



# more yoga, better world

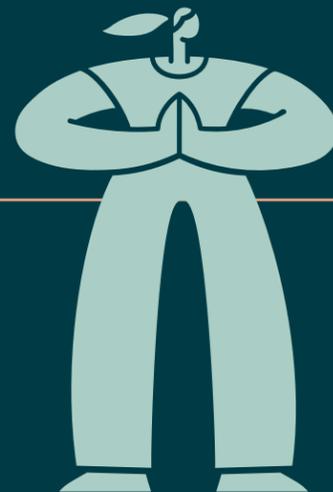
2024–2030  
Strategic Plan



Living the life that cries to be lived from the depth of our being frees up our energy and vitality.

We benefit and everyone around us benefits.

—  
Deborah Adele  
*The Yamas & Niyamas:  
Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*



## We Bow In Gratitude

We express our utmost gratitude and appreciation to those who generously shared their valuable time and brilliant insights, which were instrumental in shaping our strategic plan.

Thank you for your important contributions.

### Yoga Alliance Strategic

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\* Updated on January 2026

# Envisioning and crafting a bolder, more compassionate, equitable, inclusive world, Grounded in Yoga.



This is the first strategic plan Yoga Alliance has developed in the period following recent, generational changes in so many wide-ranging facets of our lives—how we think about and approach human interactions and work; our collective understanding of systemic inequities and their deep and wide-ranging impacts; the concepts of public health and wellness; and our communities themselves. As such, this effort called for a thoughtful, creative, and broadly community-centered approach. With support from the Board Chair, the Strategic Planning Committee, Barbara Bitondo, an expert in strategic planning and community listening in global organizations, Yoga Alliance opted for an Appreciative Inquiry-based approach aimed at gathering a diverse set of stories and perspectives.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a framework used to engage groups in self-determined change. It was developed in 1987 by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva at Case Western Reserve University's Department of Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on what's working in a system and leads groups to co-design their future. Inquiries comprise a "4-D" Process (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny) and are grounded in five key principles: Positivity (affirmative questions enact positive change), Constructionist (words create worlds), Poetic (life is expressed through story), Simultaneity (inquiry promotes change), and Anticipatory (imagination drives action).

Yoga Alliance's inquiry included a deep review of feedback from members and the larger community over the last several years; a review of the prior strategic plan; a global survey of the yoga community, broadly defined, and focus groups to explore questions surfaced by these inputs. It culminated in an online Summit titled *Unleashing Our Global Potential Yoga Alliance Toward 2030*, which brought together members of the Yoga Alliance Boards of Directors, staff from across the organization, members, and external stakeholders to bring the work of the inquiry into final focus.

# Our Strategic Framework

Throughout all the conversations and feedback this community shared with us during the development of this plan, one organizing theme for Yoga Alliance's future emerged loud and clear: amplifying the power of yoga and improving its accessibility for everyone—wherever they are, in whatever circumstances.

We are steadfast in this purpose. To breathe life into it, we will focus our efforts on three foundational commitments, each of which is anchored by one or more key groups of stakeholders whose buy-in and engagement are essential and/or represent key levers we will use to generate the intended impact\*.

**Uplift the Transformative Power of Yoga.  
Surface and Reduce Barriers to the Practice.  
Build, Engage, and Support this Community.**

*\* These stakeholder groups and/or levers are identified within each section that follows.*



**Just as the elements of  
Indra's Net are mirrors of  
itself, each individual that  
practices yoga becomes  
part of the greater whole  
working towards a shared  
vision of humanity at its  
best – knowing that yoga is  
not simply a personal choice  
but a collective action  
that fertilizes the inherent  
interconnectedness and  
unity of all beings.**



# Uplift the Transformative Power of Yoga

We advocate for yoga, in its wholeness, and for human beings in theirs.

We believe that yoga offers an invitation to wellness and liberation through self-knowledge of which all human beings are worthy, and that our shared worthiness calls on each of us to act on one another's behalf.

Therefore, we believe that through yoga's self-reflection and self-work, we can transform ourselves and, together, transform the world.



