

Episode 25: Real Stories From The Accessible Yoga Training Online

In Episode 25, Jivana Heyman sits down with four Accessible Yoga teachers to talk about the Accessible Yoga Training, how the training impacted their teaching, and how they are carrying the mission of Accessible Yoga into their work. Natasha Williams-Chaoua, Sarah Nuttridge, Marc Settembrino and Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee each share where they are located, about the work they do, the communities they serve and how taking this training transformed their perspectives of the practice. This conversation gives insight to the benefits of joining our Accessible Yoga Teacher Training as well as some possibilities you might sense for yourself if you further accessibility in your teaching practice.

This week hear more about:

- How the training shifted their perspectives as a yoga teachers and yoga students
- How they each came to find the teachings of Accessible Yoga
- How to incorporate props into our teaching
- Tips for making your classes/offerings more accessible
- How teaching Accessible Yoga has transformed and inspired them
- Their collective hopes for more and more teachers to take the Accessible Yoga Training

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AK

Amber Karnes

0:01

Welcome to the accessible yoga podcast your weekly source for questions and answers around equity and yoga hosted by Jivana Heyman and Amber Carnes. Join us each week for powerful conversations with thought leaders at the intersection of justice, knowledge and practice. Welcome to Episode 25. I'm your host Amber Carnes. In this episode Jivana sits down with four accessible yoga teachers to talk about the accessible yoga training online, how the training impacted their teaching and how they're carrying the mission of accessible yoga into their work. Natasha, Sarah, Mark and Jackie Sione, each share where they are located about the work they do, the communities they serve, and how taking this training transform their perspectives of the practice. This conversation gives insight into the benefits of joining the accessible yoga teacher training, and also helps you to imagine some possibilities for yourself, if you further accessibility in your work. Hope you enjoy it.



0:56

Here we go.

JH

Jivana Heyman

0:58

Hi, this is Jivana. Thanks so much for joining us for this episode of our podcast. And I'm so excited because today, what we're doing is we're talking to a few people who have taken the accessible yoga training in the past and a morning them to share their experience with the program and also actors and people who've worked. I'm excited about whose work I'm excited about. And I want them to tell you about what they do. So I thought we'd go around and have everyone introduce themselves and talk about their work. So the topic Do you want to start? Do you mind saying hi.

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

1:35

Wonderful. Thank you. Greetings, everyone. My name is Natasha shaohua. I'm the founder and owner of deblois Yoga Denver, which is a Denver practice here that I my own business here that I do here in Denver, Colorado. I'm also, I'm also a member owner, and graduate of San Diego cooperative here in Denver. Also we are by PLC, yoga own cooperative, as well as we also have our own teacher training. And then I also and the studio manager and media director with guided by humanity. And under that hat. I also do mindfulness practices and wellness practices with a focus on for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as a focus on seniors, youth, teens, just marginalized people who usually don't get that focus. So those are kind of the hats that I wear. But overall, I've been practicing yoga for almost 20 years now I've been teaching for a little almost about three. And just loving and trying to expand my learning of the practice and applying it daily to not only myself, but just everything, of course that we learn and sharing it with others. And I'm just so appreciative to be able to learn accessible yoga training and just using the tools that from the training to expand what I'm doing with my work. So I'm just grateful to be here today.

JH

Jivana Heyman

3:10

Thank you so much. And you work for so many great organizations.

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

3:12

Yeah, thank you.

JH

Jivana Heyman

3:15

Okay, thanks, Natasha. Sara, how about you Can you say hi.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

3:20

Hello.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

3:22

So I'm Sarah. And I'm from originally New Zealand, but I am currently in Canberra. And that's in the Australian Capital Territory. I've been teaching yoga since January 2017. So reasonable, new teacher. And I've been teaching in gyms and studios. And basically, recently, I came into teaching for people with intellectual disability. And I had heard of accessible yoga. Long before I came to that teaching platform of working for people in that field. I'm also a plus size teacher. So I teach to curvy bodies as well. And I have been in really greatly enjoying using accessible yoga. In the many courses that I teach bringing it to people in gym spaces who originally thought that they wouldn't be able to do yoga. bringing it to people in the studios as well helping them to identify ways that they can personalize and customize their practices. And for the people that I teach with the intellectual disabilities and making it so accessible to them as well. I think that's about it for me to start with.

JH

Jivana Heyman

5:03

Well, I know one more thing about you, which is that you're the main moderator for our accessible yoga. Group.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

5:11

Yes, that's me.

JH

Jivana Heyman

5:14

We wanted to admit that so much. There's so much work behind the scenes, keeping that very large group going. So thank you, sir.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

5:24

That's okay. happy to help.

JH

Jivana Heyman

5:27

All right, thanks. Okay. How about Mark? Okay, say hi. And tell us about yourself?

