



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Episode #4: The Courage to Rest

Please note: This is an unedited transcript, provided as a courtesy, and reflects the actual conversation as closely as possible. Please forgive any typographical or grammatical errors.

Martha Beck: [Intro Music] Welcome to Bewildered. I'm Martha Beck, here with Rowan Mangan. At this crazy moment in history a lot of people are feelings bewildered, but that actually may be a sign we're on track. Human culture teaches us to come to consensus, but nature — our own true nature — helps us come to our senses. Rowan and I believe that the best way to figure it all out is by going through bewilderment into be-wild-erment. That's why we're here. [Music fades]

Martha Beck: Hi, I'm Martha Beck.

Rowan Mangan: And I'm Rowan Mangan. This is episode four of Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out. I know I'm certainly trying to figure it out. Martha, have you got everything figured out still?

Martha Beck: You know, I thought I had. A couple of days ago I was like, "Oh, my God, I've got it. I've got it all figured out," and then the dogs went outside.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, boy.

Martha Beck: It's not good.

Rowan Mangan: It would challenge the Buddha himself.

Martha Beck: Yeah. It is not just a cold place, this Pennsylvania where we live, it is also a muddy place.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, wait.

Martha Beck: And it is a place rife with wildlife, and you know what wildlife leaves about.



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Rowan Mangan: Like... they forget umbrellas.

Martha Beck: Well, there's that.

Rowan Mangan: They drop coins out of their pockets —

Martha Beck: We have a little return box for that. But no, they leave poop. They leave poop everywhere.

Martha Beck: Here's my question, Ro. They can train dogs. Like they've bred dogs that do backflips on purpose just to entertain people. I'm not even kidding. They've bred dogs with like nine toes on each foot. They can go puffin hunting in Iceland.

Rowan Mangan: They have not.

Martha Beck: Yes, they have. You should look it up. They're so weird. They have so many toes and they can dislocate their own shoulders so that they can crawl backwards in small tunnels.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God.

Martha Beck: They can breed dogs to do anything, but they cannot stop a dog from running into the woods and rolling in poop. Every dog ever bred, I swear to God, will run into the woods, find an animal that has died of diarrhea in its own poop. It has pooped itself to death, and then decayed in the poop. That is what the dogs will roll in, and then they will come in and they will get all over everything you own.

Rowan Mangan: And you are proposing that science has repeatedly attempted to breed this out of dogs. I mean, one would hope so. I'm right there with you.

Martha Beck: Haven't figured it out.

Rowan Mangan: But they haven't.

Martha Beck: Did they just not notice? Were the people breeding the dogs, did they have just servants who wiped the poop and dead animals off their dogs?

Rowan Mangan: I bet they did.

Martha Beck: I think they had that in Downton Abbey.



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- Rowan Mangan: We have this habit of often blaming people having servants for reasons that things were easier for other people than they are for us.
- Martha Beck: We figured that out so long ago.
- Martha Beck: So I haven't... I'm trying, if anybody out there wants to tell us why they have not bred the poop lust out of dogs. I'm still trying to figure it out. What about you? You got it all figured out?
- Rowan Mangan: You know, I don't. I can't say that I do. The thing that I have been really puzzling over in the last few days is... I have this cool thing in my office where my screensaver is. It pulls my favorite photos out of my phone and I swear to God, I get entranced by that for hours.
- Martha Beck: I also get entranced by it.
- Rowan Mangan: I know, it's lovely, isn't it? And it does this little sideshow and there's eight or six right tiles up there at a time and you just go, "Oh, I remember that." And then sometimes you go, "I have no memory of that. When did that happen?" And I started to think, we have Cloud storage, we can put any old thing up there.
- Martha Beck: We can.
- Rowan Mangan: And I just don't know how to ever bring it down again. Like I'm thinking, it's just an interesting relationship that we now have with time. Where, you know, "Oh, it's so great, we can just take a bunch of photos and then we don't risk any of them turning out crap. We can see how they look at the beginning." But you will never have time, ever, to look at all your memories that you have so cleverly recorded. You know? It's just sort of unmanageable, unless you put a lot of time or deep, deep systems in.
- Martha Beck: You will never have time to look at your memories. Wow. That just... That feels like a mic drop. I think you just figured it all out.
- Rowan Mangan: My gosh. I feel a strange golden light pulsating out of my body.
- Martha Beck: Oh, my God. She's gone. Isn't it funny that there's one theory of psychology. They say we don't actually want things for themselves. We're out looking for memories.



