**Starting-Over Guidesheet #12**

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**Cooperating with Roadblocks**

***Judith Couchman***

At the end of last summer I picked up a suitcase and changed my life. My lower back pulled out and I felt the terrible pain immediately. This prompted five-times-a-week visits to a chiropractor, who assessed me as “emergency status.” Five months later I’m down to once-a-week appointments, targeting not only my lower back, but a spine curved in the wrong direction and a cemented upper back. Years of computer work had finally roadblocked me.

Around September my fibromyalgia flared up, and I could only work about four hours a day before pain intruded. At night I tossed and turned, begging to sleep, plagued by pain and restlessness. I quit writing a book and reduced my work life to the urgent and necessary.

After years of trying remedies, in December a doctor prescribed a medication that eradicated my fibro pain and nighttime restlessness. My back improved enough to work and I anticipated resuming my full life in the new year. Then a chest cold settled in for three weeks, landing me in bed. So now at the end of January, I’m starting my new year.

If anything, the last half year has taught me about roadblocks. Sometime when they intrude, I can remove them quickly. But other times—to my dismay—the barriers won’t budge. In particular, the roadblock of injury and illness demands that I slow down, set projects aside, and recover. I’ve no choice but to cooperate. And it’s the cooperation that eventually heals and strengthens me.

Especially when we’re starting over, we’ll hit roadblocks. They arrive in the form of resources, relationships, personal shortcomings, world events, and more. We need wisdom to discern whether a roadblock means stopping, pausing, going around, or breaking the barrier. Do we wait or plow through? Take baby steps or high leaps? Give up or go forward?

Consider the roadblocks you might encounter while starting over and pursuing your purpose. How will you assess and respond to them?

**Responding to Roadblocks**

1. When a roadblock challenges you, how can you respond rather than react?
2. What criteria can you create to assess a roadblock? Think of questions you can ask.
3. What roadblocks might you encounter while starting over? How can you respond to them?
4. Are you facing a roadblock now? If so, how can you manage it?
5. How will you know if a roadblock means slowing down, waiting awhile, or stopping altogether?
6. How might spiritual warfare affect your roadblocks?
7. What could you learn through your roadblocks?

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