MS

Marc Settembrino

5:33

Yes, hello. My name is Mark said Embry. No, I'm a fat queer yoga teacher and sociologist, living in Hammond, Louisiana. And I've been teaching yoga since 2017, as well. And my primary focus is on making yoga accessible to folks in larger bodies. And so some folks may know of the work that I do, through I guess, it really feels so strange to say, like my brand, but that is what it is, but fat kid yoga club. And I offer pre recorded yoga practices, as well as live yoga practices online now, since we're still in the midst of this pandemic, in the state that I live in, in Louisiana. And so that's been sort of my primary focus in terms of helping folks adopt primarily Asana, to work with their bodies, and to find some joyful movement in their bodies. Because as someone who has always been a fat kid myself, movement was not always something that was joyful, and was often something that was a punishment and very displeasurable, so just holding space for folks who are typically left out of wellness spaces, and allowing them to really sort of get into their bodies. I'm also one of the members of the emerging trans yoga project, which is an initiative to help make yoga communities more inclusive and accessible for transgender people, and more broadly queer people. And I also bring yoga into my sociology classrooms, because I think there's a lot of overlap between the two. So I try to teach my students that through sociology, we can begin to, you know, understand our shared humanity, which is also something that we can do in our yoga practice. So I use things like movement in meditation, and even a little bit of pranayama in my sociology classroom as well. Okay, that's it for me.

JH

Jivana Heyman

7:57

That's awesome. I'm so excited about the Transamerica project. Thank you. Thanks for mentioning that. All right, Jackie, is Tommy, trying to introduce herself?

J

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

8:09

Hi. Yeah, so I'm Jackie, a lot of people know me online as Sonny B. I teach a I've been teaching since late 2016. I teach quite a variety. I am a plus size Yogi also. And that's sort of what led me down my path into accessible yoga starting with Diane Bondy's training, learning different modifications. And then that led me towards juvonen in the accessible yoga community, and was able to take the training, I believe with you in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2018, maybe not 100% sure, on the date. But so I am in the north northwest of Florida Panhandle if I forgot to mention that. And I just teach a variety of different people, different students, I teach an older population, I teach wheelchair yoga, that was all pre pandemic. Now, we can't go into the nursing facilities anymore. But I also I really love chair yoga, I teach a lot of Cheerios at the college in the studio and online. And once a week, I do a Instagram Live class with Diane, where she does a standing practice. And I do the same practice seated in the chair at the same time. So we kind of have a split screen going so that people can see and learn how they can do both. At the same time. I've just been really fortunate to serve a lot of different communities with accessible yoga, a lot of different needs. And just fortunately, I've had the good training to be able to be flexible and all of that.

JH

Jivana Heyman

9:52

Thanks. Thanks, Jackie. All right. So I have some questions for all of you and I was hoping we could just go around and you could share your experiences. I guess some of you already kind of mentioned this, but I'm, I think I was kind of curious about what you how your thinking changed from before you take the training to after. And I guess, to understand that I guess I'm hoping to maybe have you share a bit about what your previous training was like, and whether you were working with people with disabilities or people who didn't feel comfortable in a traditional yoga class before the accessible yoga training. Could you talk about that? Does that make sense? Natasha, do you want to share just kind of go around?

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

10:37

Sure. Wonderful. I'm I would, okay, so prior, prior to COVID, and prior to the training to actually, I was just certified as a hatha yoga teacher, but I my personal practice was Ashtanga Yoga. So I'm used to a very physical and I've always been that way, in general, and I was always very athletic growing up, I played, you know, soccer and volleyball and ran track. And just so i was i was just always moving. And so for me, when I did come into finding yoga, so you know, what, you know, so many years ago, it was coming from that space, of course, first, so just like this, this feels good. And then kind of going from there. And then gradually wanting to teach and, and when I chose to teach I, you know, I am very, you know, privileged, I think in the in the way that I was able to be able to pick the training that I have. And it happened to be specifically a training focused on biofuels, diesel, black indigenous people of color, specifically, and it's just a training like, not none other like, and it's easy to say that, but it really is. And so, learning from the training, and then my own experiences, I just, I made the mission to teach and focus on by pll, even though I do teach openly, but my focus was there. And it was also coming from a background of healthcare. So prior to even falling into teaching kind of full time now, prior to this, I was I was working in the hospital, and I was working actually, um, in rehabilitation hospital here, with spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury patients. And then I also worked in the neuro ICU. And so 12 hour shifts, you know, three to four days a week back to back, you start to, you just have a different appreciation, of course, for life, because you're seeing it full circle on the rehab, and I'm seeing people heal. And in the neuro ICU, I'm seeing the initial accident. So as I was doing that, I would, you know, have to use the practice, you know, working 12 hour night shifts, you use the practice in a way that's different. And then you're also exposing yourself to those around you using the practice. So COVID came along, and I had my last little one, and I stepped back. But as I stepped back, I actually joined yoga teacher training, and became a teacher, starting when I was two months pregnant, and what the training and came out and you know, started teaching and kind of started this path, but still always kept in the back of my mind wanting to be and bring wellness to just healthcare backgrounds. Making sure that communities of color were exposed, because we're so community based and focused, especially coming from the Satya and because we don't have like a brick and mortar studio, we really focus on being a community and, you know, just getting really out. And that's what we love doing. So just trying to continue that path and hitting all the people that we should, but just in a different way, because our practice is very gentle. And so then you come along. And and I just happened to come across your training. And I just was like, Okay, let me let me go for this, because I already knew already, like, who I wanted to use it with. But it was just going through the whole experience. And I could have waited for you to come here to Denver. But I chose to fly out to Atlanta, and do that sacred show. And I was grateful for that experience of those who I got to interact with. And ever since that day, it just has broadened my spectrum. And I'm super appreciative of it because I feel like when you learn this practice and you have these tools, not only are you looking at people differently, and bodies differently and at you know just everything so different. You You're able to actually brings Something that makes the practice or just somebody in general feel included in such a way that's gentle. Obviously, you know, the word accessible, but just the

encouragement of using, you know, props and tools around you and you know, things that are everyday items in our homes, and making that accessible in itself. And then having someone practice with you, and afterwards say, like, thank you, like I, you know, it could be a simple practice that you would be doing in a standing, you know, seated postures, and you know, throughout the practice, but just do it in a chair.