## Key Stakeholders and Levers of Change:

### Yoga itself

Yoga Alliance supports yoga teachers, schools, and the larger yoga community. To do this work in integrity, we must, simultaneously stay focused on the needs of yoga itself as well as those of the individuals within the community. This is a concern of both practical prioritization and ethical and intellectual integrity.

As a steward of member resources, we will prioritize work that broadly serves the community or that we are uniquely positioned to offer, rather than duplicating existing efforts or impeding others. Practically, as the largest community representing yoga professionals, Yoga Alliance is among the few positioned to advocate at the systemic level on behalf of yoga traditions, their practices, and their benefits. We must hold this responsibility alongside that which we hold on behalf of members. The yoga community, like all communities, is comprised of humans with understandable human needs and desires.

These perspectives may run counter to what is best for the community and for yoga as a whole, though they may be conveyed by community members with considerable influence or standing. Our team is vulnerable to the same human tendencies, of course, and our organization has made poor choices in the past in the name of some of these pressures. To ensure Yoga Alliance remains in integrity, we will center yoga's needs overall, alongside those of our human community members, supporters, detractors, funders, and others, and transparently hold any resulting tensions.

### "Grass-tops" Outreach and Engagement

This pillar asks us to engage levers of systemic change—such as health and wellness organizations, media outlets, legislative and regulatory bodies, and large employers and other institutions. This engagement elevates the general public understanding of "what is yoga" and whom it serves, and to broaden the awareness of a complete yoga practice as a tool for improving human wellness and advancement.

# How Will We Get There?



We are committed to "advocating" for yoga in its wholeness, and working to dispel common misconceptions such as: **yoga = asana; yoga is (solely) an exercise practice; yoga is only for people of certain body types, races, ethnicities, religions, genders, and other identities. We are similarly committed to advocating for greater access to the kind of "whole-person wellness" that yoga enables, including broadening public understanding of what it means for someone to be "well," who is deserving of wellness, and the role a yoga practice can play in one's wellness.**

## We will do this through:

### Public Education and Advocacy

We will advance a more comprehensive understanding of "what yoga is" and its impact on whole-person wellness, while working to increase public access, through outreach and education to decision makers—both directly and through institutional partnerships. We will also broaden public perception of "who yoga is for" through direct education and engagement.

### Thought Leadership/Amplification

To advocate on yoga's behalf with those outside of the yoga community, we will empower ourselves and others with the knowledge to dispel preexisting misconceptions, misunderstandings, and suspicions. To advocate on yoga's behalf within the yoga community, we will continuously seek to advance the skills and tools used by teachers for sharing the traditions, while holding true to them.

### Organizational Excellence

We will continue to center diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in our organizational culture and cultivate a model in which leaders emerge from all levels of the organization. We will ensure that we remain sound stewards of community donations and membership revenue through integrated and innovative procedures, policies, and technology. We will seek to align with vendors, partners, and team members who share our vision and who also strive to broaden the reach of yoga for the benefit of all.

# Surface and Reduce Barriers to the Practice

On behalf of this community, we proactively seek to understand what keeps people from seeing themselves within it. With compassion for all, we will share what we learn and support the community in adapting and growing to meet the need.

We believe that the opportunity and necessity for self-reflection and growth exist not only for individuals but also for communities and institutions. We believe that change is growth, even when it's uncomfortable.



## Key Stakeholders and Levers of Change:

### Individual Practitioners (Current and Future)

There can be no sharing of the traditions without students to teach. This pillar asks us to believe that every person is worthy of their own yoga practice and, as such, to listen to and advocate for the needs and concerns of those students.

### Yoga Teachers and Schools

The sharing and transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, from person to person, is itself an integral component of the yoga traditions, and Yoga Alliance recognizes the expertise of teachers and schools in this realm. We believe that these teachers also deserve access to current best practices, tools, and techniques for educators of all disciplines. This pillar asks us to support the wisdom-holders—teachers, and teachers of teachers—with information, tools, and resources designed to empower them to share their expertise and be the best educators they can be in the present moment and context.

# How Will We Get There?

**Accessible Points of Entry:** Yoga Alliance will seek to understand what causes people to believe that “yoga isn’t for me” and create resources to address these concerns with the aim—and hope—of genuinely inviting people in.

