



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Episode #20: Toothpicks, Dinosaurs, and Snakebites

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] Hi, I'm Martha Beck!

Rowan Mangan: And I'm Rowan Mangan. This is another episode of Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out. I've been trying to figure it out today by constructing a gigantic model made of toothpicks and chewing gum. Anyway, Marty came into the room and she sneezed. And when the whole thing fell down, she seemed to have figured it out. It was really weird.

Martha Beck: Yeah. It's like in the ancient world when people would read the entrails of animals. For me, those little toothpicks with the chewing gum are basically what my insides are made of. So I have a resonance with them. And when I see them in a pile, it's also like Dustin Hoffman in Rain Man. He looks at the toothpicks, he knows how many there are. I look at it, I know everything that it ever was.

Rowan Mangan: I mean, it was a scale like 3D map of the universe, I suppose. So, it does makes sense.

Martha Beck: Yeah. You were running a little short on the gum, but other than that, well done. Yeah. It's totally figured out now. I figured it out. Lock me back in my room now. So what are you trying to figure out, Rowie?

Rowan Mangan: Marty, I am trying to figure out money.

Martha Beck: Oh, that shouldn't be hard.

Rowan Mangan: That's what I thought. This business of personal finance, I have bought the book, Personal Finance For Dummies. That's how serious I am about this.



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- Martha Beck: Ooh, that's serious.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. But I recently realized that it might be more complex than I thought when I announced to you and our beloved Karen with great triumph. I was like, "I figured it out. Spending and saving are the same thing."
- Martha Beck: You didn't say that.
- Rowan Mangan: And I said it in all seriousness.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. You were like, "Okay." You were going to move on to another point. You're like, "Okay. So spending and saving are the same thing." And we were like, "What? Did you take her money away from her?" Should not be entrusted with money. Yeah. It is weird though. I mean, you grow up and there are all these things, they teach you in school that you'll never need. And nobody teaches you a doggone thing about the weird things you have to do to have money as a grownup in the world and to work with it. And who learns it? Who taught you that stuff? Well, Finance for Dummies is what taught me that.
- Rowan Mangan: Personal Finance For Dummies is teaching me.
- Martha Beck: Did it start out by saying, "Okay. First, spending and saving are the same thing. Now give us all your money is the same as saving it."
- Rowan Mangan: The first thing you need to understand you dummy, is the spending and saving are not the same thing. But anyway, so I read that and it got better. Look, let's leave this topic, Marty. What on earth are you trying to figure out?
- Martha Beck: Okay. I am trying to figure out quite literally why a small dinosaur settled in my lap? Under a trying circumstance.
- Rowan Mangan: I think you'd better say more.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Well, you know that birds are directly descended from dinosaurs. Right?
- Rowan Mangan: Heard that.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And dinosaurs, some of them even had feathers. And the pterodactyls that fly around, picking people off in Jurassic Park III, they only had like a two foot wingspan.
- Rowan Mangan: You don't know how big those people were.



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Martha Beck: That's true.

Rowan Mangan: It might have been tiny people.

Martha Beck: Chris Pratt is only an inch and a half tall. "No. Well, it was you. You brought the dinosaur into the house." Remember, we got up. It was zero degrees, no, it was like six degrees Fahrenheit. Which is pretty much the same as absolute zero, which all life ceases and all molecular motion is gone. But sitting out in our backyard with its head tucked under its wing was a tiny dinosaur.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. A tiny blue one.

Martha Beck: Yes. A blue jay. And he was all puffed up like a snowball, so he looked decapitated.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's not like you think, "Oh, they just tuck their head under their wing a little bit." No, there was no head. There were two wings and there was no head because the puffy feathers meant that it was like, the bird was just round.

Martha Beck: And when a bird has no head and is round, that is a cold bird.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. So I suspected potentially a dead bird.

Martha Beck: That's right. We were standing [inaudible 00:05:03].

Rowan Mangan: The bird has no head and is any shape. Death is always a possibility. I hate to be too real.

Martha Beck: Except for cockroaches. They can live for weeks without their heads. Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: I'm not rescuing a cockroach.

Martha Beck: Yeah. But you did rescue the bird because I told you, I said, "Rescue that bird." And I said, "It's good to put a towel over them." So we went out with a towel and a box and I said to you, "Put a towel over it" Well, because I wasn't going to come close to it. I'll tell you that much.

Rowan Mangan: Marty helpfully stood nearby.

Martha Beck: I held the box for a while.

Rowan Mangan: Making instructions and demands.