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

15:39

Or not even just in a chair with a chair, because I try to encourage that too. Like, it's not like don't don't look at it as like this less than Prop, you know, it's something there that you can grab when you need it and not need it. I encourage people when we're setting up, like, forever, all the tools around you, so that you can grab and go as you're, you know, experiencing it. So I'm just grateful. And I think for me answering your question, like, it's just expanded my, my thought and how I look at people, and just knowing that I have an option, or some type of alternative to give is wonderful. Because, you know, not enough of us are saying, I don't know, you know, we feel like we have to fill that space or that void with something. But it's okay to say to a student or somebody like, hey, do you have a modification? And I don't know, I'd rather hear that and you put me in a position that's going to hurt me. So if we can take the time to just come from that perspective, by learning a practice, or just learning from those of us who have this practice and continuing with those and setting the example. Then we can continue to make yoga what it is and make it truly accessible and inclusive.

JH

Jivana Heyman

16:52

Right. All right. Thank you. That's beautiful. Sara, do you want to share? And I think you're combining kind of two parts to the question like how maybe how their training shifted your, your teaching based on what you had been trained in, and then maybe what you learned.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

17:10

Okay, so when I did my first teacher training, it was in vinyasa flow. But beforehand, I was doing a practice of power yoga, and yin yoga. And most of those classes were with the aim of helping me to stay mobile, because I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis in 2012. After doing my

teacher training with Heather, and who I found to be the person who instigated the first thoughts of accessibility, because she included in her training, being able to take whatever pose you're being taught in the training and to question well, I might not have somebody come along to the class who can do this particular pose? How do I change this pose, to suit that person's body, because we're not all cookie cutter, we're not all fitting the same pose the same way. We've all got different bodies. And so she encouraged us to question that and to be creative and explore during our teacher training. So that was probably my first touch of accessibility. And yoga was my first first training. As I went through, before my teacher training, I had been practicing yoga for a few years and friends were seeing benefits through my practice. And they had asked me all what can I do? You know, I've got fibromyalgia. Do you know what would be good for me to do yoga wise, and I would be saying to them, I'm not trying to teach you. I'm just doing this personal practice, I have no clue. And that also put that little thought into my mind of being a bit more useful to those around me, and helping them to come to some form of comfort and healing in the same way that I was experiencing with yoga. So those two precursors, the training that I did, and also the people that were around me experiencing chronic conditions were the Keystone for me to move into where I am hitting now. And in coming into the accessible yoga training, I was looking forward to meeting doing a face to face and then along came COVID. So the Sydney training that I was going to be attending has been put off And I was really thankful Jivana that you put on the online training. And that was such an invaluable experience. So even though I had already experienced, looking at poses in a different way, and being able to make them accessible for people who ever presented my class, and it took my awareness of accessibility and inclusivity to the nth degree, it just expanded, like a light was switched on, of all these other aspects that I hadn't considered before. And I quite liked it, that the training was like the smorgasbord of information from being able to make the practice accessible for people, which is what I had already had that precursor off. But then also looking into equity in gender and race and looking into brain trauma and PTSD and other trauma informed yoga. So there was a lot of things to cover, but it was all covered so succinctly and, and the information was just like, it started another whole ball rolling again, that I found it really supported what I was looking toward, which is eventually becoming a yoga therapist, which I'm in training for now. And to help people come to healing through yoga therapy through accessible and inclusive yoga for whatever chronic conditions or persistent conditions that they may be experiencing. And yeah, I'm very thankful for that training to be included into what I have done, and it's life changing.

JH

Jivana Heyman

21:49

Okay, thank you. Thanks, Sara. How about mark, do you want to share?

