

# THE ROLES REVERSE REALITY CHECK

## **6 signs it's time to step in for your aging parent and your first 3 steps when you do.**

A huge chapter of our lives that no one prepared us for.

By Barbara Stratte · Author of When Roles Reverse

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### A NOTE FROM BARBARA

You are not alone in this.

"Three years ago, I walked into my mom Bette's house and something felt very heavy the moment I stepped inside."

The mail had been piling up for months. The fridge held food long past its expiry. And my mom, the woman who always had everything together, who I still called for advice had no idea how much things had changed around her. In that moment I felt the full weight of it settle into my body. I was sad that the roles had fully reversed. And I felt deeply responsible to care for the woman who had always done the very best for me.

Nobody handed me a guide. Nobody told me what to look for or what to do first. I figured it out the hard way through downsizing her and moving into a retirement community, then my mom's Alzheimer's diagnosis, through moving her in with us, through every hard conversation and sleepless night.

So I wrote it all down. For you. So you don't have to figure it out alone. This guide gives you the signs I wish I had known to look for including a few that surprised even me. Plus your first 3 steps when you know it's time to act. "I'm five steps ahead of you in this journey and I'm reaching back to help you through."

You are awesome. You are needed. You are appreciated for even wanting to show up for your parent this way. That love you're carrying? It is real and it matters. Let's take the first step together.

# THE STARTER CHECKLIST

6 signs to look for - one from each category

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Noticing is not the same as failing. Noticing is love in action. Go through each sign and check what you've observed in the last 30 days. Be honest. Be gentle with yourself.

1

## MEMORY

### Repeating the same questions or stories within minutes

Not once in a while, but a pattern you've started to notice regularly.

2

## DAILY LIVING

### Unopened mail, unpaid bills, or expired food in the fridge

This was one of the first things I noticed with my mom. Things she never would have let slide before.

3

## SAFETY

### Increased stumbling, falls, or difficulty with balance

Even one unexplained fall is worth paying close attention to.

4

## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

### New anxiety, fearfulness, or hearing and seeing things that aren't there

My mom kept hearing a doorbell in the middle of the night. We installed a Ring camera, no one was there. Don't dismiss this one.

5

## MEDICAL

### Unexplained weight loss or significant changes in sleep

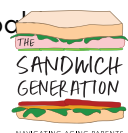
Changes that happen slowly are easy to miss until you look back and realize how much has shifted.

6

## YOUR GUT

### Something just feels different, even if you can't name it yet

You know your parent better than anyone. If something feels off, it probably is. Trust yourself.



## THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE FULL PICTURE

The Calm in the Chaos Starter Kit includes the complete 30-point Warning Signs Checklist scored across all five categories with a full scoring guide so you know exactly what your observations mean and what to do next.

### **0-2 signs? Early monitoring 3-5? Active concern 6+? Time to act now**

Whatever you checked today, you did something really important. You looked. You paid attention. You chose to see clearly instead of looking away. You are awesome. You are needed. And you are appreciated for even doing this much.

## YOUR FIRST 3 STEPS - START HERE

### 6 signs to look for - one from each category

You don't have to solve everything today. You just need to take the next right step. Here are the three most important things to do first in order.



#### **HAVE THE CONVERSATION BEFORE A CRISIS FORCES IT**

**The hardest conversation is always the one you keep putting off. Ask your parent how they're really doing. Tell them what you've noticed gently, lovingly, without an agenda. You don't need a perfect script. You just need to open the door.**

This week: Visit or call and ask one honest question. "Mom, I've noticed a few things lately. Can we talk about how you're really doing?" That's it. Just start



#### **GET THE LEGAL DOCUMENTS IN PLACE, RIGHT NOW**

**Power of Attorney and an Advance Healthcare Directive must be signed while your parent is still able to do so. I cannot tell you how many families wish they had done this sooner. Please don't wait.**

This week: Search "elder law attorney near me" or ask their doctor for a referral. One phone call sets the whole process in motion.



## **DO A SLOW, LOVING WALK-THROUGH OF THEIR HOME**

**Not an inspection – a visit with open eyes. Look at the fridge. Check the mail. Notice how they move through the space. You will learn more in one hour in person than in months of phone calls.**

This week: Plan a visit specifically to observe – not a holiday, not a quick hello. Go to see how things really are.

Three steps. That is your whole job right now. Not everything – just these three. You are awesome. You are needed. You are appreciated for doing even this much. And you are doing the best you can – I see it.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

## **YOU'VE TAKEN YOUR FIRST STEP - HERE'S THE FULL ROADMAP**

These three steps are your beginning. But there is so much more coming in this journey – and I've mapped every single part of it so you don't have to figure it out alone.



### **The full 30-point checklist**

Scored across 5 categories with a complete guide so you know exactly what your observations mean.



### **Word-for-word scripts**

Exactly what to say when your parent resists help – and how to start the conversations you've been avoiding.



### **Memory care vs. assisted living**

A clear, compassionate comparison so you can make the right choice without guilt.



### **Caregiver burnout recovery**

How to recognize it in yourself and what to actually do about it before it breaks you.

All of this and so much more is inside the Calm in the Chaos Sandwich Generation Starter Kit. Five short video modules. Eight essential printables. A Crisis Quick-Start Guide for when you need help right now. Built for people who are already overwhelmed.

"I created this because I wish someone had been five steps ahead of me saying: here's what's coming. Here's what to do. And you are going to be okay."

**GET THE FULL STARTER KIT FOR JUST \$47**

**Instant access**

**Lifetime updates**

**5 videos + 8 printables**

Built for the sandwich generation by someone living it every single day.

You are awesome. You are needed. You are appreciated for even wanting to help your parent, for showing up, for paying attention, for caring enough to read every single word of this. This is one of the biggest chapters of life. And no one prepared us for it. But you don't have to walk it alone. I'm five steps ahead and I'm right here, reaching back for you.

*Barbara Shutte*

