



BEWILDERED

WITH MARTHA BECK
AND ROWAN MANGAN

Episode #40: The Procrastination Episode

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. And this is another episode of Bewildered, the podcast for people trying to figure it out.
- Martha Beck: And what are you trying to figure out?
- Rowan Mangan: Well, I mean, so many things.
- Martha Beck: Really?
- Rowan Mangan: As I always feel compelled to point out.
- Martha Beck: More than one thing?
- Rowan Mangan: So many. So many. Imagine you were only trying to figure one thing out.
- Martha Beck: Oh my goodness.
- Rowan Mangan: I can't even imagine it. Something happened to me this week that I'm still working through. Okay, so I have to backtrack. Many years ago, I had a conversation with my father.
- Martha Beck: Oh, that's horrible.
- Rowan Mangan: I know, I know. God, can you imagine? You haven't met him, so you can't imagine.
- Martha Beck: He's delightful.



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Rowan Mangan: Yeah, of course he is. If a little melancholy from time to time. And this conversation was about Leonard Cohen and Leonard Cohen's music during Leonard Cohen's more depressing decades.

Martha Beck: Oh, wow. Because when Leonard Cohen gets depressed, he gets really depressed.

Rowan Mangan: He's competitive with it.

Martha Beck: I know.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: I heard it, and I went, "I could never be that depressed, and I'm good at it." Anyway, go on.

Rowan Mangan: There's a song that Leonard Cohen wrote called Who by Fire, and my dad, I don't know why we were talking about it, but my father says in passing, "Oh, that's a song about all different ways to kill yourself." And I was like that totally lines up with my understanding of Leonard Cohen's music. He did get quite, what's the word? Later on, he had moments of breaking through to-

Martha Beck: He was transcendent.

Rowan Mangan: ... transcendent. That's the word I was looking for.

Martha Beck: Oh my gosh, hallelujah. Listen to all 83 verses. The last one is totally transcendent. The rest of it's depressing as hell.

Rowan Mangan: I've heard that the 86th verse is an eggplant parmigiana recipe.

Martha Beck: No doubt. That'll make you hallelujah.

Rowan Mangan: I know, right? Anyway, I have a weird blind trust in my father. He speaks with a very confident voice. Yeah, and I'm a sucker for someone who speaks with the confident voice. I went on with my life. I was probably, I don't know, 14, 15 at the time. Went on with my life. Decades pass. Fast forward to last week, Marty and Karen, and I have been watching a lovely, well, not lovely, very dark, dark, terrible TV show called Bad Sisters on Apple.

Martha Beck: It's a lovely, dark, terrible show.

Rowan Mangan: Right. It's Irish.



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Martha Beck: Yeah. You got to watch it, people.

Rowan Mangan: The Irish will do funny and dark better than anyone. The theme song for this show is *Who by Fire*, like a cover of *Who by Fire*.

Martha Beck: And it doesn't just mean *Who by Fire*. Fred. Nancy, *Who by Fire*. Sorry.

Rowan Mangan: The song is like, "Who by fire, who by water, who in the sunshine, who in the nighttime," and it goes on and on. And you can see where my dad got this idea, but I think he hadn't listened closely to all the lyrics. And we watched a few episodes of this show, and I had passed on. Again-

Martha Beck: What, you passed on? You're dead now? Sorry.

Rowan Mangan: Blind confidence in this paternal figure of mine, I had said to Marty and Karen, "Oh, yeah, this is a song about suicide methods." And we'd watched a few episodes, we're watching the opening credits, and Karen next to me just starts giggling. Giggling away. And I am like, "What's so funny?" And she just says three words that to me have become immortalized, which is simply, "Suicide by avalanche."

Martha Beck: That's complicated. I love to ski, and they cause avalanches to happen because they don't want somebody causing it themselves on this-

Rowan Mangan: Who's they?

Martha Beck: The gods. Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: That sounds like them.

Martha Beck: Yeah. Mainly Hephaestus I think, but Zeus comes in.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah. In the form of our child. See previous podcast. No, that would be really, really complicated, but at the same time, awesome.

Rowan Mangan: In a way, it's the perfect crime.

Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: You got to put a lot of work in. You got to really want it, but maybe suicide by avalanche ultimately is the perfect crime.



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Martha Beck: I think you've found it. Wow. I'm going to have to keep that in my back pocket.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, mate. What are you trying to figure out, Marty?

Martha Beck: Oh, I studied Chinese in college.

Rowan Mangan: You're kidding me.

Martha Beck: Like you do. Yeah, I know. And I went to China to do research in 1983, which is 1,000 years ago now. And I was 21, and everyone there assumed I was working with the CIA, because I was practicing my cheese, my cheese. I was practicing my Chinese, and I would say things like, "What is your job?" This they thought was highly suspect. They would stare at me. I didn't realize until later that under communism, even talking about a job was loaded. But they had just been through the cultural revolution. They were highly suspicious. Here I was bop, bop, bopping around. Did I tell you about the time I had to go to the White Swan Hotel?

Rowan Mangan: Oh, I think you did.

Martha Beck: And I didn't know the word for swan, so I just kept asking the taxi driver to take me to the hotel of the big white duck. He didn't get it.

Anyway, there was a mismatch between me and Chinese culture at that time because it was so ra-ra communism. And if you said anything that wasn't ra-ra communism, you would get in trouble. It was a dystopian novel of me trying to have conversations with people who were terrified for their lives. And I thought that was a swing and a mess. But then, I came back to the US, and I developed a habit, a hobby, a way of life that I have called for years lying flat.

Rowan Mangan: You have. I can vouch for this.

Martha Beck: You know I say this all the time.

Rowan Mangan: You do.

Martha Beck: I'll be like, "We'll have breakfast. What are you going to do today?" And I'm like, "I'm going to go lie flat."

