

MEDIA KIT

REVERSED: a memoir

BY LOIS LETCHFORD

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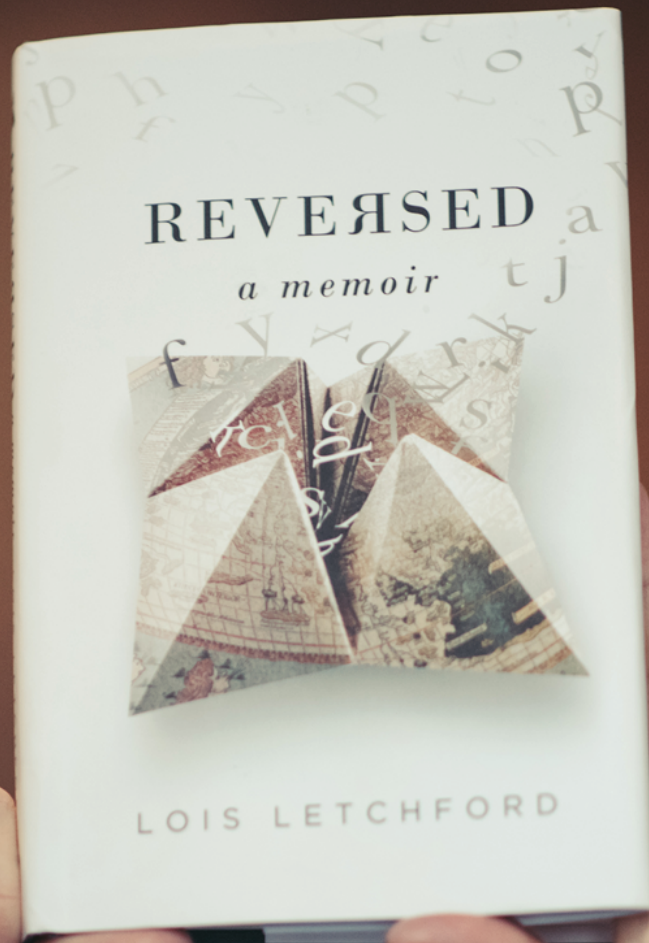
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Nonfiction/Memoir

Learning Disability

Special Education



WHO IS LOIS LETCHFORD?

EDUCATOR

**INTERNATIONAL
SPEAKER**

AUTHOR



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12,300 BOOK TRAILER VIEWS



FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, Lois Letchford has specialized in teaching children who struggle with learning to read. Her creative teaching methods vary depending on the reading ability of the student, employing age-appropriate, rather than reading-age-appropriate, material. Lois's non-traditional background, multi-continental exposure, and passion for helping failing students equip her with a unique skill set and perspective.

Lois is a literacy spokesperson for struggling learners who have been left behind in the traditional classroom. Through coaching and workshops at international conferences, TV appearances, and highly-rated radio stations, she uses her own story in **Reversed: A Memoir** to teach educators and parents how to create flexible learning environments using comprehensive strategies and innovative teaching methods.

Originally a physical education teacher, she later completed a Master's in Literacy and Reading from the State University of New York at Albany. Lois has presented her work at The California Reading Association, SPELD in Australia, the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children, the Spring Festival of Children's Literature in Maryland, and New York State Reading Association conferences. She is co-president of the Albany City Reading Association and a member of the Australian College of Education.

Reversed: A Memoir (Acorn Publishing) is her first book.



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ABOUT THE BOOK

“Reversed: A Memoir was written for all of the ‘true’ teachers of the world—every nation, every school. I recommitted myself more than ever before to fight for the needs of every child.”