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- Martha Beck: Everything we think we want to do, we're actually going out so that we can have the memory of doing it.
- I'm not so sure.
- Because we don't have time to look at our memories.
- Rowan Mangan: But we can collect memories as memories. We just can't put them in the Cloud and ever bring them down again. Get a little hook and bring them down out of the cloud. Not all of them, whereas, I don't know, if a memory is themselves, like the memories that we record on the internal.
- Martha Beck: So if your personality and your being is everything you remember in your life and you've put like a ton of it on the Cloud, but you can't remember most of it, does that mean that your fundamental identity is now in the cloud and not in your body?
- Rowan Mangan: Whoa. Whoa.
- Martha Beck: Figure that one out.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, that gives me chills. But then on the other hand they do say if you remember Woodstock, you weren't there. So there's always that factor of not remembering a lot of memories. The other strange thing, though, is that we only started doing... Like this is quite a recent phenomenon. So I have more memories in the last five years in actual images, actual data, than I have had in my whole life.
- Martha Beck: I read recently that 90% of all photographs ever taken were taken this year.
- Rowan Mangan: Shut the front door.
- Martha Beck: Right? Like they used to have to set up a whole booth and get a man who was willing to die, put his head in a box, put a muffler on it and then like-
- Rowan Mangan: And that was just the sort of fun for the afternoon. That was just the sideshow.



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- Martha Beck: Yeah. My great grandfather and his three Mormon wives standing there stock-still for like a month-and-a-half while a photographer risked his life to take the picture. So, we only have one picture of that. But if they were here now, we'd have like several dozen.
- Rowan Mangan: It's true. It's true. We would have...
- Martha Beck: It'd be frightening, actually.
- Rowan Mangan: It's weird to think of ancient Mormoneers... Mormon pioneers. Mormoneers! It's Martha and the Mormoneers, coming live to your city this winter.
- Martha Beck: Whether you want us or not.
- Rowan Mangan: And thinking of those guys like taking selfies, just using Instagram filters and putting little mouse noses and ears on their faces and stuff.
- Martha Beck: It would have been so different.
- Rowan Mangan: Maybe they would have lightened up a bit.
- Martha Beck: You'd think. These do not look like happy people.
- Rowan Mangan: Karen said, Karen, our beloved, said — we've been speculating because we do have some Mormon neighbors — I don't know if I should talk about it. Yeah, I can talk about —
- Martha Beck: We love them. They're wonderful.
- Rowan Mangan: They're awesome. But they do have just suddenly a van, like a beige '80s child molester van that has just appeared at their house, but it's parked oddly away from the house and Karen said, and I am quoting this directly, she said, "Yeah, I think a Christmas uncle is sleeping in it and they're not letting him in the house," and I am just so delighted by this notion of a Christmas uncle.
- Martha Beck: Everyone should have one, but they can't come in the house.
- Rowan Mangan: They can't come in the house.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, just throw pieces of pie out the van and they run out and get it off the snow.



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Rowan Mangan: Well, that's if they've been a good Christmas uncle.

Martha Beck: That's true.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Karen thinks the Christmas uncle is frozen to death by now.

Martha Beck: I wouldn't doubt it.

Rowan Mangan: Just like Mormon pioneers, really, when you think it.

Martha Beck: Like the Mormoneers. Everyone should have a Mormoneer pioneer uncle. We can take pictures of him, throw it into the cloud and fail to remember him. You see it all comes around, Ro, if you just follow the logic.

Rowan Mangan: I tell you what, following the logic of one of these conversations is, it takes Harvard. Drink.

Martha Beck: Drink! Does it count? Do they get to drink if... You say, I went to Harvard instead of me.

Rowan Mangan: Maybe if I say it looking at you really pointedly because they can hear that in my voice.

Martha Beck: Like, do it again.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, no. What did I say? To follow the logic of one of these conversations we have, you would have to go to Harvard —

Martha Beck: And then I say — and it's great because it's like you brought it up — “You know what? My Christmas uncle went to Harvard. Oh wait, no, it was me. But I've forgotten. I can't... I don't have time to look at the memories. So...”

