigh muscle still gives me pain, but nowhere near as bad as before, and I've had several days entirely free from pain (for the first time in about five years), and even while going faster than ever on my daily walks around the lake.

—*Allen Brown, Forest Lake Qld, 23 April 2003*