



THE CRUMBLING & THE CALLING

Episode Transcript

Hey, it's Rebecca. Welcome to Returning. A podcast to return to yourself and the wisdom within. I'm so glad you're here with me. Thanks for returning.

Today, I'm returning with Maude Hirst. Maude is perhaps best known as an actress in the popular historical drama series Vikings. But beyond acting, Maude has developed a passion for mindfulness, meditation and yoga, and she shares her teachings online through her membership community. Like so many of us, Maude's life was transformed by hitting rock bottom when many key parts of her life came crumbling down all at once. In our conversation today, we are exploring the power of surrendering and allowing things to truly crumble when they are, when they are crumbling, how reaching rock bottom can truly activate our purpose, the importance of creating space to listen deeply and be seen and how nature can help us to attune to the multiple rhythms that life holds us in. At the end of this episode, you'll find a guided Soul Inquiry, as always, to explore what the wisdom within you is wanting to share with you today.

I know how precious your time is, so let's jump right into opening Sacred Space together now. In the center of your heart, imagine a beautiful flower. With your next breath invited to open petal by petal, revealing a light in the middle. This light is your ancient, wise, intuitive self. Inviting it to step forward now and together acknowledging the keepers and custodians of the land where I am, where you are, known and unknown. Beautiful. Let's begin.

Rebecca: Well, Maude, it's so, so great having you here. And as always, before I connect with a guest, I'm, like, what is up for you right now? And I was just, like, yes, when I heard, when you responded, you responded saying something that is really prevalent and which I so resonate with, is, like, slowing down to your own pace versus the collective pace. Tell me more about that.

Maude: I just have felt in the last few months that the collective societal pace is so fast. And, you know, we see it with anxiety and with everybody that I'm working with and all my friends and family. But I felt myself really going into that pace. And I kept feeling like I need to do more and to rush

around. And I was finding it more and more difficult to sit into stillness. So I think it's just this, like, a real reminder to come back to a place to check in with ourselves. And I find it getting out in nature every day is, like, a must now, because it's, that's the kind of time where I actually rediscover what that natural pace is for myself. Because I don't feel that we can kind of create or be at our most authentic self if we're in that heightened vibrational energy, I think we really do have to ground and find ourselves amongst the kind of chaos of it all. So for me, it's just become my absolute kind of focus of my self practices, like, what is my own pace? And of course that's going to change and evolve. But right now, what does that pace feel like? And 90% of the time, that's a lot slower than where I'm sitting naturally. Like,.

Rebecca: Oh, gosh, it's so true, isn't it? Yeah, I've definitely had that invitation myself. I mean, I think I generally do. Like it's generally a thing. But particularly the past six months, oh my God. Like, yeah, I've been really getting, like, slow down to the pace of the earth, slow down to the pace of the body, you know. And I reflect back on like periods, particularly, say, like with my creativity or maybe not even the essence of the creativity. But when you go into the producing versus the creativity, which, you know, like in our modern world, it is part of it, you know, like the production is part of the creativity. But it's so easy to just spend all your time or increasingly so in producing rather than creating. And yeah, for me, like, creativity comes when you're in the moment, and that's why I love, you mentioned nature before, because I've been teaching about nature and intuition for quite a while and it being a big part of my creative process. And so it's, like, what is it? Is it the inspiration and the beauty? But recently I've been wondering, maybe it's actually just because nature has no past or future. It just like properly is in the moment. And so is it just that we are aligning into the moment So we literally do slow down when we observe nature. Like properly are in it. What do you reckon?

Maude: I think a couple of things. I think there's a natural pace that nature has that when we're in it without trying. Because if we're sitting in our house and we try and connect to that pace, we have to do something in order to get there. Whereas when you're in you immerse yourself in nature, you're part of the rhythm just naturally. And I feel like something happens when you go. And I also think it's about, like, every day we're confronted by walls and that's very much, like, it takes you back inward into, like, your own four walls and nature, for me anyway, just like, allows a space to, like, get above myself. It's like, get out of the experience of the mind, get out of the walls. And it just kind of opens me up a bit more to that, like, infinite feeling where it's something bigger. And bigger than, and bigger than what I am right now this, you know, it's there. And that kind of somehow just calms my nervous system.

