



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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## Episode #14: Sleep For Your Life

*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, this is Marty.
- Rowan Mangan: And I'm Ro and you've arrived in another episode of Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out. I've been trying to figure it out lately by watching reruns of Criminal Minds, which I thought was a really good way to do it. Marty got herself a corkboard with some pins and some of that red yarn stuff. And anyway, she pieced the crime together brilliantly, figuring it out on the spot.
- Martha Beck: Oh yes. All crime, all crime. If you have enough pins and enough red string, you end up full of pins and tangled in red string, but you will have solved every crime ever committed, which is what I did.
- Rowan Mangan: Brilliant.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And let me just say that ordinary house cats are much more dangerous than you think.
- Rowan Mangan: Do you know what? I have always suspected that.
- Martha Beck: I think most people do. You get a feeling. I mean, I think that our instincts are good.
- Rowan Mangan: I mean, the fact is that it's been right in front of our face the whole time, all those balls of yarn that the cats are playing with, they're solving crimes.
- Martha Beck: They're trying to disrupt our solving of crimes as well.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

Rowan Mangan: They're doing crimes.

Martha Beck: They're doing crimes and then covering it up by messing with yarn.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Yeah. Taking us right off the-

Martha Beck: There you go. You figured it out.

Rowan Mangan: We figured it out together.

Martha Beck: I'm so proud of us.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, I'm so proud of us, too.

Martha Beck: That was excellent. Wonderful. But honestly, Ro, what are you trying to figure out truly, really in your life?

Rowan Mangan: In my life?

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Well, Marty, what's on my mind is the whole conundrum of superfoods. Like, all right, turmeric. Go online right now and google "turmeric health benefits". You will find that turmeric will heal inflammation, will help your heart, it will prevent Alzheimer's. It will cure depression. It will cure arthritis. And so then my question is like, goji berries and turmeric, why do we eat anything else? I mean, is it true? Is this a scam? I'm just trying to figure it out, because there's all these foods. We're lucky we live in a first world country. We have access to resources and there are foods a plenty. And if they're really so good, these superfoods, I don't know. Shouldn't we be talking about it more or something?

Martha Beck: I think it gets exaggerated. I think people get focused on like, "Oh my gosh, turmeric reduces inflammation. And does all these things," and forgets that you're also mainlining whatever else is out there and putting lots of other things in that might counteract it.

Rowan Mangan: I don't anything you mainline is considered a superfood, just quietly.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

- Martha Beck: What? Wait? Go back. That's my definition of a superfood, makes you feel so good. No, but I remember telling a client once that I'd read this study that showed that women were attracted to men who had different immune systems than the women. So women go looking for a mating partner who has a very different immune system, because the ones with the same immune system are going to be related to you possibly, in your little band. No, wait, I have a point. And also your baby is going to get the maximum antibodies if you mate with someone who has different immunities, right? So I told this to this client and he was like, "Okay, so how do I use this to get a date?" And I was like, "Dude, there are other factors here." He's like, "No, no, I just have to have a different immune system." I was like, "No, you need a different personality."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, it's not super duper romantic.
- Martha Beck: And foods are not super duper foods. This is what I'm saying. They're good. They just can't be that super, or we'd all live forever, bathed in turmeric. Right?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Bathing in turmeric. I've just had a brilliant idea for a new business.
- Martha Beck: Well, Ro. You're looking so yellow today and smelling so spicy.
- Rowan Mangan: Is it jaundice or is it just a turmeric bath?
- Martha Beck: What if turmeric cures jaundice? So then if you have jaundice, but then you bathe in turmeric, the jaundice goes away, but the doctors are still treating you for jaundice because of all the turmeric?
- Rowan Mangan: I would need, like, three balls of red yarn to figure that out. Minimum.
- Martha Beck: Well, we would have three balls of red yarn if it weren't for the cats.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God.
- Martha Beck: See, I'm telling you it comes back to them.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah. Totally. Well, so there you go. There you have it. Superfoods for me. What about you? What are you trying to figure out?



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

- Martha Beck: I am trying to deal with having a baby who I suspect maybe part Zeus.
- Rowan Mangan: I was not expecting you to say that.
- Martha Beck: You know how in Greek mythology, all the people running around turned out to be part Zeus, because Zeus was a sperm donor, clearly, by whatever mechanism. I mean, as a swan, as a bull, as a guy. He was definitely having babies. And our baby, anonymous donor. It could have been Zeus. And here's why I say this. That freaking baby is so much stronger than I am. It's really quite terrifying. She's not even a year old. And I had a real debacle. What a very educated, wonderful... oh, that person might be listening. If you pronounce debacle, 'debacle'.
- Rowan Mangan: Debacle.
- Martha Beck: Debacle, you are a wonderful person.
- Rowan Mangan: And we respect you and your level of literacy.
- Martha Beck: Well, we do. I mean, immensely. This is an immensely literate person.
- Rowan Mangan: Yes.
- Martha Beck: Just, debacle.
- Rowan Mangan: Just happens to pronounce debacle, debacle.
- Martha Beck: Anyway, so it just so happened that last night, Ro and Karen were both out on an errand and I would be fine alone with Hercules baby, except that I've had this foot surgery and I'm gimpy, right? I can gimp. I can limp around the house.
- Rowan Mangan: So, point of order, you can't have Zeus and Heracles. You've got... like, which one?
- Martha Beck: No. She's part Zeus. Just like Hercules was.
- Rowan Mangan: You can't say Hercules if you're saying Zeus, because then you're mixing a metaphor. If you're talking Greek, you have to say Heracles. Hercules is Roman.
- Martha Beck: I'm not mixing a metaphor, dude. I'm mixing languages.
- Rowan Mangan: A mythology.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

- Martha Beck: I messed up my languages.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: My ancient languages that nobody speaks anymore.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. So probably correcting you on it was the most nerdy thing I could possibly have done.
- Martha Beck: Every now and then the masks slips and we see her as she truly is. Super nerd, with extreme emphasis in the classics. Okay. So, Heracles... I'm going to say Hercules, because that's what we're used to. Okay, here in 'Merca. So I have a bad foot. I am not any part Zeus. Could I just say that? I'm made mainly of stuff people put together with gum.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah and yarn.
- Martha Beck: So yeah. I have this bad foot. Gum and yarn. The cats built me. And so I say to Ro and Karen, no worries. We've got this baby who is 98, 99th percentile on height, on head size, on just general framingness. She's just a big baby. And she's strong. And she recently started sitting up, crawling, and standing. In one day she just decided to do all these things. So I said, "I'll be fine."
- Rowan Mangan: And dead-lifting 100 pounds.
- Martha Beck: Exactly. And speaking of dead-lifting, she's not the lightest thing that God ever made.
- Rowan Mangan: No, she's not.
- Martha Beck: And I am fine to pick her up, upper body strength still vestigial, but there. I cannot gimp around with the baby without hurting my foot. So how do I get the baby taken care of? Well, easy. I do everything on the floor. The baby and I will crawl together. We will roll together. I will change her diaper on the floor. Everything will be fine. So off they go. And then it comes to me putting on her special nighttime diaper. And I can't do it on the changing table where she knows she will fall to her death if she wriggles too violently.
- Rowan Mangan: She doesn't know that. She doesn't believe it.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

Martha Beck: Oh my God, this child was like... She's the master of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and many other martial arts. Putting on that diaper took me, I don't know, an hour and a half. And I would get her in position and I would grab for the diaper and she would do this flip that would flip me across the room. I mean, it was... And then she'd be headed out, bum hanging in the air, just crawling for the door. And I would grab her and pull her back and roll her over. And she would flip again. It was like trying to anesthetize a dolphin or something. She was so slippery and flippery and strong. And finally, I got the diaper on her. I was exhausted. And I hear the dogs barking to go out - downstairs.

