

LOVE IN A F\*CKED UP WORLD PODCAST  
EP08 SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Dean: I'm Dean Spade. Welcome to a new episode of Love in a F\*cked Up World, where we talk about how to build and sustain strong relationships because our movements are made of our relationships and are only as strong as they are.

It's been so meaningful to me to hear from listeners about the kinds of issues that are coming up in movements and relationships and collaborations and groups. If you haven't already, I hope you'll check out our Patreon. We're having some really interesting conversations there on the message boards and putting content there that's not anywhere else. I hope you'll come and join the conversations and support the podcast, and there's free memberships, so there's no barrier to joining us there if you want.

Another way you can support the podcast is by reviewing and rating it on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you listen. This helps people find it.

One more note. Please don't forget to send your questions to ask for the upcoming Ask Me Anything episode with Jessica Lanyadoo. We'll be recording that this fall. We've already been getting some really great questions. I'm excited to hear what people are thinking about. You can submit your questions on Patreon or by emailing us at [LOVEINAF0CKEDUPWORLD@gmail.com](mailto:LOVEINAF0CKEDUPWORLD@gmail.com), the U in f\*cked is a zero.

Today's episode addresses the question, should I stay or should I go? Sometimes in a movement group or a relationship or a job, it can be hard to tell whether you should stick with it or whether it's time to move on. My dear friend Morgan Bassichis is back to talk with me about this important topic. Morgan is an artist, a performer, a comedian, an anti-Zionist organizer, and has a background in generative somatics. I'm so grateful to them for having this conversation with me.

Welcome back to the podcast. Morgan, I want us to talk about the main question that has been vexing me, that's been coming up at, I think almost every book event I've had so far on the tour.

Morgan: Are we dating?

Dean: That one actually is private, the other one. Um, but they do always ask that.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: Yeah. It's interesting. The thing people are asking is some version of the question, how do I know when to keep engaging with people or groups that I'm struggling with, and how do I know when to move away? Like, I'm short cutting this as how do I know when to break

up? But people are often asking it actually not really about their love relationship, but more frequently about like kind of political differences and conflict in groups.

Like how to know when to stay or walk away. And I think it's such a good question that there's a lot of nuance about, and I want to talk about it with you, and I'm curious what comes up for you first when you think about it.

Morgan: Well, um, I had planned moments ago just to ask you a question, so I will, I bypass your question.

Dean: Great. This is just how our relationship goes.

Morgan: I know, and I am, we did have an episode on feedback, so we're gonna, um, redo that episode so you can tell, talk to me about how deflective... I have learned that I'm very deflective.

Dean: Oh, nice.

Morgan: Maybe you've known this about me for 20 years.

Dean: No comment.

Morgan: Um, so I'll be asking the questions.

Okay. So, um. Let's just get into it. Yeah. Okay. Can we just get into it?

Dean: You're trying to break up with me right now.

Morgan: I think this is enough. Enough is enough. This is me walking away. Okay?

Dean: Okay. I get it.

Morgan: How do you know if it's like, okay, enough is enough?

Dean: I think one thing, lots of things have come up in the discussions that have happened in the book events, but one thing for me is even just first finding out, do I have a tendency? Do I have a tendency to dip out at the first sign of imperfection?

Sometimes people have one tendency with lovers and a different one with. Groups, or one with jobs and one with family. But like, am I more of a leaver or more of a stay too long? You know? Or have I done either of those things ever? And what did they feel like? Because I first want to just notice, am I on autopilot sometimes?

Do I have trouble with trust or trouble with boundaries? You know,

like I gotta stay forever because I'm so afraid to say no to anyone. And I'm hoping that maybe it'll turn around kind of like to a fault, or do I walk away at the first sign of trouble. I think...

Morgan: That's big. I feel like we should pause on that because that's huge.

Dean: Yeah. Tell me about, what do you think about that?

Morgan: I mean, I just think often we can be both, too. We can be both someone who stays too long and leaves and...

Dean: Or only does the extremes!

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: You know?

Morgan: And we can also have a story about ourselves. I always stay too long. It's like, actually you're, there's, there's a lot going on.

Dean: You leave all the time.

Morgan: Yeah. So we can have a story about ourselves that's not always true. So, but I love that you're saying the first step here is to say, is just to check in. What's my tendency?

