

Welcome back everyone to our Find Your Voice, Share Your Story. This is part of how we tell the world what we're doing and why it's important they practice with us.

So I call this part igniting your light and finding your calling. I think of yoga teachers as storytellers. We're telling a story of how we can move through our body. Sometimes we're telling the story of releasing past trauma or limiting beliefs about who we are and what we can do. And quite frankly, we are in collaboration with our bodies, with our teachers, with the other people in the room and we're moving together to tell a story about hopefully peace in our bodies, teaching our students how to find peace in their bodies, and just being a supportive figure in a person's personal growth.

So we are teaching the body how to share an experience of connection through movement and we're helping to shape and shift consciousness, and that's something I learned from Dr. Gail Parker, that was one of our number one reasons for teaching yoga. That's one of our responsibilities and sharing your story makes you relatable.

So first of all, let's talk about building your classes and creating your following. So I recently, I don't do it so much now just because I don't have time, I recently started teaching on Insight timer and the good thing about being online is there's lots of opportunities to build your base. Something that is maybe not so prevalent when we were teaching in the local studio settings but it's a brave new world.

What the pandemic has brought us is a sense of ingenuity and figuring out how to connect with each other over the interwebs of the world. I always say to myself I'm grateful that we had the pandemic during a time when there was technology. I'm not grateful for the pandemic by any stretch of the imagination but I'm always looking for things that I've learned during this time of deep reflection. I call it the great pause where we were all had to take a break from the world, which I think was helpful for some and maybe detrimental for others. But what I learned from it is how to be more innovative and creative and that being online is a great way to connect with your students.

So I think going forward, it might be advantageous to think about having classes online and having classes in-person, if that's something you feel comfortable doing, because there's still going to be a group of people who aren't going to be comfortable to be in crowded spaces and spaces with other folks. So it might be advantageous to figure out how you can teach either consecutively online and in-person or deciding what kind of experience you want to create for your students.

So first off, finding your student base. This is your family. Right? Initially when I started teaching, you sound like your teacher because well, that's your biggest influence in your teaching is the person who taught you how to teach and so finding your own voice takes a little bit of time and finding your student base takes a little bit of time.

When I started, I was absolutely scared that nobody would want to practice with me when I stepped into the teaching arena. I mean I had been practicing by myself forever and I had been teaching fitness classes and being body shamed for teaching fitness classes. I once had one of my students come up to me and suggest I go to Weight Watchers. True story. I was able to keep up with the fitness class. I was being really fit but I didn't fit the stereotype of what a fitness teacher should look like and I was encouraged to lose weight.

And so that really started me thinking about how do we make fitness look all kinds of ways and to break the stereotype around what it is a fit body looks like, what it is a yoga teacher looks like. So that was part of my mission statement. Right? That was part of my bio was the accessibility and that bodies can look fit and be fit at all kinds of sizes. Right? That we need to stop thinking there's only one way to show up in a body, in a space where we are movement coaches, yoga teachers, Pilates teachers, whatever it is that we are doing, that we have a varied aspect or a varied example, I guess, is the word I'm looking for,

a varied example of what teachers look like so that people of all shaped sizes and abilities can see themselves represented.

So that was my mission or bio statement, my mission statement. So sit down and think about what it is I want to offer through my yoga practice. If you're interested in just doing like an hour flow to music and that feels really good, then that's what you want to write in your bio. Right? You want to say a class with Diane Bondi is a class on a musical journey where we pair Asana with music, however it is you want to teach. Right?

So you need to find your mission, your statement. Who is it that you want to teach? Who do you want to see in front of you in your student base and use your bio. Your bio is your resume or your CV for your classes. Some of us go into a job and we have a CV or a resume. This is our resume that you're going to post online so that people who are looking for a yoga for all accessible teacher that specializes in bigger bodies can find you or they're looking for a yoga for all accessible teacher who specializes in chair classes. Then they're finding you or looking for a bigger body yoga teacher that specializes in body positivity. Well, that's you.