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- Martha Beck: "But put the towel on it, Ro. Now put it in the box, Ro." And she did. And she closed the box. And she took it in the house.
- Rowan Mangan: You should see what happens around here when we get a stink bug.
- Martha Beck: Oh, God. Yeah. Ro, is my hero. She deals with the wildlife situations. Anyway, she gave it some water and cooked it a bowl of oatmeal, which I thought was odd.
- Rowan Mangan: I cooked it a very small, little, thimble full of oatmeal.
- Martha Beck: I was thinking it's probably one of those things where they eat the oatmeal and they're supposed to be carnivores and then it explodes in their stomachs or something.
- Rowan Mangan: I will never forget what Rufus Wainwright said in this documentary about Leonard Cohen. Brilliant thing called I'm Your Man.
- Martha Beck: Did he say that Leonard Cohen could live for weeks without his head? Sorry.
- Rowan Mangan: He told this story. He knew Leonard Cohen's son and came over there after school one day, I guess, they were in high school. And it was the first time he'd met him. And he was standing in his underwear with a rescued baby bird and trying to feed it oatmeal. And so Rufus and his friend came in and I guess they got snacks and stuff. And there was a lot of conversation about the bird and what they were going to do with it. And then a little bit later, Leonard Cohen goes out and they're still hanging out with the bird. And then he comes back in and he is like full fedora, full suit. And it gave him a fright.
- Martha Beck: The bird?
- Rowan Mangan: No, the bird was fine. Sorry. This is Rufus. Rufus felt scared because when the man was just in underwear with the baby bird, he was no threat. But then he came in all snazzy and suddenly this young man was intimidated by Leonard Cohen because it was like, "Leonard Cohen."
- Martha Beck: I myself, would be more intimidated. Like if we went into our kitchen and a famous celebrity were in there, in his underwear with a wild bird, trying to spoon oatmeal down its beak. I would be more worried in that situation than if he were fully attired with a fedora.
- Rowan Mangan: All right. Let's just think for a minute about which celebrities would be more or less intimidating in their underwear.



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Martha Beck: Mick Jagger.

Rowan Mangan: Mick Jagger. Not at all intimidating. It would feel very normal to me.

Martha Beck: In a fedora?

Rowan Mangan: No, no in his underwear.

Martha Beck: Okay. All right.

Rowan Mangan: Wait. Yeah. Underwear or fedora.

Martha Beck: Adele?

Rowan Mangan: Oh, no again, that just feels very normal to me.

Martha Beck: You're really used to people in their underwear, aren't you?

Rowan Mangan: I feel comfortable with it. Yeah. I mean, I don't think we just all get around in our underwear enough. I mean it's very cold right now. So it's very cold right now so I feel like...

Martha Beck: Yes, it is cold, which takes me back to my story of the bird. Okay. So we call the wildlife rescue people and they said bring it in. And I was like, "Okay." But then Ro had to leave. So I got in the car and Karen put the bird in its box next to me on the passenger seat because I was not going to get near that box. So she belted it in and it was quiet in there. This sad, tired bird. So I started driving and immediately from the box came the sounds of a bird, trying to get out. And I was alarmed. I'm telling you, it might as well have been Leonard Cohen and his underwear in there scrambling.

Yeah. Yeah, horrifying. Right? It was the stuff of horror movies, but I told myself, "Okay, no, no, no, I'll be fine. It can't get out. I'm just going to drive very gently. I'll turn gently, accelerate gently. Everything's gentle. "It can't get out. It can't get out." So I'm driving and every time I accelerate or every time I turn and I say, "It can't get out. It can't get out." But it does occur to me that it is directly descended from dinosaurs. I've got a dinosaur in a box and it's making really scary noises like the Velociraptors in Jurassic Park who could open doors.

Rowan Mangan: So also, it occurs to me that those turnings and accelerations and breakings and things like that might have been a bit erratic because you can be a little bit like impulsive.



Martha Beck: Not this time, baby. I was driving like silky smooth driving except for inside my mind.

Rowan Mangan: And, yeah. So there's a Velociraptor in a box. It can open doors. Well, why didn't you think it could open a goddamn box?

Martha Beck: Well, it was small. So I'm driving-

Rowan Mangan: Chris Pratt was only an inch and a half feet tall and he was standing in my kitchen in his underwear for the bait, oh, God, with a blue jay.

Martha Beck: Chris Pratt in his underwear, but a fedora on top. How do you feel?

Rowan Mangan: Really, really intimidated.

Martha Beck: There we go. Okay. So I'm driving along. I get to the freeway mind you?

Rowan Mangan: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Martha Beck: And I gently accelerate to 60 miles an hour into traffic. I'm merging in traffic, but everything's smooth. Everything's fine. It can't get out. It can't get out. It can't get out. Oh, my God. It got out. Yes. I turned to my right. I did not even see how it happened. There was a box with a blue jay standing on it next to me. And I just...

Rowan Mangan: So he was like perched on top of the box.

Martha Beck: He just stood on top of the box. And I was going 60 miles an hour in heavy traffic. And I thought the pecking and the flapping was about to commence. I thought he was going to come straight for my eyes.

Rowan Mangan: I bet you were starting to wish he did have no head.

Martha Beck: Yeah. Yeah. Plus he had on a fedora, anyway. I was like, "Okay. I said out loud." And I thought this was very creative, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."

Rowan Mangan: I can so picture you doing that.