MS

Yes, I'd love to share a little bit about my training. So my initial 200 hour training was through any carpenters smartflow Yoga, which is, anyone knows anything about that system, if you will, it's a very vinyasa based very athletic practice. And so one of the things that I love most about it, though, is that even though it is, can be quite strenuous, and quite physically demanding. The teaching from from Annie Carpenter is just imbued with radical acceptance. And this idea that there's no one way to practice a posture, that there's no one way to practice yoga. And that, in particular, you know, our bodies change. And the body that you had today is not the body that you had yesterday, and it's not the body that you're going to have 10 years from now, and really asks people to celebrate what they can accomplish today, right. Um, and so that was, you know, a big foundation of my 200 hour training, but is someone in a larger body. During that training, I often sort of struggled to keep up, if you will, with other folks in the class. And some of my, the, the trainers in that training were, were helpful in offering me adaptations. But in a lot of ways, I kind of had to get really curious and explore for myself different ways to adapt postures. And I had to rely on on so much other information as well, you know, Amber Karnes and Diane Bondi are just wonderful wealth of knowledge that already have it out there. And so through my own yoga teacher training process, I kind of learned to sit with what was possible for me, and begin to imagine different ways of practicing. And that's something that I have always tried to bring to the practice that I offer folks in the studio or now online. And so I was really excited to take the accessible UVA training. Because I just wanted more. Once you you start thinking about how to make this practice accessible, you just want more, and that's certainly what I got. And I really felt so affirmed in the accessible yoga training, in that it sort of validated me and letting me know that you know, what I was doing, was already making yoga accessible. And then, like Sarah said, took that to the nth degree. And I think one of the things that I'm taking away, or the biggest shift that has happened for me, since completing the accessible yoga training, I think is the permission to make my yoga practice. offices teaching and offerings, political because it is right. So mainstream yoga studios often want you just to go in to teach the Asana teach the pranayama have poked folks leave feeling better. And so that they come back and pay for class again next week. And although my personal practice was much more political, because I had been socialized by studios that wanted to erase the political nature of the practice, I noticed that that's very much what I was doing. So my practices would very much be, you know, let's, let's move our body. Let's rest See you next week. And perhaps there's nothing wrong with that. But you know, for me, that also leaves out so much more. And so what I've been doing since completing the accessible yoga training is really just taking my my political, sociological self, and allowing that self to merge with my yoga self, and really inviting people who practice with me to really sit with difficult issues. You know, for example, here in Louisiana, so far this year, there are at least four black trans women that we know that have been murdered.

Marc Settembrino

26:26

And I've never been in a yoga class where anything like that is acknowledged, but we acknowledge that in my practices, and it may make you a little bit uncomfortable. But I think that's why we get on the map anyway, is to be able to start thinking about, you know, if we can be the uncomfortable and clear headed on the map, how do we begin to be uncomfortable and clear headed off the mat? And so one of the things, as I've said that, that really, I've taken away from the accessible yoga training is that it's okay to bring the politics to the forefront. So yeah, thank you for that. Jivana.

JH

Jivana Heyman

27:09

Thank you. Yeah, that makes me very happy. I mean, you know, I love the connection made with that kind of the resiliency that we find through yoga, you know, allowing us to allowing that resiliency to kind of show up in our lives so that we can address difficult things and, you know, look at the really, I don't know, the parts of our lives that we often want to just turn away from, to other people's suffering and the way we might contribute to that. So anyway, I really appreciate that. Mark. Thank you. About Jackie, join us.



27:46

Yes, my

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

27:46

story is quite similar to Marx also, I help except that I had gone into yoga teacher training, not to actually be a teacher, because I truly didn't believe that someone in a plus size body like myself, could be a yoga teacher, it wasn't really addressed very well, in my training, it was just a very basic 200 an hour that we had at my home studio. And we had a couple of hours that were focused on accessibility. Basically, it was, here's how you teach yoga in a chair. I'm not a

lot of detail into proper usage or anything like that. And then that's when I discovered amber and Diane's training went in that direction. And that was the first time I realized, wait, I could be a yoga teacher. And I probably should be a teacher, because we need more people who can be out there teaching in all different kinds of bodies, not just plus size, but all different kinds. I've got two chronic illnesses also, that show up a lot of times in my practice, that needs to be accommodated for. And, and that's a lot of the students that I see that walk in the door. And so after that training, after my 200 hour, I have been asked to serve a couple of chair classes. And you know, I could get by and I realized that I liked it a lot. And this was the community more so that I wanted to work with and that I was going to need some deeper training. And, you know, I had the basic knowledge of how to use how to modify the poses for standing in a mat practice. I could get by with teaching a couple of share practice, but I really wasn't truly serving the students with disabilities or other specific needs. Before I was before I had that accessible yoga training, and just was really grateful that that training was available, and was able to equip me with what I was worth, what my goals were and what I was looking for, but of course we got so much more out of it anyway.

JH

Jivana Heyman

30:00

everywhere I've ever online, I guess



30:04

I'm teaching

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

30:07

and grateful for I get to do I just, I really feel like it's such a service and not a job.

JH

Jivana Heyman

30:16

There you go. Alright, so I wonder if we can go around maybe one more time and share. Either maybe something that, like something that surprised you that maybe you learned in the training, something that maybe or shifted your thinking about yoga, or if you'd rather maybe share, you could just share a story about, you know, experience you've had working with a student? And how that became a learning experience. So I don't know, I'm just learning. I'm interested in hearing. I don't know, maybe something you learned from the training? Or else how it kind of impacted your teaching after? Whatever Do you think should go around again, Natasha, do you want to share?