Rowan Mangan: I'm just falling down a whole rabbit hole right here. It's amazing.

Martha Beck: Ah, don't Google rabbit hole. You'll never come back. I tried it.

Rowan Mangan: I fell backwards up into the Cloud.

Martha Beck: You're pinging all my references to the Divine Comedy and that is too nerdy.

Rowan Mangan: I have to say, everything in our lives right now, because of a book Martha's writing, is in her mind a reference to the Divine Comedy.



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- Martha Beck: He literally falls upward into the cloud. Like you just said it. Plus, he has all these angels up there and they don't have time because they don't have memory because they're always staring at the light that is God and nothing ever changes in the light, which is true. At the speed of light you attain infinite mass and no time passes. So the angels don't need memory because they're always looking at the changeless. So you've been talking Dante this whole time and you didn't know it.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. I have the most groundbreaking theory to shoot at you right now. When we die —
- Martha Beck: Yes.
- Rowan Mangan: ... we fall backwards up into the cloud. The life review begins in the form of all the photos we took in our lifetime.
- Martha Beck: It's a selfie life revue.
- Rowan Mangan: It's a selfie life review. And, the light is, oh, my gosh, all these spiritual people are going to kill me. The light is actually all the flashes, all the photo flashes that we have experienced over our lifetimes.
- Martha Beck: We're creating the light with photo flashes, putting it in the cloud.
- Rowan Mangan: And they accumulate and then we get to experience the rush of them when we die. When they're going towards the light they're going backwards in time through every photo flash that they ever had in their entire life. And I don't mean flashing in that way. You have a dirty mind. But why not?
- Martha Beck: Why not? My Christmas uncle, again. Big habit of his.
- Rowan Mangan: Good callback.
- Martha Beck: Boom! Okay, what are we talking about?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Well, let's hope it makes way more sense than this. We spoke to Carmen this week, who is someone we know and who is having something that she's trying to figure out.



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- Martha Beck: What is she trying to figure out? Well, she said this. "I'm trying to figure out how to rest in a world that wants you to constantly be moving. I find it hard to let myself rest without feeling the need to justify myself."
- Rowan Mangan: Yikes. I can feel that.
- Martha Beck: Me, too.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: So what we do in this podcast, you might remember, is we're trying to help people move from bewilderment, where Carmen is right now, to be-wild-erment, where she's responding not to culture, but to her wild, true nature. So Carmen doesn't know how to rest without feeling she has to justify it. What would we say is the cultural context for Carmen's bewilderment, Marty?
- Martha Beck: Oh, do not get me started. Oh, you just did.
- Rowan Mangan: I just did. There I went.
- Martha Beck: Oops. Well, long ago, there was a man named Max Weber. He was a German sociologist, the founder of sociology. And what he did notice is that Americans are obsessed with productivity. He wrote a book called *The American Ethic* and the... Wait, I forgot. *Spirit of Capitalism*, something like that. *The American Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and it was all about how Americans felt like you can tell who God likes by how much stuff they have. So Americans went nuts trying to prove that they were good by craving mountains of stuff. And it was so depressing to Max Weber, he literally said, "We're going into an iron cage. There's no comfort in here. There's just... We'll end up robots." And then he went to sleep for like three years and couldn't get out of bed.
- Rowan Mangan: So he was worried about the mountain of stuff, all the cost it takes to participate in the mountain of stuff kind of economy.
- Martha Beck: He was worried that the joy of human life would go away because the obsession with productivity would eat us.



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- Rowan Mangan: Right, so the productivity is linked to the stuff.
- Martha Beck: Exactly. It's all about material stuff. So, like when Henry David Thoreau wrote in Walden, he wrote, "The majority of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Remember?
- Rowan Mangan: I do.
- Martha Beck: And he was actually talking about the Industrial Revolution and the factories, and it was factories that pulled people out of their houses and put them in these horrible workplaces where they just played with widgets all day long.
- Rowan Mangan: Not usually that quiet in those factories, though, was it Marty-moo? More of a... like noisy, clangy desperation.
- Martha Beck: I'm just flashing back to a factory I went to in China, like in the '80s.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God, me, too. That's amazing.
- Martha Beck: You were actually there as a neonate. You are a little tiny newborn, but they had this big factory that we went to do research on and the communists had built this factory to create all these wonderful machines, but the one thing they left out was there was no electricity at all. So, all these people, comrades — *tóngzhì* — they were all sent to the factory where they would lie on the machines and sleep all day. I kid you not. We just walked through this factory full of people sleeping on machines that could not work.
- Rowan Mangan: That is such a nice reversal of this like sweatshop kind of cliché.
- Martha Beck: I think I just figured it out!
- Rowan Mangan: That's what you need to do, Carmen, just find yourself an abandoned factory and rest there. There'll be no one there to judge you.
- Martha Beck: It's really interesting though to look at how people used to live before factories. When we lived in California, and I researched the Native Americans that lived there first.