Rowan Mangan: Uh-oh.

Martha Beck: I can't carry the baby down the stairs to let the dogs out. The dogs are going to pee in the house if I don't get down there. So I say to Adam, who's the only other adult in the house. "Adam, go down and let the dogs out to pee." And he was like, "What?" He was already in bed.

Rowan Mangan: Adam is Marty's son who has Down syndrome. He's in his 30s. He's a lovely man.

Martha Beck: He's a beautiful, beautiful man. But he's not used to doing the job of letting the dogs out. And he's not... he doesn't like breaks in his routine. So he's in his bed already. And I'm saying, "Go let the dogs out." And he said, "What?" And I said, "The bathroom, the dogs need to go to the bathroom." So then I go back, I wrestle the baby, try to get her little pajamas on. I ended up putting the wrong leg. So she had the arms of the pajamas on, but she flipped so much that I put her one of her legs in the wrong leg hole. And then after that, trying to flip her over and figure that one out, I tell you.

So after about 10 minutes, I'm thinking the dogs are going to pee everywhere. So I run to see if Adam's done anything and he's in his bathrobe and he's like, "What do you want me to do?" And I'm like-

Rowan Mangan: He's just standing in his own bathrobe.

Martha Beck: ... "Okay, here's what I need you to do. I need you to go into Lila's room. And I am going to put on her favorite song on my cell phone," which she never gets to play with, right? So I'm going to let her play with it. I'm going to go down and let the dogs out. So I leave him there. I say, "Just sit somewhere. She's not going to move. So there she's sitting, transfixed by the moving box. And I gimp down, I let the dogs out. They do their thing, takes a while, they come back in, I gimp back up. And I hear the sounds of a struggle. Like muted, yelps and yells.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

Rowan Mangan: I think it's worth pointing out at this moment that Adam works out twice a week with heavy weights. And he's quite a buff man.

Martha Beck: He's quite strong.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: But he's also not that tall. So he probably weighs about 140, which is peanuts for that baby to pick up. Nothing. I didn't know that. And the other thing is that Adam is a real gentleman. And as a real gentleman, he wears silk pajamas.

Rowan Mangan: Obviously.

Martha Beck: He is very particular about asking for them as a gift one Christmas.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Black. Black silk pajamas.

Martha Beck: Yeah. And smoking jacket, the whole thing. So he's wearing a black silk pajamas and this provides no grip, no traction whatsoever against the carpet in Lila's room. So, I hear muffled sounds of a struggle. I come in-

Rowan Mangan: Wait, why are the pants needing to have grip?

Martha Beck: You'll see.

Rowan Mangan: All right.

Martha Beck: So they're on the floor and what are I walk in to see... and they're coming out of the room, Lila in command. She is crawling along and Adam is flat out on his face, stretched out and she's dragging him. He's holding her by the ankles. And she is dragging him out of the room and he is doing everything he can. He's trying to hook his feet onto furniture and stuff, but he's wearing silk and it just glides. And-

Rowan Mangan: When you told me this story last night, I didn't realize that he was lying flat on his face.

Martha Beck: Flat on his face, trying to hook furniture with his ankles. And that baby is like, "I'm coming to get ya. I'm coming. Going to commit more crimes than all the cats in Christendom." And yeah, I got there just in time and Adam wouldn't even speak to me. He was so mad at me. And he doesn't get mad, but he was like, "Can I go now?"



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

Rowan Mangan: "Now that you've stripped my last shreds of dignity from me. And my silk pajamas."

Martha Beck: Yeah. So I've got no answers. I mean, if I'm ever left alone with that child, again, God knows what's going to happen.

Rowan Mangan: Marty, I feel very vindicated by this, because for nearly 12 months, every night, Lila and I go into that nursery of hers. And later on, I come out, about an hour later, I come out just looking like an ordinary person. And I don't usually talk about what happened. You guys don't usually ask. And now you've had a little taste of it.

Martha Beck: I know now why you don't talk about what happened.

Rowan Mangan: The first rule of fight club.

Martha Beck: You weren't there, man.

Rowan Mangan: You weren't there, man.

Martha Beck: You cannot understand. Yeah, it's something going on in there. And yeah, so I'm worried about her showing other quasi-Greek god traits as she ages. But just super strength is enough for me now. I've got to figure it out.

Rowan Mangan: Okay. Well, what are our listeners trying to figure out, Marty?

Martha Beck: Yes, what are you trying to figure out?

Rowan Mangan: I just say, I am obsessed with you freaks.

Martha Beck: Absolutely.

Rowan Mangan: You are so funny. So. I put a little call out on Instagram. If you don't follow me, it's @Rowan\_Mangan. It should be a link in the show notes. So follow me, because before we sit down to record one of these, we usually do a little call out. "What are you guys trying to figure out?" And then we get inundated with these totally bizarre things. And just every single one that I read, I just love you all more.

Martha Beck: Some of them are real and it makes my heart just swell with joy and love. And some of them are hilarious and that is even more joy and love.





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. If you're someone who wrote you were trying to figure out some tragedy in your life, I'm not saying that you crack me up. I promise, I'm really not. But here are a few highlights from our recent communiqués from your-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, so, crystalslamb says she's simply trying to figure out duality.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God.
- Martha Beck: Because that's not a problem. And oh my God, this is where my nerd meter goes mad, because I have studied much philosophy and what all. So I just want to say, and this is not going to be very funny, but whenever you have two things, what matters is the third thing in which they exist. So I may tell you, this is, when I was taking art in college, my favorite professor said every time you draw two things, it's the third thing that matters most. And I was like, what? And it's like, if you draw, say an apple in an orange and you put... or let's say two vases. And you draw them and you're focused on the vases, what you don't realize is that the space between them, that whole optical illusion faces/vases thing? Where the two vases make a face, or two faces looking at each other?
- Rowan Mangan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Martha Beck: The third thing is the field in which the two things exist. And I could go on about Chinese philosophy on this. There's only one other thing I want to say, because it's a perfect example of how liberating this is. The third thing, it's an Eckhart Tolle thing. You know I love Eckhart Tolle. He says, "Death is the opposite of birth. Life is not the opposite of death. Birth is the opposite of death. Life has no opposite." So birth and death are in duality, but life is the field through which forms go into life and then out of it. Birth and then death. It's the third. It's always the third thing. Always look for the third thing. And that's all I'm going to say. And it's not funny, but I think about it all the time. And that's kind of funny.
- Rowan Mangan: It's so interesting, Marty, because the way that I was intending to handle crystalslamb's simple duality was just to take a massive toke on my doobie and go, "Yeah, man. I know what if we're all just part of some guy's dream, man."
- Martha Beck: You can still do that. Well, you did it.
- Rowan Mangan: I just did.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, but the question really is you've got, Ro, you've got me, what's the third thing? The most important thing?



