



# BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK  
AND ROWAN MANGAN

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## Episode #34: Cave Early

*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 feeling 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.
- Martha Beck: So, Roey, what today are you trying to figure out?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, Marty, as you know, we have a daughter.
- Martha Beck: What?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, sorry, I meant to tell you.
- Martha Beck: Are you sure she's mine?
- Rowan Mangan: And other lesbian jokes. And I'm trying to figure out what's her universal world view because I think you would agree that Lila is endowed with the gift of mischief.
- Martha Beck: I would say.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, she's quite aware of her capacity to do mischief and quite delighted by it.
- Martha Beck: Yes, she's a regular Loki.
- Rowan Mangan: She's a little Loki.
- Martha Beck: Just a little Loki. Look it up.
- Rowan Mangan: So, I try to understand her moral universe, the way that she's created it.



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- Martha Beck: Moral is a strong word.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah, her amoral universe. And so, what the best I can figure out is that she thinks that all mischief can be undone through the shouting of two words and these are magical words that she uses to undo whatever went before and clean slate. So, for instance, some of the things that our daughter does, it's all the obvious stuff. She makes a beeline for the things we need her to not have, hot drinks-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, trying to drink out the toilet.
- Rowan Mangan: ... alcoholic drinks, all kinds of things and she runs to them. And then the other thing is that grill from the floor, there's an air conditioning grill.
- Martha Beck: It's like the air vent cover.
- Rowan Mangan: Yes.
- Martha Beck: So, there's a big hole in the floor and it's got this sharp metal vent on it and, weirdly, it's not affixed.
- Rowan Mangan: It's not and she's taken to just grabbing those and wielding them. I think you-
- Martha Beck: Oh, and they're sharp and they're deadly.
- Rowan Mangan: They are. And you mentioned her preternatural natural strength, physically strength [inaudible 00:02:44].
- Martha Beck: Oh, my God, that child is strong.
- Rowan Mangan: And so, she pulls these things up and she totters around the room with them. She tottered straight into you with one and nearly did you damage.
- Martha Beck: She drew blood, and she was yelling, "Heavy, sharp."
- Rowan Mangan: Like, "Show Murphy" She likes showing things at the moment. Anyway, so she does those things, she knows they're bad, she takes delight. She waits until we notice that she's got them and, at that moment, she speaks the magic words, "Good girl."
- Martha Beck: And that's true, she does.



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- Rowan Mangan: Good girl, which is a phrase that I think we've talked about we're trying not to use with her anymore but she's got it deeply embedded as, to me, it's the equivalent of calling the president and asking for a pardon.
- Martha Beck: Definitely.
- Rowan Mangan: So, yeah. So, it's just like, good girl, it's like a prayer, it's like a wish, it's like a spell.
- Martha Beck: It's like magic, yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Good girl.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, it's preemptive.
- Rowan Mangan: And then nothing's wrong anymore.
- Martha Beck: That's right.
- Rowan Mangan: But it doesn't really work that way.
- Martha Beck: No. I can't count the times I've caught her, well, not caught her, she wants my attention, edging with her hand reaching toward an electrical outlet.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, my God.
- Martha Beck: And she gets closer and closer and watches you to see and then she screams, "Good girl."
- Rowan Mangan: Good girl.
- Martha Beck: And it's preemptive. It's like somebody going into a convenient store with a gun and then calling the police and turning himself in and then robbing the store and running away. It's not exactly logical but there is some whiff of ethics to it.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah. She's got her ways, little Lila. So, what about you, Marty? What are you trying to figure out?
- Martha Beck: Oh, yeah. Well, I have found the most wonderful new app for the phone.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, boy.



