

Live captioning by Ai-Media

(Video plays)

SPEAKER:

What do you think of when you think of yoga? Poses on a mat? Perfect alignment? Reaching far beyond your toes? The beauty of yoga is that it is much more than a sequence.

Yoga is --asanas and also activism. Yoga is about a quiet internal journey. And a growing powerful outward voice. Yoga is action, curiosity, empathy. Join us as we celebrate yoga. The diversity of the millions who practice it and the power it gives us all. Because we are all for yoga and yoga is all for us.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

Alright everybody, welcome to our second webinar series with Yoga Alliance. We are so excited to have you here for our second series, which is Creating Safe Inclusive Yoga Spaces. We will get into the training shortly but before we do that we have a location poll on the screen. If you can click where you are located so we can know and put it into the chat, we would really appreciate it. We will wait for those to start coming in.

Alright, we have some Canadians here, welcome in! Also some folks from the US. Thank you so much for being here! Just so Aisha and I can level set, if you have joined us for the first series that we did on trauma-informed yoga, can you place a number one into the chat if you did join us for that. Awesome! So awesome to have you all here for the second series. Amazing! Thank you all so much for being here.

So for those of you who are new to the series, again my name is Keisha Courtney and I am the founder of The Driven Yogi. I will give you a quick story about who I am, this company and who we are. I'm no stranger to -- exclusion. My family was one of three families of color in the entire small town where I grew up. I was a competitive athlete for most my life and often I was the only Black person both in practice spaces and in both local and national competitions.

This continued into my career as a news reporter and it's also continued into my career as a Yoga Teacher. This is ironic because yoga spaces are supposed to be inclusive and that's what we say: yoga spaces are supposed to be places where we can heal. And so often I experienced discrimination and saw so many harms being done.

I started The Driven Yogi because I didn't want anyone to feel like I or anyone else marginalized had felt. In creating this education platform I knew I would need data, real-life stories, and an expert team that specializes in this work that could provide research backed solutions to incorporate these learnings into not only Yoga Teacher trainings but to also help studios build their culture or rebuild their culture from the ground up with an eye for inclusion.

In recent years, we've heard lots of talk about the harm that's being done in yoga spaces and we've heard talk and more talk about it but there were no tools for people to start doing this work. And that's where The Driven Yogi comes in.

We've created tools so people can unlearn the harm that they have done against marginalized communities and relearn ways to increase those inclusive spaces.

Right now I'm going to show a short video that's a little bit more about who we are. And then we will get into the reason why all of you are here.

(Video plays)

SPEAKER:

As teachers of movement we all have our story. The moment that helped us to discover the incredible healing powers within this practice and the moment that led us on our path to teach. For me, that moment came in 2010. I was in a high stress career as a TV news reporter and I was looking for anything to destress.

As a former competitive athlete, I already knew the power movement could bring for physical health but I was searching for something deeper. Enter yoga.

During my first practice I felt transformed and for the first time in my life I was present. For the first time in my life I felt safe in my own body. The practice itself brought healing but my experience inside yoga studios was quite the opposite.

The pain, dismissal and discrimination I experienced in the outside world was often amplified in yoga spaces. And for the past several years it's been made clear that hundreds of students feel that way as well.

Our world is quickly changing and if fitness spaces don't adapt, grow, and change, spaces that exclude certain populations will quickly become obsolete. If we want to live up to the true meaning of yoga we have an awful lot of work to do. That work begins with teacher education.

At The Driven Yogi, our mission is to fill the yoga gaps and transform yoga spaces for the better. We do that by educating teachers, studio owners and staff on how their conscious and unconscious actions discriminate and exclude large groups of students.

We give them skills and knowledge to do better and grow new communities. In the past two years our team has conducted studies to help guide the conversation and help bring inclusion and diversity into the forefront of wellness. We were named as an organization to learn from and --our unique trainings already taking place within Bay area, California studios have impacted close to 5000 yoga students.

We offer online and on-site delivery of our signature Teacher Training courses and two levels of our annual Committed to Inclusivity membership, that combines our signature courses for teachers and

includes one on one, real-time support.

This critical work is new territory and requires unlearning, relearning and practice in order to see true change. Even with the best intentions and the commitment to doing the work, the process is going to be messy sometimes but The Driven Yogi will be with you every step of the way.

