



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Episode #9: Brave Enough to be Weird

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 am Martha Beck.
- Rowan Mangan: And I am Rowan Mangan and this is Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out. I myself have been trying to figure it out by digging in the backyard for clues. And then Marty walked by and looked at my little archeological dig, and she just figured it out on the spot.
- Martha Beck: I did. And here's what I have to say. It's not what you're digging for, it's what you're digging through.
- Rowan Mangan: It's what you're digging through. Wow. That sounds wise, if only I knew what it meant.
- Martha Beck: If only I knew what it meant. Here's what I know. If you don't understand, you're just not ready.
- Rowan Mangan: Ah, okay.
- Martha Beck: So anyway, what are you trying to figure out for real, Rowan, honestly?
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. What am I trying to figure out? So there's this funny thing that I do. And it's when I'm trying to kickstart a new phase in my life or a new focus in my life. I need to move furniture around. I need to rearrange my physical environment. So I'm trying to figure out at the moment how to shift a bed somewhere and a desk somewhere else and-
- Martha Beck: Randomly in the night.



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- Rowan Mangan: Randomly in the night.
- Martha Beck: Pushing furniture out the window.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, that's me. So, I'm trying to figure that out and it's interesting because it always signals a new time.
- Martha Beck: It is, I know exactly the feeling. Actually, it's something I've noticed a lot in coaching that when people are ready to shift something fundamental in their identities, they start moving furniture a lot.
- Rowan Mangan: Huh?
- Martha Beck: I think it has to do with the fact that gorillas make nests.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God. I knew you were going to say that because when I start doing my little diagrams of bed, desk, I just think, this is exactly what gorillas must do when they want to make nests.
- Martha Beck: That's what they do out in the wilderness with their diagrams and their spreadsheets and their arguments. No, I was there last week. Yeah. They move around a lot. I've seen them. I went to Rwanda and I saw the gorillas and they make these humongous nests. Can you imagine even how big a bird's nest is? Imagine a 700 pound animal making a nest?
- Rowan Mangan: I think it sounds lovely. You know, I would like a nest.
- Martha Beck: I was just thinking if we could get a gorilla to come move your furniture, that would figure a lot of things out because those suckers are strong.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I'm all for it.
- Martha Beck: There you go. Gorilla furniture. Boom.
- Rowan Mangan: So that's me, gorilla nests in the night. How about you, Marty, what are you trying to figure out?
- Martha Beck: Seriously, I'm trying to figure out, they're saying that COVID lock down may end someday. I don't know. It's a rumor. At the point in the future when we're all listening to this, it's probably the middle of another pandemic. I don't know. But I'm marketing a book, as you know, and I have to be in the world again after not being in the world for a long time. And here's what happens to me when I'm not among the peoples. I drift. I drift.



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- Rowan Mangan: You drift. Where do you drift to?
- Martha Beck: Oh, I drift into a sea of weirdness. I'm a very, very weird person by nature. By nature, keyword. So yeah. I remember getting up the first month of the lockdown and thinking, no one's coming in the house and I'm not going to see anyone for a month. And just my inner weird, just rearing up its head and going, ho, ho, ho-
- Rowan Mangan: And it was just like, ooh, here we go.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, getting limbered up, baby.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. So I went and got weird and it didn't end there. It went on for months and months and months and months, and every month I got weirder and weirder and weirder and weirder.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I think a lot of us have had this experience actually of just, your little foibles become exaggerated when they're not grounded down on the edges by constant contact with the culture.
- Martha Beck: It's like Nell and her twin sister creating a new form of English.
- Rowan Mangan: Tying the world.
- Martha Beck: That's how we started talking to each other, and I was digging in the backyard. I'm like, hey, hey, digging the yard, I don't know.
- Rowan Mangan: Making references to movies that no one else could probably remember except us.
- Martha Beck: Well, if they don't understand, they're just not ready.
- Rowan Mangan: They are not ready.
- Martha Beck: Go rent the movie now. I love it. It's very poignant. Anyway, I do think that we all have this new level of weirdness and one of our listeners wrote in, a wonderful listener named MA Travel Dreamer.
- Rowan Mangan: Love you MA, MA Travel Dreamer.
- Martha Beck: MA Travel Dreamer, which could mean it's our travel dream. It could mean it's the mother of all travel dreamers.
- Rowan Mangan: Could mean a master's degree in travel dreaming.



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- Martha Beck: Could be. Yeah. So a-
- Rowan Mangan: Country singer about their own travel dreaming. MA travel dreaming.
- Martha Beck: MA travel dreaming.
- Rowan Mangan: MA travel.
- Martha Beck: MA travel dreaming. Anyway, MA travel dreamer says, this podcast "allows me to be more eccentrically myself."
- Rowan Mangan: What more could we wish for any of our listeners really than to be more eccentrically themselves?
- Martha Beck: I love it. I love being... That's the whole thing of this podcast, is eccentric is fine.
- Rowan Mangan: Right. But eccentric can also be difficult. So on this podcast, we do tend to talk about the getting out of the consensus point of view of the culture and finding our way back to our own true nature, which is coming to our senses. But what we don't often talk about is what happens then. You become more eccentrically yourself, and then you go back out of your little pandemic bubble into the world. And there you are, with your little archeological dig and your little robe sweeping across the floor to a baby in a room you're not supposed to be in a zoom meeting. That's a callback to a previous episode.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, that is a different episode. Keep listening.
- Rowan Mangan: Keep listening.
- Martha Beck: Anyway, yes. We all come out of isolation and we don't want to come to consensus again, but-
- Rowan Mangan: It's hard.
- Martha Beck: ... when you don't come to consensus, there are pressures.
- Rowan Mangan: Yes, or was it easy for you to say, Marty and Row but just come to your senses, but you don't know what it's like to be in the world.
- Martha Beck: We don't, we don't. We like to hang out in our house. We never go anywhere-
- Rowan Mangan: We are weird as shit.



