



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Episode #15: Ten Thousand Spoons

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 here we are at another episode of Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out. I have been trying to figure it out by sitting on the floor in my closet in the dark. But then Marty came in with her phone's flashlight and figured it out by interpreting the hieroglyphics that I'd scratched onto wall with my fingernails.
- Martha Beck: Well, I can't say I figured it all out, though my history of locking people in closets gave me a lot of insight into the hieroglyphics that come when you're blindly scrabbling at sheet rock in the dark.
- Rowan Mangan: That's a very disturbing admission.
- Martha Beck: But you did depict what seems to be an owl with a meerkat in its claws. That is actually the schematic for a spacecraft steered by intelligent weasels that will carry us to the Pleiades. There, figured it out.
- Rowan Mangan: Brilliant.
- Martha Beck: It's always about the Pleiades in the end.
- Rowan Mangan: Isn't it though? We've got a friend who has freckles or moles in the shape of the Pleiades. Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Is she a weasel?
- Rowan Mangan: Well she's an alien.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Martha Beck: Okay. I don't know whether to steer clear of her or just climb aboard?

Rowan Mangan: Climb aboard?

Martha Beck: Things are looking dicey on this planet. Let's go to the Pleiades.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, let's do. Let's do. I've had enough.

Martha Beck: Yeah. But anyway, what are we trying to figure out on the meantime before we go to the Pleiades, my dear?

Rowan Mangan: Well, what I have been trying to figure out... Okay, so I will say upfront before I go into this that it's possible that I'm about to admit to a crime. And I'm just trusting you and our listeners to keep it under the hat if I am.

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: It's one of those crimes where if you don't know if it's a crime or not, I think you can still get done for it.

Martha Beck: Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Rowan Mangan: No excuse. So there's a thing that happens in our house and-

Martha Beck: That's illegal. I don't even know what you're going to say.

Rowan Mangan: So, does everyone do this? I don't know if everyone does this but like do you ever just like make an administrative phone call on someone else's behalf and kind of pretend to be them a little bit.

Martha Beck: A little bit.

Rowan Mangan: Just a little bit.

Martha Beck: Little bit.

Rowan Mangan: Like with the best intentions in the world and no fraud being-

Martha Beck: No.

Rowan Mangan: -actually perpetrated.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Yeah, like sometimes when you need to deal with an American system like a doctors' system that you haven't been in because it's different from Australia, it's just easier for me to get on. They can't understand your language anyway.
- Rowan Mangan: Exactly, that's the [crosstalk 00:03:13].
- Martha Beck: And you don't know... So yeah, sometimes I just pretend to be you.
- Rowan Mangan: And it's quite common too for our beloved Karen to pretend to be Marty because-
- Martha Beck: Because I'm completely incapable of any action that would make me fit for polite society?
- Rowan Mangan: I'm glad that you said that so I didn't have to. Thank you. Yeah, but then sometimes there's like Karen will be on the... There was this time recently, Karen's on the phone pretending to be Marty... Ah, I'm really worried that I'm going to jail for this story, but anyway.
- Martha Beck: I know, I'm scared too right now.
- Rowan Mangan: I know, I don't know. I might be making a terrible mistake. Anyway, Karen was pretending to be Marty and then someone asked, "What's your phone number?" And Karen kind of panicked, ran across the room to Marty, handed her the phone so that Marty could say her phone number but then, so Marty sort of grabs the phone looking a little bit like, "What? What?" And then Karen starts whispering Marty's phone number to Marty for Marty to recite even though it's Karen who's been pretending to be Marty up until that point.
- Martha Beck: So you're having trouble figuring this out. Imagine that you're just sitting, minding your business and someone you love dashes into the room with their phone, shoves their phone into your face and starts frantically whispering your own phone number. What?
- Rowan Mangan: I have to say though, there's a certain way that Marty, if she's painting or something can disappear that I think we just over compensate.
- Martha Beck: Oh definitely.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Rowan Mangan: Is that fair? And so what I was trying to figure out is why a few days ago I did something really similar where Marty's phone rang. I was closer to it than she was, so I grabbed it, answered it, put it on speaker, went over to Marty, who in fairness had been watching the whole thing and was completely aware of what was happening. I put the phone in her face and then I whispered, "Hello. Hello."
- Martha Beck: I bet people think it's a ghost recording. Like I talked about ghost writing, well maybe they think it's a ghost phone where they make a call and they know it's not me because it says, "Hello." In the manner of an Australian but very quiet, "Hello." And then I come on and they're like, "Dude, you're totally haunted by an Australian ghost." Think of the adventure we're offering people.
- Rowan Mangan: We were at some sort of weird new age conference once in Arizona and someone in the room, we were watching a psychic and some in the room was haunted by an Australian ghost.
- Martha Beck: That's true.
- Rowan Mangan: Do you remember that? Yeah.
- Martha Beck: The psychic had some chick come up on stage and she was being haunted by her father who was Australian. And here's the kicker, he did not, according to the medium, he did not believe in ghosts.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, the ghost who didn't believe in ghosts.
- Martha Beck: He didn't believe in himself.
- Rowan Mangan: He needs a life coach. Well, death coach.
- Martha Beck: Death coach. Oh my God,-
- Rowan Mangan: After life coach. After life coach.
- Martha Beck: After life coach. Oh, that's just money. Think about all the change we're going to be getting from the dead.
- Rowan Mangan: So anyway, I just wanted to say that what I was trying to figure out wasn't that it must've been weird for the person on the other end of the phone. It was just in my brain it was necessary to prompt Marty about what to do when she answered the phone.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: We should actually do an episode on ADD, living with someone who has it because actually that sounds odd but given the way my brain works I found it really very understanding and helpful. I wish every time my phone rings someone would hand it to me and say something like, "Hello," or "Go away. I do not wish to purchase real estate in Florida." And then I could say it and it would be like I am in the real world, whereas really I'm just thinking, "All shadows are blue. All shadows are blue," which is basically what I think for hours on end.
- Rowan Mangan: One day she came out of this sort of fugue state and said to Karen and me, "If I ever seem upset about a painting again, just remind me of this," and she started singing-
- Martha Beck: All shadows are blue. I think I've told them about this already, I'm so obsessed with it.
- Rowan Mangan: I don't think you have but there was like a, "All shadows are blue, my dear," or something in the original.
- Martha Beck: All shadows are blue, dear. All shadows are blue. All shadows are blue, dear.
- Rowan Mangan: So that's were our instructions if she ever seems depressed about painting it's because she's forgotten that all shadows are blue.
- Martha Beck: And we do have to sing everything because we have a one year old who loves music-
- Rowan Mangan: That's right.
- Martha Beck: -and every time we sing something to her like, "You're a sweaty little thing," or something because we sing everything, and then we stop and she looks at us and she says the one word she really says clearly, "Again." And we have to sing it over and over. We have become a repository of the worst songs on earth. And all shadows are blue is a solid hit there.
- Rowan Mangan: Sometimes I'm not sure because the way she pronounces it is, "Again," and then every now and again she just does little variations to see the effect and I don't know, I have this feeling that sometimes what she's actually doing is accusing various people of being gays, "A gay?"



