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Talking With a Parent Who Has Dementia

A Workbook for Adult Children

Worksheets, practice exercises, and real-life scenarios to help you stay connected with your mom or dad through every stage of dementia.

This workbook belongs to:

Name: _____

My parent's name: _____

Date started: _____

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Welcome

If you are reading this, your mom or dad has dementia — or you think they might. You have probably noticed that the conversations you used to have don't work the way they once did. Maybe your parent repeats the same question, gets upset over small things, or loses the thread of what you're saying halfway through.

That is hard. It is hard for you, and it is hard for your parent. The good news is that **how you talk** can make a real difference. Small changes — fewer choices, shorter sentences, a calmer voice, more listening — can turn a tense moment into a peaceful one.

During my years as an occupational therapist, I worked with many families who wanted desperately for their parent to understand them. Most of the time, the answer was not to try harder to be understood. It was to change the way they were talking. This workbook will help you do that.

How to use this workbook

Work at your own pace. You do not need to finish it in one sitting. Do one part a week, or come back when something changes.

Write in it. The lines and boxes are there for you. Messy, honest answers are more useful than neat ones.

Use it with the checklist. The companion checklist, *Talking With a Parent Who Has Dementia*, is your quick daily reminder. This workbook is where you think things through, practice, and plan.

Share it. Part 9 includes a communication guide you can fill out and give to siblings, aides, and anyone else who spends time with your parent.

Revisit it. Dementia changes over time. What works today may not work in six months. Come back and update your answers.

> **One thing to remember**
> Your parent is not trying to be difficult. The changes you see — the repeating, the confusion, the anger over small things — are part of the disease. Keeping this in mind is the single most helpful thing you can do before every conversation.

What's inside

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PART 1

Where Is Your Parent Now?

The way you talk to your parent depends a great deal on the stage of dementia they are in. Each stage brings different challenges. Something that works well in the early stage may not work at all in the late stage.

Use the chart below as a general guide. Every person is different, and your parent may show signs from more than one stage. Check the boxes that describe your parent today.

Early Stage	**What helps when you talk**
☐ Can still live alone and do most things for themselves ☐ Needs reminders about tasks or appointments ☐ Has trouble finding the right word ☐ Is losing focus or judgment in some situations ☐ Forgets to eat regular meals ☐ Has had a fall without warning	Talk openly about what they are going through. Reassure them you are there for them. Use sticky-note reminders where memory slips. Offer no more than two choices at a time.

Middle Stage	**What helps when you talk**
☐ Has trouble following explanations ☐ Can't follow directions with more than one step ☐ Needs spoken or physical cues to finish tasks ☐ Becomes angry or aggressive, in words or actions ☐ Believes others are stealing or trying to cause harm ☐ Gets more restless or upset in late afternoon or evening ☐ Repeats the same few words or goes quiet	Give one step at a time. Stay calm; don't argue. Plan around the late-day restless period. Comfort first, then redirect.

Late Stage	What helps when you talk
☐ Needs supervision around the clock ☐ Doesn't seem to understand most words ☐ Doesn't recognize everyday objects (a fork, a cup) ☐ Needs hand-over-hand help to eat or drink ☐ Still responds to tone of voice and facial expression	Speak softly but clearly. Get down to eye level. Use very short sentences. Keep the room quiet and peaceful.

Final Stage	What helps when you talk
☐ Awake for shorter periods ☐ Responds mainly to touch, tone, and presence ☐ Care is focused on comfort	Communicate through gentle touch. Use a calm, warm tone. Simply be there.

My parent today

Based on the chart, which stage (or stages) best describes your parent right now?

Has your parent's doctor told you what stage they are in? If not, write a question to ask at the next visit.

What can your parent still do well? List as many things as you can. (You'll use this list later.)

What has become harder for your parent in the last six months?

What changes have you noticed in how your parent talks or understands you?

PART 2

Your Communication Habits: A Self-Check

Most of us fall into habits when we talk to our parents — habits that made sense for decades but may not work now. This self-check is not a test. It is a way to spot the one or two habits that, if changed, would make the biggest difference.

Be honest. Check the box that best describes what you usually do.