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

31:02

Sure, yes. Um, for me, as I can, I can relate it, it relates to the student after because they're benefiting from me learning and I'm actually applying a lot of our stuff to myself, because I was recently in an accident. So I'm actually a year and a half out. So I've been using the practice actually helped me heal. And in doing so those who take part in my practices benefit because because not only are they learning, this natural practice of incorporating props, and just these items, but that they too are feeling like what I feel because I have to, you know, I I'm doing it not only for myself, but also i'm also sharing the practice. So yeah, I see so many benefits. And as I said earlier, like hearing people say after just like, gosh, just using a block and applying and turn it, you know, putting that force into that, at that height, you know, at that angle, you know, opening up your chest in such a way or, you know, looking at simple postures of like, you know, Shavasana is like people thinking, Oh, it needs to be laying down, you know, and just, you know, encouraging like having your feet up on a chair, you know, and resting forward on a bolster, that's, that's, like just showing that it can be shown in different ways, like postures that have been, that are looked at as the traditional and, and I just had to learn. And it's funny, because it wasn't too long after I did the training with you. And then everything came into play. Like I just I had to use it. And and I just seem so appreciative of it. Because Yeah, I just try my best to make it natural now. And, and like I said, try to make it something that's not like, let's just just get the block, like, it's like, just remind people to set themselves up, make it accessible to you have it nearby, you know, because maybe you're going to do one round, you know, several rounds of sun salutation or just any type of flow, and it feels good. And then maybe like, three out of those, you know, several rounds, you needed support. Because for me, that's how it is with my hip, you know, in the in the area where I had my injury, still, you know, that, that there's times when I'm strong? And then there's times where I'm gonna buckle. Yeah. And so the practice to is was a lovely reminder with those who attended with me and my cohort, to also not look at people and just think that they don't have you know, that we're all okay, because there were several people that aren't my training that, you know, had some issue that you would not have, you know, considered and, and so that's

just how we were so trained, you know, to just look at people and if they don't have actual physical disability, that we assume that they're okay. You know, and, and I think that those of us who take the practice and just want to apply and come from this approach, are just able to look at people a little bit differently when they enter and just always, you always have in the back of your mind, like, I don't know what this person has, you know, and that's just always what my reminder is, is like, I don't know what this person is able to do, or, you know, but I'm always going to try and come from this basic 101 you know, practice and just always have the props nearby. And it's, you know, honestly, since I've had my energy like I was teaching while before my accident and doing well, but to be honest, it's since the practice and since having my injury Working through it and people physic like, as I'm teaching you physically seeing you get better over time. That is what has expanded, you know, and broaden my spectrum because that vulnerability is like on show, especially those of us who are showing, and teaching virtually, you know, you're seeing those moments like Jackie saying, when you're showing up, truly, you know, yourself and your practice, and then you know, you're showing up differently other ways. So. So that's kind of my example. Yeah. All right. And it also just, like, I don't know about anyone else, but I know for me, and because of injury, and because it applies to, like, so many in our communities, just so many different ways. anatomy, I feel like we look at it differently, you know, anatomy and just those types of body works, I think is just now something that I just want to dive more into and learn more about and understand. Yeah, yeah. So thank you.

JH

Jivana Heyman

36:03

Yeah, thank you. I just also love how you're sure. I'm sorry about the accident. But I love that idea that, you know, as a teacher, if we've had an injury, or if we have a disability, or any kind of challenge that actually makes us learn and grow and become, I don't know, maybe a better teacher, rather than worse. And I think there's just like, that, that's something that just bothered me so much about the kind of commercial yoga moral that tends to want teachers to be able to do everything and look a certain way. And I feel like actually, that doesn't mean you're going to be a better teacher. And I just I love that example of how your injury made you a better teacher.

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

36:48

Absolutely, thank you.

JH

Jivana Heyman

36:50

Thank you. Sara, do you want to share something either like something that you took from the training, or an example of how that helped you teach?

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

37:02

First, I want to agree with you and Natasha about some what you were just saying. I remember when I first started teaching, and I was going to work for a studio and I went along to do a trial class. And the studio owner said to me, that what I had taught was great, but you just need to express the full part of the pose, you know, don't do don't don't do by half measures. And I had demonstrated to the full capability of my body. So we're talking about how we don't know what students have when they come in talking about everybody's body is different, and that we're accessing what we can within our bodies capabilities on any given day, that that really relates to me. And my past experiences. And considering I along with osteoarthritis, I've I've experienced chronic fatigue and been pretty out of it for a number of years in some places. When you get that kind of request, it's like, well, I am doing my best. So having accessible yoga out there, being able to acknowledge that everybody's body is different. Yoga has is accessible for all, wherever you're at at any given day is just wonderful. And how I've come across, post accessible yoga training with what I've been doing in my teaching and my day to day experiences, there's two things that stand out. And I'm going to address them briefly, both of them. The first one is that my training has allowed me to be more aware of what I'm doing for my students in the sense of that, maybe I was teaching them a something adapted for a chair, and then realize that, oh, maybe they might want to explore it from a different position on the chair or a different position behind the chair instead of sitting on the chair, maybe they want to try standing behind and finding that they were perfectly capable of it. It just was that I hadn't thought outside of the box. As far as like thought I could you know how we have that. Pre thinking and then post training thinking it just allows you to break free of, you know, when you thought you weren't in the box, and all of a sudden Oh, okay. I've got a lot more that I could actually tap into. And somehow I've just limited myself. So that was something that surprised me post training is that, you know, I can expand upon what teaching I'm already doing. And that maybe it was just me holding myself back. Another point is the after Kelly's talk on race equity. And I came across a post within one of my social media feeds. And typically, I think that everything's going fine. In my social, I don't have any haters or people that have a form of racism. But I came across this one post, and they were complaining about a TV show that had been had a couple of episodes withdrawn,

because somebody had filed a complaint that there was a racist term in the two episodes. And I noticed that everybody was commenting underneath it of off, we're all getting so sensitive, we won't be able to say anything next, because oh, we will offend somebody.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

41:19

And then I looked at who was making the comments, every single person within the comments that I could see, were white. And they were making a complaint that somebody had said that all of this is racist. And it was coming from somebody who identified with what that comment was. And it was a derogatory comment, something that we might not know. But the station that withdrew, the two episodes acknowledged and said, oh, we're sorry, we did not know that. We'll remove them. So kudos to the station for acknowledging that somebody has made that complaint. But I put a question on that feed. I said, anybody here making that comment, actually, of a person of color? And so it's another thing that has surprised me from that training is that I'm more aware now of racism, inequality. And, you know, that things I might not have noticed before are there.