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- Martha Beck: My kid, not Lila, but Kit showed it to me, it's called Seek. You go outside and you put your camera on anything - plant, bug, whatever and it will tell you what it is. And I came in and I said, "I think we have termites because I found this little pile of sawdust and they leave these little piles." So, I went out and I used the Seek app, immediately it told me the real identity of this thing which has been obsessing me ever since.
- Rowan Mangan: Not termites then.
- Martha Beck: It is called, and this is the truth, this is literally true, dog vomit slime mold.
- Rowan Mangan: Dog vomit slime mold.
- Martha Beck: Yes.
- Rowan Mangan: Four more disgusting words cannot be spoken in the English language. When you put them up against each other, each word gets ... What's the word I'm looking for? Exponentially more disgusting.
- Martha Beck: Well, it got worse because I came into the house and I was like, "I can't believe this is something really called dog vomit slime mold." So, I googled it and the first thing that came up was a garden site and it said, "Caring for dog vomit slime mold."
- Rowan Mangan: Caring for it.
- Martha Beck: And then it said, "You don't have to take care of it, you can't get rid of it. It's just out there when it rains." Because I wrote two memoirs, one was called Expecting Adam, one was called Leaving the Saints because they like you to start with that ing. So, I thought, "Caring for dog vomit slime mold, a memoir."
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, no.
- Martha Beck: And I wake up at night and this Victorian era mini-series is playing out between a woman who cares for a dog vomit slime mold and they can't be together because someone in her position, her family would not be into it. And they're like, "Oh, Mr. Slime Mold," "No, call me Dog Vomit." I gain endless joy from this.
- Rowan Mangan: I actually had to forbid you from saying those words. I'm letting it go now but I had to forbid you, didn't I, in the house because it was making me-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, you're a little green.



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Rowan Mangan: Ugh, it's not good.

Martha Beck: Well, sometimes it's called witch's butter.

Rowan Mangan: See, that seems lovely although I wouldn't want to have a slice of toast at the witch's house, if you know what I mean, knowing its other name.

Martha Beck: I've also heard that it's called troll cat vomit slime mold.

Rowan Mangan: Troll cat-

Martha Beck: So, put troll in there. Cat.

Rowan Mangan: No, you didn't say cat.

Martha Beck: Troll cat. Yes, troll cat vomit slime mold.

Rowan Mangan: Wow.

Martha Beck: Somebody's going to a lot of trouble. There's the whole "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". No, it wouldn't.

Rowan Mangan: You know, in France they have a ministry of naming things so that they're French-

Martha Beck: Yeah, I remember this.

Rowan Mangan: ... they're properly French and English doesn't take everything. Because when computer came out, French started calling it computer and then the ministry went, "No, say l'ordinateur."

Martha Beck: L'ordinateur.

Rowan Mangan: Like that. I think we need one of those. I always thought it was a little bit French, but actually, what it is, is really good idea.

Martha Beck: Yeah. So, what would we re-christen my favorite new pet?

Rowan Mangan: Bert.

Martha Beck: You go out to your Seek app, point at this slime... By the way, it's fascinating because it's the link between a unicellular organism or a multicellular organism, it works as unicellular until it forms, oh, God, fruiting bodies that are multicellular.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, Marty.



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- Martha Beck: I know, I know. Sorry, I was going to try to not geek out on this but I cannot help it.
- Rowan Mangan: We just lost [inaudible 00:08:31].
- Martha Beck: So, instead of whatever it's called, it's simply Bert.
- Rowan Mangan: Bert.
- Martha Beck: People go, "What is this that I can't get out of my garden?" Bert.
- Rowan Mangan: Caring for Bert.
- Martha Beck: Love it.
- Rowan Mangan: Caring for Bert. Oh, my God.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Suddenly it is really, really moving and I feel really bad about the fun I was making of it. Now, anyway.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, dear. All right. Well, let's-
- Martha Beck: What to do with that delicious topic was part of what I was trying to figure out.
- Rowan Mangan: We'll be right back with more Bewildered. I have a favor to ask. You might not know this but ratings and reviews are like gold in the podcasting universe. They get podcasts in front of more faces, more eyes, more ears, all the bits that you could have a podcast in front of, that's what they do. So, it would help us enormously if you would consider going over to your favorite podcasting app, especially if it's Apple, and giving us a few stars, maybe even five, maybe even six if you can find a way to hack the system, I wouldn't complain. And a review would also be wonderful, we read them all and love them. So, thank you very much in advance. Let's just go out there and bewilder the world. Mwah.
- Martha Beck: But what are we really, really trying to figure out, seriously, for the folks at home?
- Rowan Mangan: So, we recently brought down to our dungeon here our very good friend, Liz Gilbert, and she appeared on our podcast and we had such a great conversation with her. And I wanted to pick one of the threads up and talk about it a little bit more with you because what we were talking to Liz about was, basically, how far will you let your body and mind and soul degrade before you'll accept that you're on the wrong path in some way in your life.