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- Martha Beck: even if there is no pandemic. If someone were to pull a pandemic as a hoax, we would be pleased and nobody would be hurting and we could also stay in the house. But this whole episode is about this idea of, once you've discovered yourself, whether it's because you're coming out of a lockdown or because you've just discovered something about yourself that's new. Going out into the world as someone who's away from consensus, how are you brave enough to be weird?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It looks weird to go out there as yourself.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. One time when I was teaching Sociology 101 back in the days when I was earning my pay by teaching the introductory courses, before I dropped out of academia to be weirder, we did this unit on what actually shapes behavior. And I asked them to go out and break a law, but not one that hurt anyone. So they didn't stop at a stoplight. Came to-
- Rowan Mangan: That could have hurt someone.
- Martha Beck: I mean a stop sign, a rolling stop at a stop sign. Don't do these things. It's been many years.
- Rowan Mangan: It's been many years since I advised people to break laws in my course.
- Martha Beck: That's not a smart thing to say on something that's slated for public consumption. Now, I said, you've probably broken the law. You haven't parked in the right place. You didn't come to a full stop. I said, now go out and break a norm, a social norm. So it's well within the law, but it's just not normal for your social group.
- Rowan Mangan: Aha, and what did they do?
- Martha Beck: My favorite one was, and I don't know how they had the courage to do this, which goes to the topic of our podcast because it takes courage, one woman went home to her very traditional family, her huge family. They all had people come in for Thanksgiving dinner. And being Australian, you might not know as much about Thanksgiving dinner as an American US person might.
- Rowan Mangan: It has something to do with turkeys.
- Martha Beck: It has everything to do with turkeys, everything.
- Rowan Mangan: I think America was founded by turkeys.



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- Martha Beck: It was. Absolutely, it was the founding turkeys. Without them, the founding fathers would've starved. It was all about the Turkey self-sacrifice. So the food you eat at Thanksgiving is what you would call utensil food. It's gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, I don't know, string bean casserole with can goop on it.
- Rowan Mangan: Would you call that utensil food, would you? Come to Thanksgiving, we'll be serving utensil food. Imagine. That just doesn't get the mouth watering. You can tell that part of this story is influenced by the fact that our daughter's starting on solids and we've been thinking a lot about utensils.
- Martha Beck: And in the middle of a pandemic, it's like, here, shove this into your face. Who cares what it looks like or how you look afterwards? The dogs will feast on the detritus from your face.
- Rowan Mangan: Look, Leila, utensil food.
- Martha Beck: Now, that you're 10, it's time for utensil food. So, she's getting into utensil food, I'm giving it up. Anyway-
- Rowan Mangan: Thanksgiving.
- Martha Beck: Thanksgiving. Sloppy food, gravy food.
- Rowan Mangan: Got you.
- Martha Beck: Pumpkin pie, the whole works. This young brave college student went home to her traditional family and sat at Thanksgiving dinner at her massive family table and ate the entire meal without utensils. She just used her hands.
- Rowan Mangan: She didn't use utensils, for utensil food?
- Martha Beck: No. I know, shocking. That's exactly what I'm saying, it breaks a norm. Utensil food?
- Rowan Mangan: No utensils.
- Martha Beck: So she was like mashing it into her mouth with her hands. She was putting her face right down on the plate. And the interesting thing is not that people say, what are you doing? No one said a word.
- Rowan Mangan: Interesting.



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- Martha Beck: In fact, all conversation stopped. There was deadly silence, except for her going, [foreign language 00:10:53]. And then after 10 minutes, her father at the head of the table jumped to his feet and screamed, "I just can't take it any more" and ran from the room. And the whole family just stared at her and no one said anything. It was the most interesting story.
- Rowan Mangan: How did she feel? Was it hard?
- Martha Beck: She was thrilled. She must've been well raised by that loving family because she did not flicker in her self-esteem. She thought it was hilarious and she was very proud of herself. And I think she got an A in my course right at that moment. But what was so fascinating is the way the culture of her family reacted to this aberrant behavior. They didn't react by just surfacing the issue and say, "that is not a cultural norm among our group." Instead it was just like, "Oh, what do we do? What do we do?" Because the culture never talks about its own rules.
- Rowan Mangan: Right, right. So everyone just panics if they are broken.
- Martha Beck: Alice Miller, the psychiatrist, called this, that rule "thou shalt not be aware". And it means, never ever be aware that there's a code of conduct that's shaping you every minute. And the moment you make a statement on it, it's like the secret is broken and the culture can be rattled. And that's what must never happen.
- Rowan Mangan: Why do you think that is?
- Martha Beck: I think it's because humans rely so much on cooperation and it's a shorthand for everybody working together because if everyone were working completely individualistically, it would take a lot of time to assign roles or something. I don't know.
- Rowan Mangan: It's interesting. I like that description of, we're not just going to be uncomfortable or anything, we're going to panic because someone's not eating with a knife and fork.
- Martha Beck: Well, this is why I just wrote in this book I just published, people like someone who decides to say, put a Menorah and a Kwanzaa celebration together with Christmas in a school room. It can be seen as attacking our way of life, they are trying to steal Christmas. Anything that's like, there is an alternative culture that we might also observe, it basically says our culture is not supreme. And it's seen as attacking our way of life because the way the culture does things, it never talks about it, actually is the way of life.



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- Rowan Mangan: Do you think that there's something going on where we want to pretend that culture is nature? We don't want to pretend that we've just made up this and that it's just a rule? We want to act as though it's come down from heaven. It's physics. It's not-
- Martha Beck: We say it's physics because our religion is science, but in other cultures, it's this has come down from God or the gods or whatever. And there's-
- Rowan Mangan: Same thing.
- Martha Beck: ... The moment something is repeated, it starts to take on the flavor of, we have to do it this way again. This is what we talked about last time. It must be because it was, and nobody talks about, it must be because it was. Everybody just starts doing it that way. So it must be something deeply biological.
- Rowan Mangan: So what we're going to talk about today is, what happens when you break those rules? What happens when you're being yourself and how do you cope with the wrath that comes down upon you?
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Wrath-
- Rowan Mangan: Sorry. American wrath.
- Martha Beck: I thought you meant like a dog or a ruff, like in Elizabeth in England. They come and put a ruff on you.
- Rowan Mangan: I would say wroth, you would say wrath.
- Martha Beck: Wrath, yeah, the wrath.
- Rowan Mangan: Let's call the whole thing off.
- Martha Beck: That's a good idea.
- Rowan Mangan: So what does the cultural pressure to not be weird? What does that look like? How do we encounter that?
- Martha Beck: It can be the silent treatment like if you put out something on Instagram and no one likes it. It could be just the great silence that my student encountered at Thanksgiving dinner.
- Rowan Mangan: I think social media is actually a really interesting example of that because I think people definitely... Because if you respond to something, you're putting your own name up against there. And so then you might be endorsing the counter-cultural thing.