When I talk with my parent...	Often	Some-times	Rarely
I raise my voice when I feel frustrated.	☐	☐	☐
I repeat the same words over and over when my parent doesn't understand.	☐	☐	☐
I correct my parent when they get a name, date, or detail wrong.	☐	☐	☐
I ask open-ended questions like "What do you want to do today?"	☐	☐	☐
I give my parent three or more choices at once.	☐	☐	☐
I use "he," "she," or "it" instead of names.	☐	☐	☐
I give directions with several steps at once.	☐	☐	☐
I talk while standing over my parent.	☐	☐	☐
I talk with the TV or radio on.	☐	☐	☐
I do most of the talking in our conversations.	☐	☐	☐
I remind my parent that they forgot something.	☐	☐	☐
I talk to my parent in a tone I might use with a child.	☐	☐	☐
I tell long stories with lots of details.	☐	☐	☐
I try to have important talks in the late afternoon or evening.	☐	☐	☐

Every item on this list is something the checklist and this workbook suggest doing *less* of. Any item you checked "Often" is a good place to start. Don't try to fix them all at once — pick one or two.

Which two habits would you most like to change first? Why these two?

What usually happens right before you fall into these habits? (Tired? Rushed? Worried?)

What is one small thing you could do differently the next time you talk with your parent?

What do you already do well when you talk with your parent? Give yourself credit.

PART 3

Setting the Scene

People with dementia struggle to focus when there is a lot going on around them. They also tend to have better and worse times of day. Many people become more restless, anxious, or confused in the late afternoon and early evening — this is often called "sundowning."

You can't control the disease, but you can control **when** and **where** you have important conversations.

Room-by-room distraction check

Think about the rooms where you usually talk with your parent. What gets in the way?

Room	TV / radio on?	Other people or pets?	Too bright, dark, or noisy?	Can you sit at eye level?
Living room				
Kitchen				
Bedroom				
Car				
Other:				

Which spot is the best place for an important conversation with your parent? What would you need to change to make it even better?

Best and worst times of day

For one week, notice how your parent is doing at different times of day. Write a word or two in each box: *calm, alert, sleepy, confused, upset, chatty*.

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Midday							
Late afternoon							
Evening							

Looking at your week, when is your parent usually at their best?

When is your parent usually at their hardest? What could you plan for that time instead of conversation (music, a walk, a snack, a quiet activity)?

Is there a conversation you need to have with your parent soon? When and where will you have it, based on what you learned?

PART 4

Changing Your Words: Practice Exercises

These exercises help you practice the key speaking skills before you need them. Read the example, then rewrite each sentence in your own words. Say your answers out loud — practicing out loud makes it easier to do in the moment.

Exercise A: Turn open questions into simple ones

Open-ended questions make your parent sort through too many possibilities. Short, clear questions with one or two answers are easier.

> **Instead of:** "Mom, what do you want me to fix for dinner?"
>
> **Try:** "Mom, would you like chicken or spaghetti for dinner?"

1. **Instead of:** "What do you want to wear today?"

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "What would you like to do this afternoon?"

Try: _____

_____

3. **Instead of:** "How are you feeling?"

Try: _____

_____

4. **Instead of:** "Who do you want to visit this weekend?"

Try: _____

_____

Exercise B: Replace pronouns and vague words

Words like *he, she, it, there,* and *that* make your parent guess what you mean. Use names and specific places.

> **Instead of:** "She called and said it's over there."
>
> **Try:** "Diane called. She said your glasses are on the kitchen table."

1. **Instead of:** "He's coming over later to fix it."

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "Put it back where it goes."

Try: _____

_____

3. **Instead of:** "They said we have to be there at two."

Try: _____

_____

Exercise C: Break it into one step at a time

Directions with several steps are very hard to follow in the middle stage. Give one step, wait until it's done, then give the next.

> **Instead of:** "Go wash your hands, then come sit down and eat your lunch."
>
> **Try:** Step 1: "Let's wash your hands." Step 2: "Now let's sit down." Step 3: "Here's your sandwich."

1. **Instead of:** "Get your coat and shoes on, and grab your purse, we're leaving."

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "Brush your teeth, put on your pajamas, and get into bed."

Try: _____

_____

Exercise D: Rephrase instead of repeating

Saying the same words louder or again and again rarely helps. Try a different, simpler way to say it — or show it.

> **Instead of:** "Dad, it's time for your medicine. Dad. It's time for your MEDICINE."
> **Try:** "Dad, here's your pill." (Hold it up.) "And here's some water to help it go down."

1. **Instead of:** "We need to go to the doctor."

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "You need to take a shower today."