Rebecca: And you're someone who, like, I consider as an artist, as a creative, a creator, and you have many different ways that you express that and, you know, in different stages of your life as well. Like, have you always been connected in with an inner call that was, like, this is what I want to do? And then it's just kind of, like, you've just been led in different forms of expression, or was it

more, like, you just fell into a path? And then it was, like, no this is the one for me. Tell me a bit about that.

Maude: It's been a very interesting unraveling of this over the last few years, actually, as it always is, as you start doing more self work. But I thought I was always, that, like, acting with something that, because that was kind of my into kind of creativity, I started training as an actress and auditioning when I was ten years old, so I was super young. And I really thought that it was something that was kind of intuitively there. But I actually, as I've kind of done a lot of healing work on myself, realized that it was my expression of need. I needed to desperately be loved. My parents divorced when I was younger, and it was about, like, validation. And so I kind of fell into the creative. I definitely was naturally creative. I was always doing, kind of like, gymnastics and being physically creative before that, intuitively. But I think the kind of path when I was younger into creativity was about an external validation that I needed. And, like, that seeking of, like, can the world love me, please? And then as I've got older and I've started to, well, really through meditation and a lot of different kind of healing modalities, I started to listen to kind of what is my creative outlet really like? What is that purpose filled intuitive thing that we always want to come through? And as soon as I started meditating, I kept getting a voice of being like, this is where you were always supposed to be. This was the thing. If you had, like, not been consumed in the external world, if you had never been, like, you know, hurt or traumatized along the way, like, this was your calling was always going to find you into meditation and to guiding this practice. And so there's always been a creative spark in me that I've kind of known, but how it's come out has been of a path of many directions. But I certainly feel this is my authentic, intuitive version of creativity at the moment through kind of guiding meditations and, yeah, in these kind of practices.

Rebecca: Amazing. And, like, do you feel like there's multiple ways that we can all express ourselves or do you feel like for you it's, like, obviously it will change over time. Like we're only however old we are. Who possibly knows where it's going to end? And I'm sure there's things that aren't even invented yet that will be part of and all of that but, like, do you get a sense that, like, there's so many different ways that you can express yourself, or do you see it more as, like, a clear path?

Maude: I think there's many different ways we can express ourselves at different times in our lives. And I think that that changes, I guess with that whole thing of intuition of like what feels right for you now, which is something that I'm really trying to follow for myself, is like, what is it in this moment of my life? How does this express itself without giving it the limitations that like this is my creative expression. So therefore this is, I have to stick in this. And when I kind of transitioned from acting into the kind of wellness, mindfulness space, I just was, like, let's just drop all definitions of ourselves. And, like, this whole thing that once we say that we, you know, that we're creative as a singer or that we're creative as a performer or in meditation or in art, once we've said it, we limit ourselves so much. And so we kind of put this boundary around ourselves that then makes us a bit

fearful to express ourselves in all these different ways. So to answer the question in a kind of roundabout way, but I do think there's many different ways that we can express ourselves, but I think in different time zones of our life, there's one major creative outlet that I feels most intuitive, I think, for each of us.

Rebecca: Yeah, I so hear you. Yeah, when I reflect back I'm, like, I feel like there's parts of the journey or even like energies that you're connecting with or that's the case for me. I'd call it, like, creative muse, and if you're working spiritually, it could be that, you know? Where it's, like, oh they were ready to breathe through me. But maybe, yeah, I remember when I was writing my first book feeling, like, oh my gosh, I've got to get the name, the title right. It has to be the perfect title. Whereas really, I was like, there were so many different ways to express that, you know. There's no right or wrong way. But yeah, when the energy is there, it's, like, so there. And yeah, it's interesting, like, hearing you talk about all the work that you've done as a child and, like, really unpacking, like, you know, being called to acting. And I've spoken to a couple of my friends who are actors who've kind of come into this, what would you call it, like, this calling. And I think it's interesting the, like, what was the dynamic with you of, like, when you are an actor, you're kind of playing a part, which I think we all are in our life before we know who we are as well. Like, what was that like?