Dean: Yeah. What's this like for me usually? You know, I think that can help. And also sometimes you might have a friend who's got a really different tendency, so it's kind of fun to like talk it through with someone who's a bit different from you. But both of you are noticing it and this might just be some ingrained stuff. Like I was actually talking to someone today about how a lot of people who had to like, run away from home when they were young, they really know how to leave to preserve their dignity. And it's a very beautiful skill. But then they might get to a point in their life where they're like, all I ever do is leave to preserve my dignity, and I lose connection. And so maybe I wanna like, beef up my skill about staying.

And a lot of people I know are like, cannot break up or cannot quit a job or something like that. Even when the signs are that it's really hard on them. And it's like, okay, what would it be like to preserve my dignity a little bit more and let some connection go, you know?

Morgan: So you've noticed what your tendency is. You've noticed the, the other muscle that you have not yet gotten a chance to build.

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: And then how do you know inside yourself if it's like, oh,

this is something I wanna walk away from? Or, yeah, how do you know?

Dean: One thing I'm curious about myself is like, am I in the middle of a kind of heightened reaction?

I think we've talked about before. Something I feel pretty freaked out about is that in my experience in our movements, it feels like one strongly emotionally activated person can disorganize any group. And that's like, really unsustainable and not working very well. We need to somehow have groups that can hold when somebody really is freaking out. Even if they're using politicized language to accuse others, like all the things we all do when we're scared and upset, how do we hold together?

And so one of the things I like to ask myself is what does it look like when I'm the emotionally activated person? It's very easy to point fingers at others, but when I'm really stirred up, and maybe a little off base and seeing things through a very particular lens and maybe getting accusatory, what does that feel like for me? And so that I can try to learn how to discern whether this is one of those moments. Or are there friends I can talk to about what that's like for me, who will help me figure out like, oh, Dean, like I think, don't give the feedback in the group yet. You gotta cool down a little. Or, that part seems right, but that part seems about your envy about this other person. Or that part seems like it's about some old stuff.

One type that I see in our movements a lot is someone who, when they get emotionally activated, they decide they're gonna be the truth teller. So they enter different groups, maybe pick up on different underlying conflicts and dynamics, you know, all groups are struggling with lots of different power dynamics and whatever, and they decide to like, tell the truth and like, accuse everyone in the group of something or name things in the group in a way that I think feels maybe freeing for them.

Maybe they did that in their family, maybe they didn't get to do that in their family. There's something historical happening. And it's like, take no prisoners, like very willing to destroy groups. And so like, am I in that kind of role? Like, am I doing something that's meeting an emotional need for me that may be harmful and not grounded and probably not even meet the emotional need really, even if it feels relieving in the moment.

Like even if it's just a little, I'm looking for those kinds of patterns in my thinking or feeling, and asking for support around them from people who I can be really honest with what it feels like to be inside me and navigating the complexities of relationships and movements, so that I can try to make sure that my interventions, whether it's like feedback in the group or for the person, or whether it's deciding to have a boundary and leave or limit some kind of

contact or some kind of participation, is coming from the principled parts of me and not just reactivity are something historical.

Morgan: Hmm. I mean, I think you just, there's so much there. I feel like I almost wanna listen to that on like, um, 0.01 speed to really, 'cause there's so much, um.

It's hard to know when we get in relationships, we get in groups, I, at least I feel sometimes like almost dizzyed by the number of dynamics and by what's coming up for me and knowing, oh wait, what's me and what's them and what's normal and what's not normal, and what's useful tension and not useful tension? And what's an indication that this is not life-affirming for me and that I, you know, it's just not where I'm being called to, to work or to contribute.

And I think one thing is just to acknowledge it's confusing. Like, as you said, like it's really confusing.

Dean: There's no answer that's clear.

Morgan: In dating, in friends, in groups. It's confusing.

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: It's confusing. There are times when it's clear, when you're like, this relationship is worth it to me, and this is a useful discomfort, necessary discomfort. And there's other times when it's like it's confusing, so...

Dean: And most of the time when we're really struggling, at least on some level, what's happening is that I believe that it's life and death. If I'm really upset about this, I've somehow decided that my role in this group, or my relationship with this person is life or death.