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And Marty, you have a philosophy around this that you call “cave early” and I think it is very helpful for the peeps getting the cultural messages. Could you please explain cave early?

Martha Beck: Yeah, cave early means, when you notice that something isn't good for you, give up, stop, fall down in your tracks, lie flat on the floor until the urge goes away. I've heard that before. Sometimes I get a really strong urge to just forge ahead and work, but if I lie down for long enough, it goes away, that's the cave early philosophy. It's like, if you're a camel and you've got a lot of straw on, how many straws ahead of that last straw do you figure this is getting strenuous until the last straw snaps your spine, yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Right, right. And it makes me think of that thing that our personal messiah, Oprah Winfrey, said once. Was it her or was it someone else?

Martha Beck: Oh, how can I know? You haven't said what it is.

Rowan Mangan: What's that?

Martha Beck: Yes. First it's a whisper or like, "You might want to worry about this." Then it's a little message, "Hello, hello. Seriously, this is a problem." Then it's a lesson, "Oh, now something went wrong and you should learn from that." Then it's a problem, "Oh, boy, this keeps happening," and then it's a catastrophe. Yeah, it will destroy you.

Rowan Mangan: That's the straw that actually breaks the camel's back.

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: But our cells or however you want to put it together, something in us is trying to tell us nicely before it tells us in a harder way.

Martha Beck: Yeah, it's edging up to the outlet going, "Good girl."

Rowan Mangan: Good girl, good girl.

Martha Beck: The moment you hear, "Good girl," you know something bad is going to happen, cave right then, cave early, yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Right, right.

Martha Beck: And then it generalizes to things like, "My, it's been record heat all summer in the Northern hemisphere, hmm." How far do we have to go toward catastrophic, apocalyptic climate change before we go, "Yeah, we might want to quit some things," yeah.



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- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, that inconvenient truth.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Oh, yeah, that is an inconvenient truth but I can tolerate it. Let's go eat lunch.
- Rowan Mangan: It's inconvenient. Nothing is worse than inconvenience in this culture. Literally death before inconvenience, that's what we're living.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, and that's specifically the whole weird culture. I always think there are a million cultures within cultures but ours is so dominant in America right now. It is really true, death before inconvenience. You have to be able to do it with a remote from your couch or it is just too complicated. We leave the inconvenient things to other people.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah, we do. Some of our listeners will remember me holding forth at great length about cup holders once on this topic.
- Martha Beck: Oh, yes. God forbid, you should not have a place to put 19 cups at once.
- Rowan Mangan: I know, right? So, what does the culture say about this idea of cave early?
- Martha Beck: Well, don't.
- Rowan Mangan: Don't?
- Martha Beck: It says don't cave early, don't you ever cave, no, no. It's all about attachment and hanging on and true grit.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, don't give up, stay the course.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, never, never, never give up that great Winston Churchill speech which was, yeah, I take it, well placed but where he says, "We will never give up, we will fire on the beaches, we will fight in the streets." Only when you listen to him talking, he's so negative charisma. He's like, "We will fight on the beaches, we will fight on the streets. We will never, never, never give up."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, I think probably the situation where someone wants to invade your country with guns and tanks and stuff, that's probably not a good cave early situation.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, stipulated and that's why-
- Rowan Mangan: Let's not apply it to that.





