

Building a Sustainable Yoga Career
test

(video plays)what do you think? Do you think of? Poses on a Mat Perfect alignment? Reaching far beyond your toes? The beauty of yoga is that it's much more than a sequence.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much for writing us.

SPEAKER:

Yoga as -- and also activism. Yoga is about a quiet, internal journey. And a growing, powerful, outward force. 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.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

A very, very warm welcome to everyone who is joining us tonight. Namaste. My name is Cristal Sharma of Soul Power Yoga and tonight I have the joy of being the host for such an enriching conversation about how to become a sustainable yoga teacher. Right away you should see a location poll pop up on your screen and I hope you do take a moment to let us know where you are joining us from. Myself, I am joining you from wonderful central New Jersey. It is where I have lived, started my practice, have been a yoga teacher for over 20 years and a studio owner, as well. I am an E-RYT 500. I also lead prenatal yoga teacher trainings, kids yoga trainings and am very passionate about the South Asian voice for yoga education. When we talk tonight we are discussing the topic of a sustainable career in yoga and remember this accounts for continuing education. This is part one of a three-part series. So if you have not already, make sure that you are signing up for part two and part three will be upcoming in March and April. This counts as continuing education in professional essentials. And most important is we need to know who our wonderful speaker is tonight who is Justin. And I think we are going to have a great and enriching conversation. So if you have not already had the pleasure of meeting, please note that our speaker tonight Justin is an E-RYT 500 and fellow YACEP presenter who has been in love with yoga as soon as he started in 2011. He is not only a teacher but an educator and has completed his 200 and 300 hour teacher trainings at Laughing Lotus. Is passionate about helping himself and others stay balanced, love their breath and most important Leica promote both physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Is Rhythm and Flow classes taking on an uplifting and introspective journey with a practice steeped in timeless yoga traditions infused with music and spiced with divine inspiration. It's a pleasure to be joining you tonight and Justin take it away.

JUSTIN IFILL:

No S, thank you very much. First of all I really appreciate that introduction. Thank you all for being here

this evening. This webinar came about because I was having a lot of conversations with teachers, especially those that were perhaps in the first couple years of teaching and there were often lots of questions about what to do and how to do it, especially with regards to studios.

So when the opportunity came along to have a discussion about this I think in a bigger forum and a bigger audience, I had to jump on it because I think it's very important, especially as yoga teachers we maintain our energy levels, as we trying to make this our lives or livelihood. I thought it was very important to have this conversation this evening so I'm looking forward to this a lot. I think it starts at the beginning, for those of you that maybe got your 200 hour recently or are thinking of making a transition to teaching full-time which in and of itself I feel like is a hard thing to distinguish. Pre-COVID for example, I probably taught about 15 classes a week which in this chair right now seems like insanity. (laughs) at this point I am down to about five classes a week and even then there are people in the discussions with you say that might be too much.

Again maintaining that energy level so that you can definitely show up to teach from a place of authenticity and the students will feel.com will feel that energy or lack thereof.

I think the first thing I wanted to discuss is as soon as you get your 200 hour or even maybe before him, I remember one of my teachers told me I guess to everything. And at the time it definitely felt like a sound piece of advice. I think I probably still agree with that about 90% of the way. There are some things I definitely think you should not say yes to everything, obviously. But I just wanted to get my feet wet and personally I I started teaching at gyms, studios, whoever would have me. It didn't matter what I was getting paid I just really wanted to jump in it and get that experience to teach. I think in the beginning the first year or six months, depending on your personal experience, it might be fine to do that if you have the time and energy and capability to do that.

I jumped right in and started just, that's sort of my personality anyway, I don't do anything halfway, I like to go all in. For me, it was really trying to find also my voice I think in the beginning, my teaching voice, and trying to figure out yes, the -- with and also how do I make this authentically me. I had a lot of teachers I loved the way that they talk and I knew them personally and there was no difference really between them as a teacher and them off the mat just having a conversation and I really respected that and I really wanted to get there and it was definitely a journey.

Just to get right into it, the first thing is trying to figure out maybe even getting insurance to teach. There are definitely, Yoga Alliance has some resources to help you get that insurance. You could do your own research and get insurance, some studios and gyms require it. You might just want to have it it's a good idea to protect yourself.

Then, going into looking into a studio can be an interesting task. There are a lot of different ways

people do it, hitting the pavement as they say and going to studio managers and owners and asking them if they're looking for new teachers, hiring new teachers, sending emails out, emailing gems, going on additions which can be vary in citing producing I would say. There are a lot of different ways and I guess I will focus on the studios first talk about some of the other venues, as well.