Rowan Mangan: She does say this.



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- Martha Beck: Because I have a lot of autoimmune issues, and I don't really have symptoms anymore, but it's because I know when they start, I go lie flat, and everything's fine. And I just think it's a way everyone should live. And I was reading online that in China, there's an entire social movement that's like the hippie movement, and is called *tang ping*, which means lie flat.
- Rowan Mangan: I've got to say, I can't see it as much of a movement.
- Martha Beck: As much as emotionlessness.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's more of a social inertness.
- Martha Beck: Definitely the cause of no social movement whatsoever.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Sounds delightful.
- Martha Beck: Anyway, here's what I'm trying to figure out. Was I presciently connecting with the Chinese people who would share my feelings about ra-ra communism? Go work all your life like box with a horse in 1984.
- Rowan Mangan: Or ...
- Martha Beck: Or ...
- Rowan Mangan: ... did you seed-
- Martha Beck: ... did I cause the lying flat movement? Which is also now considered to be the whole trigger for the quiet quitting, or whatever that is now. What's that online? I'm not an online sort of person. I'm lying flat, don't blame me.
- Rowan Mangan: It's not just something that's online, my darling. It's quiet quitting, it's just showing up, and not doing anything other than what you're contractually obliged to do. It's doing your job.
- Martha Beck: Like working?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah. It's funny because it's like quiet quitting is a response to the kind of ra-ra capitalism-
- Martha Beck: That's true.



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- Rowan Mangan: ... which is work 23 hours a day, do everything it says on your job description, and then twice that, and all of that. And quiet quitting is, "What if I just did my job? What if I just did what I'm supposed to do?" And people are like, "How dare you?" No wonder the Chinese are all lying flat.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. And it's very brave of them. And I feel like there's this confluence between me and the soul of the Chinese people, since we're all doing the same lying flat now. And I just want to-
- Rowan Mangan: Can you lie flat in solidarity?
- Martha Beck: Oh, totally. I would invite all our readers to lie flat in solidarity with all of us.
- Rowan Mangan: The ones who read with their ears.
- Martha Beck: Yes. Just lie flat and read.
- Rowan Mangan: Ear readers.
- Martha Beck: We just walked by Adam's room on the way down here. You tell them -
- Rowan Mangan: So inspiring.
- Martha Beck: They won't believe me. You tell him what he was doing.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh my goodness. This is Marty's son, my stepson Adam. He's 34, he has down syndrome, and he knows how he likes to live. And he's quite - He knows what he wants, and he knows how to do it, and that's the Adam. Marty and I, I walk past his room coming down to do this podcast, and Adam is ...
- Martha Beck: You had to see it really.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. It's really hard to ... He's lying on his belly on his bed, like crossways, not up and down the way you might go to sleep, but cross ways. But lying very much like if you tried to impersonate a sea lion lying flat, but lying flat on its belly, not sitting up. He was just lying there, but his arms were by his sides. He was on his belly. His head was stuck up a bit like a suckling pig.
- Martha Beck: A bit, but not much.
- Rowan Mangan: No. Yeah, he was just lying flat.



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Martha Beck: Lying ever so flat. And he looked like someone who was preparing to be shot out of a human cannon. He was that still, and straight, and rigid, with his arms tucked tight to his side. I just looked in, and I'm like, "What are you doing?" He said, "I'm relaxing."

Rowan Mangan: It looked intense.

Martha Beck: It was an intense session of lying flat.

Rowan Mangan: But I guess that's the thing if you take the lying flat seriously.

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: And it looks like it might be in your genes, based on Adam. You got to commit.

Martha Beck: Yeah. It's a nature/nurture thing there, because yeah, he did come out with the genes of lying flat, but now then he saw a lot of lying flat in his environment. But now, he could go to China, and lie flat, and everybody would go, "Yeah, we get it."

Rowan Mangan: We get it. Well, I think that is really interesting that you are maybe a Chinese poster child for lying flat.

Martha Beck: I know. We're joking, but I'm serious. Lying flat is a thing for me, and it does not sound like something that would become a social movement in China.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I'm a little concerned that you are so serious about your role in this movement.

Martha Beck: Oh yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah, I think it was causal.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Just not sure which direction the causality runs.

Rowan Mangan: Absolutely. No, I think you definitely seeded a lying down revolution. Yeah.

Martha Beck: Thank you. That's my power.



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Rowan Mangan: Yeah, that's brilliant. 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. 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. Thank you very much in advance. Let's just go out there, and bewilder the world.

Okay. To just switch gears, today we're going to talk about something that is very close to my heart. It is in fact one of these episodes, dear listeners, where I just go, "Here's what's wrong in my life. Marty, can you please solve it?" That's why I'm here. I don't know why you all are here.

Martha Beck: I'm looking forward to this because it always goes, then it goes, "I will solve it. I'll solve it with all kinds of props, and books, and quotes from scientific journal articles." And you go, "I don't want you to patronize me, I just want you to make me feel better." And then, I feel bad, and then we both lie flat.

Rowan Mangan: Is that really what happens? I don't think that's what happens.

Martha Beck: No, that's just a trauma memory I have.

Rowan Mangan: No. I think this is going to be very helpful for everyone because I cannot be the only human being in the world given to a little bit of procrastination. And I've just had a week where I'm worrying myself Marty, quite honestly.

Martha Beck: Really?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Okay, so full disclosure. Actually, not quite full disclosure. I have had a new enthusiasm, and this comes to me sometimes quite often actually. I come upon something that I suddenly find really fascinating and interesting, and I need to know everything about it. And I'm not going to say what it is because it's borderline a little bit embarrassing, so I'm just going to say it's mini golf. Okay. I discovered mini golf, and it's really not mini golf. Come on, guys.