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- Martha Beck: Yeah. Or you could get people flat out attacking you. I put out something once that said, you don't have to tell everyone everything about yourself, but you have to tell someone everything about yourself. Yeah, that was it. And I was thinking, because otherwise you'll be so alone, somebody's got to know you. But people took it as, you should not have a single secret in your life.
- Rowan Mangan: No secrets.
- Martha Beck: I got slammed. Oh, my goodness, did they attack!
- Rowan Mangan: They wanted these secrets.
- Martha Beck: Martha Beck, how dare you be so-
- Rowan Mangan: You are ruining Christmas and secrets at the same time.
- Martha Beck: And, you leave my affair alone.
- Rowan Mangan: You were attacking their way of life.
- Martha Beck: I was attacking their way of life. That's really interesting, anyone who's weird is attacking their way of life. This six-year-old kid looks like a boy, but feels like a girl... Attacking our way of life. The six-year-old doesn't want to attack anybody. They just feel that way. But it seems gender is so fundamental to the culture that it's seen as attacking the standard roles of gender, because it does. It says, it's not the way the culture says. This child by nature is not the way the culture says you're supposed to be.
- Rowan Mangan: So it seems like what the culture wants to do is contain or constrict to fewer categories. If you're talking about, I want to have some Kwanzaa celebration or Menorah or whatever, it's about opening up instead of keeping it narrow.
- Martha Beck: And there's something about the one true thing and I think it may have to do with monotheistic religions. Because only coming out of like the Middle East, do you have religions where there is one God and only one God, and one of the big sins is to think there's another God, right? And so Christianity, Islam, Judaism, all come out of that. But if you go to the East, is it the same in the East? You grew up Asia-adjacent?
- Rowan Mangan: So I automatically-
- Martha Beck: You automatically know everything about it, but is it more accepting of multiplicity do you think?



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- Rowan Mangan: I think that one thing that I have picked up along the way is that where more Western cultures tend to locate the individual as the unit, religions in Eastern cultures are more likely to locate the community. Now, what's at stake? I don't know what that does-
- Martha Beck: What it does, it flattens diversity within the group and there's good research on that. So in a very traditional culture where the group is more important than the individual, there's actually very little attention getting behavior. Don't you say in Australia the tall poppy syndrome, you get smacked if you rise above anybody else?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. That's true. But I can't help thinking that it depends on what your culture decides to feel is fundamental to it. Because I was thinking I've lived in Thailand, the gender stuff, we were using gender as an example, gender is not a particularly intensely-held notion there. You've got the katois, which are the ladyboys, we call them, and lesbians are very accepted in Thai culture by and large. And so I think it's probably going to do the same thing anywhere that culture is functioning. It just won't choose the same things to get its knickers in a twist about.
- Martha Beck: Maybe it has to do with just individual personalities. There's this family in Russia that went off into the hinterlands to be very, very true to their religion when the Communists took over, and they made rules against things like eating squirrel because it was a sin.
- Rowan Mangan: Well, I've always felt that.
- Martha Beck: Well, yeah. But if you're starving in the Siberian taiga, it's a different thing.
- Rowan Mangan: Marty, I've never eaten a squirrel in my life because that's how dearly I hold that principle.
- Martha Beck: What were you digging for? What the hell were you digging for?
- Rowan Mangan: Bones.
- Martha Beck: Bones of squirrels. I eat a bone of squirrels. I can munch on a bone, can't I? Anyway, they had this very narcissistic family, a family member who was like, no, I will give you the rules from God, and you may not eat squirrel. Maybe it's narcissists that say that they know the right way. I don't know, but I do know that given a little reiteration and time, people will just start repeating the same types of norms and then attacking people who break those norms.



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- Rowan Mangan: Or maybe it's just about having some kind of norm. So in Thailand, it's fine if you're biologically a dude, but you want to dress like a woman or whatever, but you will wear a yellow shirt on Mondays to respect the King.
- Martha Beck: Really?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Oh, yeah. You don't want to be caught, not wearing a yellow shirt on a Monday.
- Martha Beck: I was in Thailand, I don't know what day of the week it was, but I don't think I wore a yellow shirt, dude. Damn.
- Rowan Mangan: They have your picture up somewhere.
- Martha Beck: [foreign language 00:20:13]. There's my one remaining word of Chinese after majoring in Chinese as an undergraduate, [foreign language 00:20:21]. One of the best Chinese words. Anyway all of this stuff combined, the social anthropologist, Mario Martinez, calls it tribal shaming.
- Rowan Mangan: Because when you break the rules of the culture, what happens to you is tribal shaming.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Tribal shaming, whenever you appear weird or different, you will be ashamed. And he says there are three ways that groups go about bashing individuals or smaller groups to try to get them into line with their particular worldview, their culture, and the three ways are abandonment, shame and betrayal. And these are, at an emotional level, very, very deep down. Those three penalties are unbearable to the human psyche.
- Rowan Mangan: I just had a really funny example come to mind of a way that tribal shaming works that I've been noticing lately. And again, I'm so sorry, everyone, for bringing everything back to mom stuff, but it is where my brain is right now. And I just wonder how much of the mother-in-law trope comes down to a tribal shaming because, whatever's going on, everything changes in, what's the best way to bring up a baby constantly. It's like new studies, new trends, lalala, but your mother-in-law knows how it's done.
- Rowan Mangan: There's just so many stories on my forums and in my groups from everywhere, it's like, we want to do this, this way. The baby should be sleeping on its back or whatever. And what comes in is a very judgmental, very punitive energy, not necessarily from the mother-in-law, but from the generation before saying, you've got to do it this way and there's so much conflict in that, because-



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- Martha Beck: Interesting. Did you know, I've never told you this, my undergraduate thesis was, have I mentioned that I went to Harvard?
- Rowan Mangan: Sorry, where?
- Martha Beck: No place you would have heard of. Anyway, I went-
- Rowan Mangan: I don't know why, but I suddenly feel like drinking.
- Martha Beck: I went to China and I wanted to study women in traditional China before the Communists came in. Problem was, they never wrote anything down, because women were prohibited from learning to write. And it takes like 12 years of dedicated study to learn to read and write Chinese. So I went and I gathered folk tales. I had people tell me folk stories, and I found... You know how the stepmother's always the wicked one in the West? In China, it's always the mother-in-law and the mother-in-law is the demon figure. And it's exactly that. The young wife comes in, she's probably like 13.
- Rowan Mangan: You are wrong.
- Martha Beck: No, I'm not even joking. This is pre-Communist China. And the mother-in-law proceeds to enact upon the daughter-in-law all the tribal shaming one could possibly imagine. It gets gnarly and all the happy endings were about the daughter surviving until the mother-in-law died.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God.
- Martha Beck: I'm sorry, I don't want to offend anyone out there. It's not that way under Communism, everything's perfect. Now I'm offending a whole different group of people. Anyway, I think that, that's true. I think that child-rearing practices and those very core behavioral guidance things are very rigidly enforced generation to generation. And bringing up baby is the ultimate time to a culture-rate someone, right?
- Rowan Mangan: Exactly.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. So the mother-in-law is like, I'm going to bear down and make my daughter-in-law do it my way.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's fascinating, isn't it?