So I'm not acting based in current reality, and I need help from friends to discern that. And I think it's also useful if someone's acting like that with you, like a lot of us, because we're so bad at saying no and having boundaries, we do it clumsily. So can I be a little bit forgiving if somebody is giving me a No, that feels barbed or a little harsh? Can we all just have a little bit of like, wiggle room for each other? A little bit of like shock absorption? You can't if you can't. But like, I think it can be about, can I remember that I'm safe and have lots of support. So even though my one friend or my date or whatever just gave me what feels like a harsh boundary, can I be like, okay, maybe there's a reason it was hard for them to say no, and so that's why it was a little bit much? Or I'm not used to hearing it because we are very indirect with one another, and so it seems like a really big deal, but it's just that they said no to something.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: Like, people are allowed to say no.

Morgan: Right. That makes me think of like, is this something that continually feels bad or this is an acutely feels bad thing? Like that could be a useful internal compass of like, actually I'm realizing I don't feel good every time I come to these meetings. I don't like how I feel in this group. That's a lot of great information. Or if it's usually I feel filled up and I'm happy to be here and this, something's happening that's acute. Same with relationships, noticing I generally feel good here or I gen... I think often we normalize feeling bad. And we also normalize activist spaces that feel bad. We're like, I guess this is supposed to feel bad.

Like it's, we're all supposed to be a little on edge and a little tense and a little passive aggressive and a little whatever. And, and there's plenty of other spaces where people are trying to do different things, but we can de-normalize feeling bad and be like, oh, I guess I just feel bad here generally.

Dean: Yeah. And then you get to another question. Is the bad coming from inside, outside, or both? Because I think some of us are externalizers more often in certain relationships where like, I feel bad, what's everyone here doing wrong.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: And then some of us are like, I feel bad, I must be able to completely resolve it with never giving anyone else any feedback, and I'll just have to start feeling different. And if I just read another book about it and go to another, many people who are listening to this podcast may have this tendency...

Morgan: Change me.

Dean: Yeah. I'm, if I change me enough. And it's true that when you change yourself, dynamics do change.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: That is a great place to start in a lot of ways. But if we, again, that's, if we notice that we're erring on one side or the other. It could be that I feel bad every time I enter any activist group because I really am scared about whether or not I belong, and I bring that everywhere I go. And so maybe doing work with that will make me enjoy any space I'm in more, right? Or it could be, this really isn't the group for me, like, everyone flakes every time.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: Or you know, I keep having the same conversation with liberal Zionists I don't wanna have, or whatever the, you know. Or people here actually aren't abolitionists and I actually really need to be with people who share that principle to do this work in the way I care about, or whatever. Figuring out like, is this a space that I'm gonna organize to go towards the politics I care about and I'm gonna stay in? I think a lot of us are in those spaces.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: Especially if you're in an entry point organization. Like both of us are in Jewish Voice for Peace.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: That is an organization that a lot of people are joining all the time. It's the largest anti-Zionist Jewish organization that ever existed.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: So people are gonna join who have all kinds of politics.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: And I personally hope that I turn them all into abolitionist anarchists, but they're not right now. So I'm like, I've chosen to be in a space with some people who have different politics than me because I want to be in the like, juicy experience of being like, can I share this idea with you? What do you think? What if you thought about this way? But I know in that space that I've chosen that, so it doesn't have to be scary or bad. I get to be like, oh, I'm choosing to organize the people this way. And other times I might be in a space where I'm like, to do this project together, I really need us to be on the same page about the cops or whatever it is, you know? So even just like, having that conversation with ourselves, like what criteria matter where? Instead of kind of reactively, I think what happens a lot is people have some hard moments in a group, like I felt left out or someone said something that really didn't sound right to me or offended me. And then I'm just reacting. I'm not really asking, okay, does that person actually represent the group or did one person say that and I wanna go talk to them? Or you know, they don't even come that often. I don't even mean to talk about that. You know, they're not really part of this group. You know, like what's my responsibility for navigating my way through the inevitable bumps and rubs that are a part of every relationship?

And certainly as you were saying, like the complexity of group dynamics. How do I, like with friends often, do some assessment? Is

this the spot for me? Is this really going a direction that's super hard for me? Or is it something I think that if we did good organizing, we could try to push the group in another direction? Who here might wanna listen to it? Can we have one-on-ones? You know, like is this an organizing opportunity or am I being dragged down into a politics I don't believe in, or tactics that I don't feel like doing or something like that?

Morgan: Mm-hmm. There's a lot of deep stuff you just said around like why it would be useful to have an organization that can tolerate and welcome a lot of political difference and a lot of ideological difference, versus a space where you need complete, as if there's ever complete, ideological alignment and uniformity. And sometimes we can get those confused.

