

**YOU CAN'T HEAL ALONE**

***Caregiver Healing & Support Companion Workbook***

**A practical guide for full-time family caregivers navigating trauma,  
burnout, and the need for respite**

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## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is designed to be used **slowly**. You do not need to complete it in order. There are no deadlines. Rest is part of the work.

You may find emotions surface as you write. Pause when needed. Support is allowed.

This workbook is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It is not medical, psychological, legal, or therapeutic advice and is not a substitute for professional care.

The author is not diagnosing, treating, or providing medical or mental health services. If you are experiencing severe emotional distress, mental health concerns, or crisis situations, please seek support from a licensed professional or emergency services in your area.

Caregiving experiences vary widely, and readers are encouraged to use their own judgment when applying any suggestions found within this workbook. Participation in the exercises is voluntary, and readers are encouraged to pause or discontinue any activity that feels overwhelming.

By using this workbook, you acknowledge that you are responsible for your own well-being and decisions.

## SECTION 1: ACKNOWLEDGING THE WEIGHT YOU CARRY

### Worksheet 1: Caregiver Reality Check

#### “What Is My Current Load?”

Check all that apply:

- ☐ I am the primary or sole caregiver
- ☐ I manage most decisions alone
- ☐ I feel responsible for family harmony
- ☐ I suppress my needs to avoid conflict
- ☐ I feel guilt when I rest
- ☐ I feel emotionally unsafe with certain family members
- ☐ I feel trapped in my role
- ☐ I feel unseen or unsupported

#### Reflection:

What surprised me as I checked these boxes?

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## Worksheet 2: My Caregiver Role in the Family

### “The Role I Was Assigned”

Complete the statements honestly:

- Growing up, I was often the

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- In my family, my needs were

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- When conflict arises, I usually

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- Caregiving feels familiar because

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### Insight Prompt:

Caregiving may be activating patterns that existed long before this chapter of life.

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## **SECTION 2: BURNOUT & NERVOUS SYSTEM AWARENESS**

### **Worksheet 3: Burnout Warning Signals**

#### **“My Body Is Communicating With Me”**

**Physical signals I notice:**

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**Emotional signals I notice:**

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**Behaviors I’ve developed to cope:**

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**One signal I’ve been ignoring:**

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## Worksheet 4: What Rest Feels Like to Me

### “Redefining Rest Without Guilt”

When I imagine rest, I feel:

☐ Anxiety

☐ Relief

☐ Guilt

☐ Fear

☐ Longing

**Why rest feels unsafe:**

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**What rest could give me:**

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## SECTION 3: RESPITE AS A HEALING TOOL

### Worksheet 5: My Respite Readiness

#### “Is It Time for Outside Support?”

Check all that apply:

- ☐ I cannot leave without worry
- ☐ I have no consistent backup
- ☐ My health is declining
- ☐ I feel resentment building
- ☐ I fantasize about escape
- ☐ I feel overwhelmed most days

**If two or more are checked:**

Respite is not optional—it is protective.

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## Worksheet 6: Respite Planning Map

### “Structure Creates Safety”

**Type of respite I need most right now:**

☐ Hours weekly

☐ Overnight

☐ Weekend

☐ Extended break

**Frequency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who will provide care:**

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**What I need during respite:**

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**One belief I must release to accept help:**

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## SECTION 4: BOUNDARIES & EMOTIONAL SAFETY

### Worksheet 7: Identifying Boundary Violations

#### “What Drains Me”

Situations or people that increase my stress:

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What I feel pressured to tolerate:

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What my body feels during these interactions:

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## Worksheet 8: Boundary Scripts (Write It Out)

### “Clear Is Kind”

When I need to say no, I can say:

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

When I need support, I can say:

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

When guilt is used against me, I will remind myself:

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

## **SECTION 5: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CARE PLAN**

### **Worksheet 9: My Support System Snapshot**

**Primary caregiver:**

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**Scheduled caregiver(s):**

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**Backup plan:**

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**Emergency contact:**

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## **Worksheet 10: Trigger Awareness & Patterns**

### **“When the Past Shows Up in the Present”**

Situations that trigger strong emotional reactions for me:

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What I feel in my body during these moments:

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What this reaction may be protecting me from:

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One way I can pause before responding:

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## **Worksheet 11: What Healing Looks Like for Me**

### **“Defining Healing on My Terms”**

Healing for me means:

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One belief I am ready to release:

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One boundary that supports my healing:

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One small step toward healing I can take now:

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## **Worksheet 12: My Respite Vacation Vision**

### **“Restoration, Not Escape”**

#### **Part 1: What I Need From a Respite Vacation**

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Deep rest
  - ☐ Silence / minimal stimulation
  - ☐ Nature
  - ☐ Warm climate
  - ☐ Ocean / water
  - ☐ Cultural exploration
  - ☐ Comfort & ease
  - ☐ Spiritual renewal
  - ☐ Light activity only
  - ☐ Time alone
  - ☐ Time with partner or friend
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## Part 2: Travel Style That Feels Supportive to Me

- ☐ All-inclusive resort
  - ☐ Cruise
  - ☐ Quiet cabin or retreat
  - ☐ Beach destination
  - ☐ City escape
  - ☐ Wellness retreat
  - ☐ Visiting family/friends (with boundaries)
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## Part 3: Locations That Spark Interest or Calm

Places I feel drawn to:

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Why these places feel supportive:

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#### **Part 4: Barriers & Beliefs**

What makes planning a respite vacation feel difficult:

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One belief I need to challenge to allow this rest:

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#### **Part 5: Permission Statement**

I give myself permission to rest by \_\_\_\_\_

Rest will support my caregiving by \_\_\_\_\_



## Worksheet 13: Non-Negotiables for My Well-Being

### “What Keeps Me Whole”

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**One way I will protect my peace this month:**

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## Worksheet 14: Permission to Rest

### “This Is My Reminder”

Write a note to yourself:

I give myself permission to

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I am allowed to

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Rest does not mean

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Sign your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_