Generally it depends on the studio and also, Cristal I definitely want to get as a studio owner your perspective on this, but a lot of studios will have audition review can come in either with a group of people or by yourself and teach a piece, not the class but it might be 50 minutes. I've had auditions which are as short as three minutes which didn't understand. (laughs) but you will have these sort of interviews where you might talk a little bit than they want to hear your teaching voice, maybe they want to hear your musical taste, your flow, your sequencing, how you put it all together.

That can be very hard for a lot of people to even just kind of put themselves out there in the beginning that's totally understandable. So definitely wait until you're ready. I definitely taught friends and practice with other teachers that I knew. There are also teachers of mine that gave me a lot of great feedback to help me prepare for auditions so I definitely recommend if you have any teacher or friends or mentors or just your teachers that you practice with, to ask them about even their experience and if they have a 10 or 15 minutes to let you guide them it can be very, very helpful to help you put your sequencing together.

At the audition usually have the teacher flow for a little bit, maybe there's a conversation afterwards than they get back to generally they may put you on their sub list first especially if their roster is full in which case, you will probably be very, very hungry when a teacher emails the listserv and says I'm sending out this class and you jump on it really class before everybody does. Some studios, there are apps now and programs where the teacher will put it in and it shoots at out to everybody and you have to furiously, quickly accept. So it's a very interesting sort of dynamic. They may offer you a slot right off the bat which is great and does happen from time to time. But generally, you will kind of work your way up from being on the sub list teaching infrequently... Then maybe getting a slot. Especially, when you sub if the students give you good feedback or if the owner or the manager takes your class and really likes that, sometimes, students, especially, they speak up to you and mentioned to management or ownership they really loved your class, that can propel you into having a more permanent slot.

Nothing is necessarily safe on the business side, things shift around a lot at studios. Teachers may leave, a lot of things that can happen, unit for so definitely be patient with yourself and trust of the process.

I think that sort of studio thing. And Cristal, I guess I'm curious about how your studio welcomes new teachers or additions teachers Curious about your process.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I have loved every bit of the conversation you've kicked us off with. Because I feel like this is the behind-the-scenes conversation that is yoga teachers we have all experienced but there's no one place to get all this information or insight. When I first started teaching over 20 years ago, there was, there wasn't Yoga Alliance continuing education and it was kind of you have to figure out on your own how to find a place to start teaching and then make your way and build your resume.

So, when it came time to become a studio owner, I took all of that like hits and misses and said okay, how can we make this a better process? Because it's a two way relationship, not every teacher is designed for every space and not every space is designed for every teacher. I always want teachers to feel like as much as they're coming to it audition or they are coming to interview, they also should have their eyes and ears open to see is that the right space and fit for me? Because every style is unique and everyone needs to find a home for their voice. So we did go through the audition process and that was giving us insight into how a teacher went to structure their class, give them free reign of showcasing what they thought was their best. I agree with them there was the time limit, we didn't say let's teach any hour class. But we had them showcase what they thought was their best. It was a great way for them to really feel empowered to find what they thought was representation of their wheelhouse. I think that gives great insight when you get to experience somebody's class then you really get to learn okay, then from there you can have a really good conversation about how it fit. So I think what you talked about so far is 100% correct, you do have to say yes to a lot of things. You have to be open to a lot of opportunities. But I think a big piece is keeping those lines of key medication open and advocate for self. As teachers we feel like we are not sure how to do that and that's also part of the process at the beginning.

I'm also curious, for all of our friends who have joined us and are watching right now, make sure that you know the Q&A is open. So we want to hear from you, both Justin and I are keeping an eye on the Q&A and we want to help your questions are and what your experiences are and remember this is a really great time like I said to talk about these behind the scenes experiences.

JUSTIN IFILL:

Definitely. And just a quick question do you want, just in terms of the Q&A, should we go through the questions that they too can appoint or do you want to address it as it comes out?

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I will keep an eye on it for you, Justin, and your call. Do you want to save some time at the end or do you want me to interrupt you if something looks interesting?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Yet just looking at the question about how I taught -- classes per week think from the beginning, I'm

from New York, we have sort of a grind mentality. And I think at the time it was a combination of wanting to make as much money as possible but that also really get that experience. There were some studios that actually had a headset so just to address the voice comments. I definitely would utilize the mic so I don't have to speak over the music. So that was also a big thing for me.