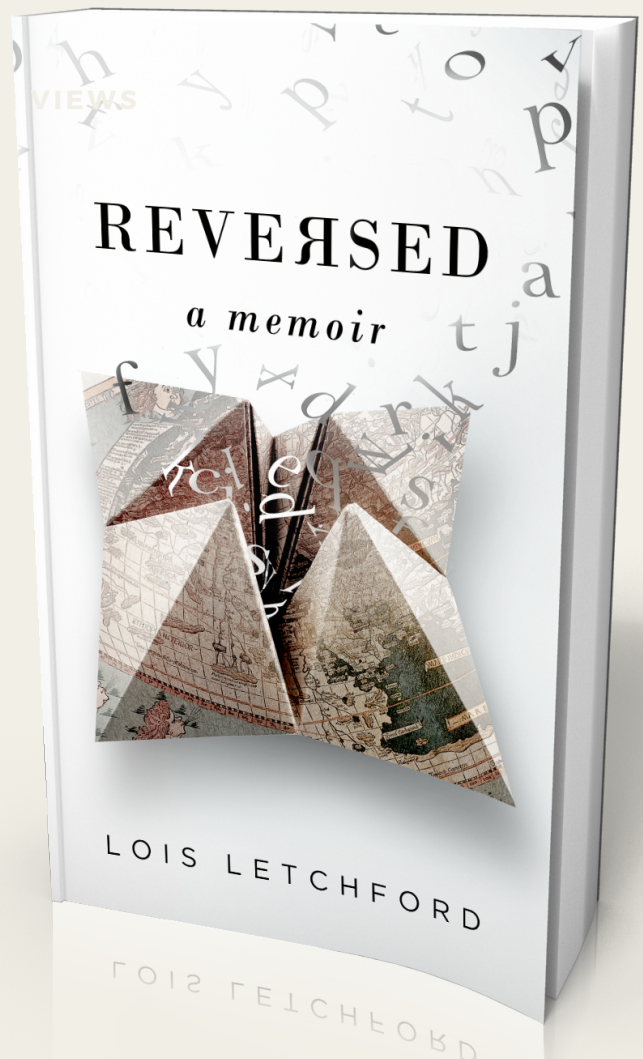
—Steven L. Layne, author of **Igniting a Passion for Reading**

BOOK DESCRIPTION

"HE'S THE WORST CHILD SEEN IN 20 YEARS OF TEACHING!"

When Lois Letchford learns her son has been diagnosed with a low IQ at the end of grade one, she refuses to give up on his future. Testing showed Nicholas had no spatial awareness, limited concentration, and could only read ten words; he is labeled "learning disabled," a designation considered more derogatory than "dyslexia." The world of education is quick to cast him aside, so Lois begins working one-on-one with him.

What happens next is a journey—spanning three continents, unique teaching experiments, a mother's discovery of her own learning blocks, and a bond fueled by the desire to rid Nicholas of the "disabled" label. And, the child once called "the worst seen in 20 years of teaching" received a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics from Oxford University in 2018.



#15 in Educators (Kindle)

#52 in Learning Disabled Books (Paperback)

#78 in Educator Biographies (Kindle)

As of August 2018 (Amazon)



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BOOK EXCERPTS

PROLOGUE

Pacing the carpeted floor of my home in Upstate New York, I await an email, a message, or Skype call. Anything. I think, Nicholas should have contacted me by now.

I know my son had walked into his oral examination—known as a viva—at the same time I woke up. It was noon at his university in Oxford, 7:00 a.m. in the States. I had anticipated three hours of nonstop questions, defending experiments, assumptions, and analysis. Justifying to the experts in his field everything he has worked on for the past four years. Just the three of them. Cross-examination for hours on end.

Has he done enough? Is he up to this monumental task? Today's the day we both find out. I'm more than mildly terrified. I need him to call me. I need him to say, "I've done it!"

The clock ticks away painfully slow. A text message comes through from Nicholas' girlfriend, Lakshmi, now living in her home in India.

Lois, I'm getting worried. It's been four hours, it reads.

I believe in him, I write. He knows his work.

There's nothing else to do but wait. Another hour passes. And another.