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- Martha Beck: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. And that I'm thinking, "Okay, I've got to keep driving straight. Even if he's pecking my eyes out, I must save lives. I must save lives by focusing on the driving. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no." So then I find a place, a shoulder to pull off on. I stop the car very gently because now he's precariously balanced on a freaking box.
- Rowan Mangan: Wait, I have to just ask you something?
- Martha Beck: What?
- Rowan Mangan: So if a bird is in a car and the car is driving and the bird was able to hover inside the car, is it moving with the car? I think it slammed back.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. This is part of an illustration of an exercise to explain special relativity.
- Rowan Mangan: Special relativity.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. No he can't hover. That would take a hummingbird. What are you crazy?
- Rowan Mangan: But if a humming... All right, don't worry.
- Martha Beck: No, no, no that, yeah. It's a whole different issue. We may have cut this whole thing because, yeah. Okay. So I'm there, got my emergency flashes on, parking brake is on. I'm sitting there, the bird is perched on his box. I'm going, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no." And I thought, "Okay, I've been around wild animals a lot and horses and things and you just have to get really calm." So I did the thing that we'd learned to do with horses. And I got really calm, because I didn't know what I was going to do. I had to make a plan. I was going to try to get the towel out and then put it over him. But he was standing on the box and the towel was in the box. So I was completely flummoxed. And as I sat there pondering what to do, the tiny Velociraptor walked off his box and across the seat and into my lap. And there he did sit down.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, he loves you.



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Martha Beck: He did. And I loved him. And I thought, "I want this bird to keep, I want this bird to marry." And so I don't know why he did it. I picked him up really gently. He didn't kick, he didn't squawk. I put him in the box really gently. I wrapped him in his towel really gently. I put the box together really gently and then I freaking put my purse on it really hard. And then I, not hard enough to smush him. And then I drove to the wildlife rescue thing and they took him and I could hear him scribbling inside and they were yelling, "Oh my God, he is so feisty." And I was like, "No, he loves me, that dinosaur." And I don't know why. And I've been wondering about it ever since.

Rowan Mangan: Let me ask you this. After he crawled into your lap and gave you a cuddle. And then you put him back in the box and you put your purse on the top very hard.

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: After that, while you were still driving, did he scrabble?

Martha Beck: No.

Rowan Mangan: So maybe he was just trying to say, "Okay, so I might be a bird, but in my world, it's polite to say hi to someone before you put them in a box and drive them across state lines."

Martha Beck: Ro, I think you have figured it out. That's it.

Rowan Mangan: It's just a simple lesson on manners.

Martha Beck: It's dinosaur etiquette.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Thank you for helping me figure that out. I feel so much better.

Rowan Mangan: You're very welcome. We'll be right back with more Bewildered. I have a little favorite to ask. Would you consider giving us a little rate and review love on your favorite podcast player? It helps people find the podcast. It builds this beautiful community. Most of all, it helps us in our quest to Bewilder the world. Thank you so much. First up on the BeWild Files today, Marty, we have Karen who is going through a lot of change.

Martha Beck: Oh.



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- Karen: Hi, there. I am calling because I have the great gift of starting my life over at 36 years old. I know they recommend change in small increments, but that's just not my situation. I quit my marriage. I quit my corporate job. And now I'm in a position where I need money ASAP. So I'm curious to know your thoughts on following the way of integrity and also figuring out how to live life and monetize it. How do you combine money and integrity when you're in a hurry? Okay. Thanks. Bye.
- Martha Beck: Hi. Ever been here Ro, to that place where Karen is?
- Rowan Mangan: Never, never, never.
- Martha Beck: Like the time you had \$3 left for a hotel room in India and it nearly killed you.
- Rowan Mangan: I wasn't so keen on integrity back in those days. So it worked out okay.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. She ended up smashing a bug on a light bulb or something and it was a nightmare night. Okay. Anyway, we've both been in a situation where we didn't have money and we needed it ASAP. And here's the thing. It did not show up. I don't want to discourage you Karen, but after my long years of thinking about this, I realized that when I'm in a hurry, the anxiety about the money is the thing I put first in my attention. And that is the opposite of an abundance mentality that seems to allow things in more, oh, I'm sounding very new age here. What am I trying to say, Ro?
- Rowan Mangan: Congratulations, Karen on starting your life over and quitting all the things. Nice clean sweep. I love it. I am not very good at moderation myself. So I really feel you. And I love that even though it's an extreme situation, your focus is living life and walking the way of integrity as well as finding money, which let's face it, it is a real thing. Spending and saving are the same thing. I don't know how much harder I can stress this people. Yeah. How to combine money in integrity when you're in a hurry and Marty's like, "Yeah, but when you have hurry, hurry energy, it's hard to make money out of that." I get it.
- Martha Beck: Maybe this is the splitting hairs, but I actually don't think so. I think this is a place where the culture makes a big hair out of something that should be split. So the split hair-
- Rowan Mangan: Wait, like a big hair?
- Martha Beck: One big hair. H-A-I-R.