And, I think --

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I agree with that. When I first started teaching, when I moved over, so my background is corporate and I spent time moonlighting and then transitioned into a full-time. So everyone's journey, right, coming into yoga is different. But... Being was a nice, step-by-step process where I had ways to measure was this sustainable for me? Once I got to a place where I was full-time, I was teaching upwards of 2020+ classes sometimes if I was sobbing and I see what one of the questions was asking. You really have to be mindful of the boundaries of your own physical and mental well-being. Certain phases of life might allowed to be able to teach more and have a very aggressive schedule. But some of them you're going to really need to understand what are your boundaries may be in relationship to your other work, your passions, your family, your relationships. I always say try to start smaller than build up rather than adding to a place where you feel like you're burning out.

JUSTIN IFILL:

When I first began teaching, I definitely had more time for sure. Now I have an almost 2 year old so that's another reason why I had to reduce my classless. So definitely life circumstance will definitely be a huge factor in how many classes you decide to teach per week Becky I would say that, I know I saw a question briefly about what is the sort of "full-time?" I, personally, have always struggled with this answer because when I was teaching 15 classes a week of course it was full-time. But I do think even if you teach probably, you know, five or above, I would say that's pretty much full-time. I think it also depends on, because you could teach five private classes or even five studio classes depending on where you are and what the pay rate is and be able to do other things. I also do event planning and production. There was a question about what I do besides teach yoga. And I felt like in my event world, it's a lot of details, is a lot going on, so I needed the yoga to bums me out. I found teaching yoga, not just practicing yoga, talk to be very therapeutic. Because something would happen at an event and I went back to my yoga practices to bring you back to center. A very brief story, I was in the Hamptons doing an event. I felt the energy of entitlement." (laughs) so I walked away and went into a back room and literally felt my feet on the ground and stood in -- for about three minutes then went back to breath. Went back out, felt totally fine. So these tools that we can also from the practice are huge and it just leads into all aspects of your life. I could talk all about that but I won't do that today.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I agree, having a healthy balance of how much your teaching in your own practice and usually that's

the first thing that gets forfeited is your own practice but you have to hold space for it otherwise it makes it challenging. I do see a lot of questions about economics and about pay and just as a reminder that is the topic of the second part of this three-part series so again another great reminder that you should be signing up for part two because we will be talking about pay then.

SPEAKER:

That's a great plug for that. I will just round up the studio portion, I think once you make your way to teaching and one studio, it could be multiple studios, I personally am not a fan of telling a studio that I'm only going to teach for you and not going to teach another studio that might be close by. I'm personally uncomfortable with that. But there are studios, especially work corporate studios like -- or -- that may require teachers to not teach at another hot studio within a certain radius. So that's a decision you have to make. Is the benefits of the job worth it for that kind of noncompete clause?

So that's the thing you have to work out and some gym people will do that, too. With gyms, it's very interesting. The big what I would say is probably Equinox were usually have one large addition, it could be 30, 40 people in a room and they just go down the line and you have a few minutes to teach. I would say that is very nerve-racking. (laughs) especially big, corporate gems like that when they just want it to be what you look like, how you sound, what you say all in three minutes than they just kind of figure it out and send you an email later for the your in or whether you are out. The gym pay varies so the larger companies generally have more decent pay and we will go into that later. Smaller gyms might not. But there is something to be said for the community of a small gym. I taught a gentle class at a gym a very small gym in Brooklyn and I left the community there. Probably the same core four or five people and everybody else around us, it was wonderful. So there definitely can be positive aspects to any situation.

It also depends on, I personally, when I teach I like to incorporate a lot of the "philosophy, a lot of the mythology, some of the -- that I have learned in my classes perhaps in a gym they might not want you to ohm, they might not want you to chant certain things, you have to know, ask these questions as Cristal mentioned, it might not be the right fit if you want to teach. Certain studios might want you to do a particular sequence which may or may not resonate with you that might not be what you want to do. You may have your freedom. Just to be mindful and cognizant of that. I've definitely been in situations where a studio wanted a particular flow and after a while I was not interested in doing that anymore because I wanted to deconstruct a lot of different things and play with -- and -- and restorative and make my own blunt with it. But particular studios may have a particular lineage that they honor. So again if you are trained in that lineage or want to get to know lineage bit better it might be a good idea. It might not. If you are a regular of the studio, you practice there, that might be another thing to consider is to go there and practice to talk to the teachers and get firsthand knowledge of what is going on in their experience of teaching at the gym or the studio.

