A COMPANION TO THE UNKNOWING PARENT

Reflection & Conversation Workbook

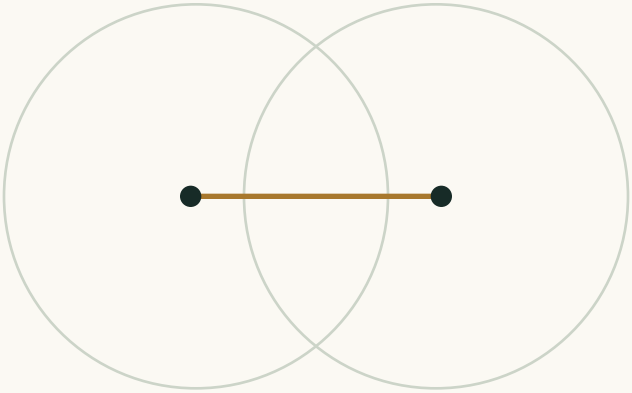
When your children grow up, your part in the conversation changes.

Seven sessions for parents of adult children

Worked examples. Words to try. Space to write.
One small practice to carry forward.

JAMES M. BALL

Print it. Write in it. Or type into the response fields.



FREE SAMPLE
Includes the first session and worksheet.
Full edition details: jamesmball.com/workbook

A PRACTICAL PLACE TO BEGIN

Work on your part.

This workbook is for parents of adult children who want to examine a familiar pattern and choose a different response.

Use one real moment

Pick a small, recent situation. Work with what you actually said or did. You do not need to solve your whole history before taking one useful step.

Take the sessions at your own pace

Allow about 15-20 minutes per session, or longer if you need it. There is no deadline. Each session pairs an idea and a fictional example with a worksheet and one small practice.

Keep your answers yours

Write by hand or open a saved copy in a PDF reader that supports forms. Save and reopen after a short test entry. These fields do not submit your writing to James or this website. Keep a completed copy somewhere private.

Choose whether to have the conversation

You can use every exercise privately. A request for space or no contact is a limit to respect. The workbook does not require a message, an apology, or a meeting to count as useful.

Keep expectations honest

These are reflection tools, not counseling or a promise of reconciliation. Another person may not agree, answer, or forgive. Your practice is the part you can choose.

SESSION 01

Name the moment

Separate what happened from the story you added.

Choose one recent exchange with your adult child. Keep it small: a delayed reply, a short phone call, a change of plans. A single moment is easier to examine honestly than a verdict about the whole relationship.

THE PRACTICE

Write three separate things: what you could have recorded, what you assumed it meant, and what you felt. Your feeling deserves attention. Your interpretation still deserves a question mark. Then name the part you can change: your next message, your tone, or the time you give yourself before answering.

A FICTIONAL EXAMPLE

A text has gone unanswered since yesterday. The observation is the unanswered message. "I do not matter" is an interpretation. Disappointment is a feeling. Sending another accusing message is a choice. None of this tells you why the reply has not arrived.

WORDS YOU CAN ADAPT

"*I noticed I filled in the blanks when I did not hear back. Is there a better time or way for us to keep in touch?*"

ONE SMALL TRY

Before your next reply, write one observation without words such as always, never, selfish, or ungrateful.

SESSION 01 WORKSHEET

Name the moment

Short answers are enough. Keep each response within the visible space, then choose one action you can take yourself.

1. What happened? Describe only what you saw or heard.

2. What meaning did I add, and what else could be true?

3. What did I feel, and what choice is mine now?

The small response I will practice, and when:

Before you move on: circle one sentence you want to remember.