

Ep #272: Building a Successful Yoga Therapy Business in Just Over One Year with Lisa Workman, Kinesiologist and Yoga Therapist



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatley

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Susi: Welcome and welcome back. I'm so glad that you're here because I'm continuing on with conversations with trainees and grads and what they're up to. And there's nothing really that delights me more than talking with a grad who is taking it by the horns and is showing really what is possible when they integrate the training that they have taken with me into the work that they were already doing and really allow their creativity to soar.

And along with that, going from a place of employment that they weren't necessarily happy with or that it wasn't necessarily nourishing, and jumping ship and creating their own thing. A lot of people are terrified to do that, and Lisa is an example of what is possible.

So I'm really, really, really excited to have her here on this podcast so that you can hear about her process and her perhaps inspire you or just open the gates of what can happen and what's possible as a yoga therapist and integrating the skill of yoga therapy with other health professional work and creating what you want to create.

So this is really specifically for people who've been wanting to jump ship, they feel trapped in their job and they just need to hear some words of encouragement. So that is what this is. So, Lisa Workman, welcome. Welcome to the podcast.

Lisa: Oh thank you so much for having me Susi, it's such a pleasure to be here.

Susi: So how about we start with just some context? So why don't we just give a run-up of your background and what you were doing and why you

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chose the Functional Synergy Yoga Therapy program. Why don't we just do the before story?

Lisa: Sure, absolutely. Yes, so before I was trained as a kinesiologist and exercise physiologist and I was working in primary healthcare. I'd been there for almost 15 years at the time and had been really loving the interaction with individuals who are struggling with chronic disease. So helping them move better and help manage the chronic diseases they were dealing with. Some had pain, some had high blood sugars, some had high blood pressure, all of the things.

You know, I'd taken my 500 hour yoga training and I had always known I wanted to be the yoga teacher. And I poked around the internet because I wanted more. There was just, I knew that there was something more and I had found that there was yoga therapy. And I was like, oh my goodness. This is not something I knew about at all, but would fit perfectly with the work that I was doing in primary healthcare.

And truth be told, probably even a couple years before I realized that, I was like where is that formal education? I like programs that are really going to push me out of my comfort zone and where can I find that? So I looked more at the institutions. So I knew that in Calgary there was a program for yoga therapy. And when I was kind of ready to step forward with more, it no longer existed.

But my husband's aunt sent me Susi's email one time and she's like, you need to know Susi and she's so close to you. I live in Edmonton, Susi's in Calgary, like we're both Albertans. Like check out what Susi's doing. And so I probably got your email, I jumped on your email list right away and I was just probably on your email list for six months before I was like, "Yep, this is it, I'm doing it."

And I'd looked elsewhere because I'm a little bit of a nerd, like I'll research things as much as I need to before. And I was like, yeah, Susi was leaps

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and bounds ahead of every other program that I looked at. And it just happened to be that the program turned to virtual because we had to, it was 2021 at the time. So it was perfect. I didn't have to travel, I have a young family. And it just all lined up perfectly.

So it was knowing Susi through emails and watching her videos. And actually, I probably bought some of your products. I think I did even in that time frame. Just like knowing you and getting your book. And I bought my skeleton ahead of time because I just thought it was so cool to have one and all these things. And it just led perfectly to be, yes, this is the right person, this is the right program, this is the right thing for me to do.

Like I knew in my gut that this was the next step. And I didn't know why it was, it was more just like there was a felt sense that it was this is the next thing I need to do for my professional life, not realizing how powerful it was in my personal life as well.

Susi: Isn't that interesting? I would say that 98% of the people who enroll have the exact same statement, right? Then they have other things they say as well, but they're like I just know this is it. This is it. And so that's actually something that I watch for when people email me now. I'm like I want the folks who are like, "Yes, this is the one. I don't know what I'm getting into, I just know based on all the things you've said." Like they've watched the videos, they follow the podcast, they've been on the email.

And the thing is some people think that's really woo-y and soft, and the reality is that there's an element of that in healing, right? Like we're people to trust themselves, to trust their inner knowing, to trust their inner healer. So there really needs to be that level of inner trust. It's not just a logical left-brain decision, although you did use your left-brain a lot in that process, right? That part of the structure of your decision-making, and there was a right-brain like, hmm, yes this is anchored in what I know to be true for the next step. That's so cool. Really cool.

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Now, I remember when I met you in the intensive and then into the actual rest of the program, because the intensive is the first step. And some people enroll in the intensive first before enrolling in the rest of the program, they just want to kind of make sure that what they're feeling is correct.

