

# *YOGA PHILOSOPHY & DEI ACTIVITY GUIDE*



With  
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# OBJECTIVES:

The five objects of the workshop are as follows::

- ☑ **Define what "Diversity & Inclusion" means**
- ☑ **Identifying how yoga aligns with social justice & anti-racism.**
- ☑ **Discuss cultural barriers to entry**
- ☑ **Create a personalized purpose-focused mission statement**
- ☑ **Points of Clarification: Q&A**

LET'S DIVE IN



# DIVERSITY VS. INCLUSION

“Liberation is understanding our humanity and being able to see the humanity in others such that we understand our freedom is dependent upon others freedom.” ~ Excerpt *Skill in Action*

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Diversity refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique while inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome.

## EXAMPLES

DIVERSITY IS INVITING PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT TRAITS, ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS, SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS, BODY SIZE, ETC. TO THE TABLE.

INCLUSION IS MAKING SURE EVERYONE AT THE TABLE IS ALLOWED TO USE THEIR VOICE EQUALLY AND BE GIVEN THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS.

LIST 3 WAYS YOU CAN CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT IN THE YOGA/FITNESS SPACES YOU NAVIGATE.

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# BHAGAVAD GITA

Sometimes we have to go against everything we know for what is right....

## BRIEF SYNOPSIS

THE GITA IS THE SIXTH BOOK OF THE MAHABHARATA, ONE OF INDIA'S MOST FAMOUS EPIC POEMS. IT'S UNCLEAR EXACTLY WHEN THE GITA WAS COMPOSED –ESTIMATES VARY WIDELY, BUT A NUMBER OF SCHOLARS SUGGEST IT WAS COMPLETED AROUND 200 CE AND THEN INSERTED INTO THE LARGER WORK; MANY SEE IT AS THE FIRST FULLY REALIZED YOGIC SCRIPTURE. CURIOUS THOUGH IT MAY SEEM THAT SUCH AN ANCIENT TEXT FROM A FOREIGN CULTURE HAS BEEN SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY WESTERNERS, THE GITA, LIKE ALL TRULY GREAT WORKS OF LITERATURE, CAN BE READ ON MANY LEVELS: METAPHYSICAL, MORAL, SPIRITUAL, AND PRACTICAL; HENCE ITS APPEAL.

## DIVERSITY IN YOGA

SEARCH THESE TERMS IN GOOGLE, ON IG OR ON TIKTOK: "YOGA MAGAZINE COVERS" "YOGA"

1) HOW MANY SCROLLS DID IT TAKE FOR YOU TO FIND SOMEONE YOU FEEL REPRESENTS YOU?

2) HOW DO THESE RESULTS MAKE YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR PLACE IN A YOGIC SPACE?

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# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

"Appropriating" often means overlooking history

## DEFINITION

- THE ACT OF A DOMINANT OR PRIVILEGED GROUP ADOPTING CULTURAL ELEMENTS OF ANOTHER (MOST LIKELY MARGINALIZED OR OPPRESSED) CULTURE IN AN INSENSIBLE MANNER.
- PLAYS ON HISTORIC THEMES OF OPPRESSION, DOMINATION, AND PRIVILEGE.
- IGNORES THE VALUE, SIGNIFICANCE, OR MEANING OF THE OBJECT/PRACTICE.
- DOES NOT GIVE CREDIT TO THE ORIGINAL CULTURE/RELIGION/ETHNICITY/ETC.
- LOOKED DOWN UPON/MOCKED WHEN PRACTICED/WORN BY THE ORIGINAL MARGINALIZED CULTURE BUT BECOMES "COOL," "TRENDY," OR "EDGY" WHEN DONE BY THE OPPRESSORS/APPROPRIATORS.