Martha Beck: They're going to be dying with curiosity.



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- Rowan Mangan: I know. I had this week where I had my enthusiasm, and I just, Marty, I just lay flat, and read about my enthusiasm on my phone all week long. And I didn't write my newsletter, and I didn't do my work. And the kid's still alive, so I must've done something, but that was probably Karen. And then I had this great theory about halfway through the week that I sometimes I think, "I've got it. I know what's going on." And I went to Marty and I said, "What if procrastination is actually our soul's genius, and it's our souls directing us to what we're actually supposed to be doing?"
- Martha Beck: Well, hello. It sounds like you have solved your problem.
- Rowan Mangan: And Marty's like, "Yeah, sometimes, but there is such a thing as procrastination-"
- Martha Beck: That's true.
- Rowan Mangan: "... and it doesn't always feel the same way." And so, I was like, okay, so maybe my soul did need to obsess about mini golf, and maybe it didn't. But my fear, Marty, is we have this game we play where I have a fear, and then you tell it, and it's fun. My fear is that it's been I've been so lazy with my enthusiasm, and I haven't done anything hard. And I'm scared that maybe I never ever, ever will again, and I'll just lie flat, and read about mini golf for the rest of my days. And I can't imagine myself feeling motivated to write something right now.
- Martha Beck: Who by mini golf.
- Rowan Mangan: Who by mini golf. The Cohen estate's going to come after me for that.
- Martha Beck: I understand that feeling. I understand it deeply in the marrow of my bones for I have done it. I have done it, Rowan Mangan, and I have a way out.
- Rowan Mangan: Hooray.
- Martha Beck: Hooray.
- Rowan Mangan: That's what I was hoping you would say.
- Martha Beck: Not really a way out, but definitely a way that's gotten me off my keister, and gotten me to roll over onto my back, and work while lying flat.
- Rowan Mangan: Before we jump into your solutions, let's talk a little bit about the culture and nature of it all.



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Martha Beck: Yes, yes, yes. Because that is our thing. Remember, bewilderment is be-wild-erment. We're becoming wild, so there's a wild procrastination. Wildly procrastinating.

Rowan Mangan: Oh yeah, I'm pretty wild. What would we say that the culture says about procrastination? It's pretty obvious, isn't it?

Martha Beck: Well, don't.

Rowan Mangan: Just don't, right?

Martha Beck: Don't.

Rowan Mangan: Beyond that, there's something morally corrupt about you if you do.

Martha Beck: Definitely.

Rowan Mangan: Because you should love to work those 23 hours a day, and never quiet quit anything. Just don't procrastinate. Just do it, you filthy pig.

Martha Beck: Do it now, you filthy pig.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: That sums it up.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: It has all the shaming, and all the horror.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah, it's a really big one this one. Yeah. And immediately, my mind is going wildly academic because I just can't help it. There are cultures that are called polychrones, and then there are-

Rowan Mangan: Oh, we've talked about these before.

Martha Beck: Oh yeah? I think we did, yeah. You guys already have heard this. You folks. Polychrones are people who live in this random, different things are happening at the same time, and you choose among them. And then monochrones, like Western modern cultures, are very much driven by the clock. You have-

Rowan Mangan: Not necessarily Western, but yeah.



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- Martha Beck: That's true. Modern. Yeah. But the vast majority of places that were not colonized by Western society had more relaxed. Everywhere I've been in the world, they'll say, "Oh, this is on Yugoslavian time," which these to say-
- Rowan Mangan: They don't say that in Japan though, do they?
- Martha Beck: Always. Because Yugoslavian Airlines, when I was there, had the initials JUT, because in Croatian, that means something about an airline. But all the Croatians told me it means jokes about time. Oh, it would be JAT. Yeah. Anyway-
- Rowan Mangan: About time.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, but I've heard that in Jamaica, I've heard that in South Africa, I've heard that all over the place, in Mexico. There's a different time sense. I do have this feeling that it is a colonial imposition on a lot of people, and-
- Rowan Mangan: I'm just saying today, right now, saying Western could be exclusionary because there's plenty of this pressure going on everywhere, because the internet, it's a post national kind of system really at this point.
- Martha Beck: That's true. I'm so sorry. I was being exclusionary. I just was thinking about when factories became a thing, and there would be little villages that would spring up around the factory so the workers could be close, and come into work. And because they wanted everyone to start on the assembly line at the same time, the factory owners would blow a whistle that would literally wake everyone in the town up at 5:00 AM. I don't know how they avoided being murdered. I truly don't. Anyway, so yeah, definitely the culture says, "Do it now, you filthy pig."
- Rowan Mangan: Procrastination. Procrastibation.
- Martha Beck: Ooh, naughty.
- Rowan Mangan: Hello. Naughty, naughty. I do it all the time. All the time. You can't stop me. What about you?
- Martha Beck: We've tried to stop you.
- Rowan Mangan: They're trying to stop me procrastibating in public.
- Martha Beck: We should totally call this episode Procrastibating.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I think we might not get too many...



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Martha Beck: I think we'd get letters, but not the good kind. Not like the Letterman jacket for procrastination.

Okay. So yes, you do it all the time.

Rowan Mangan: I sure do. I'm actually, yeah, I've got a bit of a chronic condition.

Martha Beck: I have a bit of a condition. For me, now this is going to sound really bad. Now you've set everything up to be sexual innuendo. You know this. But for me, the only really the time when this is difficult to not do is when I wake up, I [inaudible 00:20:57].

Rowan Mangan: Oh yeah. A lot of people have that though. Don't feel bad.

Martha Beck: This is so childish. This is so childish, Ro.

Rowan Mangan: I know. It's fun.

Martha Beck: No.

Rowan Mangan: Sorry for being childish.