Negative thoughts seep into my mind, as even my faith starts to wane. Maybe he's not talking to us because...he wandered off track despite his many hours of preparation? Maybe his examiners said, "This thesis is not up to our standards." Maybe his auditory processing difficulty—to comprehend a question, process this information, and spit out a coherent, intelligent response—is just too great...I cannot go there.

Finally, seven hours since the start of his exam, I hear the Skype ringtone.

"Hello, Nicholas!" I shout.

"It's over! I've done it. The examiners are happy with my oral exam. I've completed another step for my doctorate," he says, quiet relief resonating in his every word.

He smiles, despite the bags drooping under his blue eyes, and expels one slow and long breath.

"I want to jump through the computer and give you an enormous hug." I cry, unashamed, knowing the incredible fight we've faced to reach this moment.

Nicholas follows with a simple, "Thanks, Mum." Then, softly and matter-of-factly, "My thesis is completed. You can publish your book now."

I glance over at the stack of pages behind my laptop.

Our story.



BOOK EXCERPTS

CHAPTER I: DISASTER (JANUARY 1994)

“Smile, boys,” I say, squinting through the camera lens. I feel the unforgiving Australian sun weigh upon my head, tiny beads of sweat forming at my hairline and trickling down my forehead. Wiping the side of my eyebrow clears any moisture that might interrupt my view; I steady the camera, ready for this photo. I want to remember this morning. It’s Nicholas’ very first day of school, and I don’t know who is more nervous—him or me.

We are standing in the backyard of our small, three-bedroom brick home in the leafy suburb of St. Lucia. Nathanael, my eldest, smiles with ease. He is ready for the third grade. Leaning nonchalantly against an umbrella tree, he holds Nicholas’ hand with an extra clench of courage to help him face the day. Nicholas clings to his brother, tensing every muscle.

“Can you smile, Nicholas?” I ask, trading my camera for Isaac, my twenty-month-old, with my husband, Chris.

Nicholas rolls his eyes as he shifts from one leg to the other. His mouth moves from a downward curve to a flat line, the closest to a smile he can fake. A bloodless face displays an inner terror, grim under a wide-brimmed blue hat that reads the school’s name: Ironside.

This is the best photo we are going to get of Nicholas this morning, I think.

“Boys, you look great,” my ever-optimistic husband chirps, snapping another photograph. I turn my gaze to the right for a moment, spotting a stick insect in the trees beside me.

“Look, Nicholas!” I say, pointing to the bug. “You can take this to school today.” Nicholas nods, though the flat line of his mouth doesn’t change.

“Show your teacher what you found. It can be a great first impression.” Maybe having something to hold onto will help him through the day.

He nods again. I sense the fear pouring out of his five-and-a-half-year-old body.



BOOK EXCERPTS

CHAPTER 16: A GAP IN THE MAP (JULY-DECEMBER 1995)

“Nicholas! I have some fascinating information for you.” I pull out blank sheets of paper, spread them across the table, and join them together with tape.

“Nicholas, you asked who came before Columbus. I read about this man named Eratosthenes. He lived a long time ago.”

On a large piece of paper, I create a timeline by drawing a line with a black sharpie and then making pencil points for approximate century marks on the line.

“We are here, in 1995.” I place a mark for 2000, 1900, 1800, and 1700. “Cook went to Australia in the 1770s. That is about here,” I say, pointing to the left. Nicholas concentrates with the edge of his thumb in his mouth. I write “Cook” near the 1770 dot.

“Then we have Columbus. He went from Spain to America in 1492.” The timeline has another dot. I write “Columbus” at the point.

“Now, we have this big gap in time, until we come to the time Jesus was born. Before Jesus, we have Eratosthenes. He lived about 200 years before Jesus.”

I stop to allow Nicholas to take in this information. He sits, eyes focused on the timeline.

“Well,” I continue, “this smart man Eratosthenes estimated the distance around the world way back here.”

I tape two pieces of paper together. They join to form a large cylinder. “Eratosthenes said, ‘This is how big the world is.’” My first model sits on the table in front of us.

Nicholas nods in acknowledgment and shifts in his chair to sit on one leg.

