

SPARK — Margaret's Hero's Journey

15-Stage Service Design Framework

Graph Version:

Deficiency (1–5)

1. **Hidden problem** — Excluded from family moments, not just tech
2. **Call to action** — Flyer asks what she wants, not what she needs
3. **Mentor's help** — Emma wants better visits, not a student
4. **Accepting the problem** — Never had equal footing together
5. **Decision to act** — Both show up wanting something better

Challenge (6–8)

6. **Transition** — Margaret sets the agenda, Emma follows
7. **Designing without discouraging** — Margaret's knowledge builds the game
8. **Setting the parameters** — Must feel meaningful, equal, and safe

Personal growth (9–11)

9. **Key task accomplished** — Playing a game she helped create
10. **Emotional reward** — She teaches Emma something real
11. **Identity definition** — She designed something, not just learned

Community resolution (12–15)

12. **Returning home** — The game belongs to both of them
13. **Resolution** — Margaret initiates next time
14. **Problem solving** — She shares her pride, not a lesson
15. **Stability** — Her presence invites others in

Full Version:

Deficiency (1–5)

1. **Hidden problem** — Margaret doesn't feel excluded from technology. She feels excluded from the moments that happen around it. Her family sends memes she doesn't understand, plans trips in group chats she can't follow, and laughs at references she can't place. She wants to be in those conversations — not a simplified version of them,

not a watered-down "grandma edition" — but the real ones. She just doesn't know how to get there without asking for help in a way that makes her feel like a burden, or worse, like she's the reason the room slows down.

2. **Call to action** — Something in their world signals that connection is possible — a flyer, a family moment, a community program. It doesn't ask them to learn anything. It asks what they want.
3. **Mentor's help** — Emma isn't looking for a student. She's looking for a better way to spend time with her grandma — one where they're both having fun and neither of them is performing. She finds SPARK not because Margaret needs fixing, but because Emma wants the visit to mean something more.
4. **Accepting the problem** — They both recognize that their current dynamic — Emma showing, Margaret forgetting, both feeling guilty — isn't what either of them wants. The problem isn't Margaret's ability. It's that they've never had a shared activity that put them on equal footing.
5. **Decision to act** — They show up together. Not because one is teaching the other, but because they both want something better. That's the only agreement needed to begin.

Challenge (6–8) — Co-designing the game

6. **Transition** — The facilitator introduces the co-design framework. The challenge is not to play a game we made — it is for both players to design one together. Margaret sets the parameters: what kind of connection matters to her, what pace feels right, what success looks like. Emma's job is to make that possible, not to decide what it should be.
[Autonomy activated]
7. **Designing without discouraging** — The co-design process works like this: the facilitator opens with a question only Margaret can answer — "What's something you know a lot about that Emma probably doesn't?" This immediately positions Margaret as the expert. From her answer, the facilitator helps both players build a simple game around that knowledge — question cards, a storytelling prompt, a memory-sharing activity. Emma contributes by suggesting how to structure it, but Margaret approves every decision. If a suggestion makes Margaret hesitate, it doesn't make the cut. The game isn't finished until both players feel like they made it together — and until it requires nothing from Margaret that she hasn't already said she's comfortable with.
8. **Setting the parameters** — The players don't need to know what the final game will look like before they start — they just need to agree on what it must feel like. It should be meaningful to Margaret. It should require genuine participation from both. It should never put either player in a position where they feel useless or left behind. When both players can say yes to all three, the game is ready to play.

Personal growth (9–11) — Playing the game they designed

9. **Key task accomplished** — They play the game they built together. Margaret isn't learning something foreign — she's playing something she helped create. Because of that, she's never lost. She knows the rules because she made them.