Martha Beck: It's cold right now in Pennsylvania, and under my blankets it is warm.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, I bet it is.

Martha Beck: And outside the blankets is a bitter world of getting dressed in clothes that are cold.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Marty has this really cute thing she does where she gets her clothes, and she pulls them under the covers to warm them up before she gets into them. The clothes spend a little bit of time warming up in the bed before she-

Martha Beck: That's right. I roll myself around them like a mother duck-billed dinosaur or something on her eggs. I just roll over on them, and I'm like, "Warm little ..." And it makes a cold spot on my tummy, but it's not like the cold spot is all over my body.

Rowan Mangan: Who ends up having to sleep on the cold spot?

Martha Beck: Yeah. And then, I get dressed under the blankets, but that's after I've procrastinated for some time.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



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Martha Beck: Yeah.

Rowan Mangan: For quite a while sometimes.

Martha Beck: A long time.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah.

Martha Beck: Yeah. I have the same problem.

Rowan Mangan: You have a really good work ethic though.

Martha Beck: Well, I'll tell you why in a minute.

Rowan Mangan: So Marty, now that we've established our maturity credentials by renaming procrastination, procrastibation ...

Martha Beck: Oh yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah? Yeah? Let's figure this out.

Martha Beck: You know what, you have given yourself the key to figuring it out. Because procrastibation, I'm sorry I keep talking about this, but now it's there. We have to talk about it forever. It's only procrastibation if there's only one of you.

Rowan Mangan: And ...

Martha Beck: Wait, no.

Rowan Mangan: If there is more than one of you, it's just a good time.

Martha Beck: Yeah. Just a party.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. All right.

Martha Beck: Here's the thing, when you're trying to get out of bed in the morning, and part of you doesn't want to go, there are obviously two people here. It's not just one person. If you lie there thinking, "Okay, I'm the one who has a mental social conditioning that I have to get out of bed at a certain time," and you're saying, "Why am I so bad? Why am I so bad?" You're talking as if you're the one who's not getting out of bed, but in fact it's a totally different person.



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And this I get from part psychology. I'm not saying we all have multiple identities or anything, dissociative identity disorder, I'm just saying that there are different parts in everybody's mind, and part psychology is just becoming really the hot trend right now. And it turns out that if you talk to different parts of you like the other total person that they really are, you can actually get them to agree to stuff, like you're in a negotiation.

- Rowan Mangan: Right.
- Martha Beck: It's not procrastination, it's a mediated negotiation session.
- Rowan Mangan: Procrasti-party. Procrasti-mediation. Anyway, it doesn't matter.
- Martha Beck: Yeah, yeah.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay. That's cool. But I feel like when I'm in this mode, my procrastinating part is way stronger than any other parts. The other parts are there, and they're going, "Maybe if you ..." But I think they're secretly on the same side as the procrastinator.
- Martha Beck: See, just knowing that. Just the way you're figuring this out. Okay, so I'm going to do a little ... Sorry, I can't do it. How about I get coachy. When you go from, "Do it now, you filthy pig ..."
- Rowan Mangan: "Do it now, you filthy pig." Yep, yep.
- Martha Beck: And you're lying in bed, "Do it now, you filthy pig," and nothing happens, right? Log jam, nothing.
- Rowan Mangan: Oh, god. Everything is-
- Martha Beck: Stop it!
- Rowan Mangan: Sorry.
- Martha Beck: You child!
- Rowan Mangan: Sorry, sorry.
- Martha Beck: Stop it now, you filthy pig. No, okay. Feel the feeling. You're lying there, and you're just like, "I've got to get up. I've got to get up. It's cold, it's horrible. I don't want to do it. I can't procrastinate."
- Rowan Mangan: Or in my case, I'm up, I'm sitting on my armchair, and I'm reading about mini golf instead of writing my newsletter.



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- Martha Beck: I've got to write a newsletter.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Okay, so feel the feeling of, "I've got to write a newsletter." What does it feel like seriously in your body?
- Rowan Mangan: It feels like dripping green tar that's shot through with poisonous algae.
- Martha Beck: Well, that sounds super fun. It sounds like something Leonard Cohen would write a song about. Who by algae? Green tar algae.
- Okay. Now, when you say, "I actually think that a lot of my parts are on the same side, they want to read about mini golf," what happens inside your body when you shift that way?
- Rowan Mangan: I go, "Conspiracy, conspirabation."
- Martha Beck: Conspirabation. Oh, that does sound like a party. Okay. This is wonderful. Do you see now how you're not as miserable?
- Rowan Mangan: Yes.
- Martha Beck: Because what we do is we get stuck in the command, "Get up, you filthy pig," and that is so insensitive and insulting to our various sensibilities. Because it's not the wild way. It really, really is a social convenience. You have to get up at the same time as everybody else, so you're joining the cultural norm, and you're doing violence to the parts that are conditioned to when the light comes in, and how cold it is. We're supposed to sleep more when it's cold. It preserves energy. The squirrels out there are sleeping extra.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay so you've got yourself off the hook, but I still promised people I would write a newsletter.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. Exactly. But now, you've got a conspirabation.
- Rowan Mangan: Sure do.
- Martha Beck: What you have to do, instead of screaming, "Do it now, you filthy pig," you have to make friends with these people who don't want to do it.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay.



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Martha Beck: Then, it becomes about, and I love this because we've been reading all these books about how to raise a toddler because we have a toddler who is very sure what she wants, and much stronger than all of us put together.

Rowan Mangan: Yep. That's her.

Martha Beck: Yeah. She does things like it's like trying to raise a baby Tyrannosaurus Rex or something. The child-

Rowan Mangan: Very cute one.

Martha Beck: Oh my god, she's so cute. She's so cute.

Rowan Mangan: And she's funny and awesome.

