

Motherhood After 40

Companion Workbook

Printable Tools for Real Life, One Page at a Time

Mara Bennett

All twelve chapter tools, plus the Sleep Companion. Print the pages you need. Return when they are useful.

A place to put things on paper

You do not have to complete this workbook in order. Choose the tool that fits the problem in front of you. One answer, one row, or one page can be enough for today.

The chapters keep the prompts short so the reading can move. Use these full pages when you want to write, print, or return to a tool later.

Print at Actual Size / 100% on US Letter paper. For A4 paper, choose Fit to page and check the print preview so nothing is cropped. You can print only the pages you need. A notebook or notes app works too. The main book contains the fuller context, examples, scripts, and discussion.

The Sleep Companion begins with a complete core plan. Its following page is optional space for notes. Blank writing space is intentional.

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This workbook provides educational information and guided reflection. It does not diagnose, treat, or replace individualized medical, mental-health, legal, or financial advice. Seek qualified professional help for those questions. For immediate danger, use your local emergency service.

Any scenarios identified as illustrative composites in the main book are fictional.

Choose a tool

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WORKSHEET 1 • CHAPTER 1

The Comment Toolkit

Situation	My response
A clumsy comment I want to end	
A comment I want to defuse with humor	
A passive-aggressive comment I want clarified	
A question that is too personal	
A repeated comment that needs a boundary	
A comment made in front of my child	

My default line if I freeze:

WORKSHEET 2 · CHAPTER 2

The Support Circle

Four roles

LISTEN — Who can hear me without trying to fix everything?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP IN — Who can help practically with my child?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SOLVE — Who can help with a practical problem?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SHOW UP — Who could respond in a real emergency?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WORKSHEET 2 · CHAPTER 2

The Support Circle — continued

Gap Check

- ☐ One role is empty.
- ☐ One person is carrying too many roles.
- ☐ Most of my support is too far away for practical help.
- ☐ I only ask when things have become an emergency.
- ☐ People offer help, but I rarely make a specific ask.

My weakest role right now is:

The Repeated Contact Rule

One place where I can see the same people regularly:

How often I can realistically show up:

For the next: ☐ 4 weeks ☐ 6 weeks ☐ 8 weeks

WORKSHEET 2 · CHAPTER 2

The Support Circle — continued

Three Moves

Move 1 — One existing connection I can strengthen, and the small move I will make:

Move 2 — One specific ask I can make (what + when + how long + permission to say no):

Move 3 — One repeated place I can add (where, when, and how many times I will try):

WORKSHEET 3 · CHAPTER 3

The Body Log

Use the five-column core tracker daily. Capacity 1-5: 1 = bare minimum; 5 = unusually high reserve. In Sleep, include approximate total hours slept when possible. Add detail only when it is useful.

Date	Sleep	Cycle / body change	Capacity 1-5	What stood out

WORKSHEET 3 • CHAPTER 3

The Body Log — continued

Optional Expanded Tracker

Use this only when the extra detail may help you or your healthcare professional interpret the pattern.

Date	Breastfeeding / cycle context	Mood	Stress 1-5	Medication / alcohol / illness / other context

WORKSHEET 3 · CHAPTER 3

The Body Log — continued

Two-Week Summary (bring this to your appointment)

- Dates tracked: start date / end date / number of days recorded:

- Average sleep per night (hours) / worst night (hours):

- The three changes I noticed most:

- Night sweats or hot flashes: number of times / usual time of night or point in cycle:

- Changes in my cycle or bleeding:

- Am I breastfeeding? If yes, how often:

- My best days had in common:

- My hardest days had in common:

- Caffeine / alcohol / medication / illness worth mentioning:

- What worries me most:

- What I most want to leave this appointment with:

WORKSHEET 4 · CHAPTER 4

The Inventory of You

I miss this, and I want some version of it back:

I miss this, but I do not actually want it back:

This part of me never disappeared (qualities, not roles):