## EXAMPLE:

1. TAKING A SACRED OBJECT FROM A CULTURE AND PRODUCING IT AS PART OF A HALLOWEEN COSTUME.
  - A. INDIGENOUS HEADDRESSES,
  - B. TRIBAL FACE PAINT
  - C. BLACK FACE
1. WEARING "ETHNIC" HAIRSTYLES AS THOUGH THEY'RE NEW
  - A. CORNROWS
  - B. BANTU KNOTS
  - C. HEADWRAPS

WRITE DOWN 2-3 EXAMPLES OF THINGS YOU CONSIDER CULTURAL APPROPRIATION & WHY.

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# CULTURAL APPRECIATION

"Appropriating" often means overlooking history

## DEFINITION

**CULTURAL APPRECIATION IS THE RESPECTFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT UNDERSTANDING, AND ENJOYMENT OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL PRACTICES, BELIEFS, TRADITIONS, AND CUSTOMS WITHOUT APPROPRIATING OR DEVALUING THEM. IT INVOLVES VALUING DIVERSITY, LEARNING ABOUT VARIOUS CULTURES, AND FOSTERING POSITIVE INTERACTIONS AND EXCHANGES AMONG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS.**

## EXAMPLE:

- **INCORPORATING SANSKRIT TERMINOLOGY: CULTURAL APPRECIATION IN YOGA INVOLVES USING SANSKRIT TERMINOLOGY FOR YOGA POSES, BREATHING TECHNIQUES, AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS. BY USING THESE TRADITIONAL TERMS, PRACTITIONERS HONOR THE LANGUAGE AND HERITAGE FROM WHICH YOGA ORIGINATED, FOSTERING A DEEPER CONNECTION TO ITS CULTURAL ROOTS.**
- **CELEBRATING CULTURAL FESTIVALS: YOGA STUDIOS MAY HOST EVENTS OR CLASSES THAT CELEBRATE CULTURAL FESTIVALS SUCH AS DIWALI, HOLI, OR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA. THESE EVENTS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTITIONERS TO LEARN ABOUT THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE BEHIND THESE CELEBRATIONS, PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF DIVERSE CULTURAL PRACTICES.**
- **OFFERING DIVERSE YOGA STYLES: CULTURAL APPRECIATION IN YOGA ALSO INCLUDES OFFERING A DIVERSE RANGE OF YOGA STYLES THAT REFLECT THE RICH TAPESTRY OF YOGA TRADITIONS FROM VARIOUS CULTURES. THIS MAY INCLUDE STYLES SUCH AS KUNDALINI YOGA FROM INDIA, YIN YOGA FROM CHINA, OR AFRICAN-INSPIRED YOGA PRACTICES. BY EMBRACING AND OFFERING THESE DIVERSE STYLES, PRACTITIONERS HONOR THE CULTURAL ORIGINS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRACTICE OF YOGA.**

# YOGA & SOCIAL JUSTICE

*“Yoga is Skill in Action. Do every action to the best of your ability” ~  
Excerpt Skill in Action*

## YAMAS & NIYAMAS

### Yamas

1. Ahimsa: nonviolence
2. Satya: truthfulness
3. Asteya: non-stealing
4. Brahmacharya: non-excess
5. Aparigraha: non-possessiveness, non-greed.

### Niyamas

1. Saucha: purity
2. Santosha: contentment
3. Tapas: self-discipline
4. Svadhyaya: self-study
5. Ishvara Pranidhana: surrender