So these are the things that you want to distill down into your bio or your mission statement. Helping you develop your voice as a teacher is starting with who it is that you want to teach. How do you want to connect with them? And I just gave you a bunch of examples of developing your voice. So if you're really interested in teaching to people who are recovering from an illness, you find maybe you work at hospice. You're finding what makes you happy. You're finding where your energy is best served in your classes and so that's something you really want to look at. Who do I want to teach and how can I reach out to that key community and offer my services?

And when you're developing your voice as a teacher, remember show up as yourself. I used to think that yoga classes had to be super serious. Right? Like this is something that we can't laugh at. We can't have a conversation during. We can't be ourselves during. So I just started being myself at my yoga classes and either you love it or you hate it and that's okay for me. There's hundreds of yoga teachers in the town that I live. I could probably throw a quarter out the window right now and hit at least two. Okay? So I know that showing up authentically as myself and sharing the joy of the practice will draw the people who want that as well and that what was what builds my voice. Talking to my students, asking them what they need from me helps me to build your voice.

So what we are going to be doing in this particular module is finding your student base, writing your bio, developing your voice as a teacher, using equitable and powerful language, which we've already talked about in the language module, writing your class description, mastering social media, which is what Amber's going to share with you, pitching your class to a yoga studio, creating flyers posters and marketing materials. So we're going to do a bunch of different things in building your classes and finding your voice.

First things first. You need to write your bio and what I did when I was first trying to initially write my bio is I put a post up on my social media and I asked yoga with Diane Bondi is what? And I asked people to tell me what their yoga experiences with me were and I used those as jumping off points and as points in my bio.

You also want to reach out to your friends and your family and ask them to share what you are teaching with their friends and their family. Right? Create an intro to yoga series. I'm going to tell you when I had my yoga studio for a decade, the number one thing that brought in students and kept students in my studio was that intro to yoga series. I had a studio on the busiest road in Windsor, Essex county, and I put a big sign out by the road. It was a hundred dollars a month to have the sign out at the road and that paid for itself within the first week of it being out there because I would run an intro to yoga series and

everybody who was driving down was also really helpful that there was a light right at the Plaza so there'd be people sitting in their cars, looking at the sign and the street.

So I did some of statistics around who was around the studio where I lived. Like there was a neighborhood behind the studio and I was thinking of really targeting people around the studio and putting signs out on the road, doing public events in that community, offering a free class in the community so that people could be less intimidated by the space and know that the space was for them.

You can also do a yoga for all class or series. I don't think you have a choice anymore. I think teaching on online platforms is a must. Whether you have your own online platform, whether you teach on Instagram or do something like Insight timer, anybody can teach on Insight timer. You just go to the Insight timer website and go to yoga teachers and apply to teach and they use your credentials.

We've had quite a few yoga for all teachers teaching on that platform or you can create your own online platforms. There's Vimeo. There's all kinds of things but you're going to, we're going to talk more about that in the next session section and Amber, I'll talk to you about that.

So sharing your experiences. What finds your family? So putting yourself out there. Remember, I talked about doing free classes in the communities. You want to engage. Having a class at the park and sharing it on social media, asking your friends to share it, sharing your story of how you became a yoga teacher can help you to build your following and find your voice.

So how to create a kick asana bio. I know but I thought it was fun. And you hear this all the time, be honest and authentic because people can tell right away when you're not and that's one thing I really do on my social media pages is what you see is what you get and so many people tell me wow, you look exactly like you do on your social media. Yeah because I don't use filters and I don't Photoshop my face. I might mess around with lighting if a picture's really dark so I might put a lighter filter on it or if I don't like the color of something I'm wearing, I might use a filter to enhance the color but I show up exactly as I am on my social media.

If something's bugging me, I share it. If I'm out in the world doing the things that I love, I share it. So I really make sure that I am 100% authentic. What you see is what you get.