Motherhood added this to who I am (three words are enough):

This still matters to me, but this is not the season for it:

I am ready to stop pretending I should still care about:

I want more room in my life for:

WORKSHEET 4 · CHAPTER 4

The Inventory of You — continued

One Piece of Me I'm Reclaiming

The part of me I want more room for:

The smallest real version:

When it can happen:

What may get in the way:

Fallback version:

WORKSHEET 5 • CHAPTER 5

The Capacity Ledger

Three things that reliably drain me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Two things that genuinely restore me:

1. _____
2. _____

One thing that looks like rest but often leaves me more depleted:

One thing that looks like effort but often gives something back:

WORKSHEET 5 · CHAPTER 5

The Capacity Ledger — continued

Morning Capacity Check

Today: 1 2 3 4 5

Given that number, what kind of day should I plan?

Must / Could / Not Now / Someone Else

Must	Could	Not Now	Someone Else

WORKSHEET 5 · CHAPTER 5

The Capacity Ledger — continued

Low-Energy Day Plan

The minimum that genuinely needs to happen:

One thing I will protect if I can:

One ask, shortcut, or support I can use:

What could make tonight slightly easier:

WORKSHEET 5A · SLEEP INTERLUDE

Sleep Companion — Bad Night / Next Day Plan

Use this after a genuinely rough night. The point is to reduce decisions, not to rescue the whole day.

The minimum for tomorrow:

One thing I want to protect:

One ask or shortcut I can use:

One thing I can cancel or move:

WORKSHEET 5A • SLEEP INTERLUDE

Sleep Companion — Bad Night / Next Day Plan — continued

Optional notes (second page)

Last night was rough because:

What could make tonight slightly easier:

One sentence I will not argue with today:

If my child slept but I still could not sleep, what did I notice?

If sleep difficulty is persistent, worsening, concerning, or affecting your ability to function safely during the day, bring it to a healthcare professional.

WORKSHEET 6 • CHAPTER 6

Who Owns What

Mark one box per row. The questions below the table are where you describe what ownership would involve.

Domain	Mine	Shared	Not Mine
School			
Health			
Meals / groceries			
Activities			
Clothing			
Bills / paperwork			
Family calendar			
Social / family obligations			
Home / repairs			
Other			

WORKSHEET 6 · CHAPTER 6

Who Owns What — continued

One domain I want to transfer, share, simplify, or externalize:

Who owns it now?

Who could own it?

What would ownership actually include?

The conversation or system change I need:

What I need to stop monitoring if ownership moves:

WORKSHEET 7 · CHAPTER 7

The Middle Map

Use this page to make the middle visible. Start with the people, then sort the responsibilities.

The Three Directions

My child or children: what do they genuinely need from me right now?

My parent or parents: what do they genuinely need from me right now?

Me: what do I need in order to remain functional inside both roles?

WORKSHEET 7 · CHAPTER 7

The Middle Map — continued

What Am I Actually Carrying? (one row per responsibility, for one parent or older relative)

For each row, choose one option in each column:

Type: Care / Admin / Emotional support / Convenience

Decision: Keep / Share / Hand off or simplify

Then ask yourself: do I do this mainly because I always have?

Responsibility	Type	Decision

WORKSHEET 7 · CHAPTER 7

The Middle Map — continued

One clear request I'll make this week:

To:

The task:

Starting:

“Done” looks like:

One conversation or system change that would help:

WORKSHEET 8 • CHAPTER 8

The Body Reset

When appearance judgment gets loud, use this page to get more specific.

What am I actually feeling right now?

Is this mainly about appearance, comfort, health, identity, or something else?

What is my body allowing me to do today?

What would make me physically more comfortable right now?

WORKSHEET 8 · CHAPTER 8

The Body Reset — continued

What is one decision I can make without turning my body into a verdict on my worth?

One recurring source of unnecessary body friction I can remove:

Weekly check-in

How much space did thoughts about my body take up this week?