## YAMAS & NIYAMAS: ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF YOGA

### UNDERSTANDING THESE PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE.

**AHIMSA: THE ABSENCE OF INJUSTICE, VIOLENCE, AND CRUELTY.**

**SATYA: SPEAK THE TRUTH TO CREATE AN OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE.**

**ASTEYA: CHALLENGES US TO BE MINDFUL IN OUR CHOICES AROUND CONSUME, NEED, AND DESIRE.**

**BRAHMACHARYA: THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS ESSENTIAL TRUTH.**

**APARIGRAHA: ENCOURAGES US TO ASSESS UNHEALTHY OLD BELIEFS, FEARS, AND DESIRES.**

**SAUCHA: CLEANLINESS OF BODY, MIND, AND EMOTIONS.**

**SANTOSHA: THE PRACTICE OF ACCEPTANCE.**

**TAPAS: PERSEVERANCE & CONSISTENCY**

**SVADHYAYA: NON-JUDGMENTAL SELF-OBSERVATION.**

**ISHVARA PRANIDHANA: SPIRITUAL GROWTH ENABLES US TO LIVE A MORE PURPOSEFUL AND COLLECTIVE EXISTENCE.**

**IDENTIFY ONE YAMA OR NIYAMA THAT YOU CAN FOCUS ON IN YOUR EFFORTS TO MAKE YOGA MORE INCLUSIVE.**



# THE ALLY VS. THE ACCOMPLICE

“If we don't begin to consider how our thoughts, words and actions impact the collective good, we will perish.” ~ Excerpt *Skill in Action*

## THE DIFFERENCE

Ally an ally is willing to stand in support of a marginalized voice, risk is rarely involved

Accomplice An accomplice uses the power and privilege they have to challenge the status quo, often risking their physical and social well-being in the process. (co-conspirator) Examples: Alexis Ohanian & Reddit, Marilyn Monroe & Ella Fitzgerald.

YOU'RE UNIQUE POSITIONED TO BE AN ACCOMPLICE.

BELOW YOU'LL FIND AN EXAMPLE OF A DIAGRAM. ON THE LEFT ARE ALL MY IDENTITIES THAT ARE TOP OF MIND. ON THE RIGHT YOU WILL SEE A LIST OF WAYS THIS IDENTITY IS EITHER SOURCE OF PRIVILEGE OR SOURCE OF TARGETING.

IDENTITIES	PRIVILEGES OR OPRESSION
BLACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Targeted because of institutional racism in America</li></ul>
WOMAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Targeted due to patriarchy. Often underpaid, overlooked &amp; devalued.</li></ul>
"EDUCATED" - 2 MASTERS DEGREES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Privilege which gives me access to spaces &amp; conversations.</li></ul>
BUSINESS OWNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Privilege which provides me the freedom of any option I pick.</li></ul>
500HR RYT/ 200HR E-RYT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Privilege which enables me to educate others &amp; expand my income potential.</li></ul>
U.S. CITIZEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Privilege which enables me to not be concerned about deportation.</li></ul>



# HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY?

By using the example above take a moment to write down how you self-identity and if that identity is a privilege or source of you being targeted.

IDENTITIES	PRIVILEGES OR OPPRESSION

# HOW ARE YOU UNIQUELY DESIGNED TO BE A CHANGE AGENT?

## PROMPT

Based on what you wrote above, and the example provided to your right, how are you uniquely positioned to engage with the practice of yoga to create change?

## MY EXAMPLE

I am a Black, female yoga instructor and my body in these traditionally white spaces is a revolutionary act. My level of education afforded me access to certain spaces and provided me with the ability to pay for yoga teacher training. As someone who has been granted access to these spaces, it is my duty to educate my students on the aspects of yoga outside of their physical practice. In addition to creating a safe physical space for my students, I will also provide them with tools to create a safe space for us all off of the mat by implementing yoga philosophy throughout my teachings. I will encourage my students and colleagues to remove excuses from their lives and fully embrace their power and ability to change the world around them.

**HOW ARE YOU UNIQUELY  
DESIGNED TO BE A CHANGE  
AGENT?**

## PROMPT

Based on what you wrote above, and the example provided to your right, how are you uniquely positioned to engage with the practice of yoga to create change?

Based on what you wrote above, and the example provided to your right, how are you uniquely positioned to engage with the practice of yoga to create change?