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Gay. And she says it in the morning too. We see her on our little Nanny Cam. She sits up in her crib and she goes, "Again." And I think it's like her shock and awe that the dawn has come, like, "Again?" Because I think that when I get up. I look at my feet, one of which looks like skeletal and weird and the other one which is still chubby and purple. My Gollum foot from foot surgery. I look at my body, I look at the bedroom, I look at the day and I think, "Again?"
- Rowan Mangan: So you're basically saying that again is Lila speak for what, "What fresh hell is this?"
- Martha Beck: Definitely. Yeah. We could teach this to our after life clients.
- Rowan Mangan: Good point.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Good point, because that's got to be a shock.
- Rowan Mangan: No kidding, right?
- Martha Beck: Right.
- Rowan Mangan: Anyway, listen Marty.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, sorry.
- Rowan Mangan: What are you trying to figure out?
- Martha Beck: This is... I wasn't going to talk about this because it's literally, "Again?" And you've heard this before from me but it is a really good example of what it's like to live the fresh hell of living inside my skin. So I've been doing a lot of interviews, mostly podcast interviews for my book, and most of them are on Zoom because the people like to see each others faces and so I get all... I have this special designated space with lights and the background looks tidy and everything and I like sit down in my spot, turn on my lights, turn on my computer, bada bing, bada boom, we've got a podcast interview. Well last week someone did that, called me for a Zoom interview or a Skype interview or something, and it was just dark on her end and I was like all gussied up and ready. And she said, "Oh, this is just audio." And I was like, "Cool. So that means I can like scratch myself through the whole interview." And then I thought, "Wait, it could be even better than that." I like to be on bed for most of my time.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

So here's the deal, I had earphones in and I very silently, while talking to her, managed to stand up from my chair, unplug my computer, get around the lights and the cords, go over to my bed. Now I have to say, since my foot surgery, my side of the bed looks weird because everything you need to survive is there along with my extra hand, which is one of those spongy things you use. So there's like a huge-

Rowan Mangan: One of those spongy things you use is like you might use it to pick up litter, you know what I mean? If you were doing community service or something, it's like an extended go-go gadget arm.

Martha Beck: Yeah, it's this long bar that you can clamp like a hand and it's my extra hand. And I can just sit there and while my foot was really bad I could reach anything I needed and I arrayed everything I needed around the bed. So there was like a huge tub of peanut butter in case I get hungry in the night because you can't be going down to cook if you don't have a foot. So-

Rowan Mangan: I just want to say something about the extra hand. One day I was just like, "Oh Marty, I feel like crap. I'm so tired," and she just reached out her extra hand to me and like kind of stroked my shoulder with it. It was weird.

Martha Beck: I can do anything with my extra hand. I love it so much. And then I have like all the books I need and all the pharmaceuticals I need. Oh, and Ro had been... She got under the bed to look for something that I had dropped and she was like, "Marty, there are a lot of pills under there," because I had set up, I was going to be super healthy, so I put up calcium pills and all these... and painkillers that I had to take early on in the process and when I was taking them I was on my back, I couldn't reach around and a lot of them fell under the bed and I would just say, "uh" reach in and take another one. So there was a large array of loose pills under the bed which she picked up and put on my bedside table right next to like the huge thing of peanut butter.

So I creep over there so seamlessly-

Rowan Mangan: During this audio interview.

Martha Beck: Yeah, I'm on the interview. No one would've guessed because I am good at getting to the bed and lying down without anyone knowing.