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- Martha Beck: Ooh, yes. So all of this comes back to what Martinez calls tribal shaming. Actually I think our friend, Liz Gilbert, is the one who coined that phrase and then attributed it to Mario Martinez, because I looked it up under his name and all I found were pillows shams.
- Rowan Mangan: Tribal shams.
- Martha Beck: Pillow shams and they were very attractive. So now our house is full of tribal pillow shams.
- Rowan Mangan: This is what it's like to live with Martha Beck. She wants to Google tribal shame. The next thing you know, your doorbell rings and you have six packages that say, tribal sham.
- Martha Beck: I went so far as to order it. I have no fear of the tribal shams.
- Rowan Mangan: Whatever Liz does is reverse plagiarism. You were saying this to me earlier, that instead of taking someone else's idea and calling it her own, she'll come up with something brilliant and then assume someone else did it-
- Martha Beck: Just give them the credit. Yeah, she does it with me all the time. It's fabulous. Anyway, the abandonment and shame betrayal thing, all of us have been... The silent treatment, as we said with the internet, if that happens to you in your family, if that Thanksgiving dinner silence had gone on for days or weeks, unbearable. The shaming, a place we'll get to in a minute, it is like everyone's been shamed at school for stuff that they didn't even know. It's a thing, and then all the kids are mocking you and the rest of your life is never the same after a group shaming experience.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's very effective form of social control, right, to shame someone?
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And the worst of all, I think, is betrayal where somebody's off, let's say they're having a gossip session with some friends from work and you're their best friend but they decide to start bashing you along with the group because they're afraid of getting shamed. And then you hear that they've betrayed you. They didn't stand up for you. And it's a deep, deep wound when somebody-
- Rowan Mangan: Sorry, what would that look like? Give me a-



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- Martha Beck: Say you have a best friend and you like to go out and dish about everybody at the office and you go out for coffee, and you think you're best friends and that you share secrets about different people in the office. And then one day you overhear your friend with a group of other people from the office. And guess what they're doing? They're telling the same kinds of nasty little stories about you to try to fit in with that group. That's a form of social betrayal.
- Rowan Mangan: Is that tribal shaming?
- Martha Beck: It is according to Martinez.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, okay.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. What happens is, the group as a whole moves against you. Well, for example, take survivors of sexual abuse.
- Rowan Mangan: Me. Raise your hand if you're one.
- Martha Beck: When someone reports sexual abuse, the entire culture has to change and address the perpetrator and disrupt the social order. I was just reading about a gymnastics coach who was abusing his athletes and it went on for years and years because he was a winning coach and no one wanted to disrupt the system. So occasionally a girl would come forward, and what would happen? Not only would the whole system shut down, but the other girls who were being abused also would stay silent or side against the woman who was speaking out because they were afraid of disrupting the system.
- Rowan Mangan: Got it.
- Martha Beck: That's social betrayal.
- Rowan Mangan: Got it.
- Martha Beck: By the way, the guy shot himself in his car. So there you go. That's one response to cultural pushback when it finally comes.
- Rowan Mangan: When it finally comes. Yeah. And it's interesting that you say that because I think that particular brand of the cultural rules around speaking up against perpetrators has been changing the last few years with the #metoo movement. And we're seeing that a lot. And the shock of, well... I don't want to get nitty gritty into our culture stuff, but the shock of men largely, powerful men who don't enjoy all of a sudden the privileges of their status.



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- Martha Beck: Well, for that matter, over the last year I've become really acutely aware of where I haven't stood up for people in underserved populations. I'm part of the white entitled majority. So just go along with it, why raise a fuss and nothing's wrong with me? When I do that, I'm betraying people of color, people who are differently abled, all kinds of folks who may be shamed by the culture, and I'm not doing anything to stop it. So that's benign or passive betrayal, but it's still a betrayal.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, It's about staying comfortable.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, instead of standing up for somebody who is different and is claiming that.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, it's actually an interesting point, that discomfort is in some ways and even one of the strongest, what do I want to say? Like-
- Martha Beck: Conditioners.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Reinforcers of culture.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. It's fascinating.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And there's something about... Back when I was teaching again in that course, there was a man who was a guest on a talk show, and this was when reality talk shows were getting really nasty.
- Rowan Mangan: I think some of them still are.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, it was so funny, once I went to be on one of those shows, oh, thank God, they didn't want me in the end, but the usher who me in, he was an intern working for the show, and then they had this thing where a woman was supposed to find out that her paternity test showed that her boyfriend wasn't the father and they didn't have anyone to play. It was supposed to be a reality show. They didn't have anyone to play the father or the boyfriend, so the usher who let me in and the intern ran onstage and pretended to be the jilted boyfriend and threw chairs and all. It was just, oh, I can't believe I was even in that studio. But I couldn't leave because, cultural pressure.
- Martha Beck: Anyway, there was a guy who was on one of these shows and they said he had a secret admirer, and they read these love letters from the secret admirer. And he was, Awwwww. And then it turned out the secret admirer was a guy, a dude.



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Rowan Mangan: Oh.

Martha Beck: A man. And-

Rowan Mangan: When was this?

Martha Beck: I think it was in the '90s. And a day or two after the show aired, the man just laughed along, ha ha ha. They had brought on the secret admirer. They shook hands, blah, blah, blah. He went over to the secret admirer's house and shot him in clear daylight, killed him, because he would rather be a murderer in prison with the stigma of murderer, than-

Rowan Mangan: The possibility.

Martha Beck: ... maybe I let another man admire me. That's how strong cultural pressure and shame is.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, that's fascinating, isn't it. We were talking about school before, and I think one place where almost everyone has one of those experiences is school. For whatever reason I guess everyone's trying out the culture and the way that culture functions in their crude growing up way. But I feel like the tribe of the school yard is always a really very strong thing.