Be creative and fun especially the fun part because there's so many things in this world that aren't fun right now and so we really want to give an opportunity to let off some steam. So when you're teaching, I love to have a little bit of an element of fun unless that's not in your repertoire. So don't be something that you're not but you can also have fun with explaining who you are. Right.

I saw [inaudible 00:12:03] where somebody says I'm a mini driving, a minivan driving mama who loves to teach yoga in my spare time or I had a teacher who drove a Harley and so she talk about her Harley in her bio and I thought that was amazing. I think being honest, honestly, that it comes down to being you, always introduce yourself. My name is Diane Bondi and this is within your bio and your bio can be oral in your class or if you're setting up a website, introduce yourself. Tell people how you got here. Tell people why you do this. Tell people about your yoga journey and then the most important one is tell us why we want to practice with you. Why do I want to practice with you? And how you figure that out is you plus what equals your yoga.

And again, throw it out into your social media circles, into your networks. The people who have been practicing with you for a while, the people who around you. Why should people want to practice with me? Why? And you can put it out there and then people will give you feedback on why it's important like why people want to practice with you, what your class means to them because sometimes it's hard to talk about yourself in a positive light and figure out what you want to offer.

But if you are ... just ask your friends around you. Ask the people you practice with. Why does practicing with you? Why should people practice with you? And then of course, be concise. Try to do it within 200 words or less. So you should have a long bio and a short bio and just be really concise. Think about that space on your Instagram where you think, I think it's 140 characters or 200 characters on your Instagram to explain who you are. You want to catch people's attention right away. Right?

Your bio is your resume for your social media and the interwebs. Okay. So create a tagline that encapsulates your value. You'll need two bios. I just mentioned that, a short one and a long one for websites and a shorter one for social media. But I think my bio, my short form or the tagline that I encapsulate my bio is like self-love is a revolutionary act, which borrowed from Andre Lord, No Yogi Left Behind. I was using that and that was a paraphrase from a former president. I was using things like that.

What's another thing that I say a lot? I've been saying a lot of do what needs to be done in your yoga class. Right? Like do what needs to be done for you to enjoy your yoga class. I'm trying to think of something I say a lot. Here's one. Come as you are, use what you have, do what you can. So I usually have like a little tagline that explains who I am and what a yoga class looks like for me.

Here's my short form bio. This is an older bio. I don't think I talk about my book in this bio but we can also take a quick jump over. Let's do that. Let's take a quick jump over to my ... Let's see if we can do this, if it will let me do this. Yeah. I think I might have to hit escape. Okay.

So let's take a quick jump over to my website so that you can see what my bio looks like. So this is my website and I think it's advantageous if you're going to be teaching online to have somebody create your website for you unless you're really good at these things. So here is my website. You go to the About Me page and then here I am.

So I have a short bio, which is this love is a revolutionary act. So I have the short bio here and then I blend out into a bigger bio and places where you may have seen me, how you can connect with me, all those things.

So I like to have a bio that shows everything that I'm doing. I talk about my books here. I talk about where I contribute content and it gives people an idea of who I am and why they might want to practice with me. So that's something that you might want to explore when you're creating your own bio. Okay?

All right. Okay. And that was my longer bio. Right? So this is a thing that I actually just copied off the internet so the shorter bio, and then for workshops or for your website, you're going to need a bigger bio. So your shorter bio is what you throw there on Instagram or social media and if you go to your Instagram, notice what key phrases you want to do. Sometimes I like to have a three-key phrase like learn, connect, and grow like those tree key phrases and that could be your punchline or your mission statement.

What's another one? Accessible, diverse, and equitable. I like those three little statements or three words that really encapsulate what it is you do and that can be like your tagline and then you can write a shorter bio, what a class is like with you, what you like to focus on, maybe how long you've been teaching and then a longer bio. Maybe places you've been featured, things that you've developed, how long you've been practicing, maybe the teachers that you've practiced with or learned with for your longer bio so that if you're doing a workshop or you're showing up on a panel or something like that, people can get a better or feel for who you are.