Dean: Yes.

Morgan: We can think we need consensus and agreement on every single thing to move at any time. And I think that really fucks us over.

Dean: Yeah, we need dissensus. We actually, nobody knows actually how to fix everything. Like, nobody knows! So it'd be ideal if we were like, let's constantly have robust debates about that. About the really big questions and then also, but let's do this together right now. Because we both agree on this one immediate tactic. Even though, wow, we're having this really wild, amazing debate about some of these big overarching questions, like being able to even discern that. Where does it super matter that we come together in perfect alignment and where can we tolerate lots of tendencies while we do some actions that we both think are meaningful? Like that's, I think really hard for people. There's a lot of perfectionism right now.

Morgan: Totally. I'll often use this metaphor? Analogy? I don't know the difference, but, um, with clients of like, is your boat generally going in the right direction? You know, or is it like, we need to turn the whole boat around? You know, like in terms of how you feel about how things are going. And if you feel like the boats generally going in the right direction of the organization that we're, it's like, oh no, we all need to help steer it and help make sure... versus like, does it need to...

I'm noticing, I'm feeling really anxious. I'm like, totally.

Dean: Is it the topic?

Morgan: Let's see. Was it the topic? Um, maybe, maybe. I feel like it's, it feels like...

Dean: It's really hard.

Morgan: Yeah. It feels like a really hard topic.

Dean: Yeah. I mean, I think there's also a piece of this that again is about our tendencies. Like my biggest fear of this book would be that it would be used this liberal way of like, you should make up with and tolerate everything from everyone.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: It does matter. I mean, you and I have spent our lives in the abolitionist movement, especially before it mainstreamed, being very unpopularly like, no, we will not involve the cops in this thing. Absolutely not. You know, protesting against queer things that had cops involved. You know like really just being like, we're gonna hold a line and we believe in holding a line.

And then also there can be a tendency to just. Make everything the line, and it can be a reason to storm out of every relationship and group, and it really can leave people quite isolated. And also, for some people it, it can be really enhanced on the internet and can be like, my full-time job is to tear down other radicals on the internet about every small difference. And that's not actually organizing us towards collective action.

So like absolutely we need to be very critical and we also need to sometimes try to move people. And not everybody has the same job in that. Like some of us, I think you and I both have personalities where we like bringing in new people and we're pretty willing to tolerate like, learning beside them. And we remember what it was like for us to learn some of those things. I wish everybody would try that, those skills more, because we just need so many more people in our movements with what we're up against. But for people who wanna do less of that, do more work in a small cell. You know what I mean? But just even knowing both kinds of work need to be done, like the deeper underground, more trust required and the like open door, come into our movements, learn alongside us, make a bunch of mistakes as you grow solidarities. Welcome. We love you. We need you.

Morgan: Why is that important right now? That it's not just like, oh, whichever you want. Like, why do we need to build big? And why do we need to have lots of doors for lots of people and build this skill of tolerating the discomfort that is required to have lots of doors?

Dean: Yeah, I mean, because our opponents have all the money and the guns, and the only thing we have that could possibly make us win is that almost everybody is losing out except for a very small number of people. And actually everyone's facing extinction, so everyone's losing out, whether or not some people are pretending they're gonna go to space.

So it's like, people power is the only kind of power that we have slash the only kind of power we've ever had. And things are very, very dire, as you know. And if we can't get so much mutual aid going that we can actually care for ourselves and each other as everything gets taken away that was once even like lightly provided by the government or as different kinds of systems of food systems, energy systems fall apart because of ecological crisis, if we can't care for each other, it's not gonna happen. And so how many mutual aid childcare projects do we need in every city? Thousands. How many food projects? Thousands. We need so many more people involved. And then we need so many people to fight the infrastructure of our opponents, to get people outta prison, to tear down all the walls they're building, to dismantle all their weapons.

Like we just need enormous numbers and we don't have them right now. People are alienated. I think a lot of people also have a tendency of being afraid to join. So this is something to watch out for in ourselves, if every activist group you walk into seems not the right vibe.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: We also have to become people who are like...

Morgan: Is it good enough?

Dean: Yeah. I'm gonna try it anyway. I'm gonna see if anyone here is cooler than I thought they were, or nicer than I thought they were. I'm gonna give people a lot of chances because no one knows what they're doing and everyone's trying. And if I can even find some people who believe that things are urgent, that's better than not having friends like that.