I will talk briefly about private. Privates are probably, it's interesting. For me personally I found I got private mostly through studio classes I was teaching already gym and people would ask me do you do privates and I would say yes and then you would discuss how that, I personally like to have a meeting with them, it could be Zoom it could be tea [sounds like] or on the phone and discuss what they are trying to do. For example if they have an injury or if it's postnatal or prenatal or flexibility, some of the things they want to work on, anything you want to do. Then, I will construct a class based on that. There are some teachers that don't like doing profits. I personally love having the private and having impact class. I like both experiences of energy. I also like having only one spine to focus on instead of 30. So that's always great. That is, my first private that I had was actually a friend of my wife and it was great, because I learned a lot in just teaching her and kind of figuring out different things that work for her and I also tried to balance what she wanted with what she actually needed (laughs) which is an interesting art because somebody might tell you I want to be more toned and they are very toned. So what is going on? You might throw in some things that are more restorative because they are a person that has a very high octane lifestyle or job so they actually need to be grounded more. So that's something you might notice about them and then you have to get than the actual medicine with the honey.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

What I would offer is remember, privates are very nuanced. So you have to come in feeling very confident in your training. In my experience exactly that, I've had people come in for prenatal, postnatal, but I've worked with students who have had brain injuries, or are recovering after surgeries or going through radiation and chemotherapy. I will always remember one of my most favorite privates was with a woman who started when she was 88 years young is what she would like to say because she says getting old is not for sissies is what she would always tell me. You really have to tailor the practice to where they are right now and then also, have a clear vision of where they want to get to, because that time is very, very unique that you have their full attention and they have yours.

So I think that's a really great way for teachers to obviously supplement income and that's always one piece. But to really learn more about the craft, learn more about their teaching and to really refine a lot of skills. I'm a big proponent of bringing the practice to where people are and privates, sometimes also scheduling. They're just a better fit for your lifestyle.

JUSTIN IFILL:

Sometimes, being aware that it may not work out, ultimately, that it might not be the best fit, again, with what they're expecting of you. And you're not ready to get the what they think they want. So, and, even though it might be a private is more money it might not be worth it if it's draining you to get to drive or get on the train and go all the way to wherever Dr. Then teach an hour or more and then come all the

way back. Maybe the personalities don't mesh really well. Again, protect your energy. That's probably the main take away. Out of everything that we're going to do in all three of these parts.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

You're getting a lot of questions, Justin, about online teaching and online classes and what is your opinion on it if you have one?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Yes. Obviously there was a time when it was a necessity. We have to do what we have to do. At this point, some of my classes are hybrid. Some studios basically require it because that is a separate revenue stream for them. So they want their teachers to do that. Others have eliminated it and said we are not going to do it because it's distracting. And there are teachers, even myself included, that have said it's like teaching two classes at once. Some teachers don't want to do it or have essentially asked for more money because its teaching two classes at the same time. I currently am, I wouldn't call myself a fan of it. I would say I think it has become some unnecessary, also when people travel if they have a monthly membership to a studio, I had a student that was on Tuesday doing a class virtually from Panama. That was fun to see them and say hi and still be connected to the student. So in a way I do enjoy that aspect of it, the connection. But I would say again, going back to the thousands of years that all this is coming together, it's in person, the energy, all that, I am a fan of that. To me, in person is my preference. But obviously, all mine, it has to be done. So you can construct an online private which can be easier, sometimes more challenging. I did have some more mature students that I found it impossible to do it online because I felt like half the time we were trying to figure out the Zoom and all that. So I got to the point where I just said listen, I'll come over. So we do that instead.

You can also, I have done this and in continuing to do it where I will record a personalized class based off what they want. So Cristal what is it you want to work on? I have a gentleman right now that just tore his ACL and MCL as we are going to do two videos one that is very, very gentle right now as he does rehab and all that. But then do another that is a little bit more challenging that he can do when he's ready. And we'll talk about pricing and all of that later when we go into economics. But I found that to be very, very helpful because I take an hour out of my day to record a whole class. It can actually be 1/2 hour class, 45 minutes, 50 if it's a 50 minute heart opener a 20 minute heart opener, guided medications if you are well versed and you get -- and want to do that, guided meditation essentially. You can do little videos that you consult and personalize it to them and they can keep it which you can record on Zoom or any platform and send it to them and that's theirs forever. If you want to get more sophisticated, other teachers have created videos and made them downloadable for a price on their website. So if you have more of a higher tech back end on your website or invest in someone who knows about that that can help you do that that's a possibility.

The other thing is you can also rent videos where they downloaded and have it for 24 hours or 48

hours or whatever you determine. There a lot platforms even Zoom where you can give somebody the video up to a certain date or a certain time. Then we'll talk about different ways to charge for that. So online is definitely here to stay. It's going to be anything. Especially if you're in Pennsylvania and you can have clients in New York that every Tuesday morning at 8 AM you have a little flock together that the thing. I would charge, I did I just say briefly I charge a little bit less for an online private then an in person private at least during, while we were in quarantine. But again we will get into pricing on that next time.