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- Martha Beck: That's why it's become so dominant for us because we want to win at all costs. And when the chips are really down, it is good to have grit and perseverance and all that but the problem is it overgeneralizes to every single thing we try to do.
- Rowan Mangan: And it's amazing how powerful those messages are, you know? You've made your decision, now stick to it no matter what, no matter what. No matter what evidence you get that it was ... It might have been right then, but even if you get evidence that it's wrong now, don't change course.
- Martha Beck: Never.
- Rowan Mangan: No matter what changes in the world around you, don't ever reconsider that decision that you've made.
- Martha Beck: Oh, yes. And for God's sake, if you're running for office, never learn anything because if you decide ... You thought that cigars were good for you and then it turns out you read a bunch of research and you found out cigars are not good for people and you've changed your mind about that. Maybe letting people have AK-47s in an elementary school, maybe that's not a good idea. I used to be pro but now I'm con and if you say, "Guess what? I've changed my mind," you are a flip flopper.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, God, a flip flopper.
- Martha Beck: Don't ever flip flop.
- Rowan Mangan: I bet everyone can resonate with how powerful these messages are around us and how-
- Martha Beck: We've all heard it, yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: ... deep they burrow into our minds. And I was thinking about it because I have a friend right now who's potentially going to be leaving her marriage and she literally told me she can hear the voices of the culture in her head saying these exact things. And it's so interesting how, no matter how intelligent or empowered financially, I feel like relationships are such a strong way that the culture uses these messages.
- Martha Beck: Oh, my gosh. I cannot count the number of clients I've had over the years who are like, "Oh, I can't leave this job or this marriage or this whatever even though it's killing me." And I had one woman who said she knew her job was giving her cancer so she took a leave. She had cancer, so she took a leave for a year and got all her chemo, got all healthy and then she went in to quit.



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And she said, "I know if I go back, I'll get cancer again." So, she went back and then she came to see me and she's like, "Yeah, they pointed out to me that I was a quitter so I'm back in," and she died of cancer two years later.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, my gosh.

Martha Beck: Have you ever heard that addiction is persistent repetition of a behavior despite negative consequences? That's one definition.

Rowan Mangan: Addiction is persistent repetition of a behavior despite negative consequences. So, bad things happen to you when you do it but you keep doing it and that's addiction.

Martha Beck: And that's what addiction is.

Rowan Mangan: Now, that's quite-

Martha Beck: And what we're basically hearing is, no matter how you feel, stick with whatever you're doing. So, that is be addicted, adopt an addiction, adopt many addictions as long as they're approved, culture approved things like a marriage or a job and stay in there no matter what harm befalls you there. And may I say also that this never quit thing was established in a culture where the average life expectancy was 45. So, you weren't going to have to stick with it all that long.

Rowan Mangan: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, yeah.

Martha Beck: But yeah. Right now, we're living longer and we're sticking in that, we're not caving. We won't cave because we did it before so we have to do it again and again.

Rowan Mangan: And it's almost like the messaging of the culture works with our own psychology because I feel like part of the struggle ... So, take my friend with her marriage, part of the struggle is, if I leave now, if I stop this now, if I quit this now, then it means that I've been on the wrong path all along because it's either wrong or right, it's one or the other. And so, the culture's voice makes that the stakes. The stakes are, if you leave something that's wrong for you, you are acknowledging that the last 20 years of your life were wrong or had no meaning or had no value.

Martha Beck: Yeah, and you're stupid and you made the wrong decision and then you stayed with the wrong decision. So, just keep staying because then it looks like the right decision. It is-

Rowan Mangan: Because ... Mmm, sorry.



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- Martha Beck: ... obsession with being right in our culture.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, and this absolute insistence that nothing must ever change. It's straight lines, it's not wobbly wavy lines. We always say nature moves and changes and grows and culture is like, "That can't be."
- Martha Beck: Right, it's this weird resistance to impermanence. The acceptance of impermanence and change is such a big part of so many Asian traditions, but in the west, it's like, "No." I could go into a long disposition about Calvinism right now but I'm not going to because I am a compassionate woman.
- Rowan Mangan: I think our listeners might have heard your Calvinism bit before.
- Martha Beck: Good girl, good girl. Oh, Lord. So, yeah, I know we've both done this before. I used to, oh, my God, through my whole 20s, 30s, and even into my 40s, I insisted on working harder and harder and sleeping less and less as my body totally disintegrated. And I had made little adaptations, but if I had any energy, it was immediately spent trying to do something that would be reputable and productive and ...
- Rowan Mangan: You're still a little bit like that, to be honest.
- Martha Beck: So are you. Good girl.
- Rowan Mangan: You are.
- Martha Beck: Good girl. Anyway, it was a complete compulsion and I didn't want to be perceived as having been a quitter in any area of life which meant I took on every role I could and tried to never let any of them go.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, and it's interesting because I was just thinking now you may not push yourself that hard but I think that there are sometimes you'll do what your body needs to do. You'll do the thing that's in integrity but you can sometimes persevere or feel guilty about that. And I just think it's so fascinating because you've done more work on yourself than anyone else I've ever met. And yet, this one, this little kernel of don't stop, don't ever stop is crazy strong even in you.
- Martha Beck: Oh, yeah. And I get emails and gifts and stuff from people I don't even know who are like, "Please come to my house in Uzbekistan and work with my mother who's ailing," and I'm like, "Oh, crap, now I have to go to Uzbekistan."
- Rowan Mangan: Guess I'm going to Uzbekistan.