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- Martha Beck: And they lived there for 6,000 years in complete harmony, living by doing things, hunting, fishing, basket weaving, gardening, gathering, talking, braiding each other's hair, all stuff we do on vacation.
- Rowan Mangan: Not an IT guy among them.
- Martha Beck: Not a single one. Well, yeah, there was an IT guy and he could make fire out of anything and that's all they needed.
- Rowan Mangan: That's wild.
- Martha Beck: Then, you know, Europeans came in, killed everyone and started lustfully digging for gold and ruining everything. But so we have this thing and it is very sort of Western European, 17th century enlightenment, blah-biddy-blah, take over the world. And what it leads to is a society where people are obsessed with earning wealth, and to do that they have to work all the time. That's not good. What's been your experience with that? You had an orifice job. Wait, that sounded really wrong. You had an office job.
- Rowan Mangan: We agreed we weren't going to talk about that part of my career, Marty. Yeah, I've worked in a bunch of offices, but I think that it didn't have that quiet desperation for me in my life because it was always a means to an end and the end was always long months of travel. But it's funny because we've actually been watching *The Office* for fun, of late, and there is something a little bit horrifying to look back on with the fluorescent lights and the ill-fitting work clothes, shirts, and everything. And you're just like, "Oh." And then the glum office party planning committee, it's... Yeah.
- Martha Beck: It really is not great. And the more developed it got, the worse it was.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And I think what's interesting is that there's another layer to the cultural thing, which isn't just we want stacks of stuff. A lot of people who are working in the middle or working-class or middle-class jobs, they're just doing it to survive. But they're still doing it 45, 50 hours a week.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.



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- Rowan Mangan: Or they're doing it, and this is the kind of bit where I feel like Carmen's getting at, they're doing it because they're meant to be doing it, because it's expected that they will be doing it. That the culture around them... that's the fear, anyway, that she'll be judged by the people around her if she rests.
- Martha Beck: So when you say they're meant to be doing it, here's an interesting Australianism because when you say they're meant to be doing it, it means they're being told to do it. But when we say they're meant to be doing it, it means it's their divine right to be doing it.
- Rowan Mangan: It's just their place.
- Martha Beck: Manifest destiny.
- Rowan Mangan: [crosstalk 00:16:41] Got it. Well, I should have said, it's what they feel they're supposed to be doing. Does that make sense to the Americans?
- Martha Beck: Yeah! As productivity just was accepted as an absolute good, people got more and more and more destroyed by it. Like Henry Ford, the big factory founder of the universe, the whole Model T thing, he revolutionized business, and he'd have all these people in his factories putting on widgets. But the burnout rate was incredible. He would have to hire like 500 people for every position he wanted to keep staffed. And the turnover rate was almost 90% per month. People hated working like that. But all you ever hear about it is, "Oh, my God, he made up this amazing model. Cars were pouring off. He revolutionized the culture by putting cars in everybody's garages." They had garages, oddly, though no cars. He put cars in them.
- Rowan Mangan: It was a brilliant use of space, really. What interests me is we don't still have that level of, as far as I know in most places, of turnover, even in factory jobs. And I wonder if part of what you're describing is the effect of working production lines for people who don't have the cultural expectation already because it's a new thing.
- Martha Beck: Well, you know what was interesting about it was that in order to remain productive, what he had to do was raise pay.



