

The First Step

A Mini Workbook for Understanding What Your Parent's Resistance Is Really About

Before you have another conversation with your parent about help, take fifteen quiet minutes with this workbook.

It walks you through the single most important exercise in the BRIDGE Framework: understanding what your parent's refusal is actually protecting, before you say another word to try to change it.

◆ **CAREGIVER TIP**

How to Use This

Print it. Write in it. Choose one specific thing your parent is currently refusing — not help in general, but one specific thing — and hold it in mind as you work through each page.

PAGE ONE

Naming the Refusal

The specific help being refused:

Be precise. Not “help” in general — the walker. The home aide. The conversation about finances. Name the one thing.

What does your parent actually say when they refuse?

Write their words as closely as you can remember them — not your summary of what they meant.

Going Beneath the Surface

What does accepting this help likely mean to your parent?

Not what it means to you — what does it mean to them? What story about themselves does it threaten?

What identity or value is this refusal protecting?

Independence? Competence? Privacy? Control? Dignity? Something specific to who they have always been?

• EXPERT INSIGHT

There are no right answers here. The goal is not to find a solution yet. The goal is to see your parent more clearly — and in seeing them more clearly, to find the beginning of a different way in.

The Question That Changes Everything

“What would my parent need to feel — or believe — in order for a yes to feel safe rather than threatening?”

This is the most generative question in the entire BRIDGE Framework, and the one most caregivers never think to ask. Not what would convince your parent rationally — what would need to be true emotionally for accepting help to feel like something other than a loss.

One thing I will do differently in the next conversation:

Not a script — an orientation. A different question. A different first acknowledgment. A different way of entering.

→ ACTION STEP

It's Not Stubbornness — It's Fear

You've just completed the B component of the BRIDGE Framework. There are five more components, and a full companion workbook with eight exercises, waiting in the complete book.

→ [Learn more at careforbetterliving.com](https://careforbetterliving.com)

Care for Better Living — *Helping families live healthier, age confidently, and create happier lives.*