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- Martha Beck: Oh, guys, we got to - because someone asked me and they want me to. And yeah, if I'm going to be a self-help person, I better do everything everywhere. Yeah, it's crazy, it's insane.
- Rowan Mangan: And you really ran yourself into properly poor health doing that.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. I did, not for a long time. I haven't had an all-nighter for a week but I used to do several a month.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: For years.
- Rowan Mangan: Of just working all night.
- Martha Beck: Horribly bad for you. Never ever do that. Cave people, cave.
- Rowan Mangan: Yes.
- Martha Beck: What about you, Roey?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, it occurs to me ... So, for you, you worked and worked and wouldn't stop and wouldn't quit and your body started to break down.
- Martha Beck: Yes, totally unraveled.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. And so, for me, I was thinking about a time that I was in a relationship with someone, it wasn't a good call and I'm stuck on relationships with this because I think I see it being so pernicious in this. And it was different from my friend because it wasn't a long ... Well, whatever. It wasn't a super duper long term relationship but I thought, "Oh, well. I found this person, this will do. I can settle, I can make this work and I think I could live with this long term."
- Martha Beck: Always a good reason to commit for the rest of your life, right?
- Rowan Mangan: I think I could get used to it.
- Martha Beck: Yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: And what happened to me was that ... So, one of my signals is anxiety, physical anxiety symptoms get really turned up and it was actually quite funny because I ended up being in this week long or weeks long state of almost panic attack level anxiety.



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Martha Beck: I thought you were going to say I was in a weeks long relationship. I was like, "That's not that bad." Okay, so weeks long anxiety, that is bad.

Rowan Mangan: And I finally was just like, "All right, I'm listening." It came as a strong enough signal that I could finally hear it and I was like, "Okay, the relationship's wrong." And I was trying to explain it to the person that I was with who thought that the problem was I was having some anxiety and needed some time out, just some time. And so, there was this whole thing of like, "Oh, you poor thing," and I guess maybe I let that continue to be the perception because what it really was was it's not me, it's you and I didn't really want to do that but there was a moment. Oh, I probably shouldn't. Oh, well-

Martha Beck: Go for it.

Rowan Mangan: ... [inaudible 00:24:03]

Martha Beck: They won't be listening.

Rowan Mangan: Where we were doing the three or four weeks post breakup "here's your shampoo and stuff". That awkward coffee where it's like, "Oh, here's your shampoo and your makeup and stuff," and the person thought that I was going to-

Martha Beck: Come back?

Rowan Mangan: ... get back together with them now because I was feeling better. And I was like, "No, I'm feeling better because I'm not with you."

Martha Beck: Because I'm nowhere near you, dude.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Anyway, so it was interesting to see. I often boast about not having too many of these cultural things in date, but man, I think ... Especially because being single, it's a bummer and being in a relationship makes your ego feel like, "Ah, somebody likes me enough."

Martha Beck: And may I say that, in almost all cultures, especially for women, there's this thing of if you're not married at 18 or whatever. In one Asian country, they say a 25-year-old woman who's not married is like a Christmas cake, nobody wanted to eat it and it just lies around getting stale. That's a really common trope in a lot of cultures that women are supposed to get into relationships and stay there no matter what.



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Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah. So, I don't know, I think it's so easy to let yourself go a long way down a track because of some thing or other that we're buying into with consensus.