Rowan Mangan: You're stealthy.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Yeah. And then I got myself all secure with my extra pillows and everything. And now I've got my computer on my lap, which is how I do a lot of Skype calls which means that like our relatives in England, they get to see the top of my head at the very bottom of the screen, just this little point of head. Or if I put it down then they see me from extreme low angles so that I'm like all double chin and that's it. So that's how I was and I'm talking to this interviewer and she was one of those people who like, "Oh my God, I can't believe I'm meeting you. I have been listening..." like, "My mother played your books to me while I was in utero and I just like followed your career and I know everything about you." And I'm like, "Oh thank you. Thank you so much." And I'm lying on the bed after this whole expedition across the mountain of things and she says, "You know I can still see you, right?" And I was like, "Oh, damn."
- Rowan Mangan: So Marty had taken this poor woman on a tour of the post-
- Martha Beck: Of hell.
- Rowan Mangan: -surgery, the peanut butter, the loose pills.
- Martha Beck: And pills everywhere. And usually I am tidy to the point of minimalism, right? Before my surgery I kept thing... Well, that may be extreme, but certainly it's not a vat of peanut butter, handfuls of loose pills and an extra arm that I use to like either comfort my loved ones or punish miscreants.
- Rowan Mangan: Every time you mention the peanut butter, the container that it's in grows again, so it started out as just a large jar. By the time you finish the story it's going to be a barrel.
- Martha Beck: It's a trough. I don't even need the extra arm. I just heave up in bed and plunge my face into the peanut butter trough. "Peanut butter." That is... I think I've mentioned this too, either that or this whole thing is déjà vu, but when people take sleeping pills and do things in their sleep that they forget later, the number one thing they do is eat peanut butter.
- Rowan Mangan: I'm speechless.
- Martha Beck: She's like, "I have nothing to say about that."
- Rowan Mangan: There's just no, when he rejoined her, there was no-
- Martha Beck: No, no, you're thinking about all the times your subconscious is thinking about all the times you've been routing through the peanut butter and didn't even know it.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Rowan Mangan: Mm, yeah, I've had a prescription or two for Ambien in my time.

Martha Beck: We are getting more and more illegal all the time.

Rowan Mangan: I know.

Martha Beck: Now this is so scandalous.

Rowan Mangan: All right.

Martha Beck: So yeah, I'm trying to figure out how honestly, how do I stop exposing myself as a complete ludicrous, train wreck to people who have respected me for decades. I mean-

Rowan Mangan: "How can I stop exposing myself to people," is what I heard.

Martha Beck: Let's just cut this off at how do I stop exposing myself.

Rowan Mangan: Everyone's trying to figure that out, babe.

Martha Beck: So as you know, in this podcast we help people go from bewilderment to be-wild-erment, to go from coming to consensus to coming to your senses. And we come back to our wild true nature in the bewildered and-

Rowan Mangan: That's right, we do. And last episode we talked about sleep and we were going to also go into today's topic but we thought, "No, these are actually two episodes." Today we're going to talk about spoons. Not those spoons. No, no, we talked about Marty and her spoon bending a few episodes ago. We're passed that. These are different spoons altogether.

Martha Beck: Beyond. They're after life spoons in a way.

Rowan Mangan: If you think about it.

Martha Beck: Speak of them, speak of which the spoons are.

Rowan Mangan: Spoons in like contemporary slang, I guess, especially online, is used as a way of measuring physical energy, would you say, Marty? Is that fair?

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: And where does that come from that term?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Martha Beck:

So it comes from a blog post by a woman named Christine Miserandino who has Lupus, which is a horrible autoimmune disease. If you look it up you will be aghast that she's even having to cope with this. But it's also something that doesn't really show. It doesn't have any visible symptoms most of the time, so people don't realize that she's sick. And one day she was sitting with a friend in a restaurant and her friend was kind enough to ask, "What is life like for you with Lupus?" And they were sitting there at this restaurant table surrounded by empty tables and there was silverware set out on the tables.

So Christine Miserandino went and got a bunch of spoons from the surrounding tables and she said, "Imagine that each spoon is a unit of energy and you start the day with about 50 spoons. And every time you do something, it costs you a spoon. So you take a shower, it costs you a spoon. You make breakfast, there goes another spoon. Drive to the office, there's a spoon. Whatever it is, it requires a spoon." And she says at the end as she's pulling out spoons and now she's still got a lot of spoons in her hand and she says, "At the end of your work day you still got spoons to go dancing or hang out with your friends," or whatever.

And then she put down all the spoons but four, and she said, "I start every day with four spoons. If I take a shower, no talk to friends. If I make breakfast, I give up on making dinner. Like I've got four spoons to work with." And this went completely viral to the point where there's actually a Wikipedia entry called, "Spoon Theory," about this that we have a limited amount of energy each day and that different people have different amounts of spoons.

Rowan Mangan:

And people who sort of identify with Christine to the point that they've got, especially invisible sort of conditions that limit their physical energy, call themselves spoonies out there.

Martha Beck:

Well I'm a spoonie, really. I mean I have like fibromyalgia and stuff like that, so I very much identified with this. And I often ask people to describe situations in their lives when their spoons were high and then other situations where they had very few spoons. So Christine Miserandino's very perceptive blog post went crazy viral to the point where there's actually a Wikipedia page on Spoon Theory which talks about how people have different levels of spoons in their lives and on any given day your spoon level can fluctuate.

