

Special report: teacher training



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The business of yoga

Top tips to build a sustainable yoga teaching career. By Sally Parkes

Business and yoga together can be an uncomfortable combination to discuss for some teachers. This is because most teachers are not money driven, but instead teach the art of yoga to help and serve others within their community. However, as a yoga teacher's work evolves and begins to gather pace, it will often start to take over as their main work and source of income. It is then we need to start considering how to financially sustain a career in order to be able to teach our students and be of service in the way that they deserve.

Maintaining your practice

By maintaining your practice, it makes it easier to authentically translate your experience to other people and also keep processing what comes up for you energetically, so you don't take it in to class with you. When you become busy teaching yoga, however, it can be challenging to have the energy to keep going with your own practice. A way around this is to try a class that's different from what you've been teaching. For example, if your body is tired from teaching Vinyasa Flow, why not try a Yin or Restorative class to balance out your Yang energy and give your body time to recover, or vice versa?

Be authentic

There's no doubt being authentic not only aligns us closer with the Eight Limbs of Yoga, it also helps you draw in the right kind of student for you. So if you find yourself in need of focus, think about what drew you to yoga in the first place, and then consider if you can draw on your experiences to enrich your teachings. Once you are aware of your signature story, this can quickly become part of your 'yoga message', and the foundation of everything you teach. It will also help to attract the clients who truly align with you and therefore increase customer retention.

Narrow your vision

Classes, one to ones, workshops, retreats; there are so many offerings yoga teachers can venture into, but it's impossible to do them all well, plus you are risking career burnout. Being clear with

yourself about your vision can really help you to narrow down where you are channelling your energy and what grows to full bloom, so take time to consider your goals. And always remember, abundance grows where energy flows!

Online v in-person

Teaching online is here to stay for the foreseeable future and is growing in popularity, and so it's a good time to explore teaching opportunities within this modality. If you are a new teacher, why not offer your services to an existing online studio and teach for a prearranged flat fee? And then once you have learnt the ropes, start your own online classes or workshop. In order to avoid digital burnout, however, and to nourish the soul, it's good to have some in-person classes and events as well. And whilst the in-person classes may currently earn you less due to current Covid-19 restrictions, you'll find these feed into the online classes with regards to bookings and vice versa.

Networking

Making connections with the right kind of companies can be a huge boost to your presence in the yoga industry and a great way to receive a little support from someone else who's keen to create a successful business. These kind of connections always have more longevity if their belief system aligns with yours. For example, if you are vegan, why not reach out to a beauty brand that is also vegan? If you adore yoga leggings, try reaching out to your favourite brand. They will probably be really glad of the support as well, especially if they are a start-up business.

And lastly, a successful business is not just about earning money. It is about creating something that aligns with your own belief system and is authentic. It's about waking up in the morning and looking forward to how the day may unfold, as well as being driven to bring joy to other people as well as yourself. These are all elements of a successful yoga business.

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