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: Yarn!

Martha Beck: You. No, not yarn. The listeners.

Rowan Mangan: Oh.

Martha Beck: See, not yarn. You've been in league with the cats, have you not?

Rowan Mangan: I have. I have.

Martha Beck: Well, get to the next question then.

Rowan Mangan: So, M\_shans... Oh my God. This cracks me up so much. So this is, it actually is quite on the topic of evil cats and stuff, because there's something going on in M\_shans' building. This is what she says. "My neighbor's dryer runs 24/7, what is she drying? I'm allergic to scent, the end." And it's just like, she's just decompensating as this story goes on. It's like, so what is so wet that it has to be... I mean, it's like a [inaudible 00:18:41], you know? What is so wet that it must be dried 24/7?

Martha Beck: Meditate upon it.

Rowan Mangan: And also she's allergic to scent.

Martha Beck: She's allergic to all scent? That's a problem.

Rowan Mangan: Is the drier emitting a scent or?

Martha Beck: I guess she's trying to say in a fewer characters, the scent that is emitting from it.

Rowan Mangan: Right. Right. Yeah.

Martha Beck: I don't know.

Rowan Mangan: It's just, I mean, look. I don't want to be the first one to say body parts.

Martha Beck: Well, I was thinking-

Rowan Mangan: But we're all thinking it.

Martha Beck: In the mafia movies they call... oh, this is so gross. When they're going to kill someone and chop them up, they call it wet work.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: And they have to wear special pajamas for it or something.

Rowan Mangan: Special pajamas for wet work.

Martha Beck: So terrible.

Rowan Mangan: I'm hoping those pajamas have like little lambs and stuff on them.

Martha Beck: Lambs to the freaking slaughter.

Rowan Mangan: Oh yes, there it is.

Martha Beck: Okay. Crystalslambs will not appreciate that reference.

Rowan Mangan: Anyway, M\_shans-

Martha Beck: Yeah, so I'm sure it's body parts.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's body parts.

Martha Beck: Definitely.

Rowan Mangan: I think you should move out. So, Jessica, our friend of the show, says... and I am just so with you on this girlfriend, "Why does my nervous system react to the doorbell like it's an intruder, but I know it's Amazon?" Tell us Marty, what's going on there?

Martha Beck: Well, my question is, does the nervous system react in both ways? Because whenever it's Amazon, I'm like, "Oh, prezies for me." But then I also have the, "Curses, a human," the conflict between the two; wanting my prezie, but being afraid of people in general, is a really... I think that's just normal, right?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's sort of like our dogs. You can see it in the dogs go running towards the door, barking furiously. Like, "Don't you come in my house." But at the same time their tails are going, "Will you? Will you come? Friends? Friends?" And they're like [inaudible 00:20:56], "I like you. I like you. I will lick your ear. I'm already licking your ear." Oh, it is Amazon.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: The Amazon people don't like us. No, but it's really interesting because people who meditate don't react to the doorbell that way. But people who don't meditate get more and more... their brain goes more and more in the direction of reacting with alarm. And if you have an alarm clock, that's set like a bell or whatever, you get hypersensitive to alarms to the point where... like mice who are tested on this, they are given alarm clocks and told to set them regularly. No, the scientists set them. But those poor little mice, I saw an illustration in one study.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh God, please don't. Oh.
- Martha Beck: It was all the mouse parts of a mouse that had grown up without alarm clocks or doorbells. And then all the mouse parts of one that had alarm clocks and doorbells and it looked like the second one had been freeze dried. I mean, its organs were not healthy.
- Rowan Mangan: I think they've been in M\_shans's dryer.
- Martha Beck: I think so. That would totally explain it. Well, I just want to say to Jessica, if you don't start meditating, your brain will explode with its conflicted alarms every time the doorbell rings and you'll end up in M\_shans dryer with all your bits shriveled to tiny desiccated raisin-like objects.
- Rowan Mangan: And I want to disagree in the strongest possible terms to what Marty just said, because I think the Buddha himself would still, at the prospect of someone coming to visit, would still freak out.
- Martha Beck: That's true.
- Rowan Mangan: And jump under the covers and say, "I'm not home."
- Martha Beck: That is absolutely true. He lived at a time without clocks or doorbells. He was in the jungle. That's why he attained enlightenment. No Amazon deliveries.
- Rowan Mangan: There you go.
- Martha Beck: So Jessica, good luck with that.
- Rowan Mangan: Get some yarn.
- Martha Beck: So, as you all know, this podcast is about helping people from bewilderment to be-wilder-ment. From the confusion we all feel in life, to your wild, true nature that knows what you're meant to do. And this episode, we have a subject about which we feel great passion.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And it's a funny one, because it doesn't, on the surface, seem to be particularly cultural. But once we started thinking about it, holy moly, we are talking about sleep.
- Martha Beck: Sleep.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, sleep, man. And it is gnarly how much cultural messaging we have around this thing that should be quite simple. It's a biological necessity. And somehow, it's been turned into some sort of moral, what? Moral judgment on your-
- Martha Beck: Absolutely. I mean, there's so much shaming that goes on around when you sleep, how much you sleep, how deeply you sleep. I mean, and you're right. It's just a simple biological imperative and yet, oh my God, we haven't even begun to examine all the cultural pressures or that are on every single one of us surrounding sleep. And it wouldn't be a big deal, except it's so freaking important.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And also, I would say that we've discovered these little things that are in our culture, in doing this podcast, there's just been a couple where we find that nature has been, or a cultural idea has been mistaken for nature so completely. And what I mean by that is that these moral judgements about needing to sleep a lot, or sleeping more, or fatigue, or any of those sorts of things, we see it as though it is wrong by natural law.
- Martha Beck: Right. It's biology framed as moralism. If you need more sleep than I do, you're a bad person and should be ashamed and you should stop sleeping so much and you should sleep. "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." Unless your circadian rhythm doesn't run that way, in which case it will make you dead. That's the thing is that the consequences of the moral pressure on how we sleep are biological.
- Rowan Mangan: Did I once hear you say something about we have different circadian rhythms so that someone's always awake to keep an eye on the safety of the unit?
- Martha Beck: That's the evolutionary logic of it, right?
- Rowan Mangan: Right.
- Martha Beck: Like, if you have a tribe of people and they're in the wilderness and there's only 50 of you, it really helps to have a few people who just can't sleep until 3:00 in the morning, just when another small contingent is waking up going, "That's all the sleep I need."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: Yeah, you got to have somebody watching the fire all the time. So there are biological reasons and it is very well understood scientifically, that we have different needs and sleep cycles and all that. But put it in the cultural framework and you get beaten about the head and face for not sleeping correctly.

Rowan Mangan: I'm obsessed with this book that I read when I was pregnant. It's called Nurture Shock. And it's just a sort of survey of all the different new science that's coming out around kids, mostly. And there's a chapter in there that's specifically about adolescents and sleep, and the way that adolescent bodies, the melatonin works and everything, so that they are, for that period of their life, they are programmed to go to bed later and get up later. And then we build our schools that they have to be at school at 7:00 AM or whatever. And they can't learn, they can't retain, they can't form memories, they crash their cars. But anyway, so it was such an interesting chapter about sleep. And I just wanted to read this little quote out, if you don't mind, that I pulled out of it.