“Then, about here,” I place a dot on where 100 AD could be, “we have this man called Ptolemy.”

I pick up one piece of paper and tape the two ends together, creating a smaller cylinder. The two models sit side-by-side in front of us.

“Now, Ptolemy took a different view of the world. At this time in history,” I point to 100 AD with my pencil, “he mapped the world known by sailors. Ptolemy said, ‘The world is this big.’” I say, holding up the small cylinder of paper. “The world is this size, the size of one paper.”

A quiet Nicholas stares with fascinated eyes.

“Now, we come to Columbus,” I trace back to the timeline again. “And Columbus has a decision to make. How big is the world? Is it the size of two pieces of paper?” I pick up the first model of Eratosthenes. “Or just one piece of paper, as Ptolemy drew?” I get the second paper for comparison.

His eyes stay glued to my mockups.

...excerpt continued on next page



BOOK EXCERPTS

CHAPTER 16: A GAP IN THE MAP (JULY-DECEMBER 1995)

...excerpt continued from previous page

“Columbus makes a decision. He says, ‘That measurement of Eratosthenes is wrong. The world is not that big. I can go from Spain to the Indies over the Atlantic Ocean with Ptolemy’s map.’” I pick up the smaller model. Nicholas chuckles and leans back in his chair.

“Ptolemy was the Western World’s first mapmaker. He never left the shores of Alexandria in Egypt, and he placed ‘north’ at the top of the map. Ptolemy’s map was the most up-to-date map Columbus encountered.” I stop for a moment, leaning on the table. “Columbus was using a map that was over one thousand years old, and Ptolemy underestimated the size of the world. Eratosthenes was right!”

“Wow!” Nicholas’ hands fly across the table with his fingers on the timeline. “Could we see a Ptolemy map?” Nicholas asks, one pointing to Columbus and the other on the spot marking Ptolemy. I drag both hands through my hair.

“We are in Oxford. I think we should find a person who knows something about Ptolemy at the Bodleian Library. I’m not sure if a map will be there, but someone will know where to see one.”

“That’ll be good,” he replies, smiling.

Here I am, on the outskirts of Oxford University, a seat of learning for almost one thousand years, discovering people whose names have been long forgotten by most, and teaching my child who supposedly has a low IQ.



PRESS RELEASE

February 27, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lois Letchford Announces the Publication of "Reversed: A Memoir" on March 15th
The Journey of a Mother and Son from "worst kid ever" to an Oxford PhD in Mathematics

Troy, NY, March 15, 2018 – Lois Letchford, literacy author and educator, announced today that her new book, "Reversed: A Memoir" (Acorn Publishing) has been released. A story of unique perspective, "Reversed" chronicles the journey of Lois's son Nicholas, from the "worst child in 20 years of teaching" to a doctorate in Applied Mathematics from Oxford. The story spans three continents, remarkable teaching experiments, clashes with school systems, and a mother's discovery of her own learning blocks. Together Lois and Nicholas forge a special bond driven by the desire to conquer the "disabled" label. The book tells a gripping story while also raising philosophical questions about the measure of success and failure, and how we view ourselves.

Steven L. Layne, Chair of the Graduate Programs in Literacy Education at Judson University and author of "Igniting a Passion for Reading," says of the book, "'Reversed: A Memoir' was written for all of the 'true' teachers of the world—every nation, every school, and it will be the true teachers who will exhaust themselves in its reading. I laughed, I cried (often), and I recommitted myself more than ever before to fight for the needs of every child."

Over the past 20 years, Lois has taught struggling readers in the US, Australia, and England. Her non-traditional background, multi-continental exposure, and passion for teaching reading have given her a distinct skill set and perspective. A native Australian but Troy, NY resident, Lois holds an MS in reading and literacy from the University of Albany, SUNY. She has presented at many conferences, including The California Reading Association, SPELD (Australia), the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children, and the Spring Festival of Children's Literature in Maryland. She is co-president of the Albany City Reading Association as well as a member of the Australian College of Education.