Martha Beck: Yeah. The whole Lord of the Flies thing.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, bullying-

Martha Beck: I always thought that the girls were worse, but then I read Lord of the Flies and I was like, aah, because apparently you get kids that age. When moral reasoning develops in the early teens to early 20s, there's a period where it's a little off. So you get things like cultural pressure to conform and that's combined with not a lot of cognitive empathy because the brain hasn't really formed that, there's not enough experience, and very crude methods of enforcement, it goes on throughout life. It's just that it gets more subtle. So where in the school yard it's... I remember kids just chasing me around screaming the name Martha, because they thought it was so stupid kind of... I still do,[inaudible 00:32:23] and just running away from them, with my nose in a book, which really made me look normal. I would run from people while reading because that just made me fit right in.



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- Martha Beck: But you go all the way from there to Downton Abbey where it's like, where is your black tie? I'll put it in my other[inaudible 00:32:45]. Ugh, shame, shame, shame. It persists, but it's very strong at that age. And I remember... Here's the thing. I've never asked you this. If I were to ask you to draw me a picture of something, how would you feel?
- Rowan Mangan: Anxious?
- Martha Beck: Why?
- Rowan Mangan: Because I don't think I can draw well.
- Martha Beck: See, this is the thing. Right around 10 is when people start to be aware of creative quality, like how good a drawing is or how good a poem is, or whatever.
- Rowan Mangan: Right, which is weird because that's a very subjective thing, right?
- Martha Beck: Right. Yeah. But if you study child development in drawings, there's a really, really classic pattern that emerges as people age. There's a point where for some reason, little kids go to the corner of a page and draw like a semicircle for the sun, with rays coming out, and it's always the left upper corner. It could be the lower corner, but... And all kids do that, it's not something they've seen, they just do it. And there's a place where they draw blue at the top of the page as the sky, and then gradually they learn that the blue goes all the way down touch the horizon. But when I was teaching as a Teaching Fellow in a drawing class at a university-
- Rowan Mangan: Where was that?
- Martha Beck: Just a random university, Harvard. Drink? It was so interesting because a lot of the kids would come in and they liked to draw, kids, they were 18 to, I don't know, 30, a lot of them were going into the design school or the architecture school. But the majority of undergraduates who came in drew at exactly the level of ten-year-olds, because 10 was where they started to feel ashamed of not being able to do better. And if they could keep drawing through that, if they dared to be weird, to make pictures that were weird, they would have continued the development of the brain and the hand all of that, mainly the brain. But if they had stopped, it would just remain exactly where it was when they started to experience shame.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, fascinating.



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- Martha Beck: Which really makes me wonder about stopping at other things, all kinds of things, experimentation with movement, invention, creation of all sorts.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's so strange, isn't it, because it's like... Before I was saying it's about the culture wants to constrict and make fewer things and make everything smaller and the same and the same and the same, but it's also, it doesn't want you to grow past something. It doesn't want you to... And yet the people inevitably that we look up to and that we make heroes, are the ones who pushed it.
- Martha Beck: At least the ones we make heroes of. Maybe somewhere there are people making podcasts that are, remember Fred, he never did anything, never did anything even slightly outside the cultural bounds. Oh, Fred, mediocre Fred, we love you. You can't try to be the most perfect representative of your culture ever.
- Rowan Mangan: Well, one thing that occurs me is I think about class, like you were talking about Downton Abbey or whatever, classes like a little mini culture that is more visible to us because we can see it within our own culture, whereas a lot of the cultural stuff at large is invisible.
- Martha Beck: You ran face first into that problem, didn't you as kid.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Oh my gosh, yeah. I had the experience of going to... I think I might have talked about this before. Anyway, at high school, I went to a very, very posh private school as a scholarship kid. And so it was a very intense-
- Martha Beck: You were not a posh.
- Rowan Mangan: I was not. You'd never guess this.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I was not from a wealthy background and I did not have experience in this little bubble -
- Martha Beck: Upper-class enclave.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah this little bubble that I came into. And it was a very intense experience, there was so much shaming, because it also coincided with mean girls stuff, which is tribal shaming and bullying stuff. And you got to feel for these kids. Everyone's just trying to feel okay, you can see that in the school yard for example, everyone's trying to feel safe. It's the same thing as you saying, I wanted to stay comfortable, so I stay quiet. Most people aren't trying to shame someone else maliciously, they're just trying to feel okay.



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Martha Beck: Mean girls are a classic example of betrayers. They betray whoever's the down girl to be in with the up girls.

Rowan Mangan: Out of complete terror that it would come down on them, like you'll sell anyone down the river for the sake of keeping yourself safe for another day. It's brutal.

Martha Beck: It is.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. So I went to this school and it was, oh, this school holidays, everyone has to go to this town in Queensland together. And this one, everyone's going skiing-

Martha Beck: Groom koalas or something?

Rowan Mangan: Sorry?

Martha Beck: What do you do, groom koalas? What's the Australian?

Rowan Mangan: Oh darling, no, we have people to do that for us. Surfing and beach culture.

Martha Beck: I want the listeners to get the real picture. This is you getting up at four in the morning to take six city buses into a totally different part of town.

Rowan Mangan: I lived on the wrong side of town.

Martha Beck: Yeah. And then you had to join the rowing crew so that you could fit in, but you hated it, but you would go at five in the morning anyway.

Rowan Mangan: I thought would love it because I read a book about someone who loved it. You and I went through that similar-

Martha Beck: Don't make that mistake. We both made that mistake.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. So, it was an interesting experience for me, I will say that.

Martha Beck: Wasn't it really?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: It's okay to say it, Row. You can be brave enough to say it.