Martha Beck: Go for it.

Rowan Mangan: It said, I think this is like, it sums up the culture/nature split around sleep. So it says, "Sleep is a biological imperative for every species on earth, but humans alone try to resist its pull. Instead we see sleep not as a physical need, but as a statement of character. It's considered a sign of weakness to admit fatigue. And it's a sign of strength to refuse to succumb to slumber." And that is it right? That's it.

Martha Beck: Oh my gosh, there it is right there. Sleep is weakness. And I was going to read a quote from the book that I read about it, which is by a psychiatrist. Yeah. Fabulous, brilliant guy whose published over 100 papers and he wrote this book, Why We Sleep. His name is Matthew Walker. And I was going to read out a piece of it to say, here's what happens to you if you don't sleep enough. And I read it to Ro and she's like, "We're not trying to mortify and terrify our listeners. That is really scary." Because seriously, I will say this. If you start smoking, started base jumping as a hobby, drank too much. If you did pretty much every bad thing people tell you not to do to your body, it wouldn't have 1/10th the impact that not sleeping enough has. And even amoebas sleep, plants, sleep. And one species on earth says, "Well, that's just not okay."

Rowan Mangan: Why? Why? Why do you think it is?

Martha Beck: Well, I think... Well, now I'm going to switch to my sociology hat, because it's so fun for everyone in the room when someone puts on a sociology hat.

Rowan Mangan: Well, it's so colorful.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: Yeah. So colorful, and mine has jewels. No, but if you look at the cultural pressures around sleep, if you're in a hunter/gatherer group, the pressure is not there. And I've talked to people in South Africa, when we were there, who go out and live in the Bush and they say somebody's always awake. Somebody's stirring the coals with a stick. And then somebody will get up to talk to them and somebody else will say, "Oh, now I'm tired." And the second one will say, "That's good. I've got it. Go to sleep." So everybody's differing circadian rhythms protect the group, as we said. But when you get... and even in agrarian society, it's like, "All right, go out and plow the field whenever." But when you get to manufacturing, when you get to the Industrial Revolution, everybody has to be in the factory at the same time, doing their work at the same moment.

Rowan Mangan: So it's so interesting, because there's always this moment where we try to make biological units, human beings, into machines.

Martha Beck: Machines. Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: And it's so funny how the Industrial Revolution comes up so often in this podcast, because it's like that's where we left our true nature, when we decided to be cookie cutter, one size fits all, cogs, and not-

Martha Beck: And the roots of that culture, in that those early factories, are still the vine that's growing and we are on it. We're part of it. That is our cultural foundation. And there's this horrible thing that happened when factories became common. They needed people to be at work at a certain time and they would blow the factory whistle. But to do that, they needed everyone to wake up considerably earlier. So at like, 5:00 in the morning, in some little manufacturing town that has like a woolen mill or something, at 5:00 in the morning, a horn sounds that is so loud that it wakes up every single person in the village.

Rowan Mangan: Oh my God.

Martha Beck: And that is what life became for people. And it messed with their heads. As I always to say, this is when Henry David Thoreau said most men lead lives of quiet desperation. And I think they're just sleep deprived.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah, because we are not machines.

Rowan Mangan: But it seems like there's also a kind of religious quality to the, "You must never sleep."





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: Well, there is.

Rowan Mangan: "And deprive yourself."

Martha Beck: Yeah, the aesthetic religions. And let's not forget that the whole American thing was not only about the Industrial Revolution, but also about what Max Weber called the Protestant ethic, which means you have to work and work and work and work and work. The Puritans. No fun, no buckles. We always put buckles on. They didn't have buckles. Buckles were too good for them.

Rowan Mangan: In my day we didn't need buckles.

Martha Beck: Exactly. And I'm not aware of any research saying the Puritans wouldn't let themselves sleep, but I sincerely believe that they probably had judgements around it because the thing about all aesthetic religions is that there's this weird perverse thing in human psychology that says, if it feels good, it must be wicked and self-indulgent and if it feels bad, then it's for sure going to get me to heaven where I'll be happy forever because I suffered so much.

Rowan Mangan: Right. Right. Like the Catholic grandmother wearing two cardigans in the middle of summer to set herself up for a greater reward in heaven.

Martha Beck: Is this your grandmother?

Rowan Mangan: No, it's another grandmother.

Martha Beck: Well, I was thinking about, we heard about a certain, very famous order of nuns. They're famous around the world, did so many good things for the poor. But they also beat themselves with whips in the bathrooms of the Abbey.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's a funny thing that our little brains do, isn't it? Doing this backwards thing, instead of feels good, probably is good. We do, feels bad, probably good.

Martha Beck: Oh, got to be good.

Rowan Mangan: Must be good.