So I remember when I met you, as I do when I meet people through the programs, it was obvious that you were someone who really wanted to take it somewhere. And I could also see the fear of making that leap. Because I mean I've been at this for long enough and I just can see it, right? Part of why people also enroll in the program is because of the business training that I offer because I have a fundamental belief that if you're going to invest time and energy and money in training, you've got to make a return on it.

So we want to provide what we think is required, both from a technical side and a business side to really be able to make that gain for oneself. And so here you are, you're kind of moseying along and trying different things out but not quite ready to make that leap, right?

And I often will say when I'm guiding people, wherever you are now don't necessarily jump into the water, but build another boat. So you build the second boat while you're sailing your first boat. And then the second boat gets to a certain point and then you can jump. So it's not as big, you don't have to learn to swim while you go.

But you actually did that. You actually jumped and didn't have anything. And I think this is important for people to know. Lisa did not follow the advice. Great example of being almost exactly at her revenue line just over a year later. She's not quite there yet, but goodness, just over a year later, almost making the same revenue that you were making in your previous job is unbelievable. Like truly it's awesome, right?

And let's kind of go through what had you, because before we got recording you kind of shared a bit about the environment and where you

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were at and just like, oh, I've got to go. And so there wasn't any building of this other boat, you just got to a point where it's like I've got to go. So give us a bit of a sense so that a person listening will be like, oh, yeah, yeah, that's totally me.

Lisa: Yeah, of course. Sure, yeah. I worked with a really great team of people, it was just more the structure. I felt that I couldn't create. I didn't have autonomy. I felt like there was just so much in me that I wanted to give to the world that wasn't allowed to come out.

And so I thought if this is what I want to do and if I know this in my heart of hearts that there is more, that there's an opportunity to really reach more people, but also reach them in the way that I want to reach them. Like to be so valuable to someone and have people have those amazing transformations, then it was the time. Like it was time for me to let go.

And it truly was a letting go. The position I was in was a position that wasn't around 15 years ago and I was the first person in Alberta to do that job in a primary care network. So there was a holding on of this idea of who I was and my identity to that. And I felt like I had to get to the place where I realized I have done everything that I can in this role and there's no saying that I can't support and still be a part of it in some way. But it's time now to jump into the water.

It is time to go because I knew that there was more. There was more work, there were more opportunities for me to use the skill set that I learned in the program. But also just I knew there was more to me there was more that was available if I only let that go. I had to let that go to then see what was next. I couldn't do both. Absolutely 100%.

It was frightening. I was trying to think what are the things I need to do, and I will give a big shout out to Susan Trumpler who is part of the certification program from the business side of things. And she was a godsend, like it was so important for me to have that guide to say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa,

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Lisa, I know you want to do this but let's think about these things." And, "Oh yeah, great idea, let's move forward on that."

And with her help but also always having Susi on my shoulder, like I would hear, "Lisa, nurture what is working." And I would apply that to the business, the work, what I am doing, I try to nurture what is working. And then also what's not working that should be working? Yes, I can see that in the human body, but I can also see this in my business.

Just applying all these sorts of principles that are from certification and with the support of Susan it really kind of brought the level of fear down because I had two people that were in the wings that I knew like, okay, if really things go sideways I know I could reach out to them and ask. So I felt like I had a guide in you, Susi, and a guide in Susan that kept that fear from escalating to the point that I froze.

There was never a moment of freezing. I was always able to work through that fear. And with the work in the certification thinking about what are my thoughts about this and are these true? Is this actually data that is a story or data that it is true fact?

So all of these things were playing out and there's still a tiny bit of fear, but that fear has pretty much subsided because I've done it for a year and I cannot believe where I'm at after a year. Like it's just amazing.

Susi: And one of the things that Lisa and I were talking about before we got recording is she said, "And there's so much more that I want to do." And that's the thing, like that's a sure sign of creativity that's been unleashed, right? Is that you're plugging along doing what you're doing and you've got multiple ideas, and you can see the vision of what you actually want to create and you just keep going with it, right?

And like for me, I never ever imagined that I'd have a certification program. That was not ever in the books when I first started. I started because there

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was no place for me to work. And so it was like, well, I just started teaching yoga classes. And then people started asking for more and I just sort of followed the path of what the clients were asking for. And then someone said write a book. And I'm like, I have a C in English. Why on earth would I write a book? And then I wrote a book.

And that sort of led into the next thing and someone said you really need to do a certification. I'm like why on earth would I want to do that? And then all of a sudden I'm doing a certification and it just kind of keeps opening and expanding from there. And that really is, so much of it's very organic.

It's planned too. Like it's not just one day I decided I was going to write the book, although it did feel like that. There is some sort of planning that arises, but some things you can't plan for. The doors open where you don't necessarily expect it.

