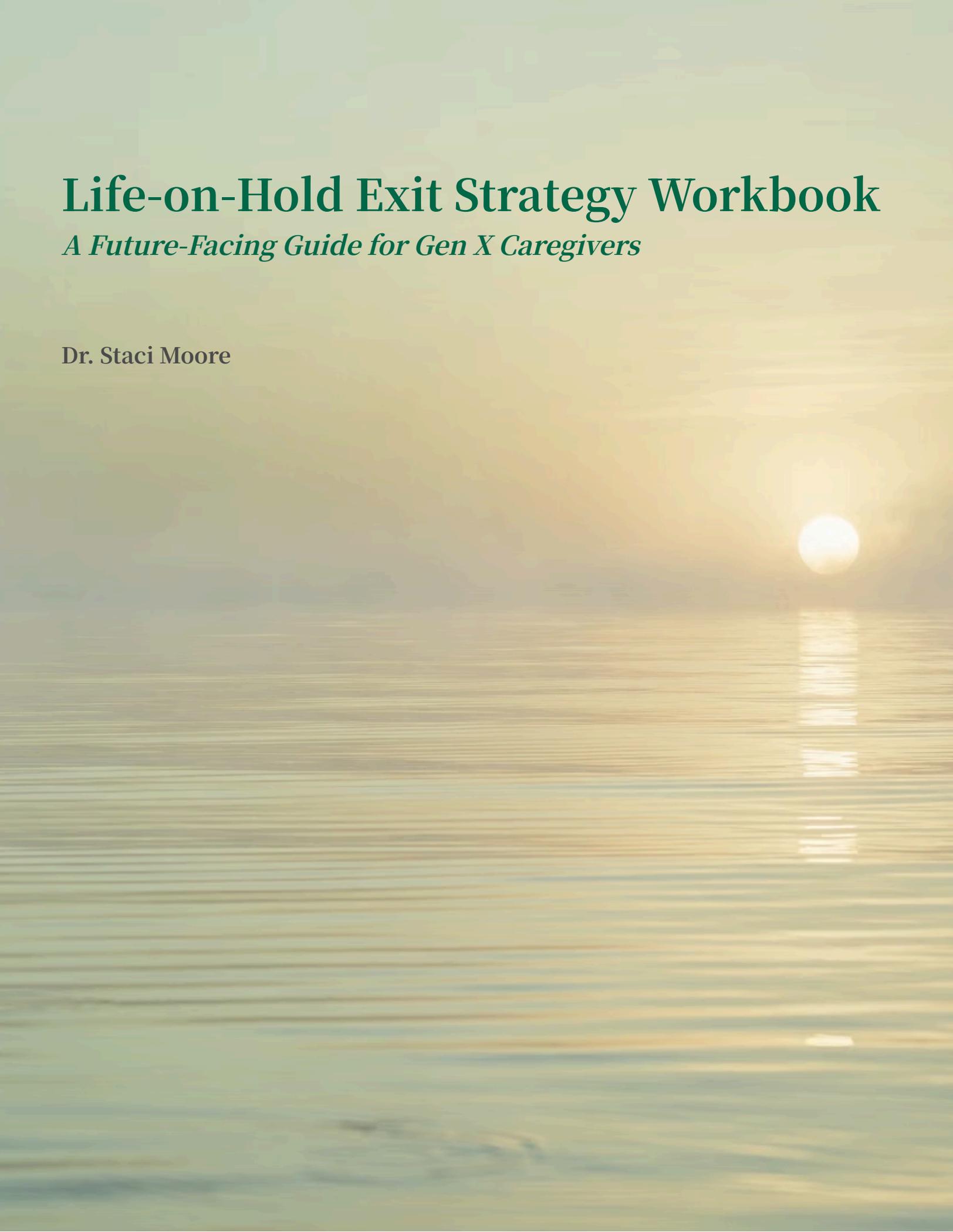


Life-on-Hold Exit Strategy Workbook

A Future-Facing Guide for Gen X Caregivers

Dr. Staci Moore



Acknowledge the Pause

Before planning forward, we name what was put down.