[illegible]

**WRITE YOUR CHANGE STATEMENT BELOW**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# CHAKRA SUPPORT

## SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA

### SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA

THE SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA, OR MANIPURA IN SANSKRIT, TRANSLATES TO, “CITY OF JEWELS.” LOCATED IN THE UPPER BELLY AT THE DIAPHRAGM, IT ACTS AS THE CENTER OF PERSONAL POWER. THIS CHAKRA GOVERNS PERSONALITY, EGO, AND IDENTITY, AS WELL AS PERSONAL FREEDOM, CHOICE, AND AUTHENTICITY.

THE SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA ALSO HAS MUCH TO DO WITH MOTIVATION, WILLPOWER, AND PURPOSE, WHICH STEM FROM ONE’S SENSE OF PERSONAL EFFICACY. SELF-CONFIDENCE AND VIEW OF THE SELF CONNECT TO THE SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA, AS WELL. FURTHERMORE, THIS CHAKRA GOVERNS THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM AND ITS RESPECTIVE ORGANS; AS A RESULT, IT HAS JURISDICTION OVER BOTH THE GUT’S EMOTIONAL BRAIN AND STORED EMOTIONS.

THE SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA HAS A MASCULINE ENERGY AND IS SYMBOLIZED BY THE COLOR YELLOW (AND/OR GOLD) AND BY A DOWNWARD-POINTING TRIANGLE WITHIN A TEN-PETALED FLOWER. ELEMENTALLY, THE SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA IS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRE (AS WELL AS THE SUN) AND ITS MANTRA IS, “I CAN.” (ACCORDINGLY, MANIFESTATION WORK CONNECTS TO THIS CHAKRA SPECIFICALLY.)



## POSTURES TO IGNITE YOUR SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA

- REVOLVED CRESCENT LUNGE
- BOW POSE
- REVOLVED TRIANGLE
- BOAT POSE
- UPDOG



# CHAKRA SUPPORT

## THROAT CHAKRA

THE FIFTH CHAKRA, VISHUDDHA, IS THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITUAL CHAKRAS. IN THE AREA OF THE THROAT, IT GOVERNS THE ANATOMICAL REGIONS OF THE THYROID, PARATHYROID, JAW, NECK, MOUTH, TONGUE, AND LARYNX. TO BE OPEN AND ALIGNED IN THE FIFTH CHAKRA IS TO SPEAK, LISTEN, AND EXPRESS YOURSELF FROM A HIGHER FORM OF COMMUNICATION. FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING COMBINE THE ESSENCE OF THE VISHUDDHA CHAKRA MEANING. THE ELEMENT CORRESPONDING TO THE FIFTH CHAKRA IS ETHER OR SPACE, AND THE SENSE IS HEARING.

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## POSTURES TO IGNITE YOUR THROAT CHAKRA

- CHILD'S POSE
- PUPPY DOG
- COBRA
- CAMEL
- REVERSE PLANK
- WILD THING

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## ARTICLES

### Diversity and Inclusion in Yoga

- Radical Diversity: Setting a Yoga Standard for Equality
- The Yoga Diversity Dilemma
- Bridging the Divide: Diversity in Yoga (Musthave Yoga Alliance Membership)
- Why Your Yoga Class Is So White
- OUTSIDER LOOKING IN: A BLACK GIRL'S EXPERIENCE IN THE YOGA WORLD
- SEEING IS BELIEVING

### African Americans & Religion

- Highland Views: Sojourner Truth: to stay here and stand the fire
- Gilbert, O., & Titus, F. W. (1968). Narrative of Sojourner Truth. New York: Arno Press.
- The Black Church
- The Image of God: Black Theology and Racial Empowerment in the African American Community by Allison Calhoun-Brown

## BOOKS & VIDEOS

### Booklist

22 books on race and white privilege that will show you what's really happening in America right now

### Video List

- Jane Elliot- Concept of Reverse Racialism
- Understanding how history impacts Black people today.
- Bishop T.D. Jakes & Pastor Carl Lentz Discuss Racism in America
- Humanity, Racism and Transformation | Carl Lentz & Dr. Anita Phillips | Hillsong East Coast