If you're ready to commit to inclusivity, I encourage you to enjoy a series of free workshops or to add our courses into your already existing Yoga Teacher training.

Bringing ideas into action is hard work and I thank you in advance for your support. I hope you'll join us in moving the industry forward together. The Driven Yogi is available to media coverage and collaborative content creation, and we offer stories in video and print about the fight for inclusivity.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

Bear with me as we switch over to the presentation. Alright, so I just wanted to address something in the video. In a national survey we did, 60% of students felt excluded due to their race, gender, ability, age or background. And 73% said their experiences could have been changed if yoga teachers and staff were better trained.

Students feeling excluded was the number one reason for not returning to a studio. Before we get into the training, I will be the first to tell you that this work is not easy. It's uncomfortable and it asks you to challenge what you have been taught, your beliefs. Even as the founder, I have work to do every day with this work but I am willing to work to look at what I don't know to change these spaces and I'm sure that resonates with you as well since you are with us here today.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for being here and committing to doing this work. And with that, we are going to pass it over to the training for the evening.

I would love to introduce you to Aisha Yusuf. She's an executive leader in social justice reform and works at the nonprofit Impacts Justice in San Francisco. She is a Teacher Trainer and a experienced DEI training leader, who has trained in yoga studios, nonprofit, and government entities. Aisha, welcome!

AISHA YUSUF:

Hi everyone! I am so excited to be here and it's my pleasure to be here to expand your knowledge as well. I want to start off by taking a deep breath through your nose. I want you to open mouth exhale and let that go. We will do it one more time and hold it at the top. Exhale and let it go.

The conversations we have with The Driven Yogi are oftentimes conversations that are tough and require us, our bodies and our minds and spirits. If you feel yourself triggered or thinking really deeply about something, I encourage you to do an inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Or any exercise to ground yourself. That goes for every yoga class but definitely when talking about things that challenge our very identity and who we are.

A couple of things that you will need: Paper, pen, phone, anything to take some notes. I say an open mind as an open heart, to think about how we show up in -- places and allow others to show up in our spaces. I am a no shame kind of girl. Just like Keisha said, we haven't been out conscious and aware on all that we have said and how we showed up. This is a place of learning and so my hope is that you can approach this from a place of learning.

I've been doing DEI, all kind of acronyms that we say for it, I've been doing a lot of this in a lot of spaces but I don't know everything. I try to tell this much to everyone that will listen so we can all create more safer and inclusive spaces.

If you have any questions, use the Q&A and we will kick it off. Everybody ready? I can't see anybody but I will pretend you can give a thumbs up. I see some hearts, good.

A lot of this training that we will do, we will use personal stories and part of the reason why is I want you to understand through experience, and also that we are using data to really support this information. The stories that we have collected over a period time to illustrate what we understand to be really important conversations on inclusion. (Reads)

"As a young BIPOC, the majority of classes I went to were taught and attended by mostly white women. This sends an unspoken rule on how a studio or student should be and this made me feel self-conscious because there wasn't a teacher who looked like me, race or body wise, and I never returned to the space."

This is not an uncommon story that I've heard it many times from people that have many identities. A studio cannot control necessarily what someone's identity is, but they can control who teaches in their space.

We are thinking about that story of the quote that I just showed you but I personally have my own experiences. Like Keisha, I am from a small town and was very conditioned to being the only Black or Brown person in that space. I started doing yoga when I moved to the East Coast and I expected people to look like me. There's Brown people over here and Black people over there but when I got to the yoga studio space, I felt as if I was in my small town.

I was a competitive college athlete when I was in college and I have a residue of muscles when I started doing yoga. Teachers would tell me, "You definitely can do handstands." "No, can you demonstrate a forward stand?" I would say, "I just started yoga two weeks ago and I don't know what you are talking about." And they would say, "Your body looks like you can."

That sat with me and then I had to have this understanding of if they were looking at my body differently, but also because I was a Black person and often times you classify us as being strong individuals and they thought I could do something more than I could.

I eventually told that teacher that I felt really ostracized because later we met again at a conference. I was actually really nervous to practice yoga because I couldn't do a handstand on all of these things

that my body expected me to do. That's an example and I have many. I will share couple with you today and I will say if any are triggering, I apologize in advance for that. Please send me a note because I am always learning.