And it's kind of like healing, it's we begin at the hips and we find our way at the shoulder and then into the breath. But it's not so formulaic that we went hips, shoulders, and breath. It's what the body revealed to us, it's what our business and our clients revealed to us in terms of what we need to do next, right?

Lisa: 100%, yeah. I never thought that adult children would be contacting me for their parents. It never occurred to me that that would be a way that someone could work with me. And so I have adult children reaching out and saying, hey, my mom's this. I really need you to talk with her. And so it's like this nice little soft handoff because this adult child has realized who I am and what I do and they're like, oh, my mom needs that help, or their dad. But you know, you get what I'm saying.

It's something I never even imagined, but it makes complete sense that that would be maybe who would reach out on their behalf.

Susi: o are you working with a lot of older clientele then?

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Lisa: Yes I am. Yeah, yeah.

Susi: And what kind of work are you doing with them?

Lisa: So it varies. It's up to, I always say I teach to the person in front of me. So it's what is their carrot and what is going on that they need help with? So more recently I've had more stroke survivors showing up at my door.

So for them, depending who they are and what they really want, we've been doing some balance work but then it's like okay, well, let's get to the real pure movement at your hip and how is that working? And then there's this discrepancy between the two sides of the body with some of these people.

So they're gaining awareness around the fact that they still have a valuable limb, either arm or leg or both, and that I can hear the negative talk or even like the, "I'm not the same like I used to and this side is just useless." And then it's been amazing to then get them to a place where they're like, oh actually it's not gone, or it's not so bad, or there's still something of value here.

And those moments are just amazing because I've been able to get them to a place for them to feel that, for them to understand that. And then it just like, oof, then we take off because then they're like, well, yeah, nothing is impossible. Because they get to a place of such, oh my gosh, I'm changed forever. And I'm like, change is possible. Something changed, but another thing can change again. Let's see what we can do.

And it's so fun to be that mirror because they don't recognize it and then I can be like, but remember when we did that three weeks ago and this is what, like they couldn't do any alternating limb work for example. And all of a sudden they're just cruising and you're like, whoa, let's stop for a second. Let's remember. And they're like, "Oh yeah, I guess so."

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So it just depends on the person, truly, Susi. But that's just an example of one of my clients of how much she has changed and become much more aware and getting to the place of, she's not completely there yet, but honoring who she is now rather than getting so concerned about who she was before.

Susi: That's so interesting because I've certainly seen people make changes post-stroke. It's been a while since I've worked with someone who's post-stroke. I've known trainees and other grads who worked with people post-stroke. I've got colleagues of mine in the cranial sacral world who work with people post-stroke, and many of them have been told by some other professionals that whatever gains you make in six months are going to be what you make.

And yet, like most people that I've seen when I saw them in the past, they were two years post, changes were being made. Like we saw changes. And the cranial sacral people are like, oh my God, yeah, like you could totally make changes, right?

So it just goes to show, like I think what that story highlights is, and how cool it is of that work and I can really understand why in your primary care work you felt trapped, because there isn't necessarily the conversation of possibility inside of that model, right? It's based off of, well, this is what we see. And then that becomes the belief. And then if that becomes the belief, then that is what drives the action.

So then you have this person showing up, and kudos to them for following the lead of their child by saying, "Okay, I'll give this a go," because something in them knew. Something in them knew and then lo and behold they actually started making the changes and that's so cool. So for those of you who are listening who think that people don't believe that they can make a change, here is a great example of people who make a change.

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But also something I've been thinking a lot about lately is articulating how it is that we support people, but also the professional to help someone move from that place of disease or condition or whatever that point A is, and then help them over or through that dark and murky place that might feel more like a crevasse or the Grand Canyon, to help them over to the other side.

And we don't even know where the other side is. Like we don't know that. We just know that there's a journey on which we can take them and we can either bear witness or hold their hand or there's a real skill to be able to help someone. And that, I think, is so lacking in many rehabilitative models. It's more like let's just give you the thing to do, do these exercises and you're on your own.

And there's just so much more that can be provided as a teacher and a teaching of skill that can really make a foundational difference for somebody.

Lisa: And that's what really came out of the certification program for me from you, is we can help fix something but that's not the point. Like we're not here to fix someone. It's allowing them to be who they are right now. Right now. And that presence idea of allowing someone to recognize that there is nothing to fix. This is where we are right now, and that it's not something that just one exercise is going to help with.

There's this greater picture, there's this wider sense that we know and we don't even know, I think, that will take someone into healing and help them have that hope and see that change for themselves.