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- Rowan Mangan: Big hair like '80s.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Like I'm about to split hairs, right? I'm going to cut into the definition of something that seems very tiny because of our cultural bias. But actually it's a big fat hair that needs to be split because if you don't split it, you don't get the money.
- Rowan Mangan: It's like an Afro.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: It's big hair.
- Martha Beck: [inaudible 00:18:10] knot of hair.
- Rowan Mangan: We're really not on the same page with this metaphor, but that's all right. You just keep going.
- Martha Beck: Here's my point. I assume you've read my book, *The Way of Integrity*. And how I'm defining it is being your whole self and being in nature, your wild, whole nature. So we always go back to what would an animal be feeling at this moment. And the thing about needing money fast, is it creates an anxiety that's in the imagination. You imagine what will happen when your taxes come due, when your rent comes due, which you have to do, don't get me wrong. But here's where I'm splitting the hair, when you go from that state of anxiety, it can't be the same as your integrity, because your integrity is always calm, is always in the present moment and is never imagining difficult things happening. So when I quit my job and my everything, home, everything, I thought I've done the work that they say to do, "Jump and the net appears." And I remember driving around with my three kids going, "Where's the net, where's the net. Where's the net."
- Rowan Mangan: I remember driving off a cliff, the Grand Canyon, Thelma and Louis style. Oh, that's his point.
- Martha Beck: If it hadn't been for the kids, I might have done that. No, but I was like, nothing happened for like 18 months and we were living on debt. This is not something I advise you to do. And then I was in a bookstore. Somebody had given me a coupon for a book for my birthday. And my plan was, because I had no money. I was going to go spend the coupon on a book, it was \$15. Read the book that night, then take it back and change it for a different book. Read that the next night and just keep going. Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Well, the *Way of Integrity* herself.



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Martha Beck: Yeah. Okay. It's all out there now. This is my big coming out as a serial-

Rowan Mangan: Martha Beck admits to a life of crime.

Martha Beck: Serial coupon use. So anyway, I went in and the book that literally jumped out at me visually, that is, it's not like a poltergeist threw it at me.

Rowan Mangan: It literally visually jumped out at you.

Martha Beck: Yeah, see. There's another problem with my integrity. The book did not literally. But it jumped out literally.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, there you go.

Martha Beck: It was just a slip of the tongue.

Rowan Mangan: I love it.

Martha Beck: Yeah. It threw itself at me, literally.

Rowan Mangan: Can we make that a new thing that we do on this podcast? If we want to say literally, but it's not true. We just say literally.

Martha Beck: That is literally true. And it was Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*. And I opened to a certain page and my eye fell upon the phrase, "God has lots of money." And it was like getting hit with a hammer in the face. I was like, "Why have I been so worried if I believe that there's any kind of higher power." It has all the money. Like, it's going to figure out what to do with the money. And I felt this incredible calm come over me. And I lost my fear of the future and I thought I'm going to make money and everything will be okay. And I went to my then husband, I said, "You can stop worrying about money." And he's like, "Did you hit a bank like I told you to?"

No, he didn't say that, don't sue me. He said, "Why, did you sell a book?" And I was like, "As if." I literally stole the book. And now I know that my pal, the divine - has all the money. So I'm sure it's going to get it to me one way or another. And it did, it actually did 14 months later. But from that moment I stopped being afraid. Because every time I went into, "Okay, I've got to have it now." It was like a fish slipping through my fingers. And when I would relax and say, "I'm going to keep working, I'm going to keep applying for jobs." I did get little part-time gigs here and there. And it was like, the fish would come lie down in my hand.



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- Rowan Mangan: So I have a slightly different take because I think one of the things that is really interesting for where Karen is versus where you were, is that we're now in the economy, I want to say, and I mean that in the largest sense where applying for jobs is only about 50% likely to be Karen's path. Do you know what I mean? Like in some in so many-
- Martha Beck: Right. I never got a job either. Not a job, job that I kept.
- Rowan Mangan: What about literally?
- Martha Beck: Literally I got some part-time gigs that could barely cover interest on our credit card loans.
- Rowan Mangan: Literally you did publish a lot of best selling books.
- Martha Beck: No, literally that was after.
- Rowan Mangan: So I have a slightly different take on it, Marty. Though, I do agree with you that the calm is the way. I feel like part of the thing is that what's different for Karen now than it was for you then is that we're living in this creativity economy to a certain extent. There's a lot of privilege in that statement, but a lot of us do have the option to be more creative about how we make money in the world. And so the idea of just applying for jobs and hoping that the money comes from that may not be Karen's reality or the scope of her options. And so what I'm thinking is that yeah, we want calm. We all want to find calm. But for me, the reason for that is that's where your creativity is. And to access that creativity is to attract, oh, dear.
- Martha Beck: Oh, it came out.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, it's the new age - is to make it easier for money to come, which is also very new age thing.