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- Rowan Mangan: It's funny. I'm actually being careful because I met really wonderful people there. And that's the thing, is that, yes, as a whole, the culture felt a certain way, and then over the years that I was there-
- Martha Beck: But you don't want to betray anyone by saying that they were part of the negativity. It's a really interesting thing. As we grow older we are more conscious of the dynamics of offending various people and it can get to be very thickety. You can really feel constrained in your behavior when you're trying, both to stay out of tribal shaming directed at you and also out of anything directed at anyone else.
- Rowan Mangan: That's so interesting because it's almost like here, you and I are making this mini culture of people who endorse coming to your senses and being yourself. And so here I am trying to be so careful not to tribally shame anyone who went to that school, who wasn't part of our culture of thinking, it's okay to be yourself, because they were subscribing to a culture. Oh, that's so funny. You're right, it's so tangled.
- Martha Beck: So what do we do about all this? What is coming to your senses in the context of this particular issue? We're always telling people, don't stick with the consensus of the culture, come to the senses of your nature. But if you do that, inevitably you are going to look weird at some point to some group.
- Rowan Mangan: And that's scary.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. It's really, really scary. You could be tribally shamed, you almost certainly will be tribally shamed.
- Rowan Mangan: You will be. Yeah. That's the thing.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, brace yourself. It's coming. So what do you do?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, first of all, I want to ask you a question about it. Is it worth it? Tribal shaming is terrifying, it sucks. Is it worth it to be yourself, or should you just fall back in line?



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- Martha Beck: I could say it depends, but I'm not going to. I'm going to do a very unsocial science-y thing. I'm going to say, yes, it is worth it. Unquestionably, and there are data to support it. One study showed it was a group of HIV, positive gay men and they tracked... This was back when people died of HIV really in droves, and they traced how sick people were and how soon they died and it was directly correlated with how closeted they were. So they could be out to their friends and family, but closeted to the rest of the world, they would die sooner than someone who was fully out. Even though the fully out person might have been persecuted by the culture, honesty is so important to the body and to the psyche that we get depressed, we get anxious, we get sick and we even die faster if we're not ourselves.
- Rowan Mangan: That's so interesting because you said yes, and there's data to support it. And I immediately thought, but let's Math 101 this, because if I can ask myself, is it worth it, and I think of the fear of being tribally shamed and it's definitely there, and then I just think of the relief in my body come to my senses, the relief of being true is always stronger than the fear. So, yeah, I agree.
- Martha Beck: I'm experiencing right now a bit of this same issue, because I didn't say there's data, I said there are data because data is plural. The singular is datum. There are data. So as soon as I said that, I thought, people are going to think I have bad grammar, but I don't. Actually I have good grammar because they're there, it's correct. But now we're all saying, there is data. I don't know what to do with myself. What are people going to think? So I'm talking a good fight, but then I can get one little word wrong, and I'm like, oh no my knickers are knotted for ever.
- Rowan Mangan: When I was having morning sickness, I had to say to Marty, look, Marty, I know that I'm supposed to say nauseated, but I'm just going to say nauseous, and you're just going to deal with it. You're going to know that I know that I should say nauseated, but I'm not going to say it because I feel like a fricking idiot.
- Martha Beck: And you know how that made me feel.
- Rowan Mangan: How?
- Martha Beck: Nauseous. Anyway, okay. It's the thing, it's always the thing.
- Rowan Mangan: I have another one.
- Martha Beck: What?



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Rowan Mangan: I used to work in a library where the library staff culture was that you couldn't say focuses.

Martha Beck: You had to say focusi?

Rowan Mangan: You had to say foci, I have been down that road.

Martha Beck: Foci? What kind of nonsense is that?

Rowan Mangan: Foci, and the other thing everyone said as a culture was Wed-nesday

Martha Beck: Wed-nesday?

Rowan Mangan: Hi to anyone listening from the Library. Wed-nesday and foci. Yeah. So good times.

Martha Beck: So, should we turn our foci to other days?

Rowan Mangan: Let's do that. So I was coming up with this metaphor that is either brilliant or terrible and only the tribal shaming will tell me which. So we get cultural messages.

Martha Beck: We do.

Rowan Mangan: Is it right for you to just jump into this?

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: All right, I'm going to do it.

Martha Beck: No, it's not all right, the culture will shame you. Jump, jump, juuump. All right.

Rowan Mangan: So we get cultural messages coming in all the time. You've got to do this, you got to do that. Don't be like this, don't say that. Live like this, wear that, have this much money blah, blah, blah. And it's like an inbox. It's like email coming in-

Martha Beck: Sort of.

Rowan Mangan: ... in a way, if you think about it-

Martha Beck: It's like a datum coming into our head.

Rowan Mangan: Exactly. Now, just stick real close with me here.



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Martha Beck: I am.

Rowan Mangan: Cultural messages or emails coming into you, and here's the trick. 80 to 85% of all emails sent out there is spam.

Martha Beck: 85%?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Good heavens.

Rowan Mangan: So that's what a lot of this stuff is going to be. A lot of these messages are of what you need to be doing, do this, don't do that. Say this, don't say that. Foci, Wed-nesday, whatnot. So Marty and I were having this conversation a few days ago, and I was trying out this metaphor and here's the thing. You could... I am feeling so stupid over this metaphor right now.

Martha Beck: You are only feeling stupid because you fear tribal shaming. Proceed.

Rowan Mangan: I do. I fear it.

Martha Beck: Proceed.

Rowan Mangan: All right, here I go with my metaphor. I'm continuing down the path of my metaphor. You can mark messages as spam. If you happen to use the mail service that a lot of us do, just mark those messages as spam and what you're doing is you're training the filter. And as more messages get recognized as spam, they get moved out of your inbox. And so that's what I'm proposing we all try to do, is notice when you feel tribal shamed or the threat of tribal shaming, which can even be worse, just feel it in your body in terms of, is it fear or is it freedom? The old Martha Beck 101 and then mark it as spam if it feels like spam.

Martha Beck: If it feels like fear, consider the source. I don't want any email from you. Who wants email from their mothers-in-law about how to raise a baby?

Rowan Mangan: Not me.

Martha Beck: I wonder if this is related to the fact that 80 to 85% of the nuts that squirrels hide, they forget about.

Rowan Mangan: Those nuts are spam.

Martha Beck: They're spam, spam nuts.



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- Rowan Mangan: Do you think they ever tribally shame each other about losing those nuts?
- Martha Beck: Probably all the time. Yeah, it would make them soak... Anyway, let's get back to-
- Rowan Mangan: Squirrels.
- Martha Beck: ... digging in the backyard and squirrels in Siberia. I never eat them. It's against the culture.
- Rowan Mangan: Eat the bones, don't need their flesh.
- Martha Beck: I actually think this is brilliant because it's interesting how much of it is language-based. If you read something, this is something I noticed when I was getting hate mail a lot for not saying nice things about Mormons necessarily-
- Rowan Mangan: You were necessarily not saying nice things-
- Martha Beck: Not saying nice things about Mormons and some of them took umbrage and they did write me-
- Rowan Mangan: Where did they take it?
- Martha Beck: They took it to the bank, they took it to the post office and they took it to my inbox. Oh, my.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my.
- Martha Beck: And I learned very quickly that actually reading the words of a hate message would brand my brain. The brain is so key to tracking tribal shame. But if I had someone else read it and just tell me the gist of it, it wouldn't brand my brain as much. So just saying spam, and just imagining that I have a rubber stamp, spam, spam, and whatever comes in from somebody I don't respect or from whatever little tweak of culture I have chosen not to represent, spam, spam, spam.
- Rowan Mangan: It's not the word spam, it's not a real message. It's trying to sell you something.
- Martha Beck: It's trying to sell you, ooh.
- Rowan Mangan: There you go.
- Martha Beck: Are you going to sell all your life to the spammers?