Did anything about food or exercise feel stressful, rigid, or hard to stop thinking about?

Is there anything I would like to talk through with someone?

If thoughts about food, exercise, or your body keep taking up a lot of your day, or are disrupting sleep, relationships, or work, consider talking with a qualified professional (see Resources).

WORKSHEET 9 • CHAPTER 9

The Experience Inventory and Strength-to-Move Map

A longer adult life does not guarantee wisdom. It does give you evidence about yourself.

Part 1: The Experience Inventory

Boundaries: a sentence I can say now that I could not say easily at twenty-five:

Recovery: something difficult I have survived before:

Uncertainty: a decision I made without complete certainty and learned from:

Self-knowledge: something I know about myself that helps me parent more realistically:

One of these strengths I am already using in motherhood:

WORKSHEET 9 • CHAPTER 9

The Experience Inventory and Strength-to-Move Map — continued

Part 2: The Strength-to-Move Map (fill in three rows)

What I know about myself	Where it shows up in parenting	The move I can make

This week I'm running this row number for seven days:

WORKSHEET 10 • CHAPTER 10

The Three Horizons

Use this page once, on paper, at a time that is not 2 a.m.

Now to 2 years

What's solid:

What's uncertain:

One question I need answered:

The school years

What's solid:

What's uncertain:

One question I need answered:

My 60s and beyond

What's solid:

What's uncertain:

One question I need answered:

WORKSHEET 10 • CHAPTER 10

The Three Horizons — continued

The costs I hadn't itemized (check any that apply): ☐ Reduced hours or pause ☐ Fertility-treatment costs ☐ Supporting a parent ☐ My own health ☐ Other: describe below.

Work, in two years I'd like: ☐ More ☐ The same ☐ Less ☐ A pause ☐ Don't know yet

What I'd need to make that possible:

What I need to find out from my employer:

WORKSHEET 10 • CHAPTER 10

The Three Horizons — continued

Questions to take to a professional:

1. Given my timeline, what are the three things I should look at first?

2. What insurance coverage would be reasonable for my situation, and what are the trade-offs?

3. What legal documents should I have in place, and in what order?

4. How are you paid, and do you earn anything from what you recommend?

5. Which of these questions belong with you, and which should I take to an attorney, tax professional, or insurance professional?

My one step this week: ☐ Talk to my partner ☐ Call HR ☐ Book one appointment ☐ Other. Complete by (date):

WORKSHEET 11 • CHAPTER 11

The Tuesday Folder

Use the Tuesday Test: if you could not manage family logistics for one week, could another trusted adult find what they needed?

Page 1: The First Page

Primary emergency contact:

Second contact:

School / childcare:

Pediatrician / healthcare contact:

Allergies / medications:

Daily routine essentials:

Important people in my child's life:

Where key documents are stored:

Where digital access instructions are stored securely:

Pet / home information another adult would need:

Something only I usually remember:

Store locations and instructions here, not passwords or other sensitive access information.

WORKSHEET 11 • CHAPTER 11

The Tuesday Folder — continued

Page 2: The Person Who Steps In

Name:

Have I asked them? ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

They said: ☐ Yes ☐ Yes, with limits ☐ No. Limits, if any:

What stepping in could mean (pickup, a night at my house, calling family, finding information):

Do they have:

- ☐ Key
- ☐ My contact list
- ☐ School pickup authorization
- ☐ Where the folder is

WORKSHEET 11 • CHAPTER 11

The Tuesday Folder — continued

Page 3: Questions for an Attorney

- ☐ In my jurisdiction, is there a short-term authorization that could allow a caregiver to consent to medical care or handle school matters?
- ☐ How do I state who I'd want as guardian? What happens if I don't?
- ☐ Is my will current, and does it address who manages money left for my child?
- ☐ Who is authorized to make medical and financial decisions for me if I can't?
- ☐ Do my beneficiary designations match my wishes?
- ☐ How do rules apply to my situation (unmarried partner, stepparent, co-parent, close friend)?
- ☐ What should I bring to the first appointment?