Try: _____

_____

Exercise E: Talk to an adult, not a child

Your parent is still an adult. Baby talk or a sing-song voice can feel embarrassing and hurtful, even if they can't tell you so.

> **Instead of:** "Good job, sweetie! Who's a good eater?"
> **Try:** "That looked good. Thanks for having lunch with me, Mom."

1. **Instead of:** "Uh-oh, did we make a little mess?"

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "Are we being a grumpy grandpa today?"

Try: _____

_____

Exercise F: Leave out the extra details

Long stories with lots of details are easy to lose track of. Keep only the part that matters to your parent.

> **Instead of:** "Diane stopped by after her dentist appointment, she was wearing that blue coat, and she brought the lemon cake from the bakery on Main Street."
>
> **Try:** "Diane came to see you. She brought you lemon cake."

1. **Instead of:** "We have to leave at 1:15 because traffic will be bad and the doctor's office moved to the second floor."

Try: _____

_____

2. **Instead of:** "Your grandson Jake called from college. He's taking biology and chemistry this year and his roommate is from Ohio."

Try: _____

_____

PART 5

Listening More Than Talking

Dementia often takes away recent memories first. What your parent had for breakfast may be gone, but the name of their first dog, their childhood kitchen, or a favorite song may still be there.

A good goal is to spend most of the conversation — 80 to 90 percent — on what **your parent** wants to talk about. Talking about the past lets your parent share what they know, which gives them a sense of control instead of the feeling of failing a memory test.

My parent's memory bank

Fill in what you know. Ask siblings or old friends to help. These become your go-to conversation topics.

Topic	What I know
Where they grew up	
Their parents and siblings	
Childhood games or pets	
School, first job, or military service	
How they met their spouse or partner	
Favorite music, singers, or dances	
Favorite foods or family recipes	
Hobbies, sports, or crafts	
Proud moments	
Holidays and traditions	
Faith, community, or clubs	
Places they traveled or lived	

Conversation starters about the past

Here are a few to get you started. Add your own, based on your parent's memory bank.

- ☐ What games did you like to play when you were young?
- ☐ Was your mother a good cook? What did she make best?
- ☐ What did you and your friends do for fun as teenagers?
- ☐ Did you have a favorite cereal or treat growing up?
- ☐ Do you remember your first car?

My own conversation starters:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Words from their first language

Some people with dementia go back to the language they spoke as a child, especially as the disease progresses. If your parent grew up speaking another language, fill in a few helpful phrases — even if you are not fluent.

In English	In my parent's first language
Hello, I love you.	
Are you hungry?	
Are you cold?	
Time to rest.	
You're safe.	

After your next conversation about the past, write what your parent talked about and how they seemed.

Music, photos, and objects that spark memories

Sometimes a song, an old photo, or a familiar object opens a conversation better than a question can. Point to it or hold it up, and let your parent lead.

Type	What it is	How my parent responded
A favorite song or singer		
An old photo		
A familiar object (tool, recipe card, jewelry)		
A place we could visit or drive past		
A smell or taste from their past		

PART 6

When the Facts Are Wrong

Your parent may mix up names, dates, and events. They may say Aunt Suzy got a dog when it was really Aunt Mary. They may say Bill bought them a sweater when it was Jim. It is natural to want to set the record straight.

But correcting your parent usually just upsets and confuses them. Ask yourself: **Does it really matter?** Most of the time, it doesn't. Letting it go brings more peace to both of you.

Does it really matter? A quick sort

Think of three times recently when your parent got something wrong. Write each one below, then decide: did it truly need correcting (for example, a safety or health issue), or could you have let it go?

What my parent said	What I did	Did it really matter?	Next time I will...

Therapeutic fibbing: Where do you stand?

Many caregivers find that they sometimes need to go along with their parent's version of reality, or even tell a gentle untruth, to avoid causing needless distress. This is sometimes called **therapeutic fibbing**.

A common example: your parent asks where their mother is, and their mother died many years ago. Telling them the truth may make them grieve as if hearing the news for the first time — again and again. Many families choose a gentler response, such as "She's not here right now. Tell me about her."

This can feel uncomfortable, especially if honesty has always mattered in your family. There is no single right answer. These questions will help you think it through **before** you're in the moment.

How do you feel about going along with your parent's reality, or telling a gentle untruth to keep them calm?

What situations come up again and again where the truth causes your parent distress?

For each situation, what could you say that is kind, calming, and that you can live with?