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: I swear to God. I've said this before. I'll say it again. I have made an entire career out of saying the following things to people and follow closely listener, because people are always mind blown by this. Okay, so listen carefully. When you do things, notice how they make you feel. If they make you feel good, maybe do more. If they make you is sick and bad and decrepit, maybe less? That's it. That is the entire message of my self-help career. And people are like, "Wait, what?"
- Rowan Mangan: But in fairness to them, if you start going, "I love sleep. It feels really good. I'm going to do more of it." People are going to hit you with sticks.
- Martha Beck: Oh, they will. They will hit you with sticks, rocks, judgements, all kinds of things, instruments of destruction. And don't even get me started about what they'll say to you online. They will not approve. And even medicine. I mean, one of the craziest things, I've had so many clients who are doctors and what they remember is being taught to exhaust themselves. I once asked a room full of 18 doctors, "What's the worst thing you ever did to your own body in order to become a doctor?" And I asked this in the morning, at an all day seminar. And there were only 18 of them. We didn't get that question finished until one o'clock the next morning.
- Rowan Mangan: Wow.
- Martha Beck: Because they had been through so much torment and a huge part of it is sleep deprivation. And they talked about being forced to operate when they hadn't slept for 48 hours and they were actively hallucinating.
- Rowan Mangan: And we celebrate that. Like, we celebrate. And the whole thing about Grey's Anatomy or whatever, all those medical school sleep deprivation stuff, it's like it's a badge of honor. I don't want to be on that table with that person with a knife.
- Martha Beck: Exactly.
- Rowan Mangan: Coming at my organs.
- Martha Beck: I know. I actually heard a doctor say, she said to her supervisor, "If I open this man's chest, I will kill him." And he was like, "If you want to be a doctor, get up there and operate."
- Rowan Mangan: Holy shit.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: It's crazy. And then it even goes to letting people get well. I just read a book about neurosurgery that says people aren't allowed to sleep in hospitals. They're constantly being awoken so that they can be tested or arranged or whatever. And sleep is the only time during which we physiologically heal, right?
- Rowan Mangan: Wow. Yeah.
- Martha Beck: The only time. So my friend, Jill Bolte Taylor, who's a Harvard neuroanatomist who had this massive stroke, lost almost all the function on her left hemisphere. And she says now, after rebuilding her brain, she was so lucky to be surrounded by brain scientists who were her friends, because they knew that we only heal during sleep and they let her sleep 15 to 18 hours a day. And she said, "If I had been in a regular hospital, a regular patient, they would've woken me up constantly and forced me to stay awake when my body was screaming to go back to sleep to heal."
- Rowan Mangan: Wow.
- Martha Beck: "So that I could be stimulated by things like having balls thrown at me."
- Rowan Mangan: Do you think that's part of it? Like, we are so obsessed with stimulation that we can't... whether it's just because of being dopamine addicts or something, that we believe in stimulation as a moral virtue somehow?
- Martha Beck: Well, I think it all goes back to economics, because the reason we believe in stimulation as a moral virtue is that it allows us to produce, produce, produce, produce. And our culture sees continuous maxed out physical wealth production as the reason to do anything. So sleeping is an absolute no-go with that. You're not producing anything that you can sell when you're asleep.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God. You're so right. You're so right. So I still don't get though, how this issue has the capacity to shame me so deeply, because it still seems like if you're looking at it from the outside, even with everything that we've said, the science is there, we really, really need sleep. There's evidence everywhere that with sleep, everything goes better. Yes, there's no direct capitalistic, join the dots kind of thing. But why, so I had a friend who... This is years ago. I told her that I had slept until 10:00 AM, because I'd not been able to sleep. And I don't remember the words she used, but I remember just she was so shaming about the fact that I'd slept in, that I just like crumpled. And it's sort of, I can't on the surface, see why. Because when we are here in this conversation, I just feel like, "Well, eff you. I was doing what I needed to do. I've got a different circadian rhythm from you. So, screw you." But somehow there was a hook that that thing could put into me. Why is it?
- Martha Beck: I think it's the weight of culture in the whole... It goes back to the seven deadly sins. Sloth is one of them.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, yeah.
- Martha Beck: And so here's the thing. If I want you to do something for me, and you don't do it, and I call you lazy, I have massive amounts of incentive to dump on you, beat you up, like if I'm going to make you do something. So it goes to power. And you can see how groups of people have been designated lazy because they weren't doing what the powerful wanted them to do.
- Rowan Mangan: I see.
- Martha Beck: I want you to do something for me. And so if I want you to do something and you're not doing it, I'm going to scream and yell and beat you and do whatever. And the history of the world is the history of people doing this to each other.
- Rowan Mangan: Is there part of it that's like the sort of symbolic masculine versus the symbolic feminine? The sort of the space of rest and silence and all of that? I don't mean men and women. I just mean-
- Martha Beck: Right, right, right, the yin and yang of at all.
- Rowan Mangan: ... we prize things that are masculine and active and out there. And we don't do the same-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, anything that is recuperative, that is nurturing, that is building of life... here's what's so interesting... I could rant. I am ranting.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: Rant away.

Martha Beck: But the history that we study is all about the history of men killing other people, mainly men. I mean, women kill people too. And that's in the history books occasionally. But the act of destroying is seen as very dramatic and productive, but the act of nurturing, which goes on in silence and continues over days, months, years of every person that was killed by this one warlord and one-

Martha Beck: Yeah. It took hundreds and thousands of hours of nurturing and quiet and cell repair and anything you want to call it, to build that. And that's not part of history. History is when we kill folks or we make stuff. There is no sleep in history.

Rowan Mangan: History is when we kill folks or we make stuff.

Martha Beck: That's it.

Rowan Mangan: That's it.

Martha Beck: Guns and butter, guns and butter. Sleep does not enter into it. And you can get more guns going and more butter going, supposedly, if you just stay productive all the time. Don't you dare go to sleep.

Rowan Mangan: I do love butter. I mean, I feel like I wouldn't be being completely in my integrity if I didn't say I think butter is fantastic. And I'm so glad that people get up early to make it. Cows. Not people. Cows get up early for my butter.

Martha Beck: Although I've always wondered, I worked for a week on a dairy farm when I was a kid.

Rowan Mangan: When were you going to tell me this?

Martha Beck: Oh, it was just a weird little field trip sort of thing. It was 1,000 years ago.

Rowan Mangan: You were a milkmaid and you never told me.

Martha Beck: I'll never forget the woman telling me... and I sat by my first cow. And-

Rowan Mangan: "I remember sitting by my first cow. She would be, by no means, my last cow."



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: You never forget your first. So I'm sitting there and I was like, 11. I didn't know even about lactation. I was like, "Hello." And here's this cow going, "Baaaa"

Rowan Mangan: I think cows go "Moo." Sheep go, "Baa."

Martha Beck: No.

Rowan Mangan: Look, I've spent a lot of bedtime-

Martha Beck: No, that's a lie. They go, "Baaaaaa". Ask one.

Rowan Mangan: Ask Lila.

Martha Beck: Okay.

Rowan Mangan: Ask your daughter.

Martha Beck: All right.

Rowan Mangan: She knows.

Martha Beck: She is part Zeus, so I'll accept her word. But it is undecided between us until I consult with the child. Anyway, so there I am by this cow and the farm lady comes and she goes, "Grab her by the tits!" Thereby setting me up for a lifetime as a lesbian.

Rowan Mangan: A socially inappropriate one.

Martha Beck: And I was like, "She doesn't have... there are no breasts on this cow. What am I supposed to do?" Plus, how do I... I don't grab people by the tits.

Rowan Mangan: Or cows.

Martha Beck: Yeah. Turned out you had to grab them, scrub them, and then start squeezing.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Scrub them?

Martha Beck: Yeah. They're dirty. Cows been out there rolling around. There's mud on them. You don't want mud in your milk bucket.

Rowan Mangan: Speak for yourself.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: And then we had them... I had do that because the machine was broken, but then they fixed it. And you just come up to the cow, you scrub her off, and then you have this cylinder thing that's like a vacuum cleaner.

Rowan Mangan: And I know what that feels like.

Martha Beck: Well, actually, so do I, but this was industrial strength. These were major and there were four. And you'd put them all on at once and then the cow would go, [inaudible 00:42:57] because it felt good. But even then I wondered, "Okay. The cows have to be milked at 5:00 in the morning and then again at five in the evening. Why not 8:00 in the morning and 8:00 in the evening?" The cows would have just... and now having been a lactator myself, on three separate, extended occasions, I know that you can alter the time when the milk comes in. If you wanted to milk them at 8:00 and 8:00 instead of 5:00... oh my gosh, people are going to attack me online for attacking the ways of dairy farmers.

Rowan Mangan: In fairness, milking in the dark is not going to be-

Martha Beck: At 5:00 in the morning it's fricking dark.

Rowan Mangan: I wouldn't know. Oh well, yeah.

Martha Beck: Anyway, all of this just to say the whole thing is the thing that puzzles me is it's all skewed toward what are called morning larks. I didn't know that's what they were called.

Rowan Mangan: Which is just like, okay, so full disclosure, Marty and I are both not morning larks, though we live with one.

Martha Beck: Woo. Woo. Woo.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: We're night owls.

Rowan Mangan: But can I just say, even for those of you who are like, "Oh, it's 5:00 AM. I don't care. It might be dark. It might be not. I'm just up." You have to accept that the term morning lark is just, in its essence, smug and obnoxious as a term.