Part of this series is around what Keisha and The Driven Yogi have determined to be "doing the work". Especially in this day and age when people walk around like this all day, we are often talking about that which is deeper than showing up at a rally or having a sign that says Black Lives Matter. It's really about doing some self investigation around who you are and helping people feel particularly welcome in your space.

I can say definitively that today you are taking a step to doing the work, which means you're actively putting your body and mind into a space to learn something different or to refresh your mind about something and how you show up as a Yoga Teacher.

Two of the things we will talk about, one of which is identity. I often talk about this from a place of self-identity. It's hard for us to think about anybody else in the world if we don't do a self reflection of our own.

I have a lot of identifying factors for me: I identify as a Black cis woman. I identify as mixed ethnicity. Identify as a straight individual. Identify as a Yoga Teacher. I will give you two minutes and I would love for you to choose three characteristics about yourself and put them into the chat or where the slide said earlier. How is it that you identify and what are the things that make you, you?

KEISHA COURTNEY:

As we progress in this training, if you have questions that you would like to be answered live, please put them into the Q&A. And to continue with the conversation with everybody, please put those into the chat.--

AISHA YUSUF:

I love that someone put age as an identifier. Yes! Love these and I am hoping everyone is reading these so that they can see where their community is at. Thank you all so much!

One of the reasons that I think we should start here is because when people come from a dominant side of society, that is usually male or white, I guess that depends on where you live and depending on your community. Oftentimes you probably don't need to adapt. If you live in a community that is all women, oftentimes you don't need to adapt.

Often the community in which we live and are accustomed to, pieces of our identity are just the norm and so I will use a -- broad-spectrum: often being white and male is the norm. When you're sitting oftentimes in a boardroom at a corporate 500 company, oftentimes everybody is white and male. They are thinking of themselves as all the same and oftentimes when we go into a yoga space, because they are primarily white and female, oftentimes people are not saying that this is their identity.

When we fail to see our own pieces of our identity, it makes it really hard to see those of others. I see

a lot of you started with gender, race, sexual orientation, parenting, all of these things - some of which are visible and some are not. Many of you have thought consciously but you have thought consciously about who you are and how you show up in these spaces.

I implore you, as you walk into your classes and studios, think about your identity and how may you affirm or juxtapose to other people in your class. Something for you to think about because that often means I am thinking about my own identity but I may not be thinking about how that shows up in other people's spaces. Please keep writing them.

Question for you all: why do you think it's important to have a conversation about race in yoga spaces? Please --write it into the chat and I will shout out a couple.

Do no harm. Assumptions are bad, yes. To be aware of unconscious bias - love that. So that folks belong. We are so far in the game and I feel like at this point, just affirming you at this point. So yeah, many of the answers that I am seeing are absolutely on par with what I believe as well.

I think it's important that we think about race in yoga spaces and how to create spaces of belonging. We are thinking about how people might not identify with the teacher and the space in a yoga classroom. Oftentimes it's important to think about race because it's usually an external identifying factor. --Race is a number one identifier and the -- data point that most determines life outcomes.

Race is such a huge and important thing for us to recognize as we walk into spaces as practitioners but also as yoga students. Love everyone's comments and I think so many of you are right on par.

I will be really quick with this and I won't go into a whole lot of depth, which is race and biology. Here is the reality: race is fake and it is a social construct that people made up many years ago. The true reality is 99.9% of humans share the same genes, which means we all share close identifiers. Race is often determined by how close to you are to the equator, where the sun is, but race is actually just a social construct.

It's important regardless of how our scientific understanding, as to something being real or not real, it plays an important part on how life exists and how people interact. It doesn't even matter that race doesn't exist. It matters on how people interact with each other and people's experiences based on their race are both extremely important and change the way they operate and traverse this world.

What race has done is it has grouped people into superior and inferior categories and that's actually why it was created. With the idea that the -- darker you are, the more inferior you are. The lighter you are, the more superior you are. That literally translated throughout the generations and leads us today into talking about race and why it's important.

The impact of race is extremely real and impacts all races on every end of that spectrum. So I talk a lot about of, really about the idea of white supremacy and colonization. If anyone here is like a scholar on this, I'm happy to go into detail with you about this but I really want to get into the nitty-gritty regarding yoga...

-- That infiltrated every part of our society and so when white became superior and Brown or Black became inferior, that's how the entire world became to structure itself. When we think about --white kings and queens that went over to Black and Brown lands and the genocide of Indigenous people, the --transatlantic slave trade, whose race was inferior and who could be a slave and who wasn't.