I see that there are 25 of these big questions so I'm wondering if I could do rapidfire for a minute.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

Wow, okay I see a lot of the repeating once. The other one I see repeating often is about waivers, how to set up a waiver, corporate waivers, anything different for private?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Yes. I think what I did previously as I looked at the waivers that studios gave their students and would basically have that as sort of a template that is it that for a private, just basically waving me of liability. That basically we are in this together and if something happens by accident you know, I shant be sued. I use language from the studios that, there are also resources online that have templates releasing you of liability. It goes back to also getting, definitely having insurance, it's a great idea.

Usually you can pay I think for a whole year, six months at a time, similar to car insurance and there's different companies you can research. I get, Yoga Alliance has different resources to look into that. All these people watching our members so definitely utilize your membership to get some insurance or do more research that's fine too, obviously, it's perfectly fine.

So I am trying to see if I can, because I want to make sure people feel they were heard. Yes. Briefly, I personally haven't had a studio asked me to send a video... that's not true. I did have an owner asked me to send them a video of me teaching and had plenty from quarantine in 2021 so I sent whatever theme I thought would be cool for them to see. Basically meet in my living room doing the flow with the musical happening.

I sent them the whole video and basically said, which was an hour or 75 minutes and said you can see the whole thing or just watch pieces if you want to. If you want, if they specifically asked for a 15 minute video you can I say record your best sequence in terms of everything fitting together, if you want to add music to it to make it unique to you that's great. I do actually want to talk about music but I'm going to hold off on that for the Q&A. But I would showcase a little bit of warm up and flow and also bringing them down. Sort of like a bell curve if you can do that in 15, 20 minutes depending on what they are asking for.

Full-time job, teaching on the side "teach fully. Well what are some of the fundamentals that got you there? Definitely managing her energy and expectations. Do not lower your standards but maybe lower your expectations. (laughs) that's definitely what I would say in that regard. If I'm teaching more than one class per day in my teaching the same sequence or do I switch it up? I would probably, I usually have, and no teachers that do the same sequence the whole month. Personally, I have a week where I have the same theme but the actual asana or the mantra or the -- these things could change. So it's a variation on the theme. Last week for example, my theme was about trusting your gut and decision-making. A lot of third chakra work, but I did it in a hot studio. I did and -- studio, I did it with restorative, I did it in 75 minutes, in one hour, so there are a lot of ways we can weave that altogether.

Since we did get a music question is going to jump into that. I agree that music, is music necessary? So that depends on your style. I personally do use music. And, it's sort of, I'm going to try to shorten this because I talk about music forever. But I would say I also like to construct, I take my music very seriously, so I like to construct it where it's basically the same bell curve.'s as you warm up we are definitely going to have a softer tone maybe -- in the background, then as we get a little more flowing maybe your -- some standing stuff, it can get a little more, it can get faster, it can have a little bit more of a bass to it. With my style a lot at times using music as a complement to what I'm saying. Some talking about decisions and trusting your gut, I have songs on there that reference these things. Okay for example, there's a Bob Dylan song called Trust Yourself. I use it to enhance what I'm talking about as we're flowing. One piece of information that I got when I was in India doing 100 hours of training is that the world has enough asana teachers so in my mind, the asana is of course important and of course it's a big limb, but how do you go beyond the asana? And I think a music can be a big part of that. Music with lyrics can be very distracting. So I know teachers that don't use lyrics at all. I personally think that if what the lyrics are psychic enhances, complements what you're saying, it can be fun. If you could just playing Beyoncé to play Beyoncé, I would say probably not find and not what I would necessarily do.

But I think, again, the music should match your sequencing and should match whatever Dharma or they are discussing for that class.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I would love to jump in for this one because I agree with you. I feel like music is such a great tool, that's such a great resource, and we talk about the a lot and our teacher training programs for the 200 and 300 hours. It can also be a distraction so I agree with you. It has to have a great build, it has to have a great message. But be careful that the volume isn't overpowering your voice because sometimes as new teachers we're not just to having projection in our voice and now, all of a sudden, I responded my playlist is amplified because that's on this great sound system. Be mindful there could also be issues and the sound system may not be working and that's fine and it could also be that your

playlist and your sequence even though in your head matched up perfectly, don't do that on the day that you're teaching. So don't let that become a distraction for you when you're teaching.

And I love the part that you mentioned about -- teachers because I agree the world has enough asan teachers and relieve the emphasis of asan is more in Western societies. So when we learn from the roots and the origins, it's more the focus on reflection and meditation and mindfulness and silence is a great tool in that moment. So music is a wonderful option but it shouldn't feel, if teachers love silence or teachers feel that they don't need music, they shouldn't feel by any means pressure that I need to have music. And everything that you shared about that, Justin, I agree with you.