**Center Safety, Equity, and Accessibility in:** Helping students find their mats is not enough; to enjoy the benefits of the practice, students must continue to return to them. Yoga Alliance will support our community’s professionals in creating yoga spaces that welcome students and encourage their continued participation.

**Professional Development:** Yoga Alliance will source best-practice knowledge, tools, and techniques from across education-related disciplines, and share these with our members throughout all aspects of our credentialing platform, including within the standards and accountability framework, continuing education offerings, and community engagement opportunities. We will prioritize those that address the “point of entry/exit concerns” shared with us, such as equity, safety and abuses of power, and accessibility.

**and Professional Recognition:** In parallel, we will educate the general yoga-interested public and those who hire yoga teachers about this elevated foundation from which Yoga Alliance credentialed teachers work. We will also create new tools and improve existing ones to help potential students and hiring managers locate Yoga Alliance credentialed teachers.

**Impact Investment:** We will invest in developing knowledge, tools, and infrastructure that address system-level issues preventing those called to teach yoga from pursuing that calling. We will prioritize supporting others’ work where possible.



When we are attentive to our actions we are not prisoners to our habits; we do not need to do something today simply because we did it yesterday.

— T.K.V Desikachar  
*The Heart of Yoga*

# Build, Engage, and Support Community

We invest in community building as a vehicle for collective knowledge-sharing, mentoring, accountability, and belonging, and for creating impact greater than any of us can do alone.

We believe that community is essential to the human experience. It drives a life of purpose and meaning. We believe that cultivating deeper connection, collaboration, understanding, representation, and shared resources within and among the broad yoga community is the best way to uplift and support those communities. Doing so will create more access to and belonging within the practice of yoga.

## Key Stakeholders and Levers of Change:

### Yoga Community

Communities comprise individuals with shared interests, norms, responsibilities, and/or ties; they are not defined by a power center and people beholden to it. Likewise, for the Yoga Alliance community to flourish, Yoga Alliance must nurture and be part of multidimensional relationships with and among its members.

# How Will We Get There?



**Yoga is firstly for individual growth, but through individual growth society and community develop.**

—  
**B.K.S. Iyengar**  
*Tree of Yoga*

### Deep Relationships with and Among Members:

Yoga Alliance will focus on delivering individual member value greater than the monetary cost, taking actions and (only) serving in roles which individuals could not fulfill on their own, and investing in in-person and virtual structures that enable members to engage with, learn from, and support each other.

### Center Yoga Teachers/Wisdom Holders:

Yoga Alliance's role within the yoga community is to serve as a steadfast advocate for yoga and to lift up and support those who share its teachings, not to step into the shoes of either.