Do your siblings and other caregivers agree on how to handle this? If not, what needs to be discussed?

A middle path
Instead of correcting or fibbing, you can often **respond to the feeling behind the words**. If your parent asks for their mother, they may be feeling lonely, scared, or wanting comfort. "You miss her. Tell me about her" honors the feeling without arguing about the facts.

Gentle phrases instead of correcting

Write a few phrases you can reach for when you feel the urge to correct. Two examples are filled in for you.

Instead of saying...	**I can say...**
"No, Mom, that was Aunt Mary."	"Tell me more about Aunt Suzy's dog."
"You already asked me that."	"The doctor is at 2:00. I'll be right here."

PART 7

Body Language and Touch

As words become harder to understand, your parent will rely more and more on your face, your tone of voice, and your touch. Even when your parent can't follow what you're saying, they can often read how you feel.

People with dementia are very sensitive to the moods of those around them. If you are tense, they may become tense. If you are calm, it helps them feel safe.

My body language check

When I talk with my parent, I...	Yes	Working on it
Sit or crouch at eye level	☐	☐
Face my parent directly	☐	☐
Make gentle eye contact	☐	☐
Smile when it fits the moment	☐	☐
Keep my shoulders and hands relaxed	☐	☐
Point to or hold up objects I'm talking about	☐	☐
Use gestures to show what I mean	☐	☐
Keep my tone warm, even when I'm tired	☐	☐
Slow down my movements	☐	☐

How my parent feels about touch

Physical contact can be very comforting for a person with dementia — but it depends on the person. Watch how your parent responds and fill this in.

Type of touch	Likes it	Unsure	Doesn't like it
Holding hands	☐	☐	☐
A hug	☐	☐	☐
A hand on the shoulder or back	☐	☐	☐
Brushing or fixing their hair	☐	☐	☐
Hand or foot massage (lotion)	☐	☐	☐
Guiding their hand (hand-over-hand)	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

What signs tell you your parent is comfortable? What signs tell you they are uneasy or upset?

Think of a recent tense moment. What might your face, voice, or body have been saying to your parent? What could you change?

PART 8

What Would You Do If...?

These scenarios are based on situations many adult children face. Read each one and write what you would do or say. There is no perfect answer. The goal is to think it through now, so you feel more ready when it happens.

After you write your own answer, read the "Things to consider" box.

Scenario 1: "Where's my mother?"

Every afternoon around 4:00, your mom asks where her mother is and says she needs to go home to her. Her mother died more than 30 years ago. When you told her the truth last week, she cried as if she had just heard the news.

What would you say the next time she asks?

What could you do around 3:30 to help the late afternoon go more smoothly?

Things to consider

Your mom may be feeling lonely, unsafe, or in need of comfort. Try responding to the feeling: "You're thinking about your mother. Tell me about her." Late-day restlessness is common in the middle stage. A calm routine, a snack, soft music, or a short walk before the hard time may help.

Scenario 2: "You stole my wallet!"

Your dad can't find his wallet. He is angry and says you took it. He is raising his voice and won't listen when you explain.

What would you say in the first minute?

What would you do to help find the wallet, or to calm the moment?

How would you take care of your own feelings afterward?

Things to consider

Fear that others are stealing is common in the middle stage. Arguing or defending yourself usually makes it worse. Keep your voice calm, don't take it personally, and offer to help look: "That's upsetting. Let's look together." If you know his usual hiding spots, write them down on the Part 9 guide for others.

Scenario 3: The same question, again and again

In the last 20 minutes, your mom has asked "What time is the doctor?" six times. You can feel your patience running out.

What could you say or do that doesn't require her to remember your answer?

What could you do for yourself in this moment to stay calm?

Things to consider

She is not doing this on purpose; she truly doesn't remember asking. Answer briefly and kindly each time, or try a written note she can see ("Doctor at 2:00. [Your name] will drive."). A gentle change of subject or activity can also help. It's okay to step away for a minute to breathe.

Scenario 4: The wrong sweater story

At a family dinner, your dad proudly tells everyone that his brother Bill gave him the sweater he's wearing. You gave him that sweater. Your sister starts to correct him.

What would you say or do?

How would you talk with your sister about this later?

Things to consider
Does it matter who gave him the sweater? He is enjoying the memory of his brother. Letting it go keeps the moment happy. Later, share the "Does it really matter?" idea from Part 6 with your sister so the family is on the same page.