We saw that play out in our lives and in our economic mobility. We see it in education. We see that play out in housing. And we see it play out in yoga. We see who has access to certain spaces and you can literally use the data by looking at the color of the skin. When we think about how we enter yoga spaces, it's really important to think about this, on who can afford classes, on who gets the money to be able to become a Yoga Teacher. Oftentimes you can -- delineate that from the color of the skin.

Instructional is the structures in which we live. Our government systems create laws and policies. The way they play out is that they are impacting one race above the other. We saw that in crack cocaine laws and all those others - it's in the instructional way on how --race does and does not exist.

Sometimes you can see it in our schools. College is a really great one and we can see it in in school systems on who can and cannot afford an education, in who teaches, and in what cultural values are favored in the classroom.

We all live in a similar society and we often times watch the same television shows and --our interpersonal ways of how we express racism or race often can show up as similar - maybe you come from a community that does not have any Indigenous People and when you meet someone from the first time, you are not sure how to engage with that person because it's different. Or, you have an idea in your head on how Black people act because the television or media told you a certain way.

Often times we play out what the institutions have told us, what the structures told us and what our television or other media around us told us. Whether it's conscious or unconscious, we act out interpersonal racism without thinking about it because the structures that are around us and in the spaces in which we grew up in.

That is the most brief instruction I have ever given on race and I hope you all have questions. I will do my best to answer them later on.

So part of the idea, and I feel like in the United States someone being called racist is one of the one most worst terms on the planet. Oftentimes how I talk about it, is whether a person is racist or not, it is not a place for me to decide but what I can say definitively is this: what you are doing is a demonstration of racism.

We saw this play out over the last five years of the treatment of Black and Brown people across the United States and when we hear certain racial slurs when we go into certain communities. I'm hesitant to say you that you are a racist but what you are doing is a racist act and you are acting out racism. Whether you choose to hold the title or not is someone else's decision but we see this play out a lot. We see this a lot in micro-aggressions, particularly in yoga studios where you can see a lot of them.

Oftentimes people characterize that by saying it's similar to a thousand tiny paper cuts.

If you get a thousand of them, you are bleeding. And that's often how micro-aggressions work in these spaces and so they are a form of racism or sexism - we can put them into any of these categories but what it often shows is little things, "oh wow, your hair is different." to someone who has curly hair. Or, a woman who does an amazing physical feat, "I didn't know you can do that." Tiny things that start to dig away at you one by one.

Little things that have you, after 10,000 little dings it really starts to impact the way you show up and in the way you behave with people.

So what's a really good way to start a race and yoga conversation? I say all the time that I don't see color and everyone is just a human. I exist as a human, right? I don't put stereotypes on people and if I allow people, as I allow people to live their own experience. But what I often talk about is the idea of colorblindness.

If somebody is walking in and they may identify as Asian or Indigenous, or Indian, or Black, or whatever that might be, that is a full part of my identity. I asked you to write your identifying factors at the start and so many of you started with the race. So many of you started with the race and for us to walk into spaces and say that you don't see color, it means you don't see someone's full identity and that's actually untrue.

If you see Keisha's picture, I can visibly see that Keisha is Black. For me to deny it, it denies a piece of her experience. It also means we are not allowing ourselves to see that our spaces are conducive to everyone. We wouldn't be having this conversation altogether if it's true. Oftentimes, if you grew up anywhere in the United States, that is just not how our institutions allow us to be. Race is a big piece of our institutions and lives, and so it's really important to operate from a place of anti-racism. I work -- extremely hard to ensure that I treat people equitably.

I think we need to get to a place where we can see each other from where we identify as who we are and still see people as -- more than just one spectrum of their identity. Race is a visible characteristic oftentimes - not always but oftentimes.

Every Black person is not the same. Keisha and I both talked about being from small towns. I now live in Oakland, California, which is not a small town and some of my experiences are very different from those in my friends circle. My experience is very different in how we show up and it's really important that we think about race as we traverse the world to understand that you can both see race and also understand that everyone's experience is not the same and we have to approach it that way.

What is diversity, equity and inclusion stand for? The acronym is DEI. Some of them here include belonging, justice, all kinds of things that people include. But the reason that we use diversity, equity and inclusion are for distinct reasons. We value and want to promote diverse spaces, where everybody, no matter their sex, color, race, gender identity, body size or age, can show up into a yoga space and feel like the spaces were made for them. This leads us to diversity of being and that's one

of the reasons why we value that.

