

The Soft Road

www.thesoftroad.com

GOING BACKWARDS TO GO FORWARDS

If you are having frequent thoughts about the future, making decisions and choices, and feeling anxious or trepidatious about what could come next, then this is for you. That's likely almost everyone, myself included!

As a coach and teacher, I am often asked about navigating the future and making decisions. My answer often surprises people: go backwards in order to go forwards.

When we want to go forwards with decisions to make, or we simply want a broader perspective on our current reality, we can enquire of our own history in a particular way, and take some time to do this exercise.

Start with an oversized blank sheet of paper and map out your life, going backwards. This is meant to be fun to do, and if you're anything like me, it includes coloured pens, arrows and annotations! First capture headline events and changes, and significant relationships of all kinds. On a second pass, make note of *how* the things you've written down came about.

This is important. We are recording *how* things happened, not *why*. Almost everyone is subject to the distracting habit of analysis and trying to make sense of why things happened as they did; but this way of thinking, poring over the past for clues as though looking at our life through a microscope, is a trap.

What, then, to look for as we go backwards with our map? Things that seemingly happened by chance, synchronicity, right time, right place, "luck", a call or a meeting out of the blue. This could be finding somewhere to live, meeting a partner, a career opportunity, making new friends; or apparently smaller events like a book title that jumps off the shelf, a new interest that inspires us...

As we populate our map, our memory is activated. Notice also where you had an idea, a desire or calling, leading you forward, even though it made no sense or seemed high risk at the time. Our map also provides a big picture view of the narrative of our lives that helps us place the more difficult things, or difficult times, in the tapestry.

Now, sit back and observe. See how many things occur in life outside of our direct control or effort to "make it happen"? Where what mattered most was not that we tried hard and strained but that we said "yes" because it felt right, or we felt compelled to do something different, and took action on opportunities as they presented themselves. Where we had the courage to leap, not knowing where we would land!

For this, and at all times, it is helpful to adopt the Vedic worldview: things, both good and difficult, don't happen for *a* reason – which tempts us to look for the reason why – everything happens for *all* reasons.

The Soft Road

www.thesoftroad.com

Going Forwards – with all the perceived challenges that lay ahead – can now be approached from a different perspective, gained from our exercise in Going Backwards. We raise our awareness, we loosen our grip on the need to know *why*, and become more receptive to the flow of life, happening for us, coming towards us, always—in our history, in our present, which is our future in the making.

“...See your life as a gift from the great unknown. And your task is to receive it...”

The Long Way Home – Mary Chapin Carpenter

Melanie Kirkbride is an exceptional coach and master teacher of Vedic meditation who works with people to empower them to unlock their potential and thrive. [Email us](#) to enquire about Melanie’s services, and to receive her Teachings.