10. **Emotional reward** — Margaret wins a round, or tells a story Emma has never heard, or teaches Emma something Emma genuinely didn't know. The dynamic that Emma wanted — equal footing, real connection — is happening. Neither of them is performing. They're just playing.
11. **Identity definition** — Margaret leaves not as someone who was helped, but as someone who designed something. Emma leaves having followed her grandmother's lead and discovered that it was more fun that way. [Merit — Margaret's knowledge became the game itself]

Community resolution (12–15)

12. **Returning home** — They leave with the game they made. It lives on the fridge, in a card deck, in a shared memory. It belongs to both of them and they can play it again anytime — no facilitator needed.
13. **Resolution** — The week after, Emma texts just to say hi. Margaret texts back — and then asks when they can play again. She initiated. That's new. [Interpersonal care — now flows in both directions]
14. **Problem solving** — Margaret calls her daughter and tells her about the afternoon. She's animated in a way her daughter hasn't heard in a while. She describes the game, what she contributed, how Emma didn't know half the answers. She asks if her daughter wants to try it with her grandkids. She's not passing on a lesson — she's sharing something she's proud of.
15. **Stability** — community leader — Problem solving was personal — Margaret sharing her experience one conversation at a time with people she loves. Stability is when that ripples outward without her having to push it. Her neighbor hears about it and asks how to sign up. Her church group starts asking if SPARK can come to them. Margaret isn't teaching anyone — she's simply living proof that the system works, and people around her can see it. [Human rights — she exists in this space fully, and her presence in it invites others in]

Storyboard — 10 panels

- Panel 1 — Margaret at the dinner table while her family laughs at a meme on their phones. She's smiling but slightly outside the circle. Emma glances over and feels the gap too.
- Panel 2 — Emma sitting across from Margaret after a frustrating tutorial attempt. Margaret looks embarrassed. Emma looks helpless. Neither is having fun and both know it.
- Panel 3 — Emma finds the SPARK flyer at the library. The headline reads "Bring someone you love." She tears off the tab. No mention of learning, no mention of technology.
- Panel 4 — David greets them at the door of the workshop. He hands Margaret a card that says "Elder Expert." She raises an eyebrow. He smiles and steps back.

- Panel 5 — David asks Margaret "What's something you know a lot about that Emma probably doesn't?" Margaret sits up straighter. Emma's pen is ready. David is already moving away from the table.
- Panel 6 — Margaret and Emma building the game together. Margaret is pointing at something. Emma is writing it down. David is visible in the background, arms folded, watching quietly — not intervening.
- Panel 7 — They're playing. Margaret wins a round and laughs. Emma looks genuinely surprised. David is not in the frame.
- Panel 8 — Margaret puts the cheat sheet on the fridge. It's in her own handwriting. David is gone. The system is no longer needed for this moment to exist.
- Panel 9 — Margaret on the phone with her daughter, animated and proud, describing the afternoon. Emma's name comes up. So does the game they made.
- Panel 10 — Margaret's neighbor knocks on her door asking about SPARK. Margaret answers with the confidence of someone who has something worth sharing.

Product-Service System Map — 3 layers

Layer 1 — Touchpoints (what people physically interact with, left to right in session order)

Community flyer → Workshop poster → Role cards (Elder Expert / Tech Guide / Program Host) → Prompt cards → Co-design worksheet → Cheat sheet (elder-authored) → Reflection card

Layer 2 — Interactions (what happens between the three people) David introduces the framework → David hands Margaret the Elder Expert card and steps back → Margaret sets the agenda → Emma follows Margaret's lead → David redirects Emma if she takes over → Margaret and Emma co-design the game together → Both players play the game → Elder initiates follow-up contact → Elder shares experience outward

The ownership transfer arrow should appear visually between "David hands Margaret the card" and "Margaret sets the agenda" — this is the hinge of the entire system. Before that arrow, David holds the structure. After it, Margaret holds the power.

Layer 3 — Back-end support (invisible to participants, what makes it run) Facilitator training program → Dignity-first language guide → Card deck production → Community outreach network → Senior centers and libraries as distribution points → David's session debrief and iteration notes

The closing loop — at the far right of the map, Margaret's word-of-mouth connects back to Layer 3 as a new distribution input. Draw this as a curved arrow from "Elder shares experience outward" looping back into "Community outreach network" in Layer 3. This is the proof that the system is self-sustaining — Margaret has become infrastructure without being asked to.

David's role across all three layers In Layer 1 he owns the touchpoints. In Layer 2 his role visually shrinks from left to right — present at the start, invisible by panel 7. In Layer 3 he feeds back into the system through debrief and iteration. His arc across the map is the meta design argument: a facilitator whose success is measured by how little he's needed by the end.