Appointment booked for:

WORKSHEET 11 • CHAPTER 11

The Tuesday Folder — continued

Page 4: The Annual Ten-Minute Update

Contacts and addresses checked:

School / healthcare information checked:

Medications checked:

Important documents checked:

People in the plan still correct:

Last reviewed:

Stop Rule

Planning session length: ☐ 45 minutes ☐ Other: describe below.

When the timer rings, I stop.

One next action for any worry that won't leave:

WORKSHEET 12 • CHAPTER 12

The Horizons Map and When They Ask

You do not need to complete all three horizons at once. Start with one year and return later.

The Horizons Map

One year from now

My child will be approximately:

I will be approximately:

What may matter most then:

One thing I can prepare for:

WORKSHEET 12 • CHAPTER 12

The Horizons Map and When They Ask — continued

Five years from now — what might be meaningfully different by then?

One issue worth revisiting later:

Ten years from now — what deserves early thought, but not immediate action?

Keep the answers provisional.

WORKSHEET 12 • CHAPTER 12

The Horizons Map and When They Ask — continued

When They Ask

If my child asks, “Are you going to die?” I’d say, in my own words:

The people who would take care of my child, and what they mean to them:

Name / relationship:

Name / relationship:

If my child asks, “How old are you?” I’d say:

Signs I’d want to discuss with a pediatrician or child therapist if they are persistent or interfering with daily life:

- ☐ Questions or fears that are becoming more intense
 - ☐ Trouble sleeping
 - ☐ Refusing usual separations
 - ☐ Significant changes at school or in daily activities
 - ☐ Persistent anxiety after a loss
 - ☐ Other: describe below.
-

WORKSHEET 12 • CHAPTER 12

The Horizons Map and When They Ask — continued

A Letter for Later

Something I hope you always know about how I loved you:

Something about me you may understand differently when you are older:

Something I hope you carry into your own life:

One Sentence

One sentence I want my child to know someday:

Where I'm keeping it:

RESOURCES

Resources — where to find support

Services change. Recheck any crisis contact before you rely on it.

Mental Health and Perinatal Support

United States — 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988; available 24/7. <https://988lifeline.org/>

Postpartum Support International (PSI): 1-800-944-4773. PSI offers non-emergency support and referrals; it is not a crisis line. <https://postpartum.net/>

International PSI resources: <https://postpartum.net/get-help/locations/>

Canada — 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 9-8-8. <https://988.ca/>

United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland — Samaritans: 116 123, available 24/7. <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Australia — Lifeline: 13 11 14. <https://www.lifeline.org.au/131114>

In an emergency, use your local emergency service.

Relationship Safety

United States — National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233); text START to 88788; <https://www.thehotline.org/>

International — Lila.help: directory of gender-based-violence helplines and organizations. <https://lila.help/>

Menopause and Midlife Health

The Menopause Society — practitioner directory: use the Society's practitioner-finder resources at <https://menopause.org/patient-education/choosing-a-healthcare-practitioner>

Sleep and Drowsy Driving

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (U.S.) — drowsy-driving resource: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving>

Older Adults and Caregivers

Eldercare Locator (United States): 1-800-677-1116; <https://eldercare.acl.gov/>

ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center: <https://archrespite.org/>

Carers UK: caregiver information and support; helpline 0808 808 7777.

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/helpline-and-other-support/>

RESOURCES

Resources — where to find support — continued

Eating Disorders and Body Image

National Alliance for Eating Disorders (United States): 1-866-662-1235; <https://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com/>

Child Grief and Loss

Dougy Center: <https://www.dougy.org/>

National Alliance for Children's Grief: <https://nacg.org/>

Legal Help

LawHelp.org: nonprofit legal-aid information and referrals by U.S. state. <https://www.lawhelp.org/find-help>