Rowan Mangan:

Yeah, and I think we both really love this analogy, Marty, because both of us have had the experience of really wildly fluctuating access to spoons in our own bodies and in our own lives, right, at different times?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: It's bewildering. People often tell me, "You're such a high energy person." Remember we had a Pilates instructor ask us that once and he said, "She's got a lot of will." But on any given day I may have the spoons to do a whole bunch of things or very, very little. So yeah, that's a really handy analogy to talk about something that is invisible on the surface.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, and again, it does have a cultural overlay. We were actually noting as we were talking about this in preparation for the podcast that the thing about spoons is that the fewer you have of them, the more likely you are to think about this. And that's where the kind of cultural level comes in because it's about privilege, like so many of these things. Those people who have limitless spoons or a huge abundance of spoons on most days really can't easily imagine what it's like for the people who don't and that's where accusations of lazy or any-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, so the culture says, "We all have the same number of spoons. Don't you dare suggest otherwise," and you're right, for people who never experience a dearth of spoons, it's incomprehensible what other people might be feeling that causes them to act so sluggish.
- Rowan Mangan: And that's funny because you told this story in jest earlier on about wanting to go and lie down on your bed while you were doing the interview.
- Martha Beck: Saves a spoon.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Saves me a spoon.
- Rowan Mangan: And you can use it later for something else where you need to sit up or stand up or whatever.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, and I'm not, like I am in no way one of the people who has the fewest spoons but I have few enough that I'm really conscious of take every opportunity to nourish and sustain your spoon supply.
- Rowan Mangan: And I think you've often been in situations that are very deep in our culture of spooniness where you've felt pressured to pretend to have a larger number of spoons than you do have.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Martha Beck: You know what was so interesting is I've been around the fringes of like Network TV when it was the big thing and everybody seemed to just be exploding with spoons. People had so much energy and I just thought, "Oh man. I got to try to keep up with these folks." And I would do something but I couldn't do it full time. I would go and lie there and just [inaudible 00:23:00]. But then I started to get to know these folks and some of them hired me as coaches and I realized that the spoon level in that industry was assumed to be supernaturally high and they could do it on adrenaline for short bursts but then it started to fail them and as their spoons dropped they would panic and they would hire a life coach even and a lot of them started using substances.

Rowan Mangan: This is similar to the previous-

Martha Beck: It's the Jessica Savitch story. So on our episode about sleep I mentioned Jessica Savitch whose career went down in flames because she couldn't keep her spoons high enough. And I came to think after meeting a lot of people in television that the assumption of the culture about peoples' spooniness is based maybe on a few extraordinary individuals whose spoons are like a shower of gold that constantly reigns from their bodies and [crosstalk 00:23:54].

Rowan Mangan: Golden shower...

Martha Beck: Some people have told me, "I just get home from work and then I have to go dancing and then I have to go jog all night to get my extra energy out," and I'm like, "Damn, buddy, could you spare a spoon please?"

Rowan Mangan: "Buddy, can you spare a spoon?" Yeah, I remember just talking to a friend of mine once who said, "Yeah, if..." Well we were both on a tram heading home and he said, "I've got to go for a jog when I get home or else I just won't be able to settle for the night, I have too much energy in my body," and it was the first time that had ever occurred to me that that could be a thing.

Martha Beck: Yeah. I think, and these people set the pace of culture and so the rest of us... Like I watched this, everyone I worked with in the TV industry was secretly exhausted, totally out of spoons and they were plummeting towards earth and they were terrified of what would happen when they ran out.

Rowan Mangan: Did they know that everyone else was-

Martha Beck: No.

Rowan Mangan: -pretending too?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: No, that was the thing. They were all like secret smokers to get more energy and secretly like they were existing on Red Bull. It was fascinating because it was a secret thing because if people knew that you were desperate for spoons, you'd lose your place in the hierarchy.
- Rowan Mangan: It's so interesting because it's like everyone's participating in this culture of being super human. No one realizes that it's pure culture, that there's no nature really in there.
- Martha Beck: And as you know, for most of my life I have been culture's little bitch. So I bought into it completely and my spoons fluctuate from zero to very few and I was pretending that I was going to fit into this high spoon culture so I abandoned myself. Talk about coming to consensus and away from your senses, I joined the consensus of that industry even though I knew everybody was faking it-
- Rowan Mangan: That's fascinating.
- Martha Beck: -I faked it too and I ended up... I mean the low point came when I stayed up one night and I had seven Red Bulls that night-
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God.
- Martha Beck: -and probably like an Excedrin as well in there somewhere, got to the airport to get on my flight to go to Texas to give a speech to a massive corporation and I thought, "If I can just get to the plane, I'll be okay." And I just fell down. And I woke up, I don't how much later, with a nurse waving ammonia under my nose and I was like, "[inaudible 00:26:29]." And she was like, "Wake up you lazy..." I don't know if she really said that but I felt that because here's the thing, the doctors are trained [crosstalk 00:26:38]-
- Rowan Mangan: Wait, so you were at the airport when you fell down and then you-
- Martha Beck: I fell down... I remember like pressing Karen's number on my call button and crawling toward a pillar, so I would be less conspicuous and then it's gone. And I wake up and I'm in a wheelchair in a hospital and a very angry seeming nurse is waving smelling salts under my nose, getting me to wake up. And I get the distinct feeling that she thinks I'm a total wimp because she's probably been through training where she does 99 hour shifts and isn't allowed to complain, right?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, but like what you're not appreciating is the scourge on this country of people who are so lazy that they lie down in airports. Like think about it from her point of view, these lazy people and all their airport lying around, calling ambulances-