Martha Beck: Oh, she's hilarious.

Rowan Mangan: And we're making it sound like she's not.

Martha Beck: Oh, no. She's the best child on Earth, for sure, now that my other children have grown up. But we've been reading about when they really want something, and they get so full of emotion that they start to thrash around. And what most parents do is try to suppress that, especially if it happens in any kind of public space. And we don't have public space problems so much, but when we're on Zoom calls, and we're supposed to show the baby, she will do it because we're forcing her to do stuff that's not really her authentic self.

She starts to thrash, and what the books say is, "This is not the time to get compulsory, it is the time to get curious." If you can say to your tantruming child, hold them in a, and she always says, "Big hug. Big hug."

Rowan Mangan: Big hug.

Martha Beck: She instinctively knows that being contained that way is what she needs. You put her in a big hug, and then you start asking, "What are you feeling? How's this going for you?"

Rowan Mangan: Often what we find just as a data point to when we ask what she's feeling is she's clearly feeling Peppa Pig, based on her responses.

Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: Watch TV, Peppa Pig, now mummy, now.



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Martha Beck: Yes.

Rowan Mangan: I'd say that's what she's feeling a lot of the time.

Martha Beck: I just want to shout out to Peppa Pig-

Rowan Mangan: Peppa.

Martha Beck: ... because it's one of best kids shows ever made. And it's British, and Lila is developing a British accent, so she sounds much more intelligent than we do. Because I'm sorry, Americans and Aussies, it's just not the Oxford way.

Rowan Mangan: How dare you.

Martha Beck: Now, when I drink my special treat, which is my Perrier, she says-

Rowan Mangan: So tragic.

Martha Beck: ... "Muffy, fizzy water." And then, you have to give it to her because she's so cute.

Sorry. We have a very cute dinosaur for a child.

Rowan Mangan: That's it.

Martha Beck: She throws a fit, and what you do is you get curious, and you say, "What are you feeling? What's going on for you?" And this validates that what's going on is important, and it preserves the wild, and it makes the wild side more likely to come with you. Picture yourself studying mini golf in your armchair, and then you go, "Do it now, you filthy pig." And then, the conspirabation says, "We don't want to." Ask some questions of the crowd. There's more than one person in there who doesn't want to go write your newsletter, right? Who's in there? Tell me. Get curious.

Rowan Mangan: A lot of mini golf enthusiasts.

Martha Beck: Well, no wonder.

Rowan Mangan: Well, the thing is, I think what's happening is that maybe I'm polychrones.

Martha Beck: Yes, you are.



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- Rowan Mangan: And I was right being that my soul, the real mini golf thing is something to do with health, and it's like my soul wants to focus on health right now. And so, my parts are on board, but the problem is that I do live in a society where you make commitments. What to do about that? I can say, my parts can all be like, "Yeah, yeah. We're going to read about mini golf."
- Martha Beck: No, no, no. It's nice. They're already doing that. We've established that. But you have to start asking them questions about what they like and don't like, and what it would take. We're in a negotiation now.
- I remember taking my oldest, Kit, when they were in high school to meet Kathy Colby, who is a person who her expertise is knowing how people do things, and how they want to do them. And we both took this little test, and Kathy looked at our results, and she said, "You're both very creative, but nobody wants to clean up." And I was like, "Bingo, but isn't everybody?" She said, "You'd be surprised."
- And then, she turned to Kit, and she said, "Obviously, you don't like the rules of high school. You're not that kind of person," And Kit is like, "Yeah. What have I been trying to tell everyone?" And Kathy said, "Okay, we need a way to fool the school system, because the school system is wrong. Your true nature is right. But we have to render unto Caesar that which is Caesars. We have to find a way to make it look like you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, but at the same time, not do violence to your nature."
- Rowan Mangan: Okay, I see.
- Martha Beck: Yeah. When I say we need to negotiate, I'm really, sitting in the armchair, I'm dead serious actually right now. Who are you?
- Rowan Mangan: No, I get that, I just don't understand the negotiation. I need you to explain.
- Martha Beck: Okay.
- Rowan Mangan: Am I negotiating to try and convince these parts that they should write a newsletter?
- Martha Beck: You're the mediator. I went to a mediation training once, and now I'm a trained mediator. You're the middle man. On one side is your cultural side saying, "I've got to do this right now." On the other side are your wild parts, and it sounds like there are several going, "Ha ha ha, watch us... Not." And in between, you are the mediator who's trying to figure out what's going on.



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And here's the thing, if you read the negotiation book *Getting to Yes*, which is pretty darn good, and it's a classic, what you want to do is talk about needs rather than rules. The fabled story is there are two people in a room. One wants the window open, one wants it closed, and they're in a fight about it. The mediator comes in, and he says to one person, "Why do you want the window open?" And that person says, "For the fresh air." And he says to the other person, "Why do you want the window closed?" And they say, "Because the wind is blowing my papers around." And he says, "Why don't we open the door to the next room, open the windows there, then you get fresh air without the wind." Boom, everyone's happy.

While you're aware of the struggle, I need to push forward. I can't. It's not happening. What you have to do is identify the part that's not coming along, and say, "Why do you not want to work on your Substack?" If you can fish around, and find the part that's saying, "No, I will not."

- Rowan Mangan: Okay.
- Martha Beck: Have you found it?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Can you picture it as some kind of object or person?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, yeah. It's like a little Huck Finn kind of kid who's just like, "F you. F everything."
- Martha Beck: I love it. And for those that are listening, it's often very helpful to find where it's living in your body. I know that sounds odd, but do you have any sense of the Huck Finn living somewhere in your body?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, in my face, in my mouth.
- Martha Beck: That's really interesting.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Wow. Okay, so he's like, "F you. F everybody."
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. He's like constructed of the word fuck.