JH

Jivana Heyman

42:29

Thanks. Thanks for showing up. Thanks. Yeah. Okay, Mark, I want you to join us here and join us here.

MS

Marc Settembrino

42:38

Yeah, I'd love to share. So one of the, I guess, exciting things about the online training was that you invited us to do our homework in a way that like, perhaps wouldn't have been the same way as if we were, we were in class in like small breakout groups. So one of our homework assignments was to lead a bed yoga practice. And so I invited some of my effective yoga club, community members to participate in that bed yoga practice. And then I also recorded it and made it available to folks who can come. And I have gotten so much positive feedback from that bed yoga practice that I offered, like I did, for some people, it's their absolute favorite practice that I have ever offered them. And they all say to me that, you know, at first, they were kind of like, Oh, you know, Ben yoga, this puts is going to be, but they were all surprised

by how challenging yet supportive the practice was. And that it was completely a different way for them to think about practicing yoga, and certainly the same for myself. And so one of the things that I'm trying to do now is, is find more ways that I can offer folks more bread bed yoga practices, so that means that I'm taking time myself to get more comfortable and familiar with what is it to, to offer this practice to folks who may be in a bed and so that means I'm spending time, you know, lying down and going through practices myself, because that's, that's how I learned so that bed yoga practice I think, was really valuable for me, but really valuable for the people that I share the practice with. And so that that's, that's my story, if you will,

JH

Jivana Heyman

44:46

that's great. I, I had, I think that was a part I missed, you know, the most from the in person training was leading that practice, actually, because in person, it's really it's very much a hands on deck. experience where we're learning actually we're learning about hands on, we're learning about consent and whether or not to use hands on and touch students and how to gain consent. Before we do that, as part of learning how to adopt the practice in the bed. So it's actually a combined practice in person. But online, we've kind of separated those two things. And I'm just glad that the bed yoga piece still was helpful. It is a really powerful practice, I think. And actually the other part of it bed yoga, to me that's so exciting is not just that it works. But I think it demands creativity, you know, from the teacher or the student, to really consider how yoga can be done in a completely different way than we're normally seeing it or experiencing it. So like you said, I think it just, to me, it allows us to change our thinking. And to step out of that kind of the routine that we get set up with the certain like series of poses we do, or they redo them in the same way. And I think by doing that it creates that's what creates accessibility. So anyway, thanks. That's awesome. Jackie, how about you have any any takeaways like something that you realize from the training or some maybe a story of something after that, how you've led the how the experience you've had with it? I've heard you told me some stories before actually,

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

46:31

I know and I'm going to share them, my answer is probably going to be a little bit longer than my previous answers. Because I'm basically if accessible yoga had a cheerleading squad, I think I might be like the head cheerleader, because it's affected my practice and my teaching so much. And I was surprised one of my takeaways was how much accessible yoga was truly about a service, and how it was so deeply in line with the sutras. And in ytt, we just had a very

basic intro to the sutras. But it wasn't until I took the accessible yoga training that I really felt more deeply aligned with my practice with the sutras. I think the training in accessible yoga, it was just I learned so much from this, and it truly strengthened my own personal practice. And that accessible yoga wasn't just about putting our bodies into the shapes of the poses, but truly making it accessible in all the different ways financially, in the way that we can bring the classes outside of a basic studio and how to get creative in those things. I thought yoga was less Asana than I had previously been taught. And that leading a yoga practice to someone bedside was not necessarily about recreating the shapes. I do. I myself really like the bed yoga portion of the accessible yoga training, I think it brings a lot of creativity. So I felt like it's made me really confident and able to make my classes more inclusive and accessible. I think the students that come into my classes feel more comfortable and confident knowing that they're safe and supported in all ways. And I feel like this training really empowered me in so many ways.



48:27

So

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

48:28

one of my stories, and I know you probably might be thinking about this one, I always feel like my accessible yoga training was like Field of Dreams. You know, if you build it, they will come. So once taken the accessible yoga training. It felt like everybody was walking in the door. Suddenly, I had blind students, deaf students, amputees, everything in the book, but my one truly like, big aha, this is amazing. I had to sit down in my car and text you just that moment was that I was hired to do some private yoga sessions for a particular family. And in the room was and just try to picture this was a grandmother, whose practice was strictly in a chair. She was in her 80s still fairly active, but she was still in the chair yoga. One of her daughters had a knee injury, so she was partially in the chair partially standing. The other daughter had cerebral palsy, but had been in an accident. And they had removed her tailbone her cut six. So she was not able to sit or stand for long periods of time. So she was doing her practice on a therapy table. And then the teenage daughter of the granddaughter was a healthy, able bodied 16 year old. Her only issue was maybe she had some tight hamstrings but she could do anything and everything in her body and that I was able to lead a yoga practice for the entire