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Just lying on their luggage. Yeah, it's a lifestyle that I had chosen. Yeah, but I literally abandoned myself to the point of fainting and they said that's how far you can torture a human body until you reach fainting.
- Rowan Mangan: Can I just tell a side story about sleeping in airports that has nothing to do with this?
- Martha Beck: I would love nothing more.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. So when I was 23, I moved to Ireland for a year and I bought a ticket through an Indonesian airline. So I flew from Australia heading through Indonesia and then up to Europe. And I spent a year in Ireland very happily and then I was ready to go back and unfortunately the airline that I'd bought my return ticket with had gone under.
- Martha Beck: Lazy.
- Rowan Mangan: In the meantime... So lazy. So I was sort of trapped because I was not someone with a lot of spare money lying around, let's just say. And so I had to... I'm trying to remember. I remember I went to London to try and get the parent company to give me a ticket to get back and somehow I got myself as far as Bali.
- Martha Beck: Wait, you went to the parents of your airline and ask them for a ticket?
- Rowan Mangan: Your dead beat kid owes me money. And so I went to [inaudible 00:29:11]... I just have this memory of being in a very cold London street trying to figure this stuff out. Yeah, got myself to Bali. I had my guitar, my backpack and I went into the little office in the airport in Denpasar in Bali and said, "Listen, here's the piece of paper from London. You guys have to fly me home to Australia now." And they were like, "Oh no, we're not going to do that." And I said, "Look, I'm homeless and broke and I really need you to help me out with this. I have a piece of paper here I think you'll find. And it was this tiny little office like the size of a king size bed. And then that's relevant because when they just refused to do anything I said, "Okay, figure it out, I'm going to sleep." And I lay down on the floor of their office, wrapped around my guitar because I was scared someone might steal it and I fell into a dead sleep, and when someone woke me up they had me a ticket on the next flight.
- Martha Beck: You know what we're actually doing?
- Rowan Mangan: What?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: We are describing a genius way of making it through a hard day.
- Rowan Mangan: Just fall asleep.
- Martha Beck: Go into a public place-
- Rowan Mangan: Become unconscious.
- Martha Beck: -have a piece of paper so they know that you're a citizen of whatever and lie down and go to sleep. I remember doing something similar in a Chinese airport office when we were all so exhausted from standing in line that this American in front of me started shouting in English, "Oh my God, oh my God, what kind of a place is this?" And the one working airline employee in the entire building who'd been filing her nails for approximately 45 minutes, looked up and said in Chinese, "There is no God." And I laughed so she knew I'd understood her, so I got a ticket-
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, nice.
- Martha Beck: -without feigning sleep.
- Rowan Mangan: Wow, sometimes I guess that can work although sometimes crying helps too or-
- Martha Beck: Crying, falling down, Red Bull. Yeah. So yeah, we've both been there guys. We've been, if not around the block, at least nearby.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, and I should say that I have also had spoon issues and it's weird for me because I've had chronic fatigue syndrome so badly that like I would cry when I knew I would have to climb a flight of stairs that was just almost unbearable the thought of having to get myself geared up for that. And luckily that's not something I have all the time and haven't had it for quite a long time, thank God. And on those days, you can almost feel negative spoons.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, it's like you say, you have to sit there... And I remember getting to that place where I'd lie there and I've noticed a pattern over the years. The first day you're below zero on your spoons. It's like you're trying desperately to just tolerate being alive. The second day there's less agony. The third day you feel almost level and the fourth day you remember what it's like to have hope.
- Rowan Mangan: Right. I think you really understand what spoon theory is if you've ever had the experience of lying down flat and it not being lying down enough.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Martha Beck: Oh yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Like how do I lie down harder? What if this was an incline of some sort? Like what if I could go to a planet with stronger gravity or something. It's just like I'm not lying down hard enough.

Martha Beck: I so know that feeling, oh my God. I remember somebody calling me to interview me once and say, "What should I say when I introduce you in your bio?" And I said, "That I lie down." And they were like, "What makes you believable," and I said, "I don't do anything, I just lie down." I couldn't even remember a time when I hadn't been lying down and I didn't want to. It was too hard. So yeah, we've both been there. So one day we were having a discussion and you will hear me pepper all of these broadcasts and Ro will as well with things that come from my son, Adam, who's 33 and has Down syndrome and he has certain phrases that he likes to say and one of those is, "Years ago, when I was a different guy in Phoenix," or, "in California." So this happened. Picture if you will, years ago in California when we were a different guy, we were talking about spoons.

Rowan Mangan: We were.

Martha Beck: Yeah. And Ro had a breakthrough. I mean seriously, it was a breakthrough for me on par with the moment I read my first quantum physics reasonably clear book and realized Newtonian physics had been superseded. Or the time when I realized, I read a book and I was like, "Oh my God, the brain is plastic." Mind blown by this leap forward in the science of spoon theory. So why don't you tell the people Ro?

Rowan Mangan: I basically I split the atom. I don't think that's too bold a claim to make.

Martha Beck: You split Adam? Well no wonder he was a different guy.

Rowan Mangan: Oh dear. Oh dear, oh dear. Is there like an American way I should've said that word is would that pun have come out of you regardless?