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Martha Beck: That's so good because there's that brilliant scene where they're trying to get Jim, the runaway enslaved person, and some people float by, and they say, "Who's there?" And Huck says, "That's my friend." And they say, "Is he black or white?" And he says he's white. And then, he says, "I know'd I done wrong. I guess a body that don't get started out when he's little just ain't got no show." And I remember reading that as a child, and thinking racism is evil, and the people who see beyond it are amazing.

I love that it's Huck Finn in your mouth. Oh, God. Okay. That was really bad. I want to talk to Huck Finn directly.

Rowan Mangan: Okay.

Martha Beck: Are you okay with this?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I'm totally, I'm just here for it all.

Martha Beck: I suddenly felt like you were beaming the thought out, "Stop it now, you filthy pig."

Okay. Huck.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: I believe in you. You were right in the book, and that tells me Ro picked a symbol where you're right and the culture's wrong.

Rowan Mangan: Okay.

Martha Beck: On the other hand, let's talk to the person who loves writing a Substack newsletter, and getting feedback from people.

Rowan Mangan: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Martha Beck: Can you find that person?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: What does that look like?

Rowan Mangan: She's a 19 year old, fresh-faced girl with a ponytail.

Martha Beck: Okay. Now, we've got fresh-faced girl, Huckleberry Finn.

Rowan Mangan: Yep.



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Martha Beck: All right. So Huck, can you understand that the girl really wants to get the feedback from the letters, the newsletters?

Rowan Mangan: Sorry.

Martha Beck: Okay.

Rowan Mangan: I don't want the feedback, I want to-

Martha Beck: Let me back up a little bit. Okay. We've got the fresh-faced girl on one side, and Huckleberry Finn on the other. The idea is that we have to get them willing to cooperate with each other for friendly reasons. You will never get them to work together by force.

Rowan Mangan: Okay.

Martha Beck: Does the friendly girl know that Huck Finn is there and vice versa? Are they aware of each other?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, they are now.

Martha Beck: I know that sounds like an odd question, but if you try this out, it actually happens. What does the fresh-faced girl who wants to write the newsletter, what does she think about Huck Finn?

Rowan Mangan: She's tolerant, but a little frustrated.

Martha Beck: What's the frustration?

Rowan Mangan: Why are you making such a big deal out of this? It's not that hard. It's not that huge a commitment to do.

Martha Beck: Okay, so that's her position. Now, we want to know what Huck genuinely feels. Really drop into that. Into the kid who's just saying F you to the whole world.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. I shouldn't always have to be doing stuff for other people, I should also be able to do stuff for myself. That's what Huck Finn's saying.

Martha Beck: And it sounds like, and tell me where I'm wrong, that he's been doing this a long time.

Rowan Mangan: Like what, complaining? Oh yeah.

Martha Beck: But also going, "I hate this, I hate this. I really, really hate this."



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- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, but not the newsletter specifically, but just having to do anything for anyone. Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Yes. This is exactly right. And the fact that you're laughing about it shows that there's a part of you that's embarrassed, or thinks it's silly somehow to not want to do what other people say, or what they want for you.
- Rowan Mangan: Not wanting to do anything that anyone else wants is definitely in conflict with many other parts of me that do want to.
- Martha Beck: Sounds to me like you need a dose of lying flat. No, not really. Because okay, so first of all, so Huck Finn is the tantrum child. When you deal with the tantrum child, you don't say, "Conform with me, you filthy pig," you say, "Wow, I really get that feeling. I've had that feeling myself a million times. Tell me more."
- What does Huck Finn, he's like, "I'm sick of doing this for my whole life." He wants to be heard and understood. He wants to be acknowledged as a real and valid part of you. He's the wild part of you, and culture doesn't validate him. I know it sounds weird and silly, but I really want to talk to him.
- Rowan Mangan: Okay.
- Martha Beck: Huck ...
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: How long have you been putting yourself aside to do other people's stuff, or stuff that other people want you to do?
- Rowan Mangan: More and more.
- Martha Beck: More and more?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Since Lila came along.
- Martha Beck: Oh. Tell me about what it's like to have a tiny baby, and a job, and other family members, and friends in two continents, and trying to do all that. How has that experience been for you? Can you tell me?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, I feel undernourished.
- Martha Beck: Oh, yeah. I totally hear that. Say more.



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Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Like the feeling of being very thirsty or very hungry, that's how I feel about just sitting down and reading about mini golf.

Martha Beck: It's watering your soul to read about the mini golf.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: And you're dying of thirst, or hunger, or both. Okay. Can the fresh-faced girl understand that Huck's been doing this for two years, and it's incredibly exhausting?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. The thing about her though is that she doesn't do the childcare either. It's like she's just like, "Yeah, but it's fun to do a newsletter once a week."

Martha Beck: Yeah. Just sit down, and slam it out. But she can't go do that without dragging Huck into something that, it's not like he's being belligerent, he's exhausted and dehydrated. That's like if you find out your two year old is starving, and that's why she's crying, the next job becomes not to shut her up, but to get her some food. How do we give Huck enough nourishment that he'd be willing to come along with the whole crowd, and do something that the fresh-faced girl wants to do?

Rowan Mangan: I don't know.

Martha Beck: Because we never ask. We never go around asking what does the wild part of me need to be nourished?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Because I feel like that what Huck wants to do is have nothing but read about mini golf for a year lying flat because he feels deprived. And so, it's like how do I go into a more integrated system where everyone gets something?

Martha Beck: Yeah. And that happens. It's like this person has literally been starved, and when people are starved, like I read this thing about a woman who got her father's diary from a prison camp in Southeast Asia after World War II, and she thought it would have all this stuff about how much he loved his family. And it did the first three pages, and the rest of the journal was filled with nothing but descriptions of food. Because when you're starving, your entire system says, "We need to think about food."

