

LOIS LEONHARDI



Hi Lois, please kick things off for us with an introduction to yourself and your story.

I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. My choices and career path always seemed a bit accidental.

I majored in Business Administration with an accounting concentration simply because a high school class let us “run a business,” and I found it fun. But after one tax season at a CPA firm, I quickly learned that lifestyle wasn’t for me.



My next job was at an investment advisory firm in the accounting department—mind-numbingly boring. I ended up scheming with the IT guy in the office next to my cubicle to automate my job, which he did brilliantly.

That automation earned me a promotion and unexpectedly launched a career that eventually led to opening my own investment advisory firm.

Somewhere along the way, I saw a sign that read, “Are you stressed out? Try yoga.” I was, so I did. The class was transformative. I had never felt so peaceful. I honestly believed that if everyone did yoga, we’d have world peace.

Check Out Lois Leonhardi’s Story

Over time, my curiosity carried me beyond the postures to yoga’s spiritual teachings and the sister science of Ayurveda. I started working exclusively with an Ayurveda doctor and devouring books by Dr. Lad on marma therapy, home remedies, and self-healing. Slowly, Ayurvedic oils and herbs took over my medicine cabinet, while a lone bottle of expired ibuprofen lingered in the back.

I began shifting my diet and lifestyle to be more grounded and intentional. Food became my medicine. As a vata-natured person (creative, etheric energy), I loved figuring out how to adapt Ayurvedic cooking principles to non-Indian cuisines. Friends constantly asked for recipes, so I started recording them just to keep them handy.

Running my own financial firm gave me the freedom to travel, study, and work from anywhere—long before remote work was trendy. I moved to Boulder for three years to study yoga with Richard Freeman, relocated to Albuquerque to study Ayurveda full-time with Dr. Lad, and traveled to India twice for deeper immersion in both traditions.

It was an enviable life. But yoga has a way of opening you up, nudging you to question your purpose, and giving you courage to take risks.

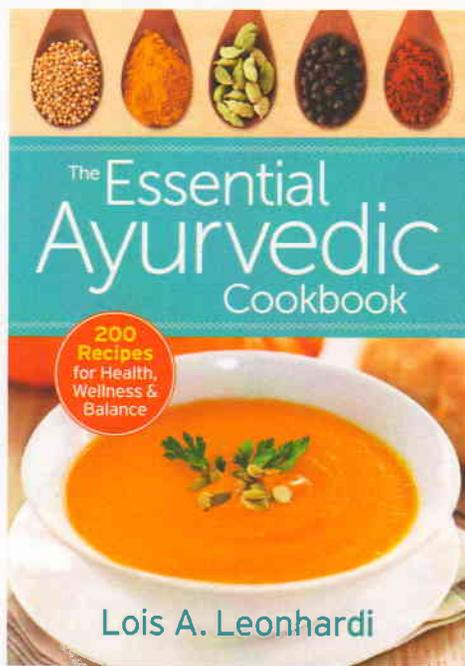
My heart wasn’t in investing anymore. I’d grown tired of the manufactured booms and busts of Wall Street, and even though I loved my clients, I knew it was time to move on. I felt a strong pull toward Ayurveda and wanted to follow it fully, but it seemed like such a flighty leap.

So I consulted a Jyotish astrologer. He confirmed that Ayurveda aligned with my dharma...along with a few other paths, including managing other people’s money, owning a restaurant, writing, and acting. That was all the confirmation I needed. I closed the finance chapter and stepped wholeheartedly into the wellness chapter of my life.

I’m sure it wasn’t obstacle-free, but would you say the journey has been fairly smooth so far?

First, the business model for an Ayurveda wellness consulting practice is... not great. Once clients understand the basic principles of Ayurveda, it becomes remarkably easy to heal themselves with simple diet and lifestyle shifts.





That's why my "Wellness Starter Package" is structured as a one-month, flat-rate program. It includes unlimited communication so clients can learn the why behind every recommendation. I create a personalized booklet with detailed guidance so they can revisit everything at home. It's tailored, supportive, and educational, designed to give them the tools to manage their health independently.