Martha Beck: That would've come out of me. It's like vomit, it just happens.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Rowan Mangan: Okay, so here's what I realized about my own spoons. Some activities or ways of passing time cost me more spoons. They take more spoons from me than others, right? Stay with me. So when it comes to the realm of spoons, energy units are not absolute, right? Right. So then I realized that spoons are also gettable. They're gettable in a day and so they don't only go away. Sometimes they do... Let me stop in all my excitement for a moment and say, this isn't for everyone all the time. Some people just have no spoons and it sucks and I am so sorry. And then I think there are some of us who struggle a bit with spoons one way or another and this might be more true for us, but I am not saying that the spoonless are spoony. I am not saying that. But if you are very lucky and very canny, which is what we're about to get into, you can get some spoons back, guys and other people.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, I mean some people, it's just not in the cards but I think for most people, and I've been using this with clients since Ro's breakthrough came and I find that I can actually get people to boost their spoon supply just in one conversation. And I can definitely go from spoonless to spoonful, at least one or two spoons, by choosing different activities or people or ways of going about things. And here's the ticket, they look like they should take equal energy.
- Rowan Mangan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Martha Beck: I have a half hour conversation with person x, I have a half hour conversation with person y. Person x takes every spoon I have. After talking to person y, I have more spoons. Or I can have tons of energy and just be [inaudible 00:36:38] and then I see... Like I'll get an email that has a subject line that is completely indifferent, like, "Just wanted to chat," but if it's from a certain person or there seems to be an energy around that particular email that all my spoons are gone. So this is what I think, while culture says all emails are equal and all half hour conversations or half hour of work or whatever, is equal, in nature that is not true. In nature the quality of what you're doing is more important to your energy level than the quantity. Like 30 minutes is not just 30 minutes. It's 30 minutes of either draining or gaining.
- Rowan Mangan: So how about this for a thought? What if spoons are attracted to nature, to true nature and like repelled by culture? What if we could actually use our own spoon levels in any given day as a barometer for like how close we are to being on the right track? Like as you get spoonier, it's like I'm getting closer to my nature, like a warmer, colder. You often do that as a coaching tool, the warmer, colder game like, "You're getting warmer. You're getting warmer." And so the more like if you have a bit more energy, bit more energy, "I've got more spoons. I must be on the right track."



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Right. So spoon supplies become a measure of how closely you're adhering to your own true nature.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: If this is true, spoon theory must be modified on a grand scale. I mean-
- Rowan Mangan: Heard it here first, folks.
- Martha Beck: -"Call the coast, we have a big story." Because the basic spoon theory out there is going to limit people's spoons by convincing them that they have a limited number of spoons.
- Rowan Mangan: Right.
- Martha Beck: There have been a lot of days when I get up and I'm like, "I have no spoons." And then I think, "Well, I'm screwed for the day. I can't get anymore." But now, what I would do is I would say, "Clearly I'm not on my nature. Clearly I'm doing something that's pulling me away from the path that's optimal for my animal or for my spiritual self." So when I'm out of spoons, instead of just lying down I should say, "What can I think of doing today that would add spoons? Is there anything that adds a spoon or two?"
- Rowan Mangan: And I just want to sort of say in passing that even if you are a very, very spoonless person and you're listening to this and going, "Well-"
- Martha Beck: "It must be nice."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, "It must be nice." And you have like medical diagnosis that mean you don't have spoons, all these things, play with this a little bit because even if there's something that you could think about or listen to that might make lying down be enough instead of not enough. Like it's worth playing with just in case, right?
- Martha Beck: I remember during periods where you had CFS and it's so weird the way it hits Ro because she's tired but she's going and then bam. I mean there are theories about how the mitochondria aren't processing oxygen as well. So it's literally like something just suddenly suffocates her muscles and she just goes down, like a fallen tree.
- Rowan Mangan: It's not like being tired. It's like being sick or weak or whatever.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, and it's not negotiable, right?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: And so I got used to just like finding ways to get you to a safe space when that hit and then waiting for the spoons to come back. But then after we started talking this way about the spoons, we started exploring ways that you could feel better while lying down. And this is the thing, you guys. It's not just important that you get up and keep working for the great monolithic production machine that is our culture.

Rowan Mangan: Oh God, yes.

Martha Beck: What's important is that you are enjoying your life, that you are engaged and joyful in the human experience. And that's really all you're meant for. Like you may leave a massive legacy on earth but honestly, the value of being alive is in the joy of the present moment and what we found is that if we talked about certain subjects, Ro's spoons would come up and her hope and her joy would come back.

Rowan Mangan: Even if my body still wasn't willing to walk around.

Martha Beck: Absolutely.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, and I feel like there was a certain freedom that came just with this language, when we broke through to having this language of, "This gives me spoons. This takes my spoons," don't you think?

Martha Beck: Yeah, absolutely.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, it was like this new way of being able to explain something that I don't think our culture, mainstream culture really has language for.

Martha Beck: Yeah. So the language... I love a rhyme so here it is. Here it is in four words, spoon drain, spoon gain.

Rowan Mangan: Hello.

Martha Beck: Hello. That's why they pay me the big bucks. So yeah, we can just be going along and going, "Oh wow, that just took all my spoons." It happened as we were starting this podcast. We were sitting down and a text came in to one of us, I shan't say who, and suddenly it was like, "Oh my God, I don't think I can do anything because I have no spoons." And because we were talking about this topic we were like, "But wait, you have just been connected with the person who's draining your spoons but how can you gain them back?"