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- Martha Beck: So then he became famous for... You'll have this horrible job but it'll pay a lot, \$5 a day, which in 1911 trust me, was more than it is now. But here's the thing. Instead of saying, "Oh, my God, this is inhuman, nobody can live like this. This is, by the way, destroying the ecology of the planet," whatever. They didn't know that back then. Instead of saying, "This is inhuman and awful," what they said was, "Okay, it stinks, but if you get enough money for it, you'll sell out for it. You will sell your freedom. You will sell the blue sky over your head and all the fun you ever had, you will sell it out because it's a horrible job, but it pays well."
- Rowan Mangan: Geez, this is us, this is human nature.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, it's certainly the Western world, and then it was imported. It was basically taken all around the globe. You read the Western colonial histories, what Europeans wrote when they went to various cultures of indigenous people, and they always said, "They're so lazy and stupid and they just sit around, these simple creatures, doing things like —"
- Rowan Mangan: Big smiles on their simple faces looking like they don't have a care in the world.
- Martha Beck: Exactly. So we killed as many as we possibly could, put the rest in slavery, and then we'll rape the women and we'll have children that are ours but also theirs, but it's okay because we'll teach them to think like us. I mean, it's literally a crazy, crazy, mentally ill way of framing life's value. But it's so dominant in terms of guns, germs and steel, to quote Jared Diamond, that... It's like everywhere. It's everywhere in the world.
- Rowan Mangan: And there's a mixed up psychology in there, I think, in how we actually go about individual pursuits of that stuff, that we work hard for the stuff. But I think for most people, the stuff that they get is some sort of compensation prize for doing all the work. And so it's like in the 90 minutes a day that I'm not working, I'll sit in a comfortable chair, thank you very much.
- Martha Beck: Right.
- Rowan Mangan: And then I'll go back to work because at some point my wife might want to sit down.



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- Martha Beck: Maybe. Our wife never sits down. It's interesting, though, because in Carmen's case, she's introjected, it to use the psychological term. She's taken the whole culture and she's made it her own conscience. So she's got this internal nag. And I know this nag well because I've had it myself and it sits there saying, "What are you doing? Get working, get working, get working." And by the way, for those who don't work outside the home, when they started making labor-saving devices like vacuum cleaners and washing machines, they thought that housewives would now have these blissfully indolent existences. Instead what happened was the standard of cleanliness went up until people were doing more housework than before. So that shows you how, no matter what gadgets we put into our lives, we don't use them to decrease labor. We always increase labor to match the limits of what we've created.
- Rowan Mangan: There's a great Ani DiFranco line. You know how I enjoy her?
- Martha Beck: Oh, yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: That she has in one song and she says, "Just when you think that you've got enough, enough grows and everywhere that you go in life, enough knows." It was just that sort of chilling, dark side of this. So, can I ask you something?
- Martha Beck: I suppose so.
- Rowan Mangan: With this sense of introject and the sense of cultural shaming around productivity, to what extent do you think the cultural shaming is real? And to what extent do you think it's the sort of pressure that we put on ourselves?
- Martha Beck: You know what? If I really put all my cards on the table, my deep belief is that 100% of it is cultural.
- Rowan Mangan: Wow.
- Martha Beck: I genuinely believe, because I was so run ragged. The whole reason I started writing about rest and blah, blah, blah, but I was such a hypocrite because I never rested. But I wrote about it because I desperately needed to rest and I would take 15 minutes and think I was a champion.



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- Martha Beck: And then I thought, "Wait, what would happen if I went wild? If I got be-wild-ered?" So, I went to wild places and then I moved to a wild place and I... The first year was one of the most terrifying years of my life because I had nothing on my schedule. Do you know how scary that is?
- Martha Beck: I just walked around with the thought, "Everything's going to fall apart." Like, "I can't not be productive." When I was at Harvard, did I tell you I went to Harvard?
- Rowan Mangan: Drink.
- Martha Beck: I used to just not plan to go to bed on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I worked two all-nighters a week until my body gave out, and then I just kept trying. But I was 50 when I moved to the woods and that first year I was so scared because there was so much culture saying, "Everything will fall apart unless you work." And after a year I had realized while wandering through the forest that in the ecosystem of a human life, if we can let go enough, we will be provided for.
- Martha Beck: And I know that sounds hypocritical coming from a privileged white... You know, I get that I'm privileged, but I honestly believe that if we're willing to let go and trust the forces of the universe, what we're meant to do will come to us as naturally and as beautifully as the hunting, fishing, basket weaving, gardening things that kept humanity alive for hundreds of thousands of years.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I see how you came from consensus to your senses in those woods over that year and went through the scary fire of that fear, of not being productive. But I think that, what you're saying about you'll be led to what you should do if you rest, there's a couple of things for me. One is that I don't really understand how someone does that, who's not going to wander in the woods for a year because I happen to know Carmen and I know that she loves her work. So it's only about... She's not in a life of quiet desperation. She just works too much.