So it's like how can we all be a little more accepting and still hold political lines? It's really hard because what comes up for me is like, I've had these experiences with liberal Zionists who just don't believe there's really a difference between me and them, and they really just wanna like, let's have coffee again, let's go for another walk. And they're not gonna move. And they don't believe that they are actually Zionists often, or like they won't use that word and they don't believe it's genocide. You know, all these things. So they're just like, they'd love to meet and talk, you know? And I'm like, that's actually really important for me not to give all my time to people who are literally gonna waste my time.

But that's hard. That's one of those hard lines where at first I was like, wow, are these people organizable? Can I bring them over and yeah, give people a few chances and then you're like, Nope, there's a lot of other people I gotta talk to who we've got really good business to do together that needs doing, you know?

So for me. I think this is often hard and I tend to over-respond and over-give my time. And I also have friends who need to come on over more towards meaning and connecting with people who are not quite on the same page as them. And like, it's just an experimental thing. It's more about trying and discerning and looking for tendencies and am I emotionally reacting? It's, there's not like, there's no answer to the question, should I break up or should I turn away I think.

Morgan: I keep thinking about parenting in this conversation and like, that there's no parent on earth who's ever had a perfect experience parenting. Like there's always challenges. It's an incredibly challenging experience. And yet there's so much perfectionism, judgment of parents and such a feeling I'm supposed to be the perfect parent. And what, you know, we hear that phrase like the good enough mother like that it's like, and actually we don't need to be perfect for whatever we're mothering, whatever we're parenting, not just, you know, whatever children. That we actually, we're good enough.

And what I notice in organizations is that there will always be growing pains. There will always be hard spots. There will always be something that's difficult. And is it the right kind of difficult? Is it a difficult that feels worth it, that feels necessary? Or is it the wrong kind of difficult that's like I'm banging my head up against a wall?

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: Like you were talking about trying to convert all liberals or something versus organizing or even maybe we talk about alcoholism or something of like, I can't cure this. The fantasy that I could cure something in our relationship. I can't fix, I can't change anybody else.

Dean: No.

Morgan: I can't even, I can't change a liberal Zionist, right? So how do we also have some grace with each other of saying, oh, we're going through a growth spurt. Yeah. Oh, this is, we're in a growing pain. And change is hard and we need to keep changing.

Dean: This comes back to our conversation about feedback. Because even with the alcoholic in your life, you know, I'll just name that we, both...

Morgan: You.

Dean: Me. That we both have this framework from 12 step programs, right? So even if I'm trying to support someone who's dealing with addiction, I can give them feedback. I can be like, wow, that behavior

impacted me these ways. I shouldn't wait and assume that they're going to change. But it is very normal and encouraging and right, to when you're in close with people be like, this gave me... this, this behavior hurt.

Morgan: Of course, yeah.

Dean: Because that's how we all grow. But there's also, how do I not wait for them to grow endlessly? How do I also know, oh, I need to take care of myself. This is putting me in danger or making me stressed out or uncomfortable. Like that line and knowing when that line is.

And one other thing that you said, that when we enter groups, we're gonna, it's gonna be hard. There's gonna be difficulty. Yeah, like all the groups I've worked with for all these years, everyone blames themselves ...

Morgan: Yes.

Dean: They're like, why? We have such hard time making a decision on whether to give these people the money or these people, in some kind of mutual aid fundraising thing. Or we still don't have, we're still not primarily governed by unhoused people or... and it's like, oh my God, you're doing impossible work under impossible conditions.

Of course, it's hard, of course. It's not up to whatever standard you've imagined could be the perfect mutual aid group or the perfect chapter or whatever. Can we go a little easier on each other? Instead of people being like, wow, we're in something hard together, it becomes that blaming one another. And that's, I think that's the difference between is this good difficult or bad difficult?

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: Is usually just like, are we turning against each other and being like, well, Morgan said we should prioritize people on the west side in the last meeting, so Morgan's my enemy. You know, instead of like, wow, it makes sense that Morgan and I... like the position of the west side. I get why someone's saying that. I get why I'm saying we should do it on Thursdays. It's like, I get it. We can't do everything we wanna do. Like we're not against each other. We're trying to solve a problem together that's not satisfiable, and we're still deciding to stay together and move forward.