Scenario 5: "I'm not a child!"

Your mom used to drive and handle her own bills. Now she can't, and she is angry. She tells you she feels like a prisoner in her own home.

What would you say to acknowledge her feelings?

What choices or control could you give back to her?

Things to consider
Losing independence is very painful. Try naming the feeling: "It's really hard not being able to drive." Then look for ways to give real, simple choices (two at a time) — what to wear, which route to take on a drive, which chore to help with. Praise what she still does well.

Scenario 6: Getting ready for an appointment

You need to get your dad dressed and in the car for a doctor visit. You told him, "Get dressed, put on your shoes, and let's go." He is sitting on the bed, not moving, and getting upset.

How would you break this task into single steps?

What could you do the night before to make the morning easier?

Things to consider
Multi-step directions are very hard in the middle stage. Lay out clothes in order. Hand him one item at a time: "Here's your shirt." Point to or hold up each item. Leave extra time so you are not rushed — your rushing can make him anxious.

Scenario 7: When the words are gone

Your dad is in the late stage of dementia and rarely speaks. When you visit, you sit by his bed and don't know what to say or do. You leave feeling sad and unsure if your visit mattered.

What could you do during your visit to connect without words?

What would you like him to feel while you are there?

Things to consider
Even when your dad can't understand words, he may still respond to your tone, your face, and your touch. Hold his hand if he welcomes it, speak softly, play music he loved, or simply sit with him in a calm room. Your presence matters.

Scenario 8: You're about to snap

It's been a long day. Your mom has refused to eat, argued with you twice, and just knocked over her drink. You feel your voice starting to rise.

What will you do in the next 60 seconds?

What warning signs tell you that you are near your limit?

Who could you call or what support could you set up so this happens less often?

Things to consider

It is normal to feel angry. What matters is what you do with it. If your parent is safe, it's okay to step out of the room for a few minutes. People with dementia are sensitive to your mood, so calming yourself helps them too. Frequent moments like this are a sign you need more support or respite.

Scenario 9: Telling your parent about the diagnosis

Your mom was just diagnosed with dementia. She keeps asking you what is wrong with her and why she can't remember things.

What words would you use to tell her? Write them out.

How would you reassure her?

Things to consider

Be direct, but loving. You might say she has been diagnosed with memory loss, and that you are there to help and support her. Depending on your mom, you may choose to use the word "dementia" or "Alzheimer's." In the early stage, talking openly about what she is experiencing can be a relief.

Scenario 10: Back to her first language

Your mom grew up speaking Italian and learned English as an adult. Lately, she mixes the two, and sometimes she only speaks Italian. You speak very little Italian.

What could you do to communicate with her better?

Who in your family or community could help?

Things to consider
People with dementia may go back to the language they grew up with. Even a few words in her first language may comfort her. Ask relatives to teach you key phrases (see Part 5), and rely more on gestures, pointing, and your tone of voice.

Scenario 11: The phone call that goes wrong

Your brother lives out of state and calls your dad every Sunday. After each call, your dad is upset. You hear your brother asking, "Don't you remember? I told you last week!"

What would you tell your brother about how to talk with Dad?

What could make phone calls easier for your dad?

Things to consider
Phone calls are hard because your dad can't see a face or gestures. Share your filled-in Part 9 guide with your brother. Suggest short calls, no memory quizzes, and stories from the past instead of questions about this week. A video call may help your dad see his face.

Scenario 12: Bath time battle

Your mom refuses to shower. When you say, "Mom, you need to take a shower," she says she already did and gets angry.

What could you say instead?

How could you set up the time, place, and steps to make this go more smoothly?

Things to consider

Don't argue about whether she showered. Pick her best time of day. Offer simple choices: "Would you like a shower now or after breakfast?" Get everything ready first so the room is warm and the towel is waiting. Give one step at a time, and protect her privacy and dignity.

PART 9

A Communication Guide to Share With Others

Anyone who spends time with your parent — siblings, grandchildren, home care aides, respite workers, day program staff, or visiting friends — will do better if they know what works. Fill in this guide, make copies, and share it. Update it as your parent's needs change.