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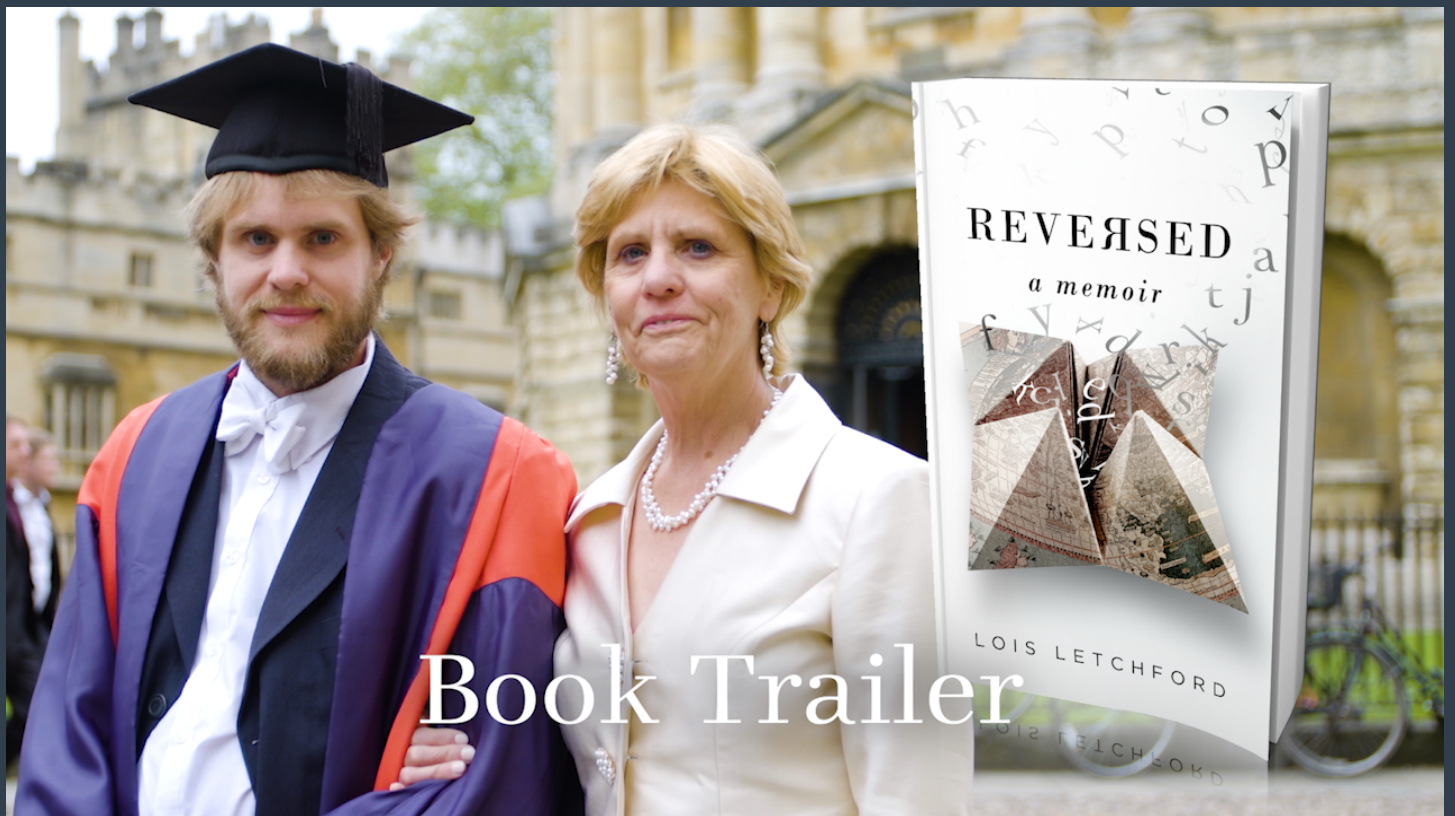
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BOOK TRAILER

WATCH THE OFFICIAL BOOK TRAILER
FOR "REVERSED: A MEMOIR"
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TRAILER BY BOUNCE VIDEO, UK

f 12,300 VIEWS

▶ 2,400 VIEWS

(As of August 2018)

Q & A WITH LOIS

1. The majority of your story is not a happy one. As a memoir, what challenges did you face returning to some of these memories?