Morgan: This, if I, if I could wish one thing for all of us, it would be that skill. If I could like blink my eyes and it's like we have this ability to be like, this is hard. This is tricky. We've never done this before. One of my parenting podcasts people, Dr. Becky is always like, this is tricky, huh? That's tricky. It's like that one

skill to be like, this is tricky. We don't know how to both welcome new people and do high stakes actions at the same time. That's really tricky!

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: That's really hard to have wide open doors that's really welcoming, and also do like, highly accountable, risky things that are, you know, like that's a tricky balance. It's a tricky balance when there's crisis everywhere. We've never done this before, you know? And just that one move in a friendship, in a romantic relationship, in an organization, lowers the stakes so much and I think makes us more willing to see where we can change and grow and take risks. That is the one skill, if I was to like visit the Wizard of Oz, that would be what I would ask them.

Dean: My friend Jamie Grant, just wrote the Polyamory for Dummies, like in the For Dummies franchise, and she was talking about it recently and she has a chapter called like When There's a Breach of Trust. I love this! There will be a breach of trust. There will be a time when you thought something was gonna happen and I thought something different was gonna happen, or I didn't do exactly what I said I was gonna do. Like how relaxing is it to be like, oh, in our intimate relationships, there will be a breach of trust.

Morgan: Mm-hmm.

Dean: Instead of, Oh my God, there was a breach of trust! I'm the worst. You're the worst. You know, like, yes. It's hard.

Morgan: Here we are being human in human scenarios over and over and over again.

Dean: And we're particularly ill-prepared to be alive because we live under horrible systems that have lied to us about everything and shaped us to be really afraid of one another. And like, it's amazing that despite all that, we want to resist and love each other and be goofy and friendly and sexy. Like it's a fucking miracle that any of this survives in us. They don't want it to. And so to be a little more like, generous.

The other thing I'll say is a lot of my workshops with groups, it's about getting people to have a conversation in the group about, for example, like group culture or feedback, rather than having it come up as just between each other.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: So like, wow, what's our group culture like? Oh, we're always late. Oh, it's fun when we sing together. Oh, we're known for having

good food. What's it like in here? Oh, it's a little hard for newcomers. Sometimes they feel like they're not part of the scene, whatever. And just talking about it, frankly. Or like, oh, you thought it was unwelcoming? I thought it was welcoming. Interesting. Like what are our different experiences in this room? You came in in September, I came in October. It was really different by then. You know, whatever. How do we just have that as more of a neutral? Like what do we all think it's like, instead of like a blame thing?

Morgan: Right.

Dean: And so how to move. I think almost every group and family and relationship can benefit from like, what's it like? How's it now?

Morgan: Right. How's it now?

Dean: What's some of the hard things that are pushing on us, or...

Morgan: Right.

Dean: What's it like when I'm more stressed at work right now? Or what's it like when you're grieving? You know, whatever, and so that we don't go to blame.

Morgan: And I don't know why, and I don't know if it's useful that I keep bringing parenting in, but it takes time to change. It's called potty training. It's called sleep training. It's not called like now you use the bat, now you use the toilet. Now you go to sleep. It's like it takes time and there's setback.

I mean, I'm not a parent, but I have, I am in awe of parent 'cause they're doing all this invisibleized devalued labor of managing change and helping, you know, like under conditions of abandonment. Whatever, we know this. But what would it be like for us all to be like, oh yeah, we're gonna be practicing this thing and we're not gonna just say it and then arrive at it.

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: That's a kind of, I would say, a kind of, almost a masculinist kind of sense of that I can just say something is wrong and then it fixes, right?

Dean: It's an edict.

Morgan: An edict versus...

Dean: And also to yourself.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: That people feel about their feelings. Don't feel jealous.

Morgan: Don't feel jealous, rather than, yeah.

Dean: Yeah. I think one of the most powerful things I've ever done in terms of my own strong feelings, I'm filled with jealousy and I'm like, of course.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: You're hurting right now.

Morgan: Makes sense.

Dean: You're scared right now.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: Just like you would with a toddler. You just affirm what's happening.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: Because this is what's happening. It's not, it's good, it's bad. It's just, Wow, you're scared right now.

Morgan: Yeah.

Dean: I'm scared. Instead of all the external and internal like barbs, you know, like, you're doing everything wrong, or I'm terrible for being jealous. It's just, oh, ouch. I'm scared right now.