### Expanded Membership Options:

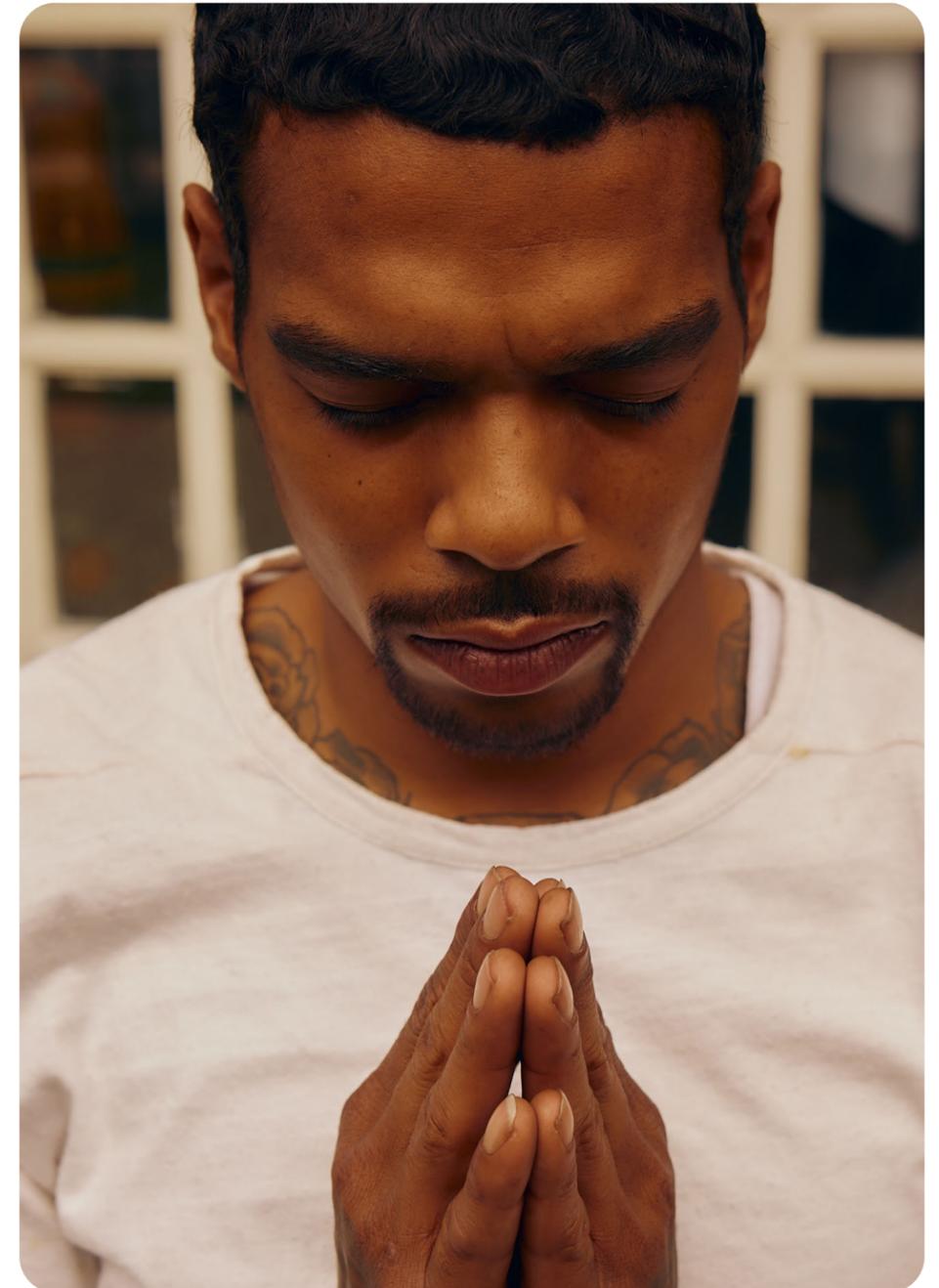
Yoga Alliance will expand its definitions of membership and affiliation and, seek opportunities to welcome and serve people at all stages of their yoga practice.

## Future Membership Ecosystem 2026+



# What's Next?

This document was written at a high level and is designed as a framework that will guide the six years of operational choices to come underneath it. This was deliberate, as it would be a nearly-impossible task to write a single operational-level implementation plan for a six-year stretch of time (or, at the very least, likely a wasted effort—as the last three years have well reminded us all). As such, this strategic plan will be supported each year by an annual internal implementation plan that will articulate the organization's goals and intentions for the year ahead, informed by the context and learnings of preceding years.



# Acknowledgements

In 2024 Yoga Alliance celebrated its 25th anniversary. At this important milestone, we would like to recognize the countless contributors who have helped shape every aspect of our work. Without them, reaching this milestone would not have been possible. In lieu of naming each one of them, join us as we pause to honor their passion and support for yoga and the yoga community.

We also express our utmost gratitude to Yoga Alliance staff and Yoga Alliance Boards of Directors for their daily contributions to advance our mission. To learn more about the individuals behind this work visit <https://yogaalliance.org/meet-our-team/>.

# Citations

- Adele, D. (2009). *The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice* (p. 46). On-Word Bound Books, LLC.
- Desikachar, T. (1995). *The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice* (p. 6). Inner Traditions International.
- Iyengar, B. (1988). *The Tree of Yoga: Yoga Vrksa* (p. 10). Shambhala.

**Yoga** is there  
wherever we are

off of the mats,  
within our hearts,  
minds and lives.

It reminds us that  
**when we can  
transform ourselves,  
together we can  
transform the  
world.**





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