Martha Beck: That's true.

Rowan Mangan: Also-



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

---

- Martha Beck: "I'm a morning lark." Here's what I think. I think that night owls have different personality types than morning larks, because we don't go up to morning larks and go, "Oh, you're tired already. Ooh, going to bed at 10:00 PM. Ooh, tired. Why don't you stay up with us?"
- Rowan Mangan: That's true.
- Martha Beck: No, but they will wake us up at 5:00 in the morning and write Poor Richard's Almanac about us and everybody supposed to get up early. I tried so hard to get up early and go to bed early my entire life. And it just doesn't work. But here's another thing.
- Rowan Mangan: She's wagging a finger at me. I'll have you know. She's about to go somewhere.
- Martha Beck: For all you go somewhere larks out there who are going, "Oh, yes. I understand. I give you." Forgiveness does not enter into it. Morning lark is not better than night owl. And here's the other thing. If they have a fight, who's going to fricking win that one?
- Rowan Mangan: She stayed up.
- Martha Beck: I'm just saying.
- Rowan Mangan: She stayed up all night planning this, thinking about this fight between the lark and the owl.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. A lark is going to come in, "(singing) It's 5:00 in the morning, wake up." And the owl, if it comes close enough to the owl, for the owl to reach it, going to pounce. History.
- Rowan Mangan: That's the end.
- Martha Beck: History will change. And I think the time of the night owl should have arrived by now. I think we should start dominating.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, I think... Yeah, I think it has, to be honest. I think the last couple of years everyone had to stay home and all those factory whistle kind of things stopped having the same kind of sway on us that they used to have.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: That's true. And then it actually got to the point in our society where I used to read about New York as the city that never sleeps and I'd be all excited. And then as I got older and tired-er, I was just like, "A city that never sleeps? This is not good for me." Although I love New York. You guys, I love New York. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying we reached the point where no sleep at all is considered to be the ultimate virtue.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Anita Franco once said, "I live in New York. New York, a city that never shuts up."
- Martha Beck: It doesn't either. Yeah. I remember on the West Wing, the fabulous president, Jed Bartlet, the best person who ever lived in history, he goes to a psychiatrist because he's not sleeping. And the psychiatrist says, "How much do you usually sleep?" And he says, "Oh, three, four hours." And I think you're meant to go, "Wow, that's why he's so cool. He only needs three hours of sleep. I wish I could be like that."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: But instead we all just felt like shmucks.
- Rowan Mangan: There are those people. And I have read that those people who need three or four hours of sleep at night off often end up being-
- Martha Beck: Murderers.
- Rowan Mangan: Cats. House cats, with their yarn and their grudges. So, but yeah, absolutely. We're trying to celebrate that not needing sleep.
- Martha Beck: They end up in positions of authority. They do. Because they're awake and producing things and the rest of the people go to sleep and that's rough on the rest of us. But there is an object lesson that you may be too young to remember.
- Rowan Mangan: She's wagging again.
- Martha Beck: Yes. The name Jessica Savitch. Does it mean anything to you?
- Rowan Mangan: In full integrity? I will say only because you told me about her, recently.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, I mean, when I was a kid and I was struggling with insomnia already and I watched what happened to her... Jessica Savitch was this really up and coming young news person at a time when women were very sparse among prestigious press-





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: The days when women were sparse and men were men.

Martha Beck: Anyway, she was a really good broadcaster. And TV news is a very intense world. And she was rising in the ranks by not sleeping as much as anyone else.

Rowan Mangan: So she wasn't sleeping her way to the top?

Martha Beck: Yeah, she was not sleeping her way to the top. So, eventually this wears on you. You can do this on sheer adrenaline for a while, but then you're going to need some chemical assistance, which she started doing. A little bit of this, a little bit of that, stimulants. And there's a place where the brain just can't take it anymore. And it just so happened that Jessica Savitch hit that moment on live TV.

Rowan Mangan: Live on air.

Martha Beck: Which is why it's historic and you can look it up. It's so weird because she looks peppy and she's talking in this peppy tone of voice, but all the emphasis start to go on the wrong syllable and she starts... it was something about owning a hand handgun and she's like, "And everybody will be there who own a hand gun." And then she just started blubbing into the microphone and it was the end of her career. It tanked her and she ended up dying by driving her car into a ditch not long afterward, which probably was about sleep deprivation too.

Rowan Mangan: You've got to sleep, man. Jessica, you've got to sleep.

Martha Beck: She's sleeping now.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: She's sleeping with the fishes. I'm sorry. Too soon?

Rowan Mangan: Never. Never too soon. You and I have both had pretty grueling experiences with lack of sleep, which is probably why we sound so bitter in this podcast.

Martha Beck: Exhausted and bitter.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: Yeah, I mean, I have never been a good sleeper. From right back from baby, from kid, even before I could have had a culture bone to pick with the morning larks. I didn't sleep well at night and I can remember being a teenager and trying to, and getting to school, and just the absolute bone tiredness. Now I know, thanks to Po Bronson and someone else writing that book *Nurture Shock*, it was because I was a teenager. My body was still secreting melatonin well into the morning, trying to make me sleep. But no, I was on a tram headed for South Yarra. Why? Why? So, but I was thinking about... I periodically have had these jags of insomnia where... you know the ones... where I like my body forgets to sleep and it sort of happens cumulatively so that I miss a bit of sleep and then over period of weeks, it just becomes less and less.

There's actually a Stephen King book called *Insomnia* about this. About people who sleep less and less and less.

Martha Beck: There's there's a film called *Insomnia* about it. Ugh, don't... go on.

Rowan Mangan: I wonder if it's the same? Anyway, so I was recalling a time when I was living in Bangkok, Thailand. And I went into one of these no sleep times and it was bad, man, because when you're in a country that is a foreign culture, there's a foreign language, there's a foreign script. Every sort of just minor interaction every day is a little bit more difficult, as those of you who've done that well know. And so the first thing that happened was I lost my ATM card, because I walked away mid-transaction from the ATM machine. Didn't take my money, didn't take my card off. I wandered in a daze.

And I can remember being in my apartment and seeing just all of a sudden, the floor just jumped up and turned into wall and came speeding towards me. There's a shot in that movie *Inception* where that happens. And it just chilled me to my bones, because that's what it was like. It's actually a lot like a weird movie like *Inception*, when you in long term insomnia mode. It's so surreal, or like being on some kind of really nasty drug trip or something, because everything just gets really strange. I had to stop going to work during that time and called in sick for a week, because to get to my job that I did at that time, I was working in a little HIV/AIDS NGO in the outer, outer suburbs of Bangkok. And I had to catch a boat to get there.

Now, the boat went along the canal that was at the end of my street, but it was a minor little street. And so it wasn't a big one where... so there was just this little wooden jetty and I had to roll up my pants because the bow wave of the boat coming would slosh water up to my knees, but they didn't stop at my street. They just slowed.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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And there's that level of like complex mathematics that our brains can do, like when you catch a ball or something that you can't consciously control, but it's like this magical thing that our bodies do and that's gone. That's gone when you're in insomnia land. And I just knew I was going to fall. I'd be sleeping with the fishes. If I tried to get on that boat, that moving boat and leap on with its bow wave and its dead monitor lizards floating around in there. Guys-

Martha Beck: I would like to take Benjamin Franklin, deprive him of sleep, try to make him into a night owl and then have him catch a boat by jumping into a canal in Thailand early in the morning with his brain full of hallucinations and melatonin.

