

Intro Letter:

Start with One Thing: Creating Structure in the Chaos

In 2013, I was a single mom with three boys. My youngest, Elijah, was three years old, and we were in the process of obtaining his Autism diagnosis. Life at home and school was overwhelming—he barely slept, he was always on the move, and our daily life felt chaotic.

The professionals supporting us kept emphasizing the importance of structure. I would nod along, pretending I understood, until one day, I finally admitted the truth: *"When you say 'structure,' I don't actually know what that means."*

A light bulb went on for one of the helpers. She gently explained, *"Structure means routines."* Tears welled up in my eyes. Routine felt impossible in the chaos of our home and my unpredictable work schedule. But she reassured me.

"Rebecca, can you start with just one thing? Is there something you can do at the same time every day, in the same way?"

She explained that children have internal clocks, and even one predictable routine could begin to reset Elijah's rhythm, helping both of us feel more stable.

I thought about it and realized that, despite my hectic schedule, we could commit to having dinner at the table between 5:00 and 5:15 PM every day. In our home, we say grace before dinner. I recruited his older brothers and my parents, who helped care for him, to get on board with this one thing.

At first, Elijah wasn't required to sit through dinner, but we asked him to come to the table and be present for grace. That was all he could manage. Over time, he started sitting with us longer. Eventually, he was able to stay for the entire meal.

That *one thing* turned into a bedtime routine. Then a morning routine. Now, at 15, Elijah has developed many routines on his own—creating the very structure that once felt impossible.

I am so grateful that I had the courage to ask for help and admit what I didn't know. And even more grateful for the helper who met me with grace, breaking it down in a way that made sense.

What's Your One Thing?

Does structure feel difficult for your family? Does it seem impossible to create routines? Try sitting quietly and asking yourself:

 ***"What is there one thing we can begin to do every day at the same time?"***

What comes up for you when you ask this question? Who can support you as you implement this *one thing*?

It all starts with one small step. And that step can change everything.