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- Martha Beck: Thank you. That is very apropos. And I actually never got a job that I kept. I did a few little part-time jobs that barely covered the interest on our credit cards, loans. But you're absolutely right in the calmness, I could begin to write things that eventually did become bestselling books. And it reminds me, and this is not the last time this has happened to me where I've thought I need money now in a hurry. It was the worst time by far. But there were a number of downturns in the economy and stuff. And actually right after we met each other, that happened. We were like, "Oh gosh, we need to get a certain amount of money in order to keep things we value, what will we do?" And we had like a week. And so we thought, "Well, what do we love to do?" We both love to write, there are people out there that love to write the way we love to write in a soulful way. Let's throw a writing program and put it online.
- Rowan Mangan: Yes we did.
- Martha Beck: And it was just the two of us.
- Rowan Mangan: No, it wasn't. We had a very supportive team around us.
- Martha Beck: It was the two of us at first going, "Could this happen?" And then we made the whole curriculum and then yes, we did have a team.
- Rowan Mangan: I just have to tell the peeps why I'm laughing because there's this story that we tell of, "Oh, hell – Martha and I just made this program and Marty likes to tell it in front of our team who sit there going, oh, you did? Did you - just the two of you? Eh, oh, that's, well done. Must have been hard not having any support."
- Martha Beck: Okay. But I've done it in the past without as much of a team. You know what I just made though, was the Walden Pond mistake.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh yes you did. Explain
- Martha Beck: Yeah. When I started off to college, they made all the incoming freshman read Walden, by Walden, by Henry David Thoreau about how Henry David Thoreau went and lived in a cabin by Walden Pond. And he just lived off the land and wrote poetry and was a whole man. And there were no problems. And then I found out some 20 years later, reading feminist theory, that the reason he was so chill out there on the pond was that his mother and sisters brought him food and clean laundry and took away his dirty clothes and cleaned his damn little cabin for him every single day.
- Rowan Mangan: He was the natural man, awakening to freshly pressed slacks.



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Martha Beck: Right.

Rowan Mangan: Virtues.

Martha Beck: The deer in the field, the fox at my door, the women cleaning, it's all part of the grand scheme of nature. So I made the Walden mistake and I can hardly believe, but I did. Oh, my God. Okay. I am so entitled, but here's the point. And you made it and I just want to sum it up. Because this is the truth. The value that you have to give the world, which is what you trade for whatever you need to live is in what you create. It's not in a pile of money. They've actually done studies of people who win the lottery and so on. And they tend to end up right back at their level of poverty from before, for various reasons, people swim around and try to grab it and all kinds of things happen. But if somebody is creative with their possessions, with their lives, and if you're in integrity, that's, you're right. You're touching the creative force.

Rowan Mangan: But that's so cool, because that's the integrity piece and what it makes me think of is the word value, because it's just like how do I say this idea? Like you create value from your creativity, from your calm, which is the value that only you can create. And from that, it's almost like a law of physics. Oh, I sound so - The Secret, but that value will just rise to meet it. Right? And I wanted to say this earlier that when you were talking about Julia Cameron, this school was where just going deeper and deeper into the new age. I have a Deepak Chopra line for you.

Martha Beck: Oh, goodness.

Rowan Mangan: Which I used to listen to this Deepak Chopra tape on the tram, on my way into work every day. And there was this great bit and it's all about manifesting money. And he's talking about how he was once working on a world peace project or something like you do. And there was this whole group of people and his teacher was there. And this guy says to the group, "Well, I mean, this is all very well, but where's the money going to come from?" And Deepak's teacher, who looks confused, and says, "From wherever it is at the moment." It's so cool. It's just like, who understands this. And honestly we've said this before, but money is the most woo woo thing in the whole world.

Martha Beck: It is. It's imaginary.

Rowan Mangan: It's so weird. Yeah. It doesn't exist. And it only exists.



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- Martha Beck: Except in people's minds. So if your mind is in a place of feeling like it's rushing ahead to try to find this ephemeral thing, you're actually not in reality. So again, when I say people aren't in integrity, it does not mean you're doing anything immoral, it means you've slipped off the truth that's most deeply coded into your being. And I actually really like Deepak Chopra. He's been so nice to me. And he is the calmest dude, man. I mean, he's not faking that. He's a very calm dude. I don't know if he was calm before he got all the money. I think he probably was. I think he was like, "Oh, from wherever it is at the moment." And yeah, I think it works. I think value is creativity and value is what gets you through life. So good luck, Karen.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. You got this. It's fine. It'll be fine.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay Marty, next up we have Jennifer who is talking about being critical.
- Martha Beck: Ooh, let's hear it.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Jennifer: So I was listening to your Bewildered podcast on creativity and creating instead of being critical. And I would love to know how to do this more at work. I am leading a team of young people at a coffee shop and they are amazing, but they are also young and I am consistently being way too critical of them based on where they are at their work experience. So I would love your advice on how to approach each obstacle with creativity. Thank you.
- Martha Beck: Okay, Jen, you are so great to have noticed this in yourself because you will never be one of those horrible bosses. And it's interesting why so many people are horrible bosses. And I think it's because when people are nervous, they're very critical with themselves. And then that just leaks out at other people, even when they don't mean to be that way. I mean, I've done this lately. Like we've been making tremendous amounts of social media content for various different things. And they felt really high stakes to me. So Ro, would be the whole technical team and I would be the talent and we'd do a video or something. And I would notice a flaw that I perceived in myself and then we'd finish taping. And then I'd be like, "Ro, we've got to fix this, this, this." And it was mean, it came out mean.