But you won't have something that's going to draw people in initially right away and make sure, do me a favor, and I know Amber's going to talk about this in creating your presence online, get a good selfie. Stand in front of a window. Do your makeup and take a picture of yourself. So that first picture you see of me in this presentation, I took in my kitchen in front of the windows. So phones nowadays have great

cameras on them so take good pictures and take a picture where people can actually see face and your eyes so that they connect with you.

I had a yoga teacher in town take a picture of her sitting in Lotus position, looking at candles, and I really thought to myself if I was brand new to yoga and I didn't know anything about yoga, this would look like a seance to me. First of all, I can't see the person's face. I can't do Lotus post. So I automatically am going to write this whole situation off. I'm unsure what's going on with the candles. I don't know what all of that is and when I look at that picture, every single time, and I told her about it and she didn't do anything about it but she doesn't have to listen to me but I thought to myself, don't you want people to see your face?

Like when I see somebody's face and I look at their eyes and I look at their smiles, I feel a connection. But if I see somebody looking down at candles, I think to myself, this isn't a person who's going to want to engage or help me with my practice and that's just how my brain works. I'm not saying that's how it is but I'm saying that's how my brain works.

Okay. So promote yourself. Oh my goodness. I don't understand our whole ... I know it's good to be humble but how is anybody going to get to your class if they don't know what you're doing? Right? Like how am I going to find anybody who's teaching yoga in my city if they're not promoting themselves especially on social media where a lot of people or if you're going to do a mailer or if you're going to put an ad in your parks and rec guide. Whatever that is, find a way to promote yourself. There's nothing wrong with promoting yourself. There is nothing wrong with marketing yourself. You're constantly marketing all the time in your everyday life. I'm always marketing to my children. Why? I would like them to eat an apple once in a while. You know what I mean?

I'm always marketing to my son why it's important for him to cut the grass. You know what I mean? You're always trying to show people what they can be doing or how they can find you or ... you know what I mean? Or convincing people, why yoga is good for them. I'm convincing my son why it's good for him to cut the lawn or why it's good for him to eat an apple once in a while.

So this is what we're doing. We're promoting ourselves. So get out of your way of not putting yourself out there because do you not want people in your class? Like if you want to have people in your class, you're going to have to promote yourself. How are people going to find you and all the wonderful things you're doing if you don't tell them. So I go into Canva. Not me. I have somebody that helps me with this because I'm terrible at these things but I go into Canva or I have somebody help me and go into Canva and create these graphics for my social media and I post them every week.

Okay. I post them every week and once a month, I send out my schedule to my email list and let them know where I'll be in case they want to practice with me. I have online and in-person teaching. So if you're in my area, you can meet me here and if you're not, then you can meet me online and that's really important.

Create some graphics and what I love about Canva, do yourself a favor. Canva I think is \$150 a year. It's worth every penny. You can create videos for your social media on there. They now have that. If you get the professional account, is \$150. You get to use all their stock photos on there and they have a lot of great stock photos on there. They have templates for everything. As you saw in this presentation, I use Canva for my presentation. I used to use Google slides. I used to use PowerPoint but Canva is by far superior product for you to have.

So I really suggest that you check it out, use it to promote yourself. Okay. Hire a photographer. I just said this. Take a great selfie. All right. So this is a selfie I took in my backyard as I was sitting on my couch. I make sure that you can see my face. Right? I like this because this is a casual picture. In this particular

selfie, I don't have any makeup on. It was just a moment in time where I liked how the light looked behind me and I just took a picture.