Susi: Yeah. Yeah, it's really embodying the mystery, right, and allowing it to unfold. And some of the purely left-brained people would be like, "Oh my God, I can't believe she just said the mystery." But it's true, it's like there's so much to heal that we just don't know. We just don't know. And there's a certain level of trust.

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So if you were to think of one to three things, and I won't force you to say three, but if there is like one to three things that you can think of that if someone is where you were, other than saying just go for it, like that can sometimes be like, okay, that's great. You probably would just say that, like just go for it. What smaller baby steps or what other words do you have for someone who's really close and just needs to have a hand? Like what would you say to them?

Lisa: That's a great question. What would I say? I would say, and this may sound a little cliché, but change is possible. And not only change for healing but a change in your life. Like are you ready to turn into someone new? Are you ready for that? And if you are hesitant, then maybe it's still finding something else that is going to give you change.

So is it you pick something up, like another side thing that will actually help you see what could change you in a little bit? Like what is it that could take you to let you know that change is possible? Because that's where I would say I didn't believe that I could do it. So it's almost that going for something that's small that'll give you a chance to try finding change, and then that can give you a certain level of confidence.

So I'll give you a small example. I started karate. I'm 40 plus and I started karate. I'm just like, what am I doing? I did my first karate tournament this year. Would I have ever done that before? No. I can't believe I'm actually doing it. But I know that now so many things are possible, so why not try it? Why not see what's possible?

And that has given me the confidence that, like, yes I'm learning so much. And it kind of feels like sometimes when I've been thrown into learning Ayurveda or learning Sanskrit, like you're just like, "What? I don't know what any of this means." But it's an opportunity that is allowing me to change and evolve. So it may not be even in a workspace or a professional setting, is there something else that will allow you to evolve that feels

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safer? I mean no one was going to pay me to do karate or like it was not that. It was more just let's try this and see what's possible.

So yeah, so I'd say start small, something that's going to be a little change that'll evolve you in some way, push you a little bit, allow you to see that actually I can do this and help build a little bit of your self-confidence. And then recognize that that too is possible from a business perspective. If you can change that way, then you can change in many different ways and it's possible. Just start small with something little.

And that's what I've done. I mean I've had smaller little contracts on the side and I think I've always worked two jobs or three jobs or like there's never just been one. But it's an opportunity to see that you also have value outside of maybe where you've been the whole time. So for me it was like this was my role, this is what I did. I need to actually let go of that and maybe feel like there's more value or there's more places that I can contribute that I didn't even realize I could contribute in.

It's kind of the two ways, finding your confidence but also knowing where else your skill set could be used and that value. And letting go, there is a huge part that you have to let go. And so you have to give yourself that space. I probably did a lot of yoga nidra to allow myself to let go.

Susi: It's so great because, yes, the number of people who have reflected that back to me, and for myself too when I'm going through a very discombobulating time, which usually is attached to some level of growth and evolution, yoga nidra is my absolute go-to. Whether it's just the body scan tool or whether it's the full-blown nidra, but yes I am with you 1,000%. It just helps us come back into the body, yeah? It helps us come back into our own sense of self and settle out that heightened sense of like, oh crap.

Lisa: Exactly, yeah.

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Susi: And it helps us, because when we're in that heightened sympathetic state we don't tend to make the best decisions, right? So when we can kind of come back into ourselves, back into a calmer state, then we can take that next step and that next step in the next step. Really, really, really good.

This has been so great, so great, Lisa. And I'm sure that people will want to know more about what it is that you do and they might even reach out to you like, how did she actually do this and get into it? So if people could reach you, what's your website? Where can people find you?

Lisa: Yeah, my website is just my name, it's just LisaWorkmann.com, you can find me there. I'm on social @medfitconsult if they want to reach out on social media, that's fine too. And then my direct email if you wanted to email me, happy to chat with you, it's info@LisaWorkmann.com.

Susi: Perfect and we'll have all of that in the show notes so you can easily find her. And do reach out to her because I love helping the yoga teacher and the health professionals integrating yoga therapy into their practices really just take off with this stuff because it's so, so possible if you got the fire in you to make that happen. And to hear it from someone who is where you were or where you are is always helpful. It's always helpful hearing from someone who actually has done it, as opposed to all those people who say it's not possible.

So Lisa, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Lisa: My pleasure. Thank you so much, this has been great.

If listening to this conversation between Lisa and I has really resonated with you and you are looking to up-level your skill in yoga therapy and build out a yoga therapy business or a business that is infusing and integrating yoga therapy into your current professional skill set, I would love to connect with you and support you in building your skill and building your business. Our next intensive is coming up soon, our next intake for a certification is right

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around the corner. You can read more over at functionalsynergy.com,
looking forward to connecting.