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Rowan Mangan: So you were like taking the critical voice that was in your head, criticizing yourself. And it was leaking out at whoever was around. So you are saying that what Jen might be doing is the same thing. Like because what was interesting about that when we went through it was that you didn't realize you were being that critical of yourself.

Martha Beck: Not at all.

Rowan Mangan: You weren't aware of the voice until you heard it out at me. And then you were like, "Whoa." And then you went back and went, "Oh wow. That's how I'm talking to myself all the time."

Martha Beck: Yeah. And that was when I brought in my psychology and thought, "Oh, that's an interject." It's a critical voice that is part of head that is so seamlessly bound into my psyche that it feels like just who I am, but I know that can't be my true nature. That's culture. Culture is always - nothing in nature, criticizes you for not doing a video well enough, not ever. So it couldn't be my nature. And I had to go in and find the place where that lived. And it reminded me of when my third child, Lizzie, was a toddler and I had a friend over and the friend was sitting on the floor with her legs outstretched.

And Lizzie went toddling by and tripped over my friend's foot and started to cry. And my friend started hitting her own foot and saying, "Bad foot, bad foot. You shouldn't have tripped Lizzy." And Lizzy sat there and she slowly took her own foot and started hitting her own foot and saying, "Bad, bad." And I was like, "Oh, holy Moses, what have I been teaching these poor children." But it really showed me, we treat others the way we feel inside ourselves. They feel about themselves the way we feel about ourselves. Not the way we feel about them. And I did that to you. And for that, I am heartily sorry.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, that's all right.

Martha Beck: It's all right. We get through it.

Rowan Mangan: We get through it. And it was actually such an amazing thing to realize. And you've been very chilled out since then, I noticed.

Martha Beck: Yeah. And the curious, we came to this when we discussed it was, there's always fun to be had. If you can find the fun and find the funny, like have you ever done something where things went so comically wrong that it finally became ridiculous?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



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- Martha Beck: I heard this horrible story about this poor woman who was caught in a tidal wave and she was a supermodel. So I was like, "How bad could it be?" Well, she was swept into this tidal wave and it pulled her out of her hotel room. And she caught onto a palm tree and managed to climb the palm tree. Water was rising, and she got up there. And then she got bashed by some refuse going by and it fractured some bones and also knocked her off her tree. But then, she got swept to another tree. She grabbed another palm tree and ants were coming up the trunk of the tree trying to get away from the water. And they started biting her. So she's dragging her broken body higher up in the palm tree and I swear to God, a snake bit her.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God.
- Martha Beck: I know. And at the point-
- Rowan Mangan: Listen, I mean, think about that story told from the perspective of the ants, the snake, I mean, it was a very stressful day for everyone.
- Martha Beck: And the snake was just like, "My mother treated me this way. How can you expect different things?" But at that moment, I'm going to hell because I felt so bad for this poor supermodel. But when the snake bit her, I started laughing like a lunatic.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, so did she.
- Martha Beck: Because it was just too terrible. And I read this in a book called Deep Survival that the people who survive horrible situations are the ones who find humor in the catastrophes. I'm not sure how big a catastrophe at a coffee shop will be.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. But I just want to point out that your example, this was how you laughed at the model in the tree getting bitten by a snake. There's no evidence that she was laughing. You were like, "Oh, when those situations just get worse and worse, so I tell you about someone I've never met." Oh, how we laughed.
- Martha Beck: In my memory, when she was on this talk show, talking about it, people did start to laugh at that point and she started to laugh. But that may just be me.
- Rowan Mangan: I'd like to think she laughed about it later. That's good.
- Martha Beck: And in the afterwards, they healed her up and she was still a supermodel.



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- Rowan Mangan: So Jen, I think we've been really clear here. You've got a coffee shop, you've got a young staff, bite them on the legs. Let ants run over their poor broken bodies, yet they'll laugh. They'll thank you for it. No worries.
- Martha Beck: But no, you can do something like, say, "Who can rack up - have a good competition, play a bingo game every time Fred puts the wrong beans in the grinder or something and gamify it a little bit."
- Rowan Mangan: Like when he puts baked beans in the grinder?
- Martha Beck: Oh, that's disgusting.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: That's why I hate you.
- Rowan Mangan: Kidney beans. Just to go back to my kidney beans theme.
- Martha Beck: I never want another coffee cup of coffee from you ever again in my life, Ro. Okay. So that's the cure. I think Jen should be set.
- Rowan Mangan: I think she is set.
- Martha Beck: Stop criticizing yourself. Find the fun. Boom. Figured.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. So next up we have Shannon who has had COVID, sorry mate. But it's given her an opportunity to re-think her life.
- Martha Beck: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Let's hear it.
- Shannon: Hi, Martha and Ro. I recently spent three weeks in bed with COVID and it was a big wake up call that I can really slow down - that my schedule does not need to dictate my life. And as I'm re-emerging into the world, I'd really love some advice on how to do less. Because for me, that is how I want to spend 2022, doing less. So if you could offer anything to support that, thanks.
- Martha Beck: Well, this is the classic perennial dilemma that we come to in culture versus nature, because our particular culture is about massive material wealth at any cost and creating continuously things that will bring more money and working like a robot in a factory. Whereas, we are actually social primates that in nature would probably just be hanging out most of the time.



