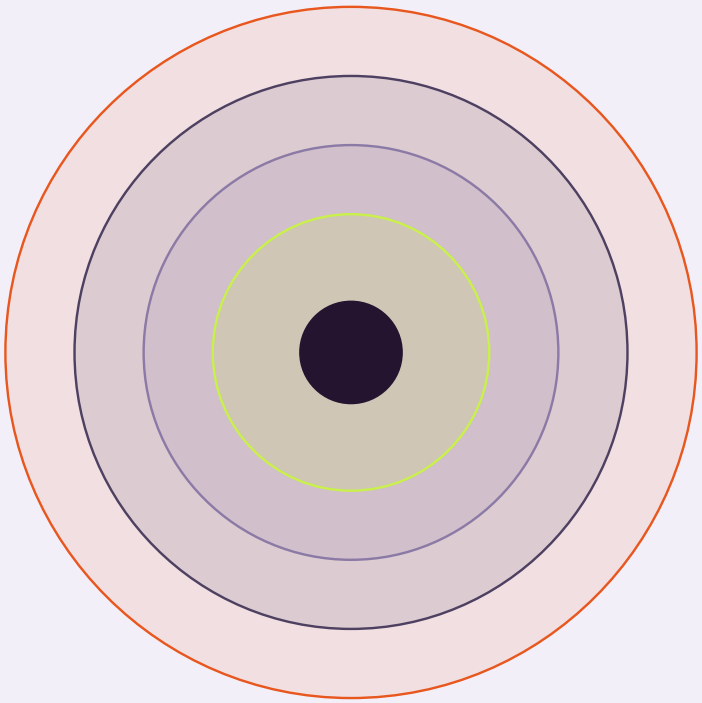


Life on the Bridge

A reading of the book by Kaelynn Partlow (2024)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Life on the Bridge, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

An autistic behaviour therapist, and Love on the Spectrum cast member, writes about autism from both sides: communication, behaviour, interaction and therapy, from someone who stands on both sides of the bridge at once.

Below are the 8 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Autism is not a superpower. Saying so out loud is what makes real support possible.

HourLife's takeaway on the case for naming disability plainly.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Ambiguity is the cost. Most of what goes wrong is a sentence with three possible meanings and no way to pick.

HourLife's reading of why plain communication matters, for anyone who talks to anyone.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Behaviour is communication that has run out of other options. Read it as a message, not as defiance.

HourLife's takeaway on reading meltdowns and repetitive behaviour as communication.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

She stands on the bridge because she is on both ends of it — autistic, and the therapist in the room.

The book's central image, as HourLife reads it.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Loneliness is the part nobody writes about, and it gets worse in adulthood as the scaffolding is removed.

HourLife's takeaway on loneliness in adulthood, once school and services have fallen away.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

She defends ABA, without apology and from the inside. You do not have to agree; you should know she is not naive about it.

ABA is contested among autistic adults; Partlow, an ABA practitioner, argues for it.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Plain language is not talking down. It is removing the guesswork so the actual conversation can start.

HourLife's takeaway: reduce the ambiguity, name the thing, say the time.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

She did not read a book on her own until she was fourteen, and went on to write one.

Kept in because the trajectory is the point: support changes what a life can contain. (Age per a 2024 Post and Courier profile.)

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Say the time, not 'soon'
- [ ] Write down the three ambiguous phrases you use most
- [ ] Give the change advance notice, in writing
- [ ] Build a sensory exit into every plan
- [ ] Learn what the behaviour is asking for

KEEP UP DAILY

- [ ] Ask a specific question instead of an open one
- [ ] Say what you mean literally, once per conversation
- [ ] Wait ten seconds after asking

30 days · Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Say the time, not 'soon'

Replace every vague interval with a number or an event: 'in ten minutes', 'after lunch', 'when the timer goes'.

'Soon' and 'in a bit' are the two most common causes of a bad afternoon.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Write down the three ambiguous phrases you use most

Everyone has them — 'in a minute', 'we'll see', 'be good'.

Write yours and write the plain version beside each. You cannot stop using a phrase you have never noticed you use.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Give the change advance notice, in writing

Plans change.

What makes it survivable is knowing early, in a form that can be re-read. A note on the fridge outperforms a spoken heads-up in the doorway every time.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Build a sensory exit into every plan

Where is the quiet room, and is it agreed in advance that leaving is allowed without explanation?

Naming it beforehand is what keeps an event from becoming an endurance test.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Learn what the behaviour is asking for

For the two behaviours that worry you most, write what happens immediately before and immediately after.

That pair usually tells you what the behaviour is achieving — which is the only useful place to start.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Ask a specific question instead of an open one

'How was your day' returns nothing.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Say what you mean literally, once per conversation

Catch one idiom, sarcasm or hint as it leaves your mouth and restate it plainly.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Wait ten seconds after asking

Processing time is not disinterest.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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December 2026

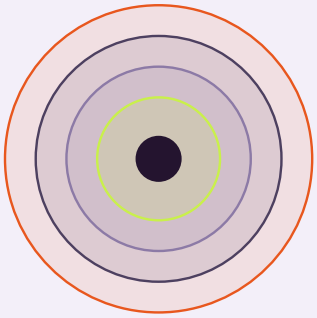
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Meeting someone in the middle is not a compromise on either end. It is the only place two people can actually stand.

HOURLIFE DISTILLATION