Martha Beck: Whatever, yeah, yeah.

Rowan Mangan: So, how do we come to our senses, Marty?

Martha Beck: Interesting you should ask because I'm dying to tell you after a break.

Rowan Mangan: So, Marty.

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: We're trying to figure this out. Stay the course, cave early. It's hard, right?

Martha Beck: Hard to know.

Rowan Mangan: And I think one of the reasons that it's hard to figure it out is that there's a logical loop built into this one, this is my theory. And you can see it with my friend at her marriage because the voice of culture is saying to her, "If this is wrong for you now, if you are going to quit, not stay the course, that means that it was never right. It means that the 20 years of your marriage have no meaning."

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Right?

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: That there was no value to that because it was either always right or it was always going to be wrong. And that's where my friend is snagged because she can't get out of that loop of, if I leave, it means my children and their lives and their experience doesn't have meaning. There's just so much about the meaning of experiences that we want to leave.

Martha Beck: Value and meaning, those are the two things that culture says, if you quit it retroactively voids any meaning or value that is attached to the experience you just had which may have been your whole life. So, of course we're like, "Gee, I don't want to invalidate everything I've ever done." But if you look at nature, it doesn't need persistence to value something.



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Rowan Mangan: Right.

Martha Beck: And not that it does anything really deliberately, nature's not making value judgments like that, but that's just the point, it is inherently valuable. Every experience is inherently valuable.

Rowan Mangan: And meaningful.

Martha Beck: And meaningful, right. That's what Viktor Frankl said after surviving Auschwitz that, in the most horrible circumstances, that part of his life was still, in some way, not good but, for him, internally good because he derived so much meaning from it, he learned so much. So, learning and the treasure of experience, those are nature's realities. And you don't have to say, "Okay, I'll obey the culture and do everything persistently forever," and you don't have to say, "I'm not touching that with a 10-foot pole because it would be stupid." Or you don't have to say, "I failed because I quit and that means that I never did anything right." These are both these extremes and nature just says experience is meaningful, inherently meaningful, as long as you can see it that way and learning to see it that way, well, is called learning.

You come out of an experience, it's horrible. Your friend is looking at her marriage, it's really bad right now. And instead of saying, "Okay, did I fail forever or will I stay and validate myself forever?" You say, "This was a good experience that became horrible. Where can I find meaning, where can I find learning?" and that is value.

Rowan Mangan: So, if we accept the premise that all experience has value and meaning, that finding that is part of what we're here to do-

Martha Beck: Right.

Rowan Mangan: ... then I think it's interesting to think about the warning signs that we're actually given because our bodies are our access to nature. Our brains are our access to culture, to vastly oversimplify, and our bodies are our access to, our entry in nature which is what we're trying to discover here by getting bewildered. So, I find that I can look back, my experience in that relationship, the anxiety, the physical anxiety, that's a big one for me. I think we all have different warning signs.

Martha Beck: Right.



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Rowan Mangan: Right? And so, the other one for me is always autoimmune stuff. So, I get chronic fatigue syndrome, flare ups when I'm starting to do the wrong thing and so it's learning to recognize them, again, not as failure. So, for me, chronic fatigue is such a bitch because it makes me stop.

Martha Beck: Yup, it's like, "I will"-

Rowan Mangan: It makes me quit.

Martha Beck: I will bring you down. You think you're going to persist? Watch this.

Rowan Mangan: Right, right.

Martha Beck: Good girl.

Rowan Mangan: It's very literal and it had to deal with me in quite a literal way because I could be so stupid.

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, so what are your warning signs that you get?

Martha Beck: Well, I went to the absolute extreme of physical decomposition too with five autoimmune illnesses that were supposed to progress and kill me because that's what they usually do to people. But they didn't kill me because I caved. And I found that, the more I caved when anything bothered me at all, the healthier I got and recovered or at least have no symptoms from diseases that supposedly were progressive and incurable. So, now, I am a big fan of the cave early. And the first thing, before you start to hurt physically, I think this is true for everyone, you start to feel a bad mood.

Rowan Mangan: Right. So, that's the whisper maybe.