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- Rowan Mangan: And it's so interesting that she was sick because when you're sick and your brain is stressed as well as your body, it can slip you out of those cultural stories enough to just be like, "I feel sick. I'm an animal. I'm going to lie down until I feel better." But you can't run the program as rapidly. It's a weird, mixed metaphor.
- Martha Beck: No, it's absolutely true. Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: As you do when you're healthy. And so it's an amazing thing that's happened to Shannon getting COVID - sorry.
- Martha Beck: It does pull you back a bit. I think that's really true because I had this last year, I had foot surgery and it was something where they saw a bone in half and reoriented it and then drive a pin through it.
- Rowan Mangan: It was not pretty.
- Martha Beck: I've had soft tissue surgeries before and I'm like up and at them the next day. And I thought, "Okay." They said, "It's going to be pretty rough for the first six weeks." And I was like, "Oh, you don't know how much pain endurance I have." I woke up from that surgery and it was like, "Oh no, no, no, no. I'm not." And I did not move for two months. I just lay there in bed. And occasionally I would get up in a delirium and find my way to the toilet. And then I would fall down almost always. And as I fell-
- Rowan Mangan: Can I just say something, you had this big spiritual enlightenment moment. One of the times you fell, you said to me, "I think I've really advanced spiritually because when I fell over that thing that Karen left in my way, I didn't even get mad at her."
- Martha Beck: I must have been on a lot of painkillers when I said that. I do not believe myself to be spiritually advanced. But I did notice - it was so fascinating when I would fall down and I'd be headed for the floor and everything was foggy because of the painkillers, but I'd watch my body turn almost like a cat in the air. So I would always land with that left foot stuck up high in the air. Like everything in my body was going to heal that foot. It was like, I had no autonomy anymore. That foot was my body's top priority and the culture could just go hang.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, that's so interesting. And so it's in only in these extreme situations that our system demotes the brain from top dog enough to just get offline from culture for a while. Right?



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- Martha Beck: But I think you're right. I'm not sure exactly what the brain science would be. I'm always having arguments about it with, Jill Bolte Taylor, who was one of the best neuroanatomists. And I'm always saying that, "Doesn't the hypothalamus do that?" And she's like, "Please read my books." But I think you're right. That the-
- Rowan Mangan: No, I'm sorry. I cannot just let that go by as though it's a completely normal thing to argue about the hypothalamus with a neuroanatomist, I can't even say the word. I just want everyone listening to understand that I'm with you on this. I don't have arguments about the hypothalamus. It's fine. You're normal.
- Martha Beck: Well, I am always wrong. So you're all normal. Jill is very smart. Am I all alone by myself.
- Rowan Mangan: But very argumentative with it.
- Martha Beck: Very argumentative. And what I think happens is that the survival levels, when you're in pain or you're sick or even at moments of great grief or there's something that comes in that says, "I don't care what you think culturally. This is too powerful a moment for me in my physical body and my emotional system." And I think it does shut down the part of the brain that is the neocortical part that is just all about language and saying what we should do. I felt that before, even when something really sad happened and then somebody was complaining about silverware in a restaurant or something. I remember this right after 9/11. And the waiter was just standing there getting berated. And he was like, "I watched the towers fall." And I'm like, "I'm not paying attention to you." He just wandered off. And I was like, "You go." So yeah, I think it is a weird gift to get that message that it's time to slow down no matter what.
- Rowan Mangan: So do you think there's some way that you can simulate that like, because this would solve our podcast. We'd never need to have another podcast if we could do this.
- Martha Beck: Then we better not say.
- Rowan Mangan: Let's not figure it out, for God's sake, don't figure it out. But like, okay. So if there was some sort of mechanism, maybe you would just have to believe you had a really sore foot or [inaudible 00:43:21].
- Martha Beck: Saw your own foot in half to get out of the trap. Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



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- Martha Beck: No, I think there's a story that actually helps me in these times. First of all, there's a saying that I used to give people a lot when I was coaching them. I don't want to be too coachy, coachy, but I really think this is something that we should all put on our bumper stickers or whatever. And it is this, if you don't want to do something and you don't have to do it, don't do it. And I mean really want to do it and really have to do it.
- Rowan Mangan: It's funny how many things we allow ourselves to be hugely inconvenienced around in order to avoid the possibility that someone might be slightly judging us just a little bit.
- Martha Beck: Oh, I know.
- Rowan Mangan: Isn't that weird because we forget that all this culture stuff is optional.
- Martha Beck: I know.
- Rowan Mangan: And somehow our conditioning has us so freaked out about someone potentially maybe raising one eyebrow in their bathroom alone. That we'll bend over backwards and fill our days with crap that we don't want to do.
- Martha Beck: I know. And people sometimes use that. I sometimes get gifts from people who think I'm far more powerful than I am.
- Rowan Mangan: What are they like steel bars to break or something?
- Martha Beck: Cakes with knives in them? I don't know that. Why would they think I'm in prison? I don't know? Because I'm so powerful. Or maybe-
- Rowan Mangan: Only the powerful go to prison.
- Martha Beck: I don't know. Martha Stewart went into prison and probably would've liked a cake with a knife in it.
- Rowan Mangan: If it was well decorated.
- Martha Beck: It would've been the best cake with a knife in it that had ever been baked and forged. She would forge the knife herself to take it to her friends in prison. Anyway, yeah. I...
- Rowan Mangan: We have gone off the rails.