family. With all of these different things going on, almost seamlessly, like everything went really well. Everyone's needs were being met, everyone felt included in the practice, it wasn't just for the standing people on the side of the room, even the lady on the therapy table was completely involved in the practice. And afterwards, the family was so grateful because they hadn't ever been able to do any activities like that with all of them together. And that they were so grateful that they had that moment together to share to each one of them be able to be a part of it. Everyone felt so good about themselves. And they felt good about their bodies afterwards, no matter what shape it was, in that day, when it showed up to the yoga practice. was a moment I will never forget, quite honestly, it was that moment when every single one of them were in chair pose together was I wish somebody had been in the room taking pictures in their thing, but it was just like, it was everything we had been taught and accessible. Yeah, it still gives me chills when I think about it, like they were amazing. And I never would have been able to figure that out on my own, there's no way that I would have been able to figure out how to teach that without accessible yoga training. Because if you you're not ever going to be in those situations, you might be surprised, you're going to have all kinds of bodies show up into your classes. Yeah.

JH

Jivana Heyman

51:35

I mean, that's been my experience. So often teaching over the years, just that so often, the room may not have that kind of diversity of ability. But usually there's a lot more diversity than we realize, you know, even even if everyone might look like they're at the same level, they're not, you know, there's just everyone has stuff showing.

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

51:52

Exactly. And that's obviously the most extreme example, you could probably ever see. I wasn't expecting that when I walked in the door that day. But it works. And I didn't get scared, I knew that I was equipped to handle this. And, but but I have and I've actually been a student in classes, where they've had students with different disabilities come in the door, and the teachers, I've heard them just say, just sit down in a chair and try to do what you can do, or just ignore them. And then I end up having to not have to because I really enjoy it. But like being able to help that student be a part of the class. I'll place them next to them and say, here, here's here's an option for you. Let's do this together. Not the teacher, but they were going to be ignored anyway.

JH

Jivana Heyman

52:42

Yeah, I just I appreciate your sharing it because I do spend a lot of time in the training on that idea of teaching mixed level classes. And I think that's why because I just, you know, for me, it took me many years to figure it out how I could do it in a way that was comfortable for me as a teacher, but it feels so important that everyone feels welcome and actively participating at their level that they choose, rather than being limited by my skills or ability as a teacher, you know, and I think that's what I kept seeing. I see a lot of, you know, more experienced teachers kind of figuring it out on their own, how to make everyone, you know, part of it, but I see a lot of newer teachers really struggling with that. And that's why I thought of like, why not just teach people how to do it, you know, how to teach mixed level classes where people are really working at different levels.

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

53:35

I'm a part of our local YCC. Now, and I do try to I don't have a lot of time or availability, but I do try to teach them that, you know, there are more ways that you can do this than just telling people to sit in a chair or try to try to help a little bit and steer them in the direction like, here's some resources, learn.

JH

Jivana Heyman

53:58

That's great. Well, you can always send them to me.

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

54:01

I have said that's the funny thing is the lady, the teacher that taught me my chair portion of my 200 hour after she saw my teaching. After I've taken the assessable yoga training, she

actually flew to Virginia and took the accessible yoga training with Amber. I thought it was great that I set my teacher to your training.

JH

Jivana Heyman

54:25

Jackie, did you have another story you wanted to tell I had a feeling or not.

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

54:31

For me, honestly, there are dozens I have the pleasure of being able to teach so many different kinds. Most recently I had a student come in who has dwarfism and an amputation. And so we were able she had her below knee amputation and to be able to get her into a yoga class where she was able to create participate. That was really strange, I actually had two new students, two separate students in the same week come in with amputations and was able to help with them and teach them, help them feel more comfortable in their bodies and be a part of the practice. And it was just exciting just to be able to just have that confidence to be like, we got this. And I'm also really fortunate that I was able to join you in Atlanta. And that's where I got to meet Natasha, too, and assist in the training. So I felt like I got a little double dose of the training, I would do it every I would do it every time I love this training, training ever. See, there's?

JH

Jivana Heyman

55:41

Well, maybe you can come to the next online one. Cool. Thank you so much. All right, well, we're kind of running out of time. I just wonder if anyone else wants to share anything I say goodbye. Do you have any final thoughts, Natasha, anything else you want to say?

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

55:56

I just want to say thank you for taking the time to ask us to gather and talk because it's so nice to, to hear all of our experiences, you know, depending upon how long and you know, we ourselves have been personally practicing and just hearing how this practice has done so much, not only for ourselves, but just for those who were sharing it with. And so it's really nice, honestly, sitting here and listening to everyone share their experiences, because it just shows just just how important it is to have the practice of yoga, but also just the the work that we're really putting out there and making sure that it really is is is accessible and inclusive, because, you know, inclusivity looks different to all of us. And I think that as long as we try to include those, especially throughout our own experiences into this practice, and and continue making it like a domino effect, you know, then we can all know that it's it's that attainable, you know, we need to continue to show all bodies all experiences, you know, I love what Mark was saying about just all everything, bring up the vulnerability because I'm the same way with my classes, we have discussions and things that just most wouldn't, and it's become necessary. And we're holding space and recognizing as we're teachers that we are holding space. So yeah, I'm just super appreciative for having just another tool that truly is used daily. I'm grateful to be amongst community, and just looking forward to learning more from all of you. Thanks.