Rowan Mangan: If any of you enjoyed the musical Hamilton and want a really lovely little gift, go online and find a song called... I think it's called Ben Franklin's Song that Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote, but it didn't end up in the musical and it is just such a happy, happy song. And it will change your life.

Martha Beck: Ro, you are playing into the mass mentality by supporting Benjamin Franklin who said early to bed and all that. And-

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, but that song is about, "I stayed up late with a succulent breast or a thigh, diplomacy happened at night."

Martha Beck: Oh, that's true.

Rowan Mangan: It's saucy.

Martha Beck: So he's one of the never sleep people. All right, okay. I'm going to try not to be bitter, because I tried. I tried to be one of the no sleep people. I could never fall asleep before 3:00 in the morning as a teenager. And I just started Hoovering everything. Vacuuming, that as.

Rowan Mangan: I wasn't sure if you meant eating, like, Hoovering everything in the house.

Martha Beck: No, I was cleaning the house. No, I mean, I was raised Mormon, so we didn't have coffee or anything. I didn't-

Rowan Mangan: You just had vacuum cleaners.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: We just had vacuum cleaners. And those were powered by mules. No, I had to go to sleep. So I would take anything in the medicine cabinet that said, "May cause drowsiness," and so I'd get stoned on whatever it was, but I would not sleep. Then I'd have to get up after no sleep. And I would take anything in the medicine cabinet that said, "Do not take it bedtime. This will wake you right up." And I was... it's a wonder I lived through those years. I was abusing drugs so severely without even knowing it, just so I was trying to make myself fit a high school schedule.

Then I got to college. We never had classes before 10:00 AM, which I think is very civilized. But at Harvard, they also run you pretty hard. And I remember hearing a professor, there was a student came in and moaned about out she just wasn't getting enough sleep. And she had way too much to do and could he give her an extension? And he just looked up at her and he said, "Sleep faster."

Rowan Mangan: Wow.

Martha Beck: That was kind of the way it goes. And then I had kids because, hey, it was all working out so well already. Why not throw a few infants into the mix? And that reached, that was a crescendo. I was not sleeping to the point of severe everything. I'm not going to tell you the things in the book, but I will tell you every psychiatric condition, every physical condition, every insult your body can suffer comes on you when you're not sleeping enough. And I was studying working moms and I read this one researcher. She said she went and researched parents who were trying to do full-time jobs and raise kids. And I'll never forget she said, "These people talk about sleep the way a starving person talks about food."

Rowan Mangan: Oh God, I know that feeling.

Martha Beck: And yet, no one made any changes.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: So.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I mean, it's in that book, The Nuture Shock, chapter about teens and sleep. There's a few school districts in the US that are desperately trying to get the time table for high school students changed just so that they stop crashing their cars and dying on the way to school. It's not even just... And you can look. The SATs go... it's bonkers, Marty. It's bonkers. What's wrong with us?



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: It's so crazy. Thank God we live in relative obscurity and are afraid of people.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Amazon or no Amazon, Jessica Bingaman.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. So, I think we've established there's an issue here. There's a place where the culture is dividing us from our nature.
- Rowan Mangan: I think we've done a pretty damn fine job of establishing that.
- Martha Beck: I'm feeling quite verklempt and teary myself about the whole issue, so.
- Rowan Mangan: I just feel tired.
- Martha Beck: Exactly.
- Rowan Mangan: Very, very tired.
- Martha Beck: But so how do we come to our senses?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, I think a big part of coming to our senses is let's start by looking at the science.
- Martha Beck: I know, I agree. And let me clarify this, because there has been some confusion among our listeners, and people in general, about coming to your senses as reawake the wild part of you being the opposite of science. It is not. Coming to your senses is exactly the same as science. Science is about observing empirically with your senses what is going on in the world and drawing logical conclusions that can be repeated. And that's what... like, a kid who is raised in the woods learning to make fire by herself is doing great science. She's doing experiments. Some ways don't work, some ways do. In school, she'd be in a culture that says, "There's a secret question we're asking and all adults know the answer and you have to get it right or we will punish you. And if you get it right, we will reward you." That's culture.
- If you're actually interacting with nature, with your senses, you are doing science. So when people say to us, "Yeah, I got rid of all that baggage about reading about viruses and vaccines and everything. It's all just so cultural. So I came back to my senses and now I just frolic about in the fields without any fear of, or attention to science," that's a different part of culture. That is sort of a new age, sort of California, flower child, sort of culture, but it's still culture if it separates you from what the senses actually report.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: Because observation, let's say for example, vision, looking, that's a sense. So that's still coming to your senses.

Martha Beck: Measuring things. Yeah, very much. It's coming to your senses in a very specific way. So this is all about science. The thing that's interesting about science is that it has a culture of its own.

Rowan Mangan: That's true.

Martha Beck: So if somebody says, "You know what? People really can figure out who's calling them on the phone," at odds that are like a trillion to one against chance, and we don't know how that happens, the scientific culture says, "That's impossible. We will pay no attention to those data." Right? "We will not look at those facts. We will look at the facts that support what we already believe." So that's why they say science advances by old scientists dying rather than changing their minds. And that's the culture of science. So it's kind of confusing, but the science of sleep is unambiguous.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah, it really is. Everything has to sleep.

Martha Beck: Literally everything alive sleeps. There has never been a species studied at any level that does not sleep. So why would we think we don't need it? And we don't even understand why. Scientists know that everything sleeps, but they really don't know why. They don't know why we can only heal during sleep, why we have to go into this state of... it's really a great passage in the beginning of the book, *Why We Sleep*, where Matthew Walker talks about, what if you just had a baby and somebody came into you and said, "Ms. Mangan, you've had a healthy baby girl. And she will live a completely normal life. And as part of that, she will undergo... every single day she will fall into a deep coma where she's unresponsive to virtually everything around her and hallucinate wildly about things that may or may not exist, believing fully that the hallucinations are real. And yeah, she'll spend a third of her life in this type of coma." And the mother would say, "Well, that sounds dreadful." Well, that's sleep. And we really don't know why this odd behavior has to occur. We just know that it always does.

Rowan Mangan: It just does. Yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah. So-

Rowan Mangan: Okay. So, but on a practical level, Marty, how do we actually come to our senses about sleep day to day, night to night, as it were?