HOW TO TALK WITH:

Name: _____

Likes to be called: _____

Date updated: _____

Things that help when talking with them:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Things to avoid (topics, words, or actions that upset them):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Best time of day to talk or do tasks:

_____

_____

Hardest time of day, and what helps then:

Favorite topics to talk about (from the memory bank):

Signs they are getting upset:

What calms them down:

Touch they like, and touch they don't:

Words or phrases in their first language:

How we handle questions about people who have died:

Daily routines that help them feel secure:

Things they can still do on their own (let them!):

Hearing aids, glasses, or other needs:

Who to call with questions:

PART 10

Tracking What Works

Keeping short notes helps you see patterns you might otherwise miss. After a conversation that went especially well — or especially badly — take a minute to jot it down.

Date / time	What happened	What I said or did	Worked?	Try next time

Conversation log, continued

Date / time	What happened	What I said or did	Worked?	Try next time

Looking back over your notes, what patterns do you see?

PART 11

Taking Care of You

Watching your parent change is heartbreaking. Taking on the role of caregiver can be overwhelming. It's natural to feel angry, sad, guilty, or worn out — sometimes all in the same hour.

Taking care of yourself is not selfish. It helps no one if you are burned out. And because your parent picks up on your moods, your calm helps them feel calm, too.

What feelings come up most for you when you talk with your parent now?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are your frustration "triggers"? (Examples: the same question over and over, being accused, rushing to appointments.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

My cool-off plan

When I feel my frustration rising, I will:

- ☐ Take three slow breaths before I respond
- ☐ Make sure my parent is safe, then step out of the room for a few minutes
- ☐ Remind myself: "This is the disease, not my parent."
- ☐ Change the activity instead of pushing through
- ☐ Call or text someone who understands

Something else that helps me: _____

My support circle

Who can you turn to? List people and services you can call on — for a break, a listening ear, or practical help.

Type of support	Who	How to reach them
A friend who listens		
Family who can take a shift		
Caregiver support group		
Respite care or adult day program		
My own doctor or counselor		
Other		

What is one thing you will do for yourself this week?

What good moments with your parent do you want to remember? Write one down.

PART 12

Resources and Next Steps

You do not have to figure this out alone. Here are the kinds of help that many families find useful. Look for them in your area, or ask your parent's doctor for suggestions.

Where to find help

Type of resource	How it can help
Your parent's doctor or memory clinic	Can explain your parent's stage, check for other causes of confusion, and refer you to services.
National and local Alzheimer's and dementia organizations	Often offer helplines, education classes, and caregiver support groups.
Your local Area Agency on Aging	Connects families to local services such as in-home help, meals, and respite programs.
Caregiver support groups (in person or online)	A place to share what's hard and learn from others in the same situation.
Respite care and adult day programs	Give you regular breaks while your parent is cared for safely.
Occupational therapist	Can suggest ways to make daily tasks and the home easier and safer for your parent.
Speech-language pathologist	Can offer strategies for communication and swallowing changes.
Geriatric care manager	Can help plan and coordinate care, especially if you live far away.
Hospice and palliative care	Focus on comfort and support in the late and final stages, for your parent and your family.

Books you may find helpful

- ☐ *When Reasoning No Longer Works: A Practical Guide for Caregivers Dealing with Dementia & Alzheimer's Care*
- ☐ *Dancing with Elephants: Mindfulness Training For Those Living With Dementia, Chronic Illness or an Aging Brain*
- ☐ *Where the Light Gets In: Losing My Mother Only to Find Her Again*

☐ *Living in the Moment: A Guide to Overcoming Challenges and Finding Moments of Joy in Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*

My next steps

Choose three things from this workbook to act on in the next 30 days.

	What I will do	By when	Done
1			☐
2			☐
3			☐

Questions to ask at my parent's next doctor visit:

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Keep going

Keep the companion checklist, *Talking With a Parent Who Has Dementia*, somewhere you'll see it often — on the fridge, by the phone, or in your bag. Revisit this workbook every few months, or whenever you notice a change in your parent.

A Final Word

When your parent is diagnosed with dementia, your relationship changes forever. You will have to change how you communicate — and that takes time, patience, and practice.

You will not get it right every time. No one does. What matters is that you keep trying to be calm, direct, and kind, and that you forgive yourself on the hard days.

Through it all, be thankful for the good times and good conversations you still have. Be open to whatever conversations your parent is willing to have, and simply enjoy the fact that you are communicating.

— Esther C. Kane, CAPS, C.D.S.

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This workbook is for general education. It does not replace medical, legal, or mental health advice. Talk with your parent's doctor or care team about your parent's specific needs.