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Martha Beck: But people can use this cultural thing. So people will give me, like I once got a gift of six pairs of shoes that were three sizes too small for me. In a basket.

Rowan Mangan: It's a specific gift.

Martha Beck: Yeah, it really was. They were strange. I think very high fashion shoes, but nothing that I would ever put on my feet. I could use them to squish bugs. I don't squish bugs. I was going to say I'm too enlightened, but actually I'm just squeamish and I have an Australian wife who's like, "I'll get it - stand back." Where did we get to this? Okay. Couple things. Yes. That basket of shoes. Then the woman came back and made all these demands on me. And I thought I had to do them. I didn't want to do them. I didn't have to do them, but I almost did them. Because of the six pairs of weird small shoes. Maybe I thought she had small children who'd outgrown the shoes and had no shoes. Anyway...

Rowan Mangan: I still don't know why you would do her things.

Martha Beck: Right. But let me tell you an incident. That is not about the six small pairs of shoes. I was in South Africa and I was watching four lioness and they were hunting a warthog. And the warthog is just like he's down on his knees, eating grass like they do.

Rowan Mangan: Little tail up in the air, like a little periscope.

Martha Beck: They don't do that till they run whoop. And then their tail go up, whoop. Like little machines.

Rowan Mangan: I'd like to just picture his tail is up while he's snorted. Is that okay?

Martha Beck: Okay. So he's down on his knees, get a picture of him. They're adorable. So he is genuflecting munching on grass. And these four lions are sneaking up on him like demons, he's genuflecting in the church, they're sneaking up like demons. And we watched for like 10 minutes as they took ever such tiny steps and then froze. And he was fine. Didn't see them. They were getting close enough to charge. And then what are those little antelope that are everywhere?

Rowan Mangan: Impala.



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- Martha Beck: Yeah. Then an impala saw the loin and it went, or I can't make the sound they make, but it was something like that. It's their alarm that says get out of here. There's a predator. And the little piggy's tail did go up. Whoa. And he shot to all four trotters and he rushed off. And the lions who had been stalking him for like an hour instead at getting angry at each other or kicking the grass or roaring, they all just dropped in their tracks and went to sleep. No use thinking about it. It's all over. They fell so hard into a sleep. One of my friends in Africa told me, "Sleep like a lion." Because lion's sleep 20 hours a day and they sleep like they mean it. And they're the kings of the jungle or the queens of the jungle. So there you go, be a lioness.
- Rowan Mangan: I love this. I really love this. I guess they were hungry and tired. And once the possibility for solving hungry went away, they went - ah cool, tired.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Preserve energy at all costs. What I've seen of tribes that have not been modernized, there's an enormous amount of hanging out, laughing, joking, talking, maybe doing each other's hair. Like there's a lot of relaxed downtime because when you have to hunt for food, there's this great book called Affluence Without Abundance that talks about how the Kalahari San people. They were so relaxed because they believed that nature would bring them what they needed, when they needed it. And it had been working for them for 100,000 years.
- Rowan Mangan: So they had pretty good evidence for their hypothesis.
- Martha Beck: It's a bit of a time. And the white farmers came in and started hoarding and storing food. And the San thought it was a mental illness. And you know what, I agree.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: It is.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Because one bowl of soup when you're hungry will make you happier, but 10 bowls of soup will not make you 10 times happier.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, exactly. And I think Shannon, as far as your situation, you've been given the gift of forgetting that the culture is all important. And instead remembering that the culture is completely optional, arbitrary set of laws that you don't need to follow. And yeah, just hang onto that. Don't worry about people being judgey.



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- Martha Beck: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. And rate and review us because we're not worried about you judging us. Rate and review us, but really in a non judgey way. See, it always comes back to bite us in the end, but that's the fun of it. Right? That's the snake in the tree.
- Rowan Mangan: Isn't it though?
- Martha Beck: The fun part.
- Rowan Mangan: It's the snake at the top of the tree and the fire ants coming up from below.
- Martha Beck: In the barista locker room.
- Rowan Mangan: That's it.
- Martha Beck: Ah.
- Rowan Mangan: Ah, good times.
- Martha Beck: So yeah, guys. Thanks for sending us your dilemmas and anybody out there who's hearing this and wants to send another dilemma. How do they do that, Ro?
- Rowan Mangan: You know what, we're not going to get into it right now, but go to my Instagram, rowan_mangan and look for instructions. How's that?
- Martha Beck: Fabulous. That's great. And 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.