Maude: I just, I mean, I hid behind, I found it so comforting in a way to know that it was always when people, when I was kind of in front of any kind of public space, everyone was asking me about the character. Everyone was asking about, like the... So it was always a kind of hidden safety net, which, as you said, you know, we're all acting. Of course we are at all stages and we all have different characters that we play in different environments. But there was definitely a sense when I started coming out into the world and teaching from a kind of authentic place and just standing up as me, I was like, this is terrifying. And so for the first time, like, although I was in front of less cameras and I was, like, kind of doing it in a much more, kind of, healing, kind environment a lot of the time. I found it much more terrifying to be myself and unraveling what it was to just stand in front of a group of people and speak as Maude. And because you have to know yourself, I guess to do that, and I didn't for years of my life. I didn't do any kind of digging or self work. I just was, like, I'm here to entertain. And so I can very much be outward focusing, not inward focusing. And I didn't like to ever really, like, put the focus on me as myself before I thankfully found meditation and did a little bit of deep digging. Finally I get the confidence.

Rebecca: And do you feel like you, like, being called to acting and, like, playing those roles and getting the, I guess, like, the admiration and all of that, like, did it fill anything within you? Or was it just always not quite hitting the spot?

Maude: It did it at the time. I think where I was at the time, there was a part of me that did love... I love, I've always loved collaboration and I've always loved, kind of, being in creative environments. My mom's an artist and there was always artists around me. And so the kind of that side of it I

really loved and it did fill this thing of, you know, when you are in the middle of a scene and you're looking at another actor and you kind of forget that everything is around you and there's only, like, there's a moment of magic that happens, which is really, like, a deep connection with somebody in quite a vulnerable state. That was really beautiful. And that would fill a really big part of me. But I found the life around it, not filling the parts that I thought it would. And that, the part of me that was craving validation was constantly seeking more validation because it never quite kind of stuck. And I've spoken about this before, but I found, like, at parties, it was very interesting that I would go to a party and Helga was from Vikings was the most kind of, I guess, successful character that I created. And I didn't necessarily look like my on screen version of that. So I'd go to parties and I'd be chatting and connecting to people, and then it would come into conversations, like, what do you do? And I'd say acting. And then I could sense there was a sense of, like, oh people were suddenly more interested. And then like, oh have you done anything that I would know? And I was like, oh I'm in this show. Then they would get more, like, more excitable, and then I'd say who I was in it. And it was almost, like, suddenly they were really interested in me. And I was, like, this is interesting because I'm not feeling connected to you because I know that you, like, I get it. We all get quite excited around success, but I really felt this sense of disconnect where I was, like, 5 minutes ago when it was just me talking to you about other things, there wasn't so much interest here. And so actually, was it me or was it the kind of acting stuff that is interesting? And I used to kind of battle with that quite a lot.

Rebecca: I so get you. And do you find that to a lesser extent, like, now with, like, you know, as you're stepping in to kind of, like, playing a more authentic role? But, like I know, I do sometimes I'm like, wait, is this who you think I am versus who I actually am? And yeah.