Equity is what we really strive for and in giving people what they need to succeed. Equity and equality are very different things. Equity is the understanding that people are going to need different things to actually meet at a level.

Everyone --saw this on Facebook and Instagram a couple of years ago and I thought it would be a good way for people to identify with a visual around us. This idea of equity and equality being different.

If I'm with my little nephew who's much shorter, if we are trying to look over a fence, it's not having an equitable space for him. He needs a process and things to help him reach a level that I am at. We see this in everything, right?

If you say all my teachers at this yoga studio are all the same. Sure, but that means every student that comes into your class may not identify as all of your teachers do, meaning you have to take another step. It's really important to hold them as different and really think about what we are striving to do.

We are striving towards equity, that people can come to spaces and feel as if they belong and that might mean you have to approach different people differently and you might have to do different things at your studio that are for different people's needs.

And the last one is inclusion and that's really this idea of belonging. You can see a B in one of the acronyms above and that's oftentimes tied to belonging. For me, belonging includes inclusion and it is the idea that people connect and can be a part of the community. That they can come to your class or studio and feel like they belong there because I created an equitable space that values diversity and I will include them into my space and make them feel like they are included there.

That does mean by doing processes and practices that help include them into that space. You all are here in step one of doing the work but you still have to do the work necessary all of the time to make people feel comfortable in your space. I teach DEI all of the time in many spaces and I am consistently and constantly doing the work. I am consistently and constantly learning from other practitioners and teachers. I am constantly showing up in spaces and challenging my own thinking and thoughts of what I say.

I do that because this is step one. All the other steps include you doing your own self-study as a teacher but also making sure that your spaces feel that way. It's another thing to take a look at in your class, to take a look at your studio and think about how you can make your class feel as if people belong here and are comfortable in your space.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

Can you see the next slide?

AISHA YUSUF:

There. Why is it important to distinguish them? I can give you a little bit more in terms of this. A really good example of this, I think partially after a lot of racial uproar over the last couple of years, you saw a lot of yoga studios diversify their pictures on their wall. "Let me go get a bunch of stock photos because I only have a bunch of white people on my wall. I actually want to make it seem like I see other people."

A lot a studios gave the illusion that they were creating spaces that everyone can feel comfortable in. They didn't make the option available or didn't go into the communities of Black and Brown people, didn't do any of the work to actually match the people they put on their walls.

"We have an equal playing field here." They haven't done anything inside and to get different people inside of your studio as teachers, you have to do a bit more work. --To get Black and Brown teachers into your studio, it might mean you might have to work with the studios in Black and Brown communities and teach classes there.

There's a huge difference between putting all these posters up on your wall to make it seem like you are an equal opportunity hirer, and it's a different conversation to bring in multiple teachers and go out and do some more work, more work than what was-- required.

Really big pieces around creating anti-racist yoga spaces. Be explicit about what it is you believe. I think that it is oftentimes a very hard thing for people to do because I think oftentimes people get really nervous and they say they don't know all the language or feel uncomfortable saying certain things. What if someone asked me about it? What do I do?

Start with doing the work but I think to also tell and show your students how you strive to be an anti-racist studio. That means more than just the pictures on the wall and that means you can say that you as a studio owner, teacher, or as a person trying to recruit more teachers, that you are really trying hard to diversify your staff.

Here's what I'm doing: I am going out into communities to talk about Teacher Training and the benefits of it. I am partnering with other body and fitness spaces that have a different clientele and am partnering with them to do classes with them. I'm inviting teachers into my studio to teach over here. I am actually doing this training and offering it to all of my teachers so they can learn to challenge themselves.

You get to be explicit about what you want and what you are doing to gain that. It's one thing to say you are trying to be anti-racist but it's another thing to show what you are doing to move towards that. "Hey, I'm anti-racist and I checked the box." It's really important as you go and think about what you are implicitly saying, It's another thing to say this is how I'm doing it. Tell the truth about who you are and what you believe and ask the questions. It's OK if you get challenged and you don't have an answer. It's OK to say you will get back to someone because you are not sure right now.

Using authentic marketing. Be accurate about your representation. I, as a practitioner am so impacted when I see yoga studios that say that they have a diverse yoga space and that they have diverse

teachers. Then I go on their website and see all these teachers that look nothing like me. I could identify less with them.