Martha Beck: Yeah. You get symptoms of anxiety, fear creeps into your mood.

Rowan Mangan: Right, yeah.

Martha Beck: I can get the fight part of the fight or flight so I start to get angry and I have trouble being courteous to people as so many others have known.

Rowan Mangan: You flew all the way to Uzbekistan and insulted the mother.





# BEWILDERED

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- Martha Beck: I was so resentful by the time I got there. So, the first thing is mood and I try to cave when the mood goes sour.
- Rowan Mangan: Right, right.
- Martha Beck: And then, if I don't do that for some reason, oh, I can trust illness and injury to just climb right on board.
- Rowan Mangan: Pain, physical pain.
- Martha Beck: Oh, yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Still, it's always waiting off stage going, "Hello."
- Rowan Mangan: If anyone's really super-duper interested in this and you should be, in Marty's latest book, *The Way of Integrity*, she talks about these symptoms. She calls them the dark wood of error syndrome using Dante. And so, yeah, check it out because it's actually really fascinating the ways that our nature is trying to tell us.
- Martha Beck: Nature and Dante, geek out. Yeah, so bad moods, bad physical symptoms then trouble in relationships. Things start to go downhill, you don't feel connected to anyone because you're not connected to yourself. And then, anything you're trying to do to make your life go forward, starts to fail.
- Rowan Mangan: Right.
- Martha Beck: Set your watch by it.
- Rowan Mangan: Wow.
- Martha Beck: And most people say, at that point, this is when quitters never win and winners never quit. I'm miserable emotionally, I'm miserable physically, my relationships are crap right now and I can't work or create or whatever I want to do.
- Rowan Mangan: When the going gets tough ...
- Martha Beck: The tough get going.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



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- Martha Beck: Yeah. And both you and I have ended up lying prone for weeks because we tried to do this the way we were taught, we're good girls.
- Rowan Mangan: Good girl.
- Martha Beck: Not anymore.
- Rowan Mangan: Bad girl.
- Martha Beck: But that's your nature, that's your biofeedback system saying time to cave.
- Rowan Mangan: And this thing about learning that moving is learning and learning to find meaning and all that sort of thing. And you said something so cool about this when you're on Glennon Doyle's podcast and I would love you ... About the learning process and staying the course?
- Martha Beck: Yeah, she said how do I be in my integrity because she said she was horrified that she had sat her kids down when one of their friend's parents were getting divorced and they were worried about it. And she sat them down and said, "One thing I can guarantee you, mommy and daddy will never get divorced." And she said, "Then I got divorced." I was so out of my integrity and I was like, "No, you're not." That's the retroactive thing kicking in, I should have known it has to be consistent throughout all time in history.
- Rowan Mangan: Or not I should have known but, because I said that-
- Martha Beck: I should've stayed.
- Rowan Mangan: ... I had no longer can leave.
- Martha Beck: Yes, oh, my gosh. And this is what I said to her, "Everybody says things that they believe to be true in the moment and really believe and intend to be true. I will never quit this job, whatever, and then situations change. People change, the world changes and nature says," to quote Liz Gilbert, "It is time for something that was beautiful to give way to something else that is beautiful, that's how nature always works. And then you sit your kids down again and say, 'You know what? I thought I was telling the truth, I really did, I really believed that and then I got more information and now I think something different and that's called learning. So, sorry if I set you up but we all get to learn.'" And that right there is nature's takeaway, we all get to learn.



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- Rowan Mangan: And that's got to be a big learning for the kid as well about the reality of being in one of these bodies and one of these brains and-
- Martha Beck: Yeah, it's going to happen to them too.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Not necessarily with their marriage but was something. With nature, with the nature of being a human comes continuous change and trying to hang on despite that is the key to all suffering. Just keep grasping something that you need to cave into ... Wait, that sounds wrong. Just keep grasping when nature's telling you to cave and, yeah, you will understand what suffering looks like.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. So, cave early, everyone.
- Martha Beck: Cave early, everyone, 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. We're also on Instagram. Our handle is @bewilderedpodcast. You can follow us to get updates, hear funny snippets and outtakes, and chat with other fans of the show.

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