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Rowan Mangan: Podcast.
- Martha Beck: Podcast. I have a idea. I remember when my oldest child was tiny, they used to say... Like we'd be doing something boring and they would say, "I have a idea." And I would say, "What?" And they would say, "A birthday party." And so we would have a birthday party like every, single day.
- Rowan Mangan: I love that so much.
- Martha Beck: And I always think about that because I'm lying there going, "No spoons and I have so much work to do. And how do I explain to this and that person that I can't go live with them in Europe for a week and help them solve their problems?" And then I think, "Wait, I have a idea. A spoon party. What can I get around me that gives me spoons? And then we can find it."
- Rowan Mangan: Okay, so Marty, here we are, we are looking at this whole new taxonomy.
- Martha Beck: Oh my God, science will never be the same.
- Rowan Mangan: I know, right? So I want to understand how this works, what the spoon drainers and the spoon gainers are?
- Martha Beck: Well you know how we talk about how science is real and science is coming to our senses? You look at the empirical data... Well it's empirical but it's also subjective. [crosstalk 00:43:38].
- Rowan Mangan: Guys, if you aren't massive nerds, please still bear with us because this is actually quite fun despite what it may sound like.
- Martha Beck: It is subjective but you can feel empirically when you set out to do something or even think about or when someone comes into the room, you can feel your spoons either being drained or gained, right? So the first thing you do is some data gathering, observation. You look at the things... And I would start with things that drain your spoons because people are fighting to stay current and energetic with things that are eating their spoons like some sort of horrific metal monster.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh gosh.
- Martha Beck: Ja. So to know what drains your spoons is the first step. So-
- Rowan Mangan: What drains your spoons?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: Well it's ironic that a birthday party or a spoon party with my oldest child would give me spoons because parties in general, the kind of party where you're supposed to drink things out of the red plastic cups with loud music and-
- Rowan Mangan: Only Americans do that red plastic cup thing.
- Martha Beck: I want to die when I end up in one of those parties. I literally hide underneath things. And once I hid underneath something at a massive party and I ran into an author I very much respected who's a Zen monk and we were both hiding under a table because parties drained all our spoons and we couldn't do it.
- Rowan Mangan: I just have this really strange image come into my head which is like a jumble of different cultural ideas. So I have this idea of you at a party and it drains your spoons and I was trying to find the image for that and it was like that thing where the servant steals the silverware and then they're trying to sneak out with the silverware and then like everything kind of falls off their body down on the floor and that's how I picture you at that party under the table with that Zen monk probably kissing.
- Martha Beck: You know why that's so apropos because it's like the height of like colonial, class privilege. I am the person running from the house with the spoons and I'm the person catching the person running from the house with the spoons.
- Rowan Mangan: No wonder you're so bewildered.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, no wonder we're so bewildered. So all right, I gave you one of mine, now you give me one of yours.
- Rowan Mangan: Hello. Don't even know what that means. Just sounded dirty. Okay, so I tell you what absolutely is guaranteed to drain my spoons is doing scheduling stuff, like my calender, your calender, let's find a time. What about next Tuesday at 2:30? No, I could do it at 2:15 but then I'd have to have a hard stop at...
- Martha Beck: Okay, a large riding mower just went past us in a-
- Rowan Mangan: Like in a comedy skit.
- Martha Beck: Actually just hearing you talk about scheduling took so many spoons from me that I literally had to like grasp for the slightest... I know we're doing spoon gains later, so I'm going to stick with this. Gifts with tentacles drain my spoons.
- Rowan Mangan: Explain.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Martha Beck: You know when somebody gives you a gift because they're just overflowing with generosity and they see something that's perfect for you and they want you to have it.

Rowan Mangan: It's lovely, a lovely feeling.

Martha Beck: It's like, so many spoons. I actually got a gift from this unbelievably wonderful gentleman who heard me... I guess I wrote a thing about spoons and he sent me these beautiful Victorian tiny spoons-

Rowan Mangan: Oh yes.

Martha Beck: -which I have in my office. Thank you so much.

Rowan Mangan: I think his name was Rupert.

Martha Beck: Thank you Matthew. Thank you for that. Or was it Michael?

Rowan Mangan: I think it was Rupert.

Martha Beck: Oh God, if I'm wrong my spoons will be gone like literally and-

Rowan Mangan: You know who you are. They're beautiful.

Martha Beck: You know who you are, I love them. So yeah, but no tentacles on that gift. But when someone gives something to you and the card says, "I know we'll be using this together soon," and inside it is like a bikini. No, people send you weird gifts when you write self-help. And it will be some bizarre, random thing that I said while I was giving a speech and probably my spoons were off that day and I said something like, "Boy, if there's one thing I like, it's lying around in a bikini," and they're like, "Me too. Next step, together on a beach."

Rowan Mangan: It's so funny because she's making up an example and I am bursting with real-life examples that I want to give but I can't because anyone of them would be so identifiable and just in case that person was listening. If you've given Martha a gift and you're listening, that's not the gifts that we're talking about, for sure.

Martha Beck: Oh no.