Maude: It feels really different now to me. But, you know, the thing that I've realized is that it was never about anybody else. It was at that those moment I didn't know myself. So I was looking for this kind of like what I was kind of looking through the eyes of somebody who was insecure, looking for that external validation. And now I'm not saying I never get insecure, of course I do, but I feel more comfortable in myself so that however people are responding to me doesn't feel as kind of heartbreaking or like as jarring to that version of myself because I, whether they're interested in what I do or not, it doesn't affect me in the same way. I'm just fascinated in connecting to people in as many ways as I can. So it's, kind of, I realize that although it does feel different now than it ever has and sometimes people completely disconnect and are not interested as soon as I say meditation. They're, like, no, not for me. But it doesn't, it's not the same feeling anymore because I feel really passionate about it. And I spoke in an interview recently. Somebody said to me, Don't you feel, like, wasn't it a risk to go from a world that was quite glamorous into something that was less glamorous? And I was, like, if only you knew the internal version of that, which was the glamorous world was so, like, internally unglamorous. And then now the unglamorous world is so internally, like, full of sparkle because I feel good. I was, like, it's such an interesting, you know, what it looks like from the outside versus what it looks like from the inside is so different.

Rebecca: Oh it's so true. And did you have, like, a moment of awakening or was there, like, one thing that happened that kind of, like, began the crumbling and the taking off of the masks and the, you know, stepping into the calling? Or was it several things along the way?

And we'll return with Maude's answer right after this short break.

Rebecca: Was there, like, one thing that happened that kind of like, began, the crumbling and the taking of the masks and the, you know, stepping in to the calling? Or was it several things along the way?

Maude: It was, no, it was definitely I was approaching my thirties, came out the show, had a horrendous break up, had to, like, sell my house very quickly. It was kind of literally a firework display of all the things at once, which I think happens. I mean, most of us, I think, you know, have a moment, which is, like, the crumbling exactly as you describe it. Which is always, I always pick that card of yours, by the way, when I'm going through something, it's like here we go again.

Rebecca: Yay. It's so annoying when it comes up isn't it? For anyone who isn't familiar with my cards, it's based on the tower card in the tarot, if you're familiar with that. But yeah, it's basically like, no, everything is on fire. No matter what you do, the tower is crumbling.

Maude: Yeah, and get ready. So that was it. I just was in this moment where it was, like, everything I thought I wanted, that I had just fell apart. And it was, like, one thing after the other. And I was suddenly, like, in the black hole. And I was just like, what do I do here? Do I crumble? Or is there a rebuilding that I can start to look at? And a friend of mine did the kind of very cliché break up, let's go to a yoga meditation retreat. And I hadn't really done any of that. And that was the start of me discovering this work, but also discovering myself, I think.

Rebecca: Oh, how amazing. Yeah, it is very, so that would have been around your Saturn Returns as well then yeah?

Maude: Yeah.

Rebecca: Yeah. It's kind of right on cue. It's amazing how that happens. And yeah, I think that, when I, like, when I reflect myself and gosh I've seen so many friends go through it. It's, like, it's actually almost easier when it all falls apart because, like, you literally, you can't hold it together anymore. So it's, like, the surrendering is just, it's just going to happen. Because, like, you know, if it's just one area, you can kind of cling to the other one.

Maude: Yes, totally that. And it's funny that it does normally, no it doesn't always happen like that, but it often does, doesn't it? Like suddenly it all, it all starts to crumble around you. But, and then you look back at the moment, in the moment it feels horrific. And I now just look back at that time and feel so grateful because it was the turning point, really, of a pretty destructive few years into something that has really changed my life, actually.

Rebecca: That's so brilliant. And, like, if there was someone going through that at the moment or even just if you were to talk to yourself, like, what would you say?

Maude: Like, allow yourself to, like, don't be terrified of the black hole. I actually got this advice from my therapist again recently. Just it's, like, we as exactly as you were describing, like, in areas that suddenly feel a bit like they're out of our control, we tend to cling to safety. And actually the kindest thing you can do to yourself is just to let it fall away and to sit in a black hole because it's scary for a moment. But the quicker you do that, the quicker you start to rebuild and to find healthier things, to kind of attach yourself to or to start kind of coming out of it. So yeah, I think my advice, if I could look back, is to be, like, don't be afraid of the black hole. Let yourself go in, because there's a, that's probably the quickest way to come through it.