The downside? Once the month is over, most clients truly don't need me anymore. They may check in occasionally for emotional support, but the goal is independence. That means I'm constantly seeking new clients.

Second, Ayurveda requires people to take responsibility for their own health. In my experience, fewer than 10% of people are genuinely interested in doing that. Many prefer the speed and convenience of "popping a pill" rather than making real changes in diet and lifestyle.

Third, Ayurveda isn't covered by insurance. Clients pay out of pocket, and I don't receive referrals through insurance networks. That means my clients must have the interest and the disposable income to invest in their wellness. I do offer adjustable rates to keep my work accessible, and my book, *The Essential Ayurvedic Cookbook*, is an affordable entry point because it teaches the principles of Ayurveda alongside practical recipes.

Fourth, I'm not vegetarian, a surprisingly controversial stance in certain wellness circles.

In Los Angeles, for example, several yoga studios refused to sell my book or give me a platform simply because one chapter includes meat-based recipes. I've also been quietly excluded by some in the Ayurveda community for the same reason. It's hypocritical, considering many of these practitioners and yoga studios still work with clients who eat meat. My book simply meets people where they are, without judgment.

More importantly, Ayurveda is not inherently vegetarian. It's about tailoring diet and lifestyle to each person's unique energetic constitution. I've seen unhealthy vegetarians and unhealthy omnivores. There is no single path that fits everyone. Ayurveda has long used certain animal products in recipes and medicinal formulations, like rabbit stew for menstrual concerns, lamb stew for anemia, and oil blends such as mahamasha thailam for trauma injuries. I honor individual choice. My work is about improving people's lives, not judging their food preferences.

Appreciate you sharing that. What else should we know about what you do?

I'm a wellness consultant, cookbook author, yoga instructor, and podcast host/producer. It's a lot to fit on a business card, but I've never been someone who fits neatly into a box.

Many Westerners have a hard time understanding what I do because the American medical system doesn't typically view the body as an interconnected whole. Ayurveda does. In this tradition, practitioners assess the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person to uncover the root cause of imbalance.

Rather than treating symptoms, root-cause awareness helps clients understand their triggers so they can prevent issues before they arise and eliminate them permanently.

My Ayurvedic training also includes marma therapy (energetic healing through touch), Jyotish medical astrology, and pulse reading. These traditional tools help identify deeper patterns of imbalance. Through marma therapy, I guide clients to recognize energetic blocks that create stagnation and show them how to release those areas. I sometimes incorporate singing bowls to help ground and rebalance the nervous system.

I weave together all of my training—Ayurveda, yoga, cooking, and emotional support—into a truly holistic approach.

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From yoga, I draw on pranayama to regulate the nervous system and specific postures to address physical discomfort. From my love of cooking, I help clients translate Ayurvedic principles into real meals. Whether someone cooks daily or rarely, I guide them in creating menus and recipes that feel nourishing, approachable, and enjoyable.

What truly sets me apart is the level of access and support my clients receive. I spend an exceptional amount of time with each person, both during sessions and between them, and I make myself available as questions arise. I also create fully customized booklets for every client, so they have a clear, personal roadmap they can return to again and again. My goal is always the same: to teach clients so much about Ayurveda that they can ultimately heal themselves. I want them to feel empowered, not dependent on me.

Ultimately, I consider myself both an educator and a lifelong student. My podcast reflects that. It's as much a platform for my own ongoing learning as it is a way to share this ancient wisdom with those who are seeking it.

What makes you happy?

My yoga teacher, Richard Freeman, used to jokingly say, "Yoga will ruin your life." And he was right, though in the most beautiful way. Yoga reshaped how I see the world and how I show up in it. It's why I love working with clients as they transform into the best versions of themselves. I'm here to support and guide, helping people tap into their own strength and inner wisdom.

My happiness also comes through movement and connections. Slacklining at the beach, sunrise yoga, cooking for friends, salsa dancing, and sometimes line dancing. All of this keeps me inspired. I'm truly grateful for the sunshine, the community and the simple pleasure of being alive.