JUSTIN IFILL:

I appreciate that. It's definitely up to you and to the teacher and there are studios that don't have music. I know when studio in particular they just have, I can't remember the exact frequencies but they play like this hum in the background and it's basically designed to bring you into a deeper meditative state with the alpha and beta waves and all these things that they have. That's the concept, that's great, it's beautiful I've practiced there and I do like it a lot. I've taught classes where we were in silence the whole time and sometimes that was unnerving for people. The part of the work is sometimes you have to get uncomfortable and quite literally at the end of it during -- there were people in tears. What my Dharma was about and I was reflecting on a time where I was co-leading a training and had a day of silence and during that time I really realized even for myself how much I rely on music just when I'm going to the grocery store or maybe trying to wake myself up in the morning or whatever it might be. Basically I think my line was our breath is going to be the music today and it was definitely a big experience for a lot of us in the space to really switch that up.

Music is a big deal. Definitely listen to the entire song. (laughs) sometimes there are things that might just jump out because the artist went crazy or, I don't know. But listen to the entire song. Be mindful of your lyrics. There have been classes where they were curses and stuff or even worse, I should say, because there's this whole thing in hip-hop yoga and it's not really meant for that so let's maybe ease up.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

This is where I think it's great as teachers and I see this coming of a lot is a common question, as well, is out to get more classes or how to get out there for studio teachers, there's nothing wrong in saying I want to teach Led Zeppelin flow class. It's already built answer talking back about what you said about expectations it's very clearly understood. If I'm going to this class I better be prepared for this type of music, this type of ambience and sometimes that really helps teachers to really figure out how are they going to find their way into a studio because I see that question coming up a lot for you as well, Justin. How did you get in the doors to a studio or work with studios who are looking to add your get in and also how do you get more clients or more people into your classes?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Definitely if you have the time, this can be twofold. If you are able to do what is called, -- have a karma program as a karma yogi for you get to work the front desk and you can earn money and take free yoga classes. If you don't have your 200 hour yet you can usually get a discounted -- so it's a way to get into the door and meet the teachers, practice for free. I would say if you're already a teacher and you're trying to break in you might want to consider working at the studio. Sometimes they need people just to help out in between the classes, do a quick sweep or something like that or at the front desk, check people in. Even there are people, no teachers who jump into being sort of an assistant manager to help out and also make a little extra money but then you also get to learn people's names and interact with people and that's I think a big thing when you are teaching is to definitely try to be personable with folks and learn people's names. That's a big one. I think for me.

Getting people in your studio, well, so a lot to that. Social media has helped me as I meet people and add that on or kind if we follow each other. I create stories. Monday here's where I'm teaching, here's the time. Here's the studio kind of thing. I do that very regularly for probably about a year. I did notice that there was an uptick in people coming because it was constantly coming up on their feet that I was teaching on these days, these times, so they got to know my schedule. On my website I have my calendar for the month, you can see where I'm teaching, where and what time. And you can start to build yourself a newsletter or a yoga list with people and their emails. If you have phone numbers there are definitely ways that you can send text messages out kind of like a Constant Contact or MailChimp situation but it's -- messages like hey I'm doing this, then teaching Saturday at 12 o'clock. Please come out. Or if you're emailing folks. Definitely be mindful of not emailing people too many times. But it's not like social media because you can do stories every day or every week that you're teaching and it's up to them to view it on their terms. I usually use email more for big things when I'm doing big workshops things like this or trainings or things of that nature that's what I will do it or a retreat, that's when I'll send out an extra email and send out the promotional work.

But it's kind of hard because as covert kind of comes back and forth and there's a wave of this, a new variant so people get freaked out, people still wear masks to the studio. It's sometimes hard also the neighborhood, if there's not a lot of people in a particular town or city or section with a are not really into yoga classes are always going to be small. Sometimes that's what it is. Is that we can perhaps lowering your expectation that you're going to have a full room of 50 or 30 people or whatever the size of the room as.

The other thing is I think we need each other to click people to feel that and slowly it can start to build where I definitely started a class and it was 8:30 in the morning on a Sunday and I thought this is not going to work. People going out Saturday night and it's not going to work but it started to grow and creep and like everything else you have to nurture it. Us again started to announce it on social media.

When I did send an email out I said hey by the way this Sunday, I know it's early but we are going to have a 75 minute whole experience, please come out.

So that, I will trying to be shorter on my answers next time.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I think it's a wealth of information. Like I mentioned before I feel like you and I have had very similar journeys in that this is stuff that you learn along the way but there isn't a central bank of how to find your way through. So I'm so happy that these conversations are now happening through Yoga Alliance, because we need more teachers who are empowered and educated. And then, who get out there and really share their craft. So this is helping them avoid a lot of hiccups.