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Rowan Mangan: Does your penis really need to be that much bigger?

Martha Beck: I thought we weren't going to talk about that, someone will shame me.

Rowan Mangan: I'm sorry. I just felt like we needed to put it out there.

Martha Beck: Okay and now of course, everything is going to be-

Rowan Mangan: Everything is a deep check. All right.

Martha Beck: Okay. I actually think that's a really brilliant thing to just envision what your life would be like if you followed every message that came in as spam and what a nightmare that would be and how you'd be immediately bankrupted and hate your life.

Rowan Mangan: You'd be giving your bank account details from to someone in Nigeria.

Martha Beck: Oh, you would.

Rowan Mangan: This metaphor is getting distorted, just the way I like it.

Martha Beck: When you decide, this is who I am. I am like this, and this is how I act, this is how I dress, this is how I say the word foci, whatever it is, you're just like, uh-uh, if anybody tries to dissuade me from this, I will be giving my bank details to a man in Nigeria who wants to take my money.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And so, as we train our spam filter, as it were, to just ignore... Messages still come in, I hasten to add.

Martha Beck: But they kind of bounce[crosstalk 00:49:18]

Rowan Mangan: They don't go to your inbox, they go to your spam folder.

Martha Beck: There you go.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I've thought all this through. So, as it gets better, I think the thing is if you're not... Oh, wait, I forgot to tell my other part of the metaphor.

Martha Beck: Oh, well.

Rowan Mangan: Unsubscribed-

Martha Beck: Ooh, unsubscribed,



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- Rowan Mangan: So some of them, they're not trying to sell you something, they're just something that you signed up to long time ago and it's no longer relevant. I actually love this metaphor so much. So, yeah, you can also unsubscribe to things. So as you unsubscribe to things, as you mark things as spam, what you're finding is that the mail that's coming through into your inbox feels really good and the messages are really clear.
- Rowan Mangan: And so I think what we're edging up towards is the point where the cultural shaming has less power over you. And you can start to own your weirdness.
- Martha Beck: And here's the thing, we were talking about how, if somebody can convince other people that something's come down from on high or that they are the one true thing, they're correct thing, they can actually do a completely counter-cultural thing and attract followers. They can effectively create a new culture. Now, I'm not saying that's a great thing because we're all into nature, not necessarily culture, but I've watched in my life many times people who were considered weird and just stayed with it. I'll never forget seeing it as a kid, a Mormon kid growing up, I saw someone on TV and they brought her on an interview and the interviewer said something like, it's been said that you sleep with men, women, everything. And I expected her to just literally burst into flames. And then she went, sure, men, women, any size, any brand, bring them on. And I was like, oh, my gosh, she just did away with all that shame by refusing to buy it.
- Martha Beck: I remember Shirley McLaine was being interviewed by Mike Wallace and he said, you know, you've written these loopy new age books about having multiple lives and stuff. And he was coming at her with some serious digs, and this was before new age was a thing and Shirley McLaine just shakes her head and she says, "Mike, Mike, Mike, that does not become you." And I was just, you go, girl. Man.
- Rowan Mangan: When they go low, we go high, that's what Michelle Obama says.
- Martha Beck: There you go. My favorite story about this though, I think I stole this from Liz Gilbert, but maybe it's mine and I'm just attributing it to her.
- Rowan Mangan: I'm sure that's not the case.
- Martha Beck: I'm pretty sure it was hers. But she knew someone who was becoming an artist, an American who'd gone to Paris to be a starving artist who would rise to greatness. And he was looking for a patron and starving in a Garret in a La Boheme kind of way. And he eventually did catch the attention of a wealthy woman who loved his art and wanted to be his patron.



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Rowan Mangan: Nice.

Martha Beck: Score. So he got an invitation to the party of the year at her palatial resort and it was a costume party. So he was like, oh, my gosh, this is my chance to get in with the nobility, with the people who love art, with everything. This is going to make or break my career. So he spent all his money on this incredibly fabulous costume that was a lobster. He was a human-sized lobster and the arms stuck straight out and then bent at a right angle so that his arms were out to the square with these huge claws on them.

Rowan Mangan: Fantastic.

Martha Beck: It was amazing. And so-

Rowan Mangan: This can only go to good places.

Martha Beck: ... he trudges the streets of Paris, he gets to the palatial estate, he gets through the guards and everything and he goes in, and it turns out the costume party has a theme. And theme is the court of Louis the 14th. So everybody's there in powdered wigs and silken robes-

Rowan Mangan: Those really high wigs, the white faces.

Martha Beck: Right. So they're all going round to chamber music. And he walks in with his arms spread wide as a massive red lobster.

Rowan Mangan: Oh my God.

Martha Beck: And at that moment, he knew it could go one of two ways. It could be the worst day of his life or he could just freaking own it. So he decided to own it. And of course he was the hit of the party.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Oh, I love that story so much.

Martha Beck: It was hilarious. Everybody thought he was fantastic and what they want. They didn't want to conformist artist, they wanted someone dressed as a lobster, of course. It seems obvious in retrospect, right?

Rowan Mangan: It just reminds me of this cartoon and the picture in the cartoon shows someone draped over a chair that's been laying on its side and the caption says, "you're not doing it wrong if no one knows what you're doing."

Martha Beck: That's how I'm going to sit from now on.