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: There are a cluster of issues that we have to deal with to get the problem under control. And the first thing is just figuring out how do we know when we personally... I personally need to sleep? How do I know when I've had enough sleep? A lot of people don't know. I didn't know until I had a chance to sleep until I wasn't tired anymore, which happened when I was like... I don't know, yesterday. How do I make this space to sleep as much as I want? And how do I deal with the cultural backlash? And I am here to tell you, there will be a cultural backlash, unless you're a person who only needs three hours of sleep at night. And then how do I deal with the times in my life when the realities of my schedule and the pressures of life don't allow as much sleep as my body needs?
- Rowan Mangan: Because I'm sure that that's what a lot of people are thinking, listening to this is, "Yeah, must be nice."
- Martha Beck: Yeah, exactly, exactly.
- Rowan Mangan: Because I think, one part of this is that the structures look so like, how can you argue with my job starts at this time? My kids wake up at this time? Or whatever your particular relationship with sleep is. But I do really, really feel like at that the first step with this is that we're all participating in a story about virtue and sleep and we all have the power to stop participating in that story, to tell a different story, which is about sleep is so crucial to my health, and my health is crucial for all the other things. If you want to frame it all up, in terms of being a person who gives, you can't give the way you want to if you're not sleeping. So tell that story.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Or stop. There's one thing that we do in our house all the time, especially Marty and me, because we are these non-morning lark types is it's always every morning we're sort of like, "Oh yeah, I'm really tired. Well, I guess I'm really tired because the day before yesterday... you know how we do that?"
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: like-
- Martha Beck: "Why do I want to sleep?" Well, you've been awake a long time.
- Rowan Mangan: Right?





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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- Martha Beck: Now, I have to say that Karen, God bless her, is one of the few morning larks who lives to support us night owls. But every time at about 8:00 PM she goes, "I'm so sorry, I'm just feeling really tired and I don't know why. I'm just going to lay down and shut my eyes for a minute." And we say to her, "Yes, honey. For eight hours you will shut your eyes." She's like, "I'm not. Oh." Anyway, so we always justify, we always feel like we need to justify sleep in our house. And if you can get into your own head the idea that your own sleep is as important as say, protecting the life of a child who's standing nearby, because it is, it's about protecting a human life. The quality, the quantity, the capacity of a human life is based on how much you sleep. So you are doing this to save a life.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: And if you can get that story switched, then the pressure of the society... it's just like once when I was traveling, I met a guy who said, "We think it's really weird in our culture that you Americans don't sharpen your teeth. We have tooth sharpening ceremony and it's a big deal and everybody does it." And I was like, "Oh yeah, we don't do that." I didn't go into some shame spiral and try to sharpen my teeth. Because it was just a cultural story, right?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Yeah.
- Martha Beck: So if you can get to the point where people are like, "Early to bed and early to rise." And you're just like, "Oh yeah, I don't do that."
- Rowan Mangan: I don't do that.
- Martha Beck: If you can legitimize that to yourself, you will then be able to make choices that take you to one of the lifestyles, and there are actually many, where you can sleep at the time that's right for you. Most of the time. Never always, but you can start to at least not be totally violating your own circadian rhythm to serve what you think is this omnipotent system, because there are ways to find different schedules.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Yeah. So, start unsubscribing to the story.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And then just start noticing how you feel. It's like Mary Oliver wrote in *The Wild Geese*... and I always think she was talking about sleep, as well as sex and food and everything else, when she said, "You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting. All you have to do is let the soft animal of your body love what it loves." There you go.





# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Rowan Mangan: So beautiful.

Martha Beck: That is the cultural model that would work.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. We saw some wild geese a few days ago.

Martha Beck: Yeah, and they're so loud. They talk while they fly [inaudible 01:07:00].

Rowan Mangan: While they fly.

Martha Beck: There you go.

Rowan Mangan: And so, I was driving along and this small flock of wild geese flew past and-

Martha Beck: And Ro spontaneously uttered what I think was the rough draft of Mary Oliver's Wild Geese.

Rowan Mangan: So I said, "Listen to that, Marty. They're saying, 'You do not have to walk on your knees. You have feet. Honk honk, motherfucker. Honk honk, motherfuckers.'"

Martha Beck: Yeah. Oh, we've said the F word. We've never done that on the podcast.

Rowan Mangan: I think we have.

Martha Beck: I probably just don't remember it, because I was tired.

Rowan Mangan: I used to swear a lot more at the beginning, because I was quite into the idea that we could be sweary on this podcast. And then, our own little culture of this podcast shamed me-

Martha Beck: It's true.

Rowan Mangan: ... into becoming-

Martha Beck: We need to look at that. Me, too.

Rowan Mangan: I think the soft animal of my body loves saying the F word.

Martha Beck: It's true. Everything about the F word is nice for the body.

Rowan Mangan: That's true.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: So anyway, I mean, okay. I got to get back into the mode of helping people come to their senses. I had this lifetime of insomnia and horror and then I started keeping a journal where I would record how much I slept and what was breaking in my body, which was always breaking, how depressed I was, very, and I would just notice how it fluctuated. And I started to realize the amount that I need to sleep. Wait, I'm going to say it out. I'm going to say it loud and say it proud. I need like minimum 9 to 10 hours of sleep every doggone night or I am no good. But I am perky as crap if I get that amount. I have a perky 14 hours left in me.

Rowan Mangan: And that just is. You can't story that. That just is.

Martha Beck: Yeah. I mean, I remember once when the Oprah Show was the big deal, there was a woman on who went into a coma because she didn't sleep enough. You can actually die from not sleeping, by the way. And this woman pushed it far enough that her body went into a coma and she stayed there for a month. And when she came out, she went on the Oprah Show and she said, "The next time I need a vacation, I need to sleep. I'm just going to take time off work." And Oprah said, "Well, you can't just take time off work." And she said, "If I don't take time off work by choice, my body will go into a coma. It's much less expensive to just drop off the grid for a month than to be in a hospital, in a coma, being cared for that entire time. So if you're having trouble justifying sleep, just remember me and drop what you're doing and go to sleep and find a way to make the world work around it."

Rowan Mangan: And even short of the coma scenario, go read that culture shock book and see... Nurture Shock. Nurture Shock, it's called. And see what just chronic sleep deprivation that you're coping with is doing to how much your brain can operate, how your body can operate. Read, Why We Sleep.

Martha Beck: Why We Sleep. All of the horrible diseases we're terrified of getting, not sleeping sets us up for every single one. So yeah, write it down. Start to experiment. Start to try to find ways. COVID gave a lot of us our first chance to kind of decide to experiment with when our bodies want to sleep. Oprah herself told me that was a gift that she got from... although we all feel bad and horrible about the pandemic. She was like, "I never tried that before, just sleeping until I woke up whenever I felt like it." So it did give some of us, who are billionaires... No, but just the fact that we were in lockdown did help a lot of people start to figure it out. And let's not lose that. Do whatever it takes to get the time that your wild self naturally needs to sleep, because the culture on this is literally homicidal. That and cats.

Rowan Mangan: So whatever you do, folks, stay wild.



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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Martha Beck: Stay wild.

Rowan Mangan: We hope you're enjoying Bewildered. If you're in the USA and want to be notified when a new episode comes out, text the word 'WILD' to 570-873-0144. For more of us, Martha's on Instagram, [themarhabeck](#). She's on Facebook, [The Martha Beck](#), and she's on Twitter, [marthabeck](#). Her website is, [MarthaBeck.com](#). And me, I too am on Instagram, [Rowan\\_Mangan](#). I'm on Facebook as [Rowan Mangan](#). And I'm on Twitter as [RowanMangan](#). Bewildered is produced by Scott Forster with support from the brilliant team at MBI.