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- Rowan Mangan: And so if it's a question of integrating, rather than cutting off the productivity, how would we recommend Carmen come from the consensus of the culture that says you must work all the time, and that she feels in herself, for her to come to her senses?
- Martha Beck: That's such a great question, and it really is... I love Marie Kondo's life changing magic of tidying up. Everybody went nuts over that book because she believes that you should pick up an object and if it doesn't spark joy, you don't need to own it. If it does spark joy, it doesn't matter what it is, keep it. But if it doesn't spark joy, it doesn't matter if it's your, I don't know, your holiday uncle, get rid of it. And the van. The van sparks joy, the uncle not so much. I'm keeping the van, get rid of the uncle. But I really do... See, I came back and a lot of the things I'd been doing, like I'm writing a book right now. I've written a lot of books. I didn't enjoy it. I enjoy this so much because my whole life was like, "Touch it. Does it spark joy?" That sounded really wrong. That sounded like something would happen in the van...
- Rowan Mangan: I think you've just given a new line to perverts all over the world.
- Martha Beck: That's why... Touch it. That's why... Oh, my gosh. So, anyway, it's so weird because I do the same things, but like now we go to New York city, which used to be the city that never sleeps. And I would go there and just get so manic and so wired and so crazed, and I'd have to rest and rest. Now we go there and it's like skiing or something, it's riding the energy of so many millions of humans, and I can't take it for very long, but it's actually joyful for me. The very same things are joyful when they're done from a place of really deeply assessing your own joy.
- Rowan Mangan: Mmm!
- Martha Beck: Like when you were working in offices and stuff, from what you said earlier, you'd plan these long trips, right? And you knew you were earning toward these trips and you loved to travel. So did the work itself spark joy because of the travel coming up? Or did it not at all and it was just like...



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- Rowan Mangan: It was neither. Those particular early jobs in my twenties were... You just went to work. That was what you did. You made the most of it. If you got a bit of a chat with your colleagues, that was good. But, yeah, I mean definitely holding... I mean, I couldn't have done it forever. I was in a call center, but later on —
- Martha Beck: Call center, not a coal center. She wasn't mining for coal.
- Rowan Mangan: Felt like it.
- Martha Beck: I love your Australian accent. Don't you ever, ever change it.
- Rowan Mangan: Thank you so much for continuing to translate me because there is so much that I have yet to learn.
- Martha Beck: That selfsame great-grandfather Mormoneer that I had grew up mining coal in Scottish mines, so, that was a nasty job.
- Rowan Mangan: I really feel like the Mormoneers would do a great synchronized dancing in roller skates kind of act.
- Martha Beck: I think they do that already.
- Rowan Mangan: We just need to give them the branding that they need. Yeah, okay.
- Martha Beck: So, yeah, so if it sparks joy, then you do it to the extent that it sparks joy. And here's the thing. Once you get that straight, it's actually pretty easy. Unless, and this is the big unless, and I don't know what it's like for Carmen, but for most people it's huge. You start to follow your joy and then other people see you following your joy and saying no to things that don't spark joy, and that's when things get nasty because the culture is so... Especially if you're male, by the way. Most of my coaches are female, partly because men are being more intensely scrutinized and shamed for doing different jobs. So, when the shaming starts for real, not just in your head but from your mother, from your next-door neighbor, whatever it is, you have to be able to stick to your own joy, to stick to your own truth, even if someone literally is acculturated into thinking that you're being a stupid, terrible, bad person.
- Rowan Mangan: I'm going to push you on this because I'm still curious about the person who basically has designed themselves a beautiful life.



