

## YOU ARE HERE

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*A compass for the new caregiver of a parent or elder.*

Becoming a caregiver for a parent or elder rarely starts with a plan. It starts with a phone call, a fall, a diagnosis, or a quiet realization over the holidays. This checklist is the map you didn't get handed. It won't make caregiving easy — nothing will — but it will help you find your bearings.

**THE QUICK COMPASS · one page · the 20 things that matter most**

**How to use this:** Don't try to do it all today. Pick one section per week. Check what's done. Star what's urgent. Pass a copy to a sibling or backup. Re-print whenever life shifts.

# The Quick Compass

*Twenty things that matter most in your first 90 days. One check at a time. Breathe between each one.*

- **Legal Authority.** Get the paperwork that lets you actually help.
- **Medical Care & Records.** One source of truth for every doctor.
- **Medications.** What they take, why, and what could go wrong.
- **Insurance & Benefits.** Stop leaving money and coverage on the table.
- **Money & Bills.** Don't let a late bill become a crisis.
- **Home Safety.** Most falls happen in places that look fine.
- **Daily Living Support.** Notice the small things that are slipping.
- **Nutrition.** Weight loss is often the first sign of trouble.
- **Transportation.** Driving is a hard, important conversation.
- **Cognitive Changes.** Track patterns instead of guessing.
- **Emotional Support (Them).** Caregiving is also grief and identity loss for them.
- **Emotional Support (You).** You can't pour from an empty cup.
- **Respite & Backup.** Plan for the day you get sick — before you do.
- **Family Communication.** Quiet resentment hurts everyone.
- **Work & Career.** Protect your job while you protect them.
- **Housing Decisions.** Aging in place isn't always the kindest answer.
- **Hiring Help.** You don't have to do it all yourself.
- **End-of-Life Planning.** A gift to your future self.
- **Digital & Account Access.** Locked accounts are a nightmare after a crisis.
- **Build Your Care Team.** Names and numbers — before you need them.

**If you only do three things this week:** (1) Start the POA conversation. (2) Make a current medication list. (3) Tell one person you're a caregiver and ask them to check on you.

*"You did not sign up for this. You showed up for it. That counts."*