"Do you have any teachers of color because I don't see it on your website?" I totally understand that websites change quickly but if you will be explicit about who you are, you have to show it. If the truth is that if your clientele and teachers are all white, before you put a poster up of someone else in your class, work to get other teachers in there and have students of other races then you, before you put the poster up.

Think about, "am I being authentic to what I want to do?" A student comes up to you and says, "You said you were a diverse base but I don't see that on your website." That's actually not the conversation you want to have and I implore you to be explicit and do the things that actually match with what you are trying to do and use marketing to be authentic about what you are marketing.

I'm not saying that you should only market to white folks if that's your community but you should diversify that. What I'm here to say is that if it's the only clientele, there are more people out there that want and can take your class. Take some extra steps to bring --them in but please don't put up the marketing campaign that's not true to that.

Hiring practices. I talked about this a little bit earlier, which is real. It takes extra work to pull in classes that have diverse teachers and it takes work. Often times when you do 200 hour Teacher Training, oftentimes you get flooded. In typical studios it's expensive and often times we see 40 people that identify as white and they just say, "We tried."

No you didn't. You would do extra work if you really wanted to diversify your teachers. It takes talking to people in these other communities. We all know folks that have connections to Brown and Black folks and so ask them what you need. "I'm really trying to hire differently. Can I advertise my Teacher Training in your class?" Do the extra work and that requires a little bit more of you as a teacher and as a studio owner.

Alright, question for you all again: what are some tangible ways you can provide a welcoming and inclusive space for students who are racially different than you?

We had talked about tons of tangible ways but let's hear what you will have to say first.

Do you want me to start? Let me look into the chat. Well, I can start by saying a couple. A couple ways that you can actually provide inclusive spaces: one is by ensuring - simple smile and say hello. Hopefully we do that for everybody but absolutely.

One is by absolutely reading people as who they are when they walk into that room. Also checking yourself if you see someone walking that is racially different --than you. "What is my own bias that I need to check really quickly about that?" Another piece of that is, as you are thinking about the guest teachers that you have, oftentimes, I don't want to preempt this, but oftentimes what we see happen is when we have students that are often racially different than us - say there's 10 students in a class,

eight are white and two are POC, often teachers get a desire to do extra hand adjustments or extra talking to them.

Teach them as all the other students and adjust everyone similarly. You interact with everyone that comes in so that they feel welcome. Say hello just like you say hello to everyone. Part of what I often see, because a lot of folks are working to be more racially inclusive, they often gravitate and run to a person of color so that they feel included but show that love to everybody.

If you want student to say, "I feel really cared for in there and I felt like I was meant to be a student in here." And they will show up if you do the work. Consider language, yes absolutely, that is a big one. We will get into that in another training around language in some of the poses that we say and how we think about the words that we say but definitely consider language when in there.

OK, I want to pause. Keisha, are we still good on time? OK, cool. I want to acknowledge one of the great things coming into the chat, which is increase teacher on Teacher Training, and consider the music that you are using.

I will end with this: often what I'm thinking about, what I'm often asking is for you to be introspective as a teacher. Often times because race is the most visible thing that we see all the time, it's not appropriate to be, "hey Indian woman. Come into my class."

Realize that you have a person that is racially different than you and maybe racially different than others in this class. Did I ask them if they needed blocks? Did I asked them if they need adjustments? Oftentimes it's really about you and how you understand your own biases and your own understanding of your own identities so that you can show up in that space as an authentic person.

And definitely asking for feedback is important. You should ask everyone for feedback but if you do -- read feedback from someone who is racially different if you, definitely incorporated that into your class.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

Thank you all for being here for Part 1 and I know this was a lot of information! We only have a limited amount of time to talk about this but we go deeper into this in the online course, which I will tell you about in a second.

We will be with you again tomorrow and we hope you will join us for the next two weeks. In part two, we will talk about bias, power and privilege. Then part three will be on creating truly inclusive yoga classes and spaces, where we will go over different scenarios and what you will do in different scenarios.

Before we get into any questions, questions, here's our email if you have any questions about wanting to incorporate these trainings into your training or even wanting to build your studio culture from the ground up, please email us here.

We are offering Yoga Alliance Members a discount on this course here for the next three weeks that we are touching on in this training. If you go to courses@thedrivenyogi.com, we go deeper into these learnings. We will now talk about some questions that you have!