Honestly, even after nearly two decades, the pain and frustration from our situation is still raw. Writing about it gave me a way to channel the anger into something positive that not only benefited me, but my readers as well.

2. Your son Nicholas and his learning disability is one of the book's main focus. You grew up with your own learning struggles. Are you still affected by a learning disability now and how did this affect your writing a book?

A learning disability is for life and I still struggle today with writing and reading. Writing this book was quite a process. I began taking writing workshops and met a young woman who became my writing coach. She edited my work not only with thought, but with love and patience, something I'm not used to as a struggling reader.

3. Nicholas's story is not unique in the fact that children with disabilities are often left behind. How can your story help other parents/teachers insure their children aren't cast aside?

Parents need to push for better teaching. When our children are sick, we go from the general practitioner to the specialist. In reading, the classroom is often the first point of failure. The next step is to try a reading "program," which is like giving a very sick child a broad-spectrum antibiotic. There's no guarantee it works. Instead, they require interventions from teachers with knowledge targeted to meet the needs of every child.

4. You're a trained PE teacher-turned-literary specialist. What draws you to teaching children?

My PE training helped me work with Nicholas. I learned to take the skill of reading apart and then bring it back together, just like I did when teaching PE. I am now drawn to teaching children because I believe that most can be taught to read and I have the knowledge and skills to teach them to read successfully.

5. Your story follows three continents. Which geographical location had the biggest impact on your son's learning and your teaching?

Each geographical move aided Nicholas's growth. If we had not visited Oxford, I can't imagine what would have happened to him. Our time in Oxford set Nicholas up for a life of loving learning, questioning, and seeking answers. Living in Lubbock, Texas took Nicholas from the bottom of the class to the top of the academic world. Without either of these moves, Nicholas would have had a different life!

6. What do you hope readers take away from reading your story?

My hope is that parents of students who struggle will take my story to their teacher and say, "Have you read this? Other children learned to read." I want parents to try what I tried by using poetry, tapping into a child's curiosity, reading more to children, and rewriting their answers on paper. Don't accept "this child cannot read."



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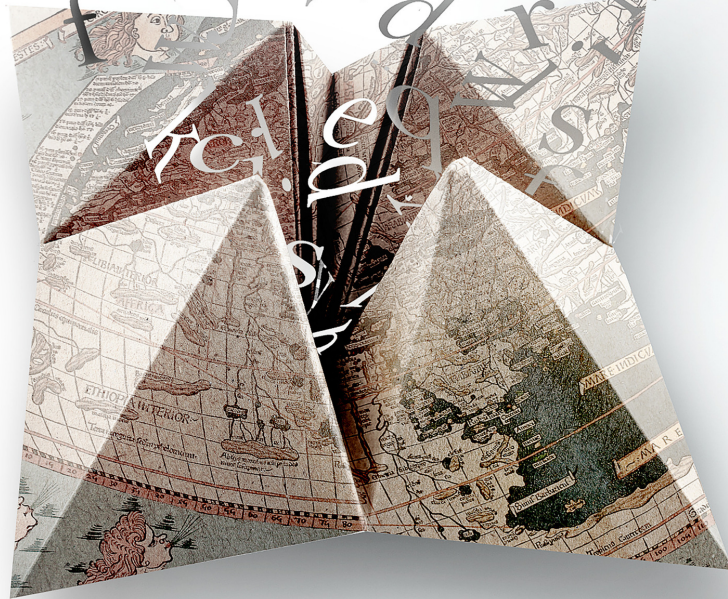
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a memoir



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