If not, hire a photographer if you're unsure. Wear something you love. Invite your friends to come along. You will need one headshot where we're just looking at your face, a beauty shot, and we will need one shot of your full body doing something that you love and have fun with it. What I like to do is play some fun music and then I either hire a photographer. If you don't have the money to hire a professional photographer and you live in a town that has a university that teaches photography or there's a place ... There's always students looking to get experience in their trade. So you could reach out online and find a student photographer.

Those very first pictures I took of myself was by a student photographer. She was like 17 years old. She came over to the park near me and she took a bunch of pictures of me at the park and it was excellent. Or you could do a trade with somebody yoga for photography. I think a session here in my town runs maybe anywhere from \$200 to \$400, depending on what you want, depending on how many pictures you need.

I like to do pictures in the great outdoors. I think those are really fun pictures and you'll notice the majority of my selfies are usually outside because the lighting is so great and make sure people can see your face and can connect with your eyes. I just find it so strange when people don't take pictures of them actually looking at the camera so that people can get an idea of what practicing with you might be like. Look at the picture on the left. I'm hoping that I'm wearing my favorite color. I'm out there doing a pose that I really love to do. Just have fun with your photos because your energy shows up on your picture. You can see who you are. You can see your eyes. Don't be afraid to do that.

Creating class descriptions. So divine yoga in your terms. Something I like to say is everyone is welcome, rated E for everyone, which I borrowed from Nintendo. Make sure you're setting expectations. What will we teach in class? What can your students expect? And when you're doing a basic class, remember you're doing a basic class and we're not doing handstands in class. Right?

Know your audience. Who do you want to teach to? What do you want to teach them? How are you going to present it? Where are you going to teach? Right. And be concise. Make sure you cover what you're teaching when you're teaching and why people want to practice with you. Right? And use uplifting and dynamic language. Right? So we talked about that in the language portion.

Okay. So here's a couple of examples of class descriptions that I have written. Yoga for bigger Bodies is about celebrating your practice as you are. There is where rated E for everyone. I borrowed that from Nintendo. All sizes are welcome. This class will center and focus on asana and larger bodies providing a customized postural experience.

So yes. Yoga is for everyone. Yes. Everyone is welcome to this class but who will be centered in this class is bigger bodies. Right? And that's something that I like to really emphasize in my class descriptions. Anybody is welcome but the people that this class is designed for is this person. And so when you come to this class, know that this is the experience that's going to be centered. Come and connect with your breath and your practice. This yoga class is not about how flexible you are or about how strong you are. It's about making yoga available to all of us.

So I really want to make sure that people who feel they aren't strong, aren't flexible can come to class and know it's for them. This is hands-free [inaudible 00:25:43]. This is a shorter description that I pulled off of my insight timer class because you only have so many characters to describe your class.

So I go let's move and flow together while giving our shoulders and wrists. This flow focuses on using standing poses and breath to create a movement practice that builds balance and coordination without using our hands. And so I think that's a little bit more concise because I have less space to talk about it.

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So decide the feeling you want to evoke. Decide who you want to reach and make sure you're specific to that clientele. So that if you're working with a prenatal class, anybody's welcome to come to prenatal yoga, if that's what you're offering. If it's not what you're offering, this class is focused on people who are having babies and perhaps their partners or people who are supporting them so that's who this class is designed for. So for people who are having babies, this is the class/ this is a prenatal class for them. So you can tell them who you are focusing or centering your information around.

Okay. So next up in our conversation is mastering social media and that is Amber's expertise. So I'll be passing the torch to Amber. I want to thank you so much for joining me for my presentation. It's always an honor to share this information with everybody. Amber and I have been teaching for a lot of years. I think combined together, we have over 50 years of teaching experience interspersed with marketing experience and all the things that form a multidimensional human being.

And so we want to share this information with you so that you don't have to struggle through the difficulties that we had to figuring out accessible yoga, figuring out how to get things online, figuring out all those things. We've already done all those things and we're happy to share it with you. So I'm excited for you to check out the next class, Mastering Social Media. I'll see you next time.