Rowan Mangan: You're amazing.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: You're awesome, no tentacles on your presents. But when I get a present I get enough tentacle presents that when I see a present come in, my spoons drop to the floor and presents are supposed to make your spoons go up but that's how much the cultural obligation because they're being used as an emblem of cultural manipulation. Now you have to come back with something nice because I gave you a present.
- Rowan Mangan: You know what drains my spoons? Well you actually do know this, flat packs, putting together furniture.
- Martha Beck: Flat packs, is that what they call them in Australia?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, like when you get from Ikea or whatever and you get a flat pack.
- Martha Beck: Unassembled furniture?
- Rowan Mangan: Yes.
- Martha Beck: That you have to assemble.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my God, here we go.
- Martha Beck: Oh, that gives me so many spoons. I love assembling those weird furniture puzzles.
- Rowan Mangan: And I hate it so much that I literally for the longest time couldn't believe that Marty didn't hate it.
- Martha Beck: So we got into this weird thing before we had spoon language. We had this weird sort of loss of communication where a flat pack of something, like a bookcase would arrive and for me like gathering together with loved ones and merrily putting together a bookcase is like the ultimate spoon heaven; and for Ro it was like being stabbed with her one remaining spoon.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh yeah.
- Martha Beck: So the package would come and she'd say, "Oh just leave it there. We'll do it later." And I'd be like, "Oh you're right, I have to eat my vegetables before I have dessert. I'll go do things that drain me of spoons." But we'd never get to the point where Ro was like, "Dammit, let's just put together that furniture."
- Rowan Mangan: I was trying to protect her from it.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Martha Beck: So this actually is true. I was getting up at night and sneaking into the other room to open flat packs of bookcases and put them together because it gave me such joy that I would rather do that than sleep.
- Rowan Mangan: It's just impossible for me to comprehend. I just remembered, so around that time, Steven Mitchell, our friend had had said this brilliant thing to Marty about first you... remember this? First you pull the rug out-
- Martha Beck: Oh yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: -from...
- Martha Beck: He's a gorgeous writer and... I mean his writing is gorgeous as well as his person but he was also a Zen monk and one of the things he says is, "The process of enlightenment goes like this, first you pull the rug out from under your feet, then you pull the floor out from under the rug and then you pull the ground out from under the floor. Now you're getting somewhere."
- Rowan Mangan: And our friend Liz, wrote us an email where she quoted that and said, "And then there's Marty in the void putting together furniture in the middle of the night."
- Martha Beck: It's a thing I do, and I don't even miss the sleep. I'm like so full of spoons. Guess what I'm going to get now? A thousand gifts of furniture with tentacles.
- Rowan Mangan: People are going to send you flat packs, yeah.
- Martha Beck: "Put together that, Martha Beck."
- Rowan Mangan: All right, let's go to what gives us spoons because I just don't think-
- Martha Beck: I already feel-
- Rowan Mangan: I just don't think I can talk about putting together furniture anymore. I'm just going to collapse in a heap.
- Martha Beck: And I already feel spoony because I'm just thinking about bookshelves.
- Rowan Mangan: So I'll tell you something Marty.
- Martha Beck: What?



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Rowan Mangan: I love parties. I love them. They give me spoons. A good party is like a spiritual experience.
- Martha Beck: I do not understand that.
- Rowan Mangan: But do not have plastic cups, that's not... no, that's not okay. We don't do that in my country.
- Martha Beck: Actually if things with fine crystal are even more frightening to me, so yeah, you're not winning me over here.
- Rowan Mangan: There's no fine crystal. We just don't add to landfill when we enjoy each other.
- Martha Beck: So that give you spoons. So okay, I'll be putting together furniture, you go off to a party and condemn them for their plastic cups.
- Rowan Mangan: Beautiful.
- Martha Beck: So that gives you spoons. Green things, green plants give me spoons and there's tons of research on this being literally true, which I will not bore you with. But just being around the trees or even a potted plant will lift my spoons a little.
- Rowan Mangan: I don't even think it's that mysterious. So for me, my daughter gives me spoons, cooking gives me spoons. I know that's not for everyone but if you love something, you know it, you know what gives you spoons. But like I can be feeling really not energized and be able to stand for four or five hours cooking a big pot of something and just be very joyful. Yeah, creating beautiful spaces is another one for me and that I really, really love.
- Martha Beck: You want to hear a weird one for me?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Nothing drained my spoons harder than trying to learn Chinese, which I did for years as a Chinese major in college, and it was very hard, it's a grind and it did not stick in my mind and yet, Japanese, which is similar... It's a completely different grammar, it's a different language family, studying Japanese gave me mountains of spoons. Like I would literally when I was in Japan, I would study so hard that I'd fall asleep and there would be Japanese books all around me and I would tuck them under my body for the joy of feeling them next to me and the moment I woke up I would start learning more Japanese. I was passionately in love with that. Chinese is... What's the difference? I don't know.



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

- Rowan Mangan: You literally took Japanese to your bed.
- Martha Beck: I did. I went to bed with Japanese.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, you are a strange one.
- Martha Beck: Back in Japan when I was a different guy.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, I bet you were.
- Martha Beck: Years ago.
- Rowan Mangan: Is that what pansexual means? I'll do it with textbooks?
- Martha Beck: No, that's, "I'll do it with pans," which apparently is a spoon thing to do.
- Rowan Mangan: That's my style. Yeah, that's true.
- Martha Beck: The cookware. So yeah, it's weird. Like you can't really fight with what your nature wants to do and when you find something that gives you spoons maybe just let it take you. Let your time be spent on the things that gain spoons instead of draining spoons and see maybe what your life becomes, if it's spoon guided.
- Rowan Mangan: Absolutely. A spoon guided life, what could be better, really? Follow those spoons, gang and stay wild.
- 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, themarthabeck. 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.