Reflection Prompts

- What parts of my life were paused: career, relationships, health, creativity, income, identity
- What did I stop doing because there was no capacity
- What have I been pretending I don't miss

Reality Check

Caregiving did not just take time. It took options. Naming the cost is not ingratitude. **It's clarity.**



Your Reflections

What parts of my life were paused:

What I stopped doing because there was no capacity:

What I've been pretending I don't miss:

Anchor Statement

I am allowed to grieve what caregiving interrupted without guilt.



Identity Reset: Who Am I Now?

You are not returning to who you were. That door closed quietly.

Identity Inventory

- Who was I before caregiving began
- Who did caregiving force me to become
- What strengths did I build that I didn't ask for but now own

Pattern Recognition

- What decisions do I make faster now
- What nonsense do I no longer tolerate
- Where am I more honest than I used to be

Your Identity Exploration

Who I was before caregiving began:

Who caregiving forced me to become:

Strengths I built that I didn't ask for but now own:

Decisions I make faster now:

Nonsense I no longer tolerate:

Where I am more honest than I used to be:

Anchor Statement: I am not starting over. I am starting informed.

Capacity Mapping

This section stops people from over-committing out of relief or fear.

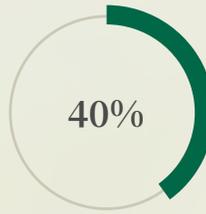
Rate Your Current Capacity

Rate honestly, not aspirationally. Use the percentages below as a guide.



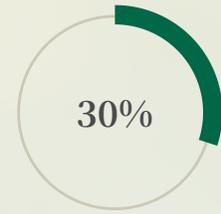
Mental Focus

Rate honestly, not aspirationally



Emotional Regulation

Current state after caregiving



Physical Stamina

Energy available now



Time Availability

Actual hours free



Decision Fatigue

Tolerance for choices

Your Personal Capacity Assessment

My mental focus right now (0-100%):

Notes about what affects my focus:

My emotional regulation capacity (0-100%):

What I notice about my emotional state:

My physical stamina (0-100%):

What my body is telling me:

My actual available time per week (hours):

How I want to spend it:

My decision-making tolerance (0-100%):

What decisions drain me most:

Red Flag Warning

If you feel pressure to "make up for lost time," pause. That impulse leads to burnout part two.

Where am I feeling pressure to rush or compensate?

Anchor Statement

I build my future around who I am now, not who I used to be.

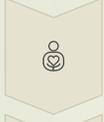
Career Re-Entry or Pivot

This applies whether caregiving ends, lessens, or shifts.



Return to Previous Field

Resume your career path with renewed perspective and experience



Pivot Using Transferable Skills

Leverage what caregiving taught you in new directions



Build Something New

Create at a sustainable pace that honors your capacity

Your Career Direction

Which path feels most aligned with who I am now? (Check one or describe a combination)

Transferable Skills Caregiving Built

- **Crisis management** under pressure
- **Medical advocacy** and navigation
- **Negotiation** and boundary setting
- **Documentation** and systems thinking
- **Emotional intelligence** under pressure
- **Resource coordination** and problem-solving

My Transferable Skills Inventory

Skills I developed during caregiving that I can use professionally:

How these skills translate to my desired career path:

What I need to learn or update to move forward:

First realistic step I can take this month:

AI Prompt

You are a career strategist. Translate my caregiving experience into professional skills for [industry or role].

Financial Re-Stabilization

No shame. No denial. Just math and truth.

1

Financial Snapshot

- Current income streams
- Gaps created by caregiving
- Expenses that increased
- Expenses that no longer matter

2

Short-Term Focus

- Stability over growth
- Predictability over hustle
- Margin over momentum

Your Financial Reality

Current monthly income streams:

Income gaps created by caregiving:

Expenses that increased during caregiving:

Expenses that no longer matter or can be eliminated:

What financial stability looks like for me (be specific):

One financial priority to address in the next 90 days:

Anchor Statement

I rebuild my finances with strategy, not panic.