And if your soul is starving for some kind of activity, for a sense of freedom, whatever, it's not negotiable. Your whole system is going to go, "Until this gets settled, nothing else matters." And then, we push ourselves so far past that for cultural reasons that we get incredibly starved for our wild food, right?



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Can you think about anything that Huck has done since Lila was born where you went, "Oh yeah." Where Huck was like, "Oh, that's fun. Oh, that feels good. That's nourishing."

- Rowan Mangan: It seems like Huck is very connected to just that "wasting time". Wasting time stuff. It's not like a bracing walk outside makes other parts happy, but Huck's just like, "I just want to do nothing." He's 13, and he-
- Martha Beck: He wants to lie flat.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: The solution is you go to China, join the lie flat movement, and become radicalized. We have to think of something that to Huck is the equivalent of lying flat. Now, there's an exercise I do, and I train coaches to do, where I talk about if you had to clean a disgusting, filthy restroom, and I said I'd give you \$5 to do it, how would you feel about it?
- Rowan Mangan: Not pleased.
- Martha Beck: Would you do it for \$50? How would you feel if I made you do it, but I gave you \$50? Disgusting, five toilets.
- Rowan Mangan: No. No, thank you.
- Martha Beck: Okay. \$500, how would you feel then? Filthy, smelly.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, no thank you.
- Martha Beck: \$500,000.
- Rowan Mangan: All right.
- Martha Beck: Really truly. You would do this restroom, I will give you half a million dollars.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah, absolutely. Gladly.
- Martha Beck: The important thing here is not that I can give you \$5 million because I can't, or I was going up to 5 million, so that's why I don't do actual negotiation. What's interesting is the shift in your willingness, because the reward has become commensurate.



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I wrote this book about people rewarding themselves for behavior they don't really want to do, but they socially have to do it, and readers afterward told me, "I can't think of rewards." Because the culture never teaches you to reward yourself for anything that the culture doesn't validate, and they never reward behavior that doesn't fit into the cultural pigeon holes.

What we have to do is find out what Huck loves, and we have to condense it. We have to feed Huck. And so, it requires some creativity at this point. And that's why I asked you, can you think about anything that happened that went, "Oh yeah." You have to go to New York City.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: That's a highly nourishing thing. Does Huck like it?

Rowan Mangan: It's a different part.

Martha Beck: This is just lying flat.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, this is the time waster.

Martha Beck: Then, could we bump it up to lying flat with a foot rub? Is that better?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Okay. Lying flat with a foot rub while watching Bad Sisters?

Rowan Mangan: No, because I have to be reading about mini golf.

Martha Beck: Oh, okay. Lying flat, reading about mini golf, getting a foot massage.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: In a very fuzzy blanket.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: By the fire.

Rowan Mangan: Mm-hmm.

Martha Beck: With a cup of coffee. Like really good coffee.



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- Rowan Mangan: Yes, please.
- Martha Beck: This is something I call the three B's, bag it, barter it, or better it. If you can just not do the newsletter, fine, but you want to do it, yeah?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: If you can barter it, and get, like I would do it for you, but it would be terrible. It would be about the tang ping movement.
- Rowan Mangan: People would love it. That's why I don't want you to do it.
- Martha Beck: Well, I would. If you want to barter, I'm here.
- Rowan Mangan: Bless your heart.
- Martha Beck: No, I'm serious. Okay. I get very serious about life coaching, and this is very life coachy stuff.
- All right, so if you can't barter it, or better it, or bag it, you can better it. Foot massage by the fire, coffee, fuzzy blanket. What if you set an alarm for half an hour, really hit it really hard, and then bam, you got to just read about mini golf for an hour and a half, but goosed up. The massage, the fire, the coffee, everything.
- Rowan Mangan: That sounds amazing.
- Martha Beck: Okay. Would you work for half an hour on the newsletter if you got an hour afterwards of just reading mini golf by the fire?
- Rowan Mangan: Yes, yes, yes.
- Martha Beck: Okay. Then, that's what we're going to do. Now, how does Huck feel?
- Rowan Mangan: Pleased.
- Martha Beck: And how does fresh-faced girl feel?
- Rowan Mangan: Pleased.
- Martha Beck: I have something to say to her. Could I?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.



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Martha Beck: Okay. Fresh-faced girl. Yeah. Now you know what Huck needs, and you can't not have Huck with you. Huck actually writes the newsletter. The fresh-faced girl will do the typing, but if you want content, it's going to come from Huck. It's going to come from the wild self. That's the only part of you that's original, right?

Fresh-faced girl, if Huck lets you work for half an hour, you have to blast through this thing. Are you willing-

Rowan Mangan: Got it.

Martha Beck: ... to do the delivery like focused, intense, boom, boom, boom?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: All right.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Huck, if she does that, and then you get everything you want by the fire, with the coffee, and so on, will you provide content?

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Hell yeah.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Okay. That's how I do it. That's how I get out of bed in the morning.

Rowan Mangan: Love it.

Martha Beck: Curled around my clothes, going, "Who doesn't want to get up?" And there's a chorus of a thousand people, "We don't want to get up. We are lying flat," and I'm like, "What could I give you? What can I give you?" And I always give it the same thing.

Rowan Mangan: What?

Martha Beck: Morning communion. That's why we have morning communion, because it's something that helps us get out of bed.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah, it does.

Martha Beck: Except for Karen, who's been moving at the speed of light since 5:00 AM.



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Rowan Mangan: Yeah.

Martha Beck: Going, "I didn't sleep much, but I got enough." Who by avalanche? She I swear is going to die from getting up early.

Rowan Mangan: She is the avalanche.

Martha Beck: She is. Be the avalanche.

Rowan Mangan: Be the avalanche you wish to see in the world.