The other question you're getting a lot about his credentialing. Do you count, I know for me I don't, but do you count your prep hours when you're keeping track of your hours for any of the certifications on need one? I know for me I count strictly just my teaching hours and it goes back to the conversation I think you are having about being mindful of your energy. Yes you might be committing to teach a one hour class in the week and you teach 10 classes but with about how much prep time comes? With that, how much travel time comes? What's the exchange, overall, of energy that you're doing. That's kind of the unsaid and unpaid part of it. But go ahead what are your thoughts on that?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Yeah, the prep work, that's definitely, we will go into some of that in part two when you're thinking about what should be paid because that's a big part of it. When I'm counting my Yoga Alliance hours and especially when I was got leading up to the 500, I only included the hours or the 75 minutes or the 90 minutes whatever it was that I taught the class not the prep work that went into that. It was tricky just teaching hours and training hours. So I think that's probably more of a part 2 in terms of weaving that into your thoughts about why you want to teach at this place. Kind of the cost benefit analysis of your prep, the actual cost, the commute, the taxes all those things. But we are going to get into that next time.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I agree. I'm trying to go through got the other question which I really appreciate it was talking about the use of the namaste. I know for me personally this is a topic that we discussed and our continuing education webinars. And as teachers of origin, a lot of weighing in on the use of namaste was important to myself and my sister when we had that conversation. I'm a big proponent of it. I think it's unfortunately gotten a lot of heat for being used and I think teachers have gotten confused. But it is a greeting and it is an energy exchange greeting and it is appropriate to use in class. If teachers are confused, please feel free to use at. It was so wonderful to hear you use it as well, Justin.

JUSTIN IFILL:

Yes especially as you welcome the students into the class, I think namaste is very appropriate. I wouldn't say that you use it to end the class which is definitely, I've talked to some teachers some studios around and we've had some conversations around them. It is more of an opening hello and that energetic exchange. But that is not really meant as a goodbye, unnecessarily. (laughs)

CRISTAL SHARMA:

It can be used as a goodbye. Culturally, if I was to say goodbye to some in India what I would be speaking to my elders in the family, we would use namaste again. So it is appropriate to use at the end. I know I feel confusing but I think we are both hitting on the same piece. It has to feel authentic. Never feel that you need to use it in order to give yourself more authority or to sound more like an expert that you know about yoga. But if it feels authentic to you and you're doing it from that intention of really just greeting the class and acknowledging their presence than don't feel like you need to overthink yourself.

JUSTIN IFILL:

I definitely use it and I switched, I also switched my closing thing because I also wanted to say something else. So I close my classes differently anyway just because I felt like I wanted to leave people with something else." So if you come to my class you generally will hear me say at the end of it -- the wealthy in spirit, you be rich in peace is generally what I say at the end of my class. That's my personal thing.

I touched up a little bit, there's a question about gyms being -- focused and generally that's the case. Again that's up for you to decide if that's okay for you to do that and if you are teaching also in a hot studio they tend to be less spiritually focused. I mean, I walked into a hot studio and have people do little Sanskrit because it was appropriate for at least the class. And they were timid about it at first. They walked in and I said please repeat after me -- and they [MUMBLES] and I was like -- and we got into it and I explained what it means in -- energetic language. The people feel a lot better about it. You can come again if they are telling you flat out don't do it that might not jive with your spirit and your teaching and maybe that's not where you should be teaching are those kind of places. I personally like to teach what I teach and not have these kind of guardrails to determine how I'm going to teach at, personally. But I have taught at studios where there was a particular sequence for you have freedom in the sequence but they generally have the skeleton that you had to follow. At the beginning I was okay with it but as I got a little bit more seasoned I thought no, because I like to deconstruct a lot of things and play with it.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I agree. I feel that has newer teachers you sometimes go along with it or you're more accepting of kind of not holding boundaries and then as you become more experienced, there's a confidence that comes

and it's okay to kind of say I've outgrown a space and it's time to move on and to find any place to teach and you're always having that place of reflection because the class needs to be authentic to you. I think we talked about this earlier but even in gyms there are some amazing classes now in --- -- - gyms. I remember when I first started teaching everything was called yoga. Now you can go to a gym schedule and it will be so detailed, here's a -- and -- it's remarkable in our time how much has grown. So you really have the ability to bring some wonderful yoga to people who may not feel comfortable to go to a studio but it's going to depend on the teacher. So feel competent to really bring the whole practice and the craft to your classroom wherever it is.