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- Rowan Mangan: It's all, just say, it's all sparking joy. I don't know if all Carmen's work sparks joy, but it's all sparking joy and she just needs to rest more. She gets sick or she gets overloaded, she gets burned out and she just needs to rest more. So that's not making a choice. It's actually just cutting off in time, time to rest.
- Martha Beck: That is a choice. So it has to spark joy in every moment. Like you have to continuously assess. Is it still making me happy? And when you're too tired, trust me, I know, when you're too tired, what's joyful becomes much less joyful and when you're exhausted, only rest sparks joy.
- Rowan Mangan: So it seems like there's a fun kind of paradox in what you're saying and you tell me where I'm wrong, that to access your full joy, you need a lot of courage.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Actually I was thinking when you said, "It all sparks joy and then she gets tired and sick." I was thinking about watching four lions hunting a warthog in Africa, like you do. And we watched them for like 20 minutes and they are so slow and so careful, like crouched down, silently, just inching through the grass. I mean they are so careful and so intense. So, this went on for like 20 minutes, and they were getting within strike range, and then an impala saw them and made a noise and the warthog went, "Oh," and ran away with his little tail in the air. And at that moment without a second's hesitation, all four lions dropped to the ground and went to sleep.
- Rowan Mangan: I love it.
- Martha Beck: There was not a moment of, "Oh, let's chase after it." They knew they couldn't. Give up. Now. No, there was no pride in it. There was no ego.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, some pride, wasn't it?
- Martha Beck: There was no ego. There was no regret. There was no, "Dammit." There was none of that. There was just, "Okay, that was sparking joy, but it's gone. So now I'm going to rest because that sparks joy." And you and I have both stood or sat, we're not supposed to stand, in Land Rovers and watched lions rest. And our friends, they were saying, "They rest like they mean it."



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- Martha Beck: And you'll sit there for an hour going, "Please, just throw us a bone." And... nothing. They just sleep, 20 hours a day.
- Rowan Mangan: The peak experience when you used to watch a lion rest, is if it will put its head up and yawn, you can get a photo of it looking like it's roaring, and that's the best thing that's ever going to happen to you.
- Martha Beck: That is all you get. So, it's interesting that people talk about having the heart of a lion because I actually think that you need the heart of a lion to rest in a culture that never rests. You need to be so brave and so ferocious in keeping your own self in harmony that even if someone mocks you, even if someone... I remember when I quit academia to go write books, this guy told me, because my then husband was teaching at the same university. He said, "Now you'll never be anything but a lowly faculty wife."
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God.
- Martha Beck: And the next year I finally sold a book and I paid more in taxes than his entire salary.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Martha Beck: But when he said that, it was like I had been one of two out of 60 people in the faculty who were female. And that arrogance and the condescension was just unbelievable. And I just sat there and thought, "You just watch, dude." He was like, "You can't hunt." I was like, "Watch me. Lionesses do most of the hunting." Beeyotch.
- Rowan Mangan: That's brilliant.
- Martha Beck: Lowly faculty wife.
- Rowan Mangan: So, we've got to be brave like lion and we got to rest like lion.
- Martha Beck: Yep. Got to rest like lion. Somebody tries to stop you, you just put your head up, show them those massive, huge teeth, and just think, now, just to yourself, "I could crack your skull like a walnut."



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Rowan Mangan: But when you show them those teeth, just be yawning really widely as you drift off back to sleep.

Martha Beck: With no intention of not resting. Yeah. And ultimately it's the freedom from having to answer to the cultural pressures is the deepest rest of all.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, that's amazing. Yeah. Absolutely.

Martha Beck: So there you go.

Rowan Mangan: So there you go. We have to, to get bewildered for Carmen, what with the bewilderment that we're looking at for her is to have the heart of the lion-

Martha Beck: To do only things that spark joy.

Rowan Mangan: ... and have the courage to rest.

Martha Beck: That's it. There we are. Be wild.

Rowan Mangan: Nice one.

Martha Beck: Stay wild everybody.

Rowan Mangan: Stay wild. We'll talk to you next time.

Rowan Mangan: Are you enjoying these shenanigans? We can notify you when a new Bewildered episode comes out. Just text the word "wild" to (570) 873-0144. You can also follow Martha on the socials for all kinds of ways to improve your life. On Instagram she's @themarhabeck, on Facebook @themarhabeck, or on Twitter, plain old @marthabeck. Her website is marthabeck.com. You can also follow me, Rowan Mangan for all kinds of stuff on the writing life, wordsmithing, and honestly, general nonsense. My website is rowanmangan.com. Find me on Insta, @rowan_mangan. On Facebook, I'm @rowanmanganwriter, and on Twitter I'm @rowanmangan. Thanks for joining us. We'll see you next time.