Please do put them into the Q&A. The first question comes from Miriam, they say, "I don't own or work in a studio. I am white and teach at a community center. What can I do as an individual teacher to encourage People of Color to attend?"

AISHA YUSUF:

I love that. A couple of things - I don't know where your community center is or what the population is around there but if people identify as you, one thing that you can do is go to a community center that's not in your neighborhood.

If it is a community center that people may not identify necessarily as you, I've seen people actually, a friend of mine actually used to teach at a community center and she would actually go to some of her friends that were teaching at --stand in studios and let them know that she was teaching at community centers. "Can you tell people about this?"

You know how at the end of class, they give a little promo? Sometimes you can ask your friend and say, "hey, can you help people get here?" "At the end of your class, would you mind telling folks that I'm teaching at a community center?"

KEISHA COURTNEY:

This next question we have is from Winnie. She says she works in a town that is predominantly white but there are some pockets of different races and People of Color. What are some ways, if she's in a predominately white town, to even start inviting those small amounts of People of Color into her space?

AISHA YUSUF:

I don't know the resources of where you live - I used to work at a studio in Boston that was really similar and was primarily a white studio that wanted to bring in more People of Color. I ended up partnering with the community center to teach five dollar classes, mostly to offer and let people know that this other studio existed.

We ended up partnering with people in the community and it's really important that you go to communities that are not your own, that you go in from a place of, "who is doing stuff here?" Go wherever those pockets are and go to them and say, "hey, I have this idea. Can I put flyers up here?"

If you invite People of Color into your studio, to make sure it's a place that they feel like they belong, and part of that is what you are doing here in this training, but also it's about if your studio only has white teachers, you might want to recruit studio teachers and students from those pockets.

"My studio is predominately white and I really am trying to diversify it." You can call out the truth in that but definitely go into those pockets and talking to the community leaders in those pockets and figuring

out how you can work together.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

Those are all the questions that I see right now. We will wait to see if there are any other questions.

AISHA YUSUF:

Vivian, you said you do the same thing, yeah. I've done this myself. It's really about going to where the students are. And also keep in mind there are realities that exist here. If it's hard to get to your studio that requires a bus or train, it may be harder for certain pockets to get there.

Go to those small pockets and as you start to build. Please, if I can implore anything to you, be part of the community that you want to work with. Be part of the question asking space and go to the community leaders in that space.

What I want to caution you against is going into any community and not asking questions and not being really humble and vulnerable as you enter that space.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

We have a question - last question that we will get answered today. This question is from John. He owns a yoga studio and yoga is a business. How can he still be cognizant of meeting his bottom line but also meeting different price differences that are accessible to people from marginalized communities?

AISHA YUSUF:

I am all here for your dollars, John. Couple of things that I have seen happen. One, you do an organizational analysis of what is the bottom and top line dollar that you can hit. Especially in more wealthy studio areas, they will say that the higher line will absorb some of the bottom line.

There's a studio that's really trying to bring in diverse classes and they charge \$37 so that they can say to people that if they are having a hard time paying, this is what this is about. They have it be absorbed in that way.

Another thing I have seen studios do is offer scholarships. "We want to be able to support more diverse students coming here, are you willing to pay two extra dollars that could go towards another student that cannot afford it?" It often happens in communities that are more affluent.

I also saw in (Place name). Ask students to participate and then it becomes a community uplift, that everyone is participating in the betterment of yoga for everyone in the community.

KEISHA COURTNEY:

I think it's really important to point this out. (Name) says they are a Black female Yoga Teacher who has a lot of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking students. They added some Spanish into their classes to just create more of a sense of inclusion.

AISHA YUSUF:

That's wonderful! I actually love that and thank you so much for sharing. Another thing you can do, if you own a studio, I would invite other guest teachers in. I'm imagining somewhere in your orbit there are teachers that speak Spanish and I've seen people invite others in for a special class for the students so that they can feel like they are absolutely seen and heard. I've seen that happen for all sorts of identifying factors.

AISHA YUSUF:

Alright, everyone. Thank you so much joining us. We so enjoy you joining us today for part one. This is just part of the work of creating inclusive spaces.

Aisha and I will see you next week for part two of this series. Have a wonderful night!

AISHA YUSUF:

Please take a few deep breaths. Thank you!

(End of webinar)

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