Reclaiming Desire and Direction

Caregiving trains people to suppress wants. It's time to listen to yourself again.



What I Want More Of

Even if it feels unreasonable or impossible right now, what pulls at you? What small joy keeps appearing in your thoughts?



What I Want Less Of

Immediately. What drains you that you're finally ready to release? What are you done explaining?



What "Enough" Looks Like

Not perfection. Not before-caregiving levels. What would enough look like for who you are now?

Your Desires and Direction

What I want MORE of (even if it feels unreasonable):

Small joys that keep appearing in my thoughts:

What I want LESS of immediately:

What I'm done explaining:

What "enough" looks like for who I am now:

Directional Question

If I protect my energy first, what becomes possible?

Your answer:

This isn't selfish. This is **strategic self-preservation**. You cannot build a sustainable future by repeating the patterns that depleted you.

Support Systems by Design

No more lone-wolf rebuilding.



Emotional Support

People who understand without needing explanations. Who validate the complexity without rushing solutions.



Practical Support

Concrete help with errands, tasks, coordination. The unsexy logistics that consume energy.



Professional Support

Therapists, coaches, financial advisors. Expertise you don't have to figure out alone.



Technological Support

AI tools, automation, apps that handle cognitive load. Let technology do what it does best.

Your Support Network Mapping

Emotional support I currently have (names/relationships):

Emotional support I need to cultivate:

Practical support I can request or hire:

Professional support I need (be specific):

Technology/tools that could reduce my cognitive load:

Boundary Reset

What I Will No Longer Explain

Your choices. Your pace. Your needs.

What I Will No Longer Negotiate

Your rest. Your boundaries. Your worth.

What Support Is Non-Optional

The help you need to function and heal.

What I will no longer explain:

What I will no longer negotiate:

Support that is non-optional for me:

Anchor Statement

Support is infrastructure, not a favor.

Gentle Forward Plan

This is intentionally small.

01

One Area to Stabilize

What single aspect of your life needs solid ground first? Choose the foundation piece that makes everything else slightly easier.

02

One Area to Explore

What curiosity deserves gentle attention? Not commitment. Not pressure. Just permission to wonder.

03

One Habit to Protect

What non-negotiable practice keeps you tethered to yourself? The thing that, when you skip it, you feel the absence.

Your 90-Day Gentle Plan

ONE area I will stabilize first:

Why this area? What makes everything else slightly easier?

Specific actions I'll take to stabilize this area:

ONE area I will explore (with no pressure to commit):

What curiosity is pulling at me?

How I'll give this curiosity gentle attention:

ONE habit I will protect no matter what:

Why this habit matters (what I notice when I skip it):

How I'll protect this habit:

Success Metric

Peace, not productivity.

You are not measuring output. You are measuring whether you can breathe a little deeper at the end of each day. Whether the weight feels slightly more manageable. Whether you remember, even briefly, what it feels like to want something.

The 90-day window is not arbitrary. It's long enough to establish patterns without demanding transformation. It's permission to move slowly in a world that will tell you to move faster.

How I'll know this plan is working (what peace looks/feels like for me):

The Truth

Caregiving may end suddenly, slowly, or never fully. This workbook is not about certainty. It is about **preparedness without pressure**.

You may return to this workbook multiple times. You may skip sections that don't fit your reality. You may rage at prompts that assume endings that haven't come. All of that is valid.

What you experienced as a caregiver changed you. Some of those changes you'll keep. Some you'll shed with relief. Some you're still discovering. There is no template for what comes next because your caregiving story is yours alone.

But you deserve a future. Not despite what caregiving required of you, but **inclusive of it**. A future that doesn't demand you erase this season or pretend it didn't cost what it cost.

You are allowed to be tired and hopeful.

You are allowed to grieve and plan.

You are allowed to rest and want.

Your Final Reflections

What surprised me most while working through this workbook:

What I want to remember:

What gives me hope:

Permission I'm giving myself today:

Final Anchor

I am allowed to have a future that honors what this season required of me.

Date completed: _____

Date to revisit: _____