JUSTIN IFILL:

Agreed. So I am going to try to do a little 30 second, 20 seconds, snippets because I know we are running out of time but -- your website, keep it simple, there are a lot of things like --- that have templates, little pictures, pop in and you are done. You don't have to pay somebody a lot to do it. That Squarespacey thing? Or just with your own photos. I personally don't like to have photos of me doing asana because it makes me feel weird to get it but I did it because it was my -- website to make it look cute. I'm not the person who's taking poses of me in different positions and posting it on social media. That's not me, personally. I'm not in it for the likes. I also don't like it when teachers talk to --. Playing a sound bowl, or having very, very light sound in the background can be, depending on who you are, kind of relaxing because maybe your -- on the tone and then drift through that space in between sleep and awake or maybe it's triggering. So definitely, I know that when I go to class and that happens, and I didn't enjoy the -- experience I might not go back. As a veteran teacher, I may offer, have you considered why you're playing music with lyrics during -- or why did you decide to talk to us for five minutes during -- if you are comfortable with that. And you might not.

The ending phrase was, how I and my class so that was yogis, may you be wealthy in spirit. May you be rich in peace.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I'm typing it in.

JUSTIN IFILL:

And I really like that because I think we are in a capitalist society so I like to flip that on its head and talk about can we not focus on the money so much but actually our own internal peace.

Yes, Part 2 will be recorded. (laughs)

What is the part of teaching yoga that is more challenging and that you recommend beginner teachers to focus more? Part of teaching... hmmm. That is interesting. Probably the sequencing, I would say, making sure that the sequencing is safe, that it makes sense. Most teachers write it out like the whole

thing. I definitely did in the beginning and I noticed that it was only when my 50 hour sequencing that one of the owners of the studio walked in and said 90% of yoga teachers don't even do their own sequence. They just think about it, write it down and go teach it. So do your own sequence, see how it feels because you might notice this is awkward or you might notice as you are teaching it, you might notice that it was awkward for somebody to go from this post... Pose so you might have to tweak it the next time you do it. Everything that feels good in your body is not going to feel good that person's body who had hip replacement or replacement knees all those things. You don't know what people are going through. So I think that part of the sequencing was probably the more challenging thing at the beginning. And that also hands-on -- adjustment, I'm doing a mini training at the end of February on that so if you're interested, let me know. Basically I did another 50 hours on mat, and that was another big thing for me the first year of teaching, training, the first six months I would say I didn't really touch anyone that I started to notice similar things came up. Okay -- triangle pose is always the little thing, document, slightly different twist, a lot of people's toes are off the ground, they are floating away conduct we get into that under the time. There are more some people who are more grounded than others there are some people doing the maximum post, effort by fiery people, we start to ease the amount of that fire. Than there are people who are in their head in the whole time. So there's a lot. But I think sequencing and hands-on assisted adjustments, I ask for consent with every class to make sure people feel safe. My training will not be online it will be in person because I feel like hands-on assisted adjustments is something you have to be there for. That will be in Brooklyn and we can talk about that another time. I don't know, I guess I could just type my email in here, you can email me, I think. I will just do that real fast.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

I know in the Q&A I think links to your websites are already there, links for how to sign up for future sessions, links for future events through Yoga Alliance, how you can reach out and find myself and find Justin. I think a big piece of what you were just talking about is it's the education. So as teachers we are constantly continuing to learn and to educate and to act on and knowing where to find that information is so important.

What would be I think you're one big take away that you want people to leave with to feel okay this is what I want to go start to do to have a sustainable yoga teaching experience?

JUSTIN IFILL:

Wow. I think it's definitely, in the beginning I think you're not even sure about well, you might be sure about this almost as if I knew I wanted to teach and I kind of stayed with that and everything else sort of fell into place. I knew what I was doing my 200 hour I wanted to do this this was something I was passionate about, I send a month in advance before it was even open, the 200 hours. Once I allowed the passion to guide me and my intuition, I really listened to the universe. The universe kind of gave me little gifts along the way so it was about being open to that I really listening and not trying to push

your own ego driven agenda thinking you need to be at this level at this time. It will happen when it happens. So definitely remaining open, having, definitely, patience and compassion for yourself. Trusting the process. And, definitely trusting your intuition and your gut. For sure.

CRISTAL SHARMA:

This has been such a great conversation and I appreciate how open and honest you were. Thank you to everyone who joined us today live tonight at all of your wonderful questions. Remember we are going to see you for Part 2 and Part 3 next month and then followed up in April. Great conversation. Have a great evening when everyone. Thank you so much for joining.

JUSTIN IFILL:

Thank you so much. Take care.