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- Rowan Mangan: I just think it's a way to set yourself... So for me, my only way of dealing with the posh private school and the fact that I had no way of competing in that particular tribe, I couldn't go to this place on these school holidays. I couldn't-
- Martha Beck: Groom your own koala.
- Rowan Mangan: Could not groom my own koala, didn't even have a koala. I only had a platypus, that's how terrible my social status was. And so the only thing that I could find to do was just to completely create, not create another tribe, but create another value system-
- Martha Beck: A counter-culture.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, a counterculture. And so what ended up happening with me and ultimately a few friends is we started sailing on tall ships and we got-
- Martha Beck: Oh, wait, wait, wait, wait.
- Rowan Mangan: Look, it's a long story. It's hard to explain. We wore lobster costumes to school. I had all the wrong clothes, couldn't take the right vacations, then I just started sailing tall ships.
- Martha Beck: Wait.
- Rowan Mangan: Found a time machine, went to the 17th century-
- Martha Beck: You literally skimmed over that like it was nothing. You sailed on those ships that have big masts and sails like whaling vessels from the 19th century?
- Rowan Mangan: We never, ever used a harpoon in anger.
- Martha Beck: Only on the other girls. Hullo. That is a very, very counter-cultural thing to do, like you did something so far outside that it was cool.
- Rowan Mangan: Well, there we were in very fancy school uniforms, private school darling and we would put on our cruise shirts for our ship, you know, our ship.
- Martha Beck: The Alma.
- Rowan Mangan: It doesn't really sound like the alternative to the wealthy school-
- Martha Beck: That's what I'm saying. It's not like everybody's like, write a note, tall ships. My child is 13. I live in Iowa. Flying a tall ship.



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- Rowan Mangan: Yes. So we would put these on over our school uniforms. And I always remember just that feeling of walking along and we looked stupid. Absolutely stupid. But what we could convey was, I'm not trying to look like you, I'm not trying, I've got a different system going on here. And that definitely saved me through all that awful social tribalism of high school.
- Martha Beck: So what happens with people who dare to be weird is that they actually become influencers. If they're strong either they don't care that they're weird, which is great, that's just living like an animal, I don't care. Put a big red spot on a dog's head, he doesn't care, he's just a dog. He doesn't know about the red spot. So you can either just be immune to culture or you start establishing culture. So in the Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell, he talks about how hush puppies were this brand of shoe that were so out of style, they were almost ready to disappear, the company was going broke.
- Rowan Mangan: What do they look like?
- Martha Beck: They look like hush puppies. What can I say? They're kind of seudy with laces and... We'll just have to look them up. They look like orthopedic shoes. They look like a nurse's shoes. They're not like Manole Boulonik. Is that how you say that?
- Rowan Mangan: Manole.
- Martha Beck: Manole Boulonik shoes unless Manole Boulonik decided to do a hush puppy. Anyway, the point is-
- Rowan Mangan: Google says hush puppies are delicious looking fried food.
- Martha Beck: Maybe that's why they weren't doing well with shoes. What are you wearing on your feet? Delicious fried food. Why are you dressed as a lobster? Anyway, a bunch of people in the lower East side of Manhattan decided that these were so uncool, they were cool. And they started wearing these shoes and they would go around and people would make fun of them and they just stuck with it. And because they were trendsetters, hush puppies became madly successful again. And now they probably don't even look weird anymore.
- Martha Beck: You've been Googling away. Did you find one?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I think they might have lifted their game since they became cool. They look fine to me.
- Martha Beck: No, no. The culture changed its game-



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- Rowan Mangan: Ooh, the culture changed around then.
- Martha Beck: ... to make hush puppies cool again because there is no natural reason to choose one shoe over another, there is only consensus.
- Rowan Mangan: Well, there's comfort.
- Martha Beck: Comfort is the thing and hush puppies are very comfortable.
- Rowan Mangan: They are.
- Martha Beck: Good God, I've worn shoes that literally felt like a crocodile was chewing off my feet, just so I would fit in. And hush puppies were not like those at all. But it changed the culture, so now hush puppies look fine.
- Rowan Mangan: I love it.
- Martha Beck: So I think the idea is, first you set your spam filter-
- Rowan Mangan: Got it. Unsubscribe.
- Martha Beck: Right, unsubscribe, then the people you're letting through to influence you-
- Rowan Mangan: Or their ideas.
- Martha Beck: ... they're more on your wavelength and then you come to your senses by saying, what is me? Not what is it trendy, what is acceptable, but what is me?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, like what looks beautiful to me?
- Martha Beck: Yeah. What delights me?
- Rowan Mangan: And I think you have to have turned off the spam for a while before you can even truly access that.
- Martha Beck: Can I just say something on that point? I think you may need another person or at least some books to read, it's really hard to just say, I will set my own culture. You have to be crazy to do that. That's why so many people who've gone out as shamanic leaders in the world over prehistory and everything, they were a little nuts.



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- Rowan Mangan: Well, I'm not sure I agree with you that you need other people or books. I think if there's enough silence and that's, I guess, what I'm getting at with silence of those cultural messages, you're not watching the ads and you're literally not subscribing to these ideas, then over time that silence will allow you to get to that experience, knowing it and being able to act on it back in the world, which is where we started with this, going back out into the world. That's two different things, but at least to be able to determine what's delightful to me, what's funny to me.
- Martha Beck: So here's a little exercise practice. Because you know me, I'm a life coach. I can't help myself. Before you go outside tomorrow, stop and think, what clothes delight me? What are the most comfortable, the most beautiful to me? Not to other people. What food seems best to me? Not to whatever diet is trendy at the moment or what you're supposed to eat. What feels like a good way to raise a baby to me? Not my mother-in-law.
- Rowan Mangan: How do I want to walk down the street as me? Yeah. Ministry of silly walks. There you go. It's there for a reason, people use it.
- Martha Beck: So, you do that. And if it's weird, say, number one, I'm filtering out the spam and 85% of everything is spam. And number two, watch me hang in here until I start setting the trend.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And just feeling how it's delightful to us.
- Martha Beck: We keep rejoicing in it.
- Rowan Mangan: Absolutely. Yeah. There's joy in that. There's a lot more joy, the more you unsubscribed to the fear.
- Martha Beck: I think dogs are a good example because they will show such tremendous joy and goofiness and they're so in the moment of being dogs. Well, cats, all non-human animals just love being themselves. We're the only animal that tries not to be itself. I think we should stop. Let's stop. But that's just me. Does that mean we should stop our podcast?
- Rowan Mangan: I suppose at some point we should just stop.
- Martha Beck: Good. Jolly ole then. Let's go sail a tall ship.
- Rowan Mangan: Excellent. Off we go then.
- Martha Beck: Okay, pirate music, because it's beautiful to us. All right. We'll see you guys next time. And in the meantime, stay wild.



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WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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