Martha Beck: Oh my gosh.

Rowan Mangan: All right. Well, I feel very joyful about my procrastination cure, and very grateful to you, and to my little parts. What can listeners to if they want to do that? Because otherwise, they're just going to be like, "I need Martha."

Martha Beck: Here's an exercise that I put in two of my books. The last one, The Way of Integrity, has the better one I think. But when I originally created it, I called it The Wild Child and the Dictator, because we all have many, many different parts, but at some point, like your wild child is Huck Finn, and your dictator is a fresh-faced girl. Oh, don't be deceived. She is a tyrant.

Rowan Mangan: She's a bitch.

Martha Beck: Because the moment you try to force yourself to do something that society wants you to do, but you don't want to do, you have become the monster of society.

Rowan Mangan: Yeah. Oh, wow. Yeah.

Martha Beck: You have joined the forces of evil.

Rowan Mangan: Oh my God, you're so right.

Martha Beck: In bewilderment terms. There's a physiological component of this because the wild child generally is going to live on the right hemisphere of your brain, which moves the left side of your body, and vice versa. The left side of your brain is the verbal one, is the socially compliant one, it's the more rigid and rule bound, and it controls your right hand. And the right side is more wild, and it controls your left hand.



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I actually ask people to physically hold out their own hands, palm up, because it actually helps with the brain component of this. To hold up your hands actually activates the two hemispheres. What you do is you imagine that in your left hand is your version of the wild child. Okay? Two inches tall. Does yours look like you, or does it look like corn? Corn?

Rowan Mangan: Doesn't look a lot like corn.

Martha Beck: I just had an image of Huck Finn, and he was smoking a corn cob pipe, and so it all became corn to me.

Rowan Mangan: It's fascinating, these insights I get into your [inaudible 00:50:07].

Martha Beck: Welcome to ADD world.

Rowan Mangan: Does it look like you or does that look like corn?

Martha Beck: Corn.

Rowan Mangan: Okay, it looks like Huck Finn and his corn.

Martha Beck: Okay. On your right hand stands a tiny version of a dictator that can take any form that you ... Yours is a fresh-faced girl, serpent with a flowery face, but whatever your dictator happens to be, that's standing in your right hand, and it's also two inches tall. It's very angry. It's screaming at the wild child, "Do it now, you filthy pig."

Look at the dictator screaming and yelling, got a whip and a gun, and then the wild child doesn't even speak English, doesn't speak any language. It's nonverbal. It's just like, "Why are you hitting me? I just need acorns or something. I just want to get by." And it will not do what the dictator wants it to do. You can see those two, and it looks like just an unsolvable conflict.

But now, while still holding your hands out, and looking at the two, I want to ask you, does the dictator look tired? Does your dictator look tired?

Rowan Mangan: Yes.

Martha Beck: Because she's been trying to force a wild thing to do circus tricks that it will not do. She's exhausted. Look over at the wild child. Does the wild child look tired?

Rowan Mangan: Yes.



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- Martha Beck: Neither one of them wants to keep this up. Tell me where I'm wrong?
- Rowan Mangan: You are not wrong anywhere.
- Martha Beck: They're both exhausted, so let them both sit down in the palms of your hands, and just assume the posture that is slumped over, lying flat, whatever Adam was doing in his bedroom, whatever. Let him just collapse. And then, see if you can find in your heart any compassion for the exhaustion, and this constant deadlock they've been involved in. Can you feel compassion for the dictator?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: Because her motivation is just she wants you to succeed and be happy.
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: The wild child, can you find compassion for that?
- Rowan Mangan: Yeah.
- Martha Beck: It's a wild thing. You've just been hitting it with a stick for 30 years, and it doesn't even know why.
- Now, look at them both, and you can bring your hands together even, and look at them right in front of your face, and start to offer them kindness. "I see what you're going through. It looks really exhausting." What comes to your mind as something you could say that is compassionate to both of them?
- Rowan Mangan: May you be well, may you be happy, may you be free from suffering.
- Martha Beck: The good old Tibetan love and kindness things, yeah. If you just repeat that over and over, you can watch them, and you'll feel something coming into your energy that's a little bit softer and gentler. Just imagine that. Have you got it?
- Rowan Mangan: Yep.
- Martha Beck: Okay. When you can feel deep compassion for both these beings, let me know.
- Rowan Mangan: Yep, I got it.



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- Martha Beck: Now, the question, listeners, is with the wild child in your left hand, and the dictator in your right hand, and you loving them both, who are you?
- Rowan Mangan: Ooh.
- Martha Beck: Because you are not the dictator, and you are not the wild child. You are compassion. And that, a lot of people think that nature is cruel, but I think ultimately it's very compassionate. And when you become compassion, technically you've moved into a part of the brain that is able to access that, which is super good for your whole body and your mind. But also, in a philosophical way, you've stepped out of the conflict between nature and culture, and you've become something even beyond that, which is I think more of an ultimate truth. You've gotten into a spiritual reality.
- Rowan Mangan: That can encompass both.
- Martha Beck: It encompasses both. It loves everything. It finds a way because it's the creation, it's the creator. It creates solutions out of the vast intelligence of the universe. It doesn't need like, "Well, you need to get a list, and put a star by your name when you do your chores, you filthy pig." It's much more creative than that. And it can make things happen by love instead of force, and you'll be amazed how well your life works when you do that.
- Rowan Mangan: I love it. Thank you so much for the coaching session, Marty.
- Martha Beck: Thank you for letting me coach. Oh my God, it's the most fun thing you can ever do with your clothes on. Except maybe for procrastination.
- Rowan Mangan: All right, folks. Well, hope you enjoyed this. Procrastinate when you need to, and-
- Martha Beck: ... stay wild.
- Rowan Mangan: ... 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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