And a lot of times when we bring feelings to others with that tone, then they can be supportive rather than just defensive. So if I'm like, Morgan, I'm scared about your other friendship and I don't think I hear from you as much or something, then you can be more like, Oh Dean, you're scared. You wanna hear that I love you. You know?

Morgan: And then there's that, which we talked about, the Buddhist idea of the second arrow. So like something's hard, and the second arrow is, it's bad that it's hard.

Dean: I'm bad.

Morgan: I'm bad, and we're bad, and you're bad that this is hard. Instead of, oh, this is hard. So let's not add another arrow to it and just say, oh, this is hard. Not, we're bad for feeling this is hard. Of course it's hard. We've never done this before.

Dean: Yes. Could we have compassion for how hard this is? And honestly, I mean, as you know Morgan, I think things are gonna get so much harder.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: And they have gotten so much harder in the last four weeks.

Morgan: Right.

Dean: And they've gotten so much harder in the last two years and et cetera, et cetera. And just like how to be a little more compassionate with ourselves and one another.

And I think that since most of us have pretty harsh internal voices that are like: you're bad, don't think that, don't say that. You made a mistake, it was terrible. Then of course we're gonna likely externalize that message and we're gonna create groups that are perfectionist and where people get thrown away for making a single mistake and where we, we fall apart over conditions that were unavoidable because of the hard the work is.

Morgan: As an artist, I can really relate to... that is where art goes to die, is to immediately expect it to be good. Like that is the biggest recipe to not make art. You have to tolerate the zone of it being bad for a while. You have to tolerate the words not coming together and the sounds not coming together, and the colors, and the idea and the concept doesn't really match the form. And it's, you have to tolerate that zone so that you can arrive through, I don't know, a dialectical, you tell me, process.

Um, but if we expect immediately like Zeus to come out, this fully formed piece of work, we're gonna sabotage ourselves. And I think it's the same for our political work. And as things get harder, we need to be militant about our playful curiosity, compassionate curiosity, about how hard it is and how we wanna keep going and how we need to try things and keep refining them. Like that, that's, that takes discipline. That's a discipline right there.

Dean: What was that prompt you gave us in the class I took with you through the Poetry Project?

Morgan: Bad ideas?

Dean: Yeah.

Morgan: That's the quickest. You say instead of... and actually I learned this first from the Center for Artistic Activism. They said, brainstorm impossible actions. Impossible actions. I translate to make a list of 10 bad ideas for your writing projects.

Dean: So much fun.

Morgan: Or write for five minutes and make it, do bad writing, do a bad poem, or get on the keyboard and make a bad song. And eventually we're short circuiting, we're, whatever the word is, we're tricking the perfectionist part of ourselves into...

Dean: Relaxing,

Morgan: Relaxing, into play, into discovering something we don't know how to do, or remembering something we did know how to do. But it's not created through perfectionism and pressure. It's actually created through this other space.

Dean: Mm-hmm. I love that. Maybe we'll leave it there and encourage everyone to make a list of bad ideas about whatever's stressing you out. It might bring something new to mind.

Morgan: Thanks, Dean.

Dean: Thank you, Morgan.

Thank you as always to Morgan Bassichis for reminding us to denormalize feeling bad.

Thank you for joining me for another episode of Love in a F\*cked Up World. This podcast is based on my new book of the same name out now from Algonquin Press. I hope you'll pick it up from an independent bookstore in your community.

Love in a F\*cked Up World is hosted by me, Dean Spade. It is produced and edited by Hope Dector. This episode was recorded by Matt Harvey and you can watch the full episode on YouTube. Thank you to Ciro, Eugene, Derekh, Kelsey, Lindsay, Jessica, Raindrop, Nicole, and everybody else who helped make this episode possible.

Our theme music is I've Been Wondering by The Ballet.

If you found the show useful or you have ideas you want us to hear about, we'd love to hear from you. Please check out our new Patreon. We have some questions there for people, like who do you think should be our future guests and do you like various design options that Ciro is playing with for the animation?

Please come join the conversation. I hope to see you there and I hope you'll submit questions for the upcoming Ask Me Anything episode with Jessica Lanyadoo.

We need each other now more than ever, and I hope this podcast offers

tools and ideas that can be useful for helping us build strong relationships so we can stick together.

I hope you'll keep listening, subscribe, and share this episode with people in your life.

We really got into it that time.

Morgan: Yeah, we do.