JH

Jivana Heyman

57:47

Thank you. That's so sweet. I, I'm really touched to just hearing this from all of us, making me more excited for the next training. So I'm excited. Okay, Sarah, how about you anything else you want to say, before we leave,

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

58:01

I'm just hearing so many things that I can completely relate to like what Jackie was saying about having classes where nobody is left out. And it's just so awesome to be able to offer a class in a gym being a person with a curvy body, and being up on the stage of the gym. And teaching two classes that have no from a team, you know, from the late teens through to in this 70s we've got people different sized bodies of different abilities, even an amputee and one of my gym classes. And it's just a joy to see that no person is left out. And for Mark mentioning that bed yoga, and I was like, Yes, I remember that bed yoga, and it was awesome bed yoga. And I've even adapted that one into a studio class where we used to do restorative practice, but because of COVID we can't use props at the moment. So I've been doing a complete back session. And people have been loving that just exploring their movement, no props, but just

using the floors your prop. And yeah, I can't. I can't just like express everything in five seconds as to how great this stuff is. You can only learn by doing it yourself. Thanks Jivana

JH

Jivana Heyman

59:27

How about your marketing thing? Any final thoughts?

MS

Marc Settembrino

59:32

I think I'll just echo what Natasha and Sarah said, like, just being here in community, it almost feels like a class reunion or something like that and getting to hear how this training has impacted so many people in in their own practice their teaching, also the folks that they share the practice with. It's just such a wonderful community to be a part of, and I'm so great Pull to you, Jivana and Amber and everyone else that makes the accessible yoga community go, especially Sarah, since she's keeping that Facebook community. In order, it was really great to be in cyberspace with you all today and hear your experiences and stories. Live.

JH

Jivana Heyman

1:00:23

Thank you, thanks for being here. Jackie, any final thoughts breath,

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

1:00:30

echoing the community and the accessible community that's been built around the world like you this has movement has grown so big and it's touching people all over the world. There's those accessible yoga groups in different countries, different regions of the US all over the place. The resources that are available to each one of us as students of accessible yoga, after the training and never goes away, we just keep learning you keep offering more training opportunities, like we just did with Kelly Palmer, we've got, you know, the yoga, the accessible yoga podcast, which is available to us. And all of our different subgroups that are out like you

just don't see that kind of training, support follow up and community. I don't, I just don't think it exists anywhere else. But accessible training. So if you get through the training, you're never going to be alone. Like you have your team here. And it's a big growing amazing team. And I'm just I love watching everybody just have these amazing successes. I think it's so great.

JH

Jivana Heyman

1:01:46

That's beautiful. Thanks, Jackie. I agree. I think it's an amazing community, appreciate all of you today who are here sharing about the training and the work that you're doing in the world, which is amazing. So thank you for that. Thanks for all of your teaching out there. And for changing, I really do think that the yoga world is changing. And I think, you know, this community is a part of that, like, I feel like there is what is it called this, like this shift that I'm feeling and maybe it's COVID and maybe it's black lives matter, I don't know what it is, but I feel like the world is changing and, and yoga is changing along with it in the West. And it's just such a relief, you know, that feel like it's becoming more available. It's becoming less, and I don't know, like exclusive and less about physical ability and just more about, you know, connecting with your with yourself and then connecting with your community, which I think is really the heart of what I'm trying to teach and I think that we're trying to do in our accessible yoga training and our accessible yoga classes. Anyway, so thanks so much for being here today and for being part of our podcast. I really appreciate it and talk to y'all soon, I hope. Okay, bye.

NW

Natasha Williams-Chaoua

1:03:03

Thank you so much. You're gonna

J"

Jacquie "Sunny" Barbee

1:03:05

buy Thank you.

SN

Sarah Nuttridge

1:03:06

Thanks. Bye.

JH

Jivana Heyman

1:03:09

Hi, everyone.

AK

Amber Karnes

1:03:14

Thanks for joining us for another week of the accessible yoga podcast, I wanted to let you know that the new cohort of jivas accessible yoga training online is now forming. We start January 22. And the course runs through February 5. It's a 30 hour continuing ed program that will teach you to design multi level classes where students have different abilities, ages, shapes, sizes, and experience levels can all practice together with ease. If you've been thinking about the training, we have a live info session with Jivana. That's happening on January 14, it's free to attend. He'll be giving some simple tips to make your yoga Asana classes more accessible, and answering questions about the upcoming accessible yoga training. So if you've been wondering what you should expect in the training if online training is different from in person, what topics will be covered. All of that will be covered in this info session on January 14 plus Jivana will lead a short Asana and meditation practice will have prize drawings including a free spot and the training and lots more. So you can join the waitlist now and sign up for this free info session at [accessible Yoga training.com](https://accessibleyogatraining.com). We also hope you'll leave us a review wherever you subscribe to your podcasts. And please subscribe to this podcast. We love hearing your feedback. It really helps us make it better each week and we hope you'll give us some input on future guests or ask a question over at our podcast page [accessible Yoga training.com slash podcast](https://accessibleyogatraining.com). We'll see you next time. Thanks