Rebecca: Whoa. It's so true. It's so true. And I mean, easier said than done, but also, like, if we just look at everything in nature, it's what it's doing all the time. Like the rebirth can't literally happen until the winter or, you know, the rose releases its petals to, like, maybe one day bloom again. Yeah, and I think kind of circling back to, like, where we began our conversation around, like, the pace of life at the moment. And I'm particularly referring to, like, I guess, like, social media. Not just social media, but in particular, like, the short form content where it's just, like, on, on, on. Like, going from, like, 60 seconds to 30 seconds to 10 seconds to 5 seconds and swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe. It's so easy to distract ourselves from what life is, like, presenting us with and numb it out. And then it's, I think it just gets so confusing, like, the more that we absorb. Whereas yeah, when we're going through a difficult time, if we can, like, find a way to... Whether it's go on a retreat, that'd be amazing. Or even if it's just, like, yeah, having that quiet time in nature. You know, I've started doing this myself lately. I started my business in, when was it? It must have been 2012 I did. And it was, like, you know, it was just me. And then I started having different people working with me, helping me, like, as I went on. And then that grew and grew and grew. And, you know, I think that part of it can, you know, turn into something else. And I'm constantly trying to go, no how can I come back while also honoring that we're mystics in a modern time. Like, it's this constant thing, like, being the mystic versus the machine. Mindfulness versus sharing mindfulness you know,? This real dance, which I think, you know, you and I, both of us, we've been called to, kind of, ride that surfboard of finding that balance. And yeah, just recently I've just had, like, a big, a little bit of a rug pull underneath me, like, just in the past 24 hours actually. And actually when I tuned into it, and I always go back to journaling when I do. Like as in go back to the channel or go back to your soul or whatever it is that is guiding you, the answer is always there. And so often we

think we need to, like, ask everyone's advice or consult with people or work out what the plan is, but ultimately we can reconnect to it at any moment. We just need the space. And when we give ourselves that space, oh my gosh, it comes in an instant in most cases, and sometimes it might be, wait it's not yet time, which is really annoying. But yeah, I think it is a really unique dance. And so how do you, what are some ways that you navigate that? Like, the, your own personal speed versus the collective speed.

Maude: By the way, what you were just saying was resonating so much. It's that whole thing that, yeah, your intuition is always whispering. It's like, are you listening? Can you hear it? And most of the time in busyness, you can't. Because, like, somebody said to me the other day, how do you know the difference between intuition and, like, and thinking and thought? I was, like, because it's exactly as you said, it just comes to you. Like intuition when you connect to it, it's always one answer, it's always clear. You don't always want to hear it, but it is always there. And so for me, it's always nature and meditation are just the things that... And meditation for me can come in many different forms. Sometimes it's breathwork, sometimes it's using, kind of, music to get me into a place, sometimes that can be a movement meditation. But stopping coming off social media for a minute and having physical, mental, emotional space for a moment to actually listen to myself again, because that... It's when I'm not listening, that the world gets chaotic and things feel... I even get that, like, slight anxious feeling. And it's always because I've just gone back. I've switched into this external place that doesn't belong to me. And so when I slow down...

Rebecca: Yes, the way you described that made me, like, really see it, like, as if it is this frequency and that you're vibrating on. Or even, like, a current that you're, like, we're all going down the river of life, right? And yeah, as we go down that current we can so easily hook into some other current that, you know, it's not like it's going to take us somewhere completely different. But our own current might be way faster it just might go a different way. Ultimately, I think we end up roughly the same place, but, you know, it's a lot harder to go in someone else's current rather than just, like, properly trust your own.

Maude: Totally. My, I work with an amazing somatic therapist, so it's, like, therapy, but also, like, body work as well. And she always talks about that, like, there's these two versions of our life that are always, kind of, in flow with each other. And one of them is that feeling of, like, you're having to push against life. And it's this, like, that frequency that's faster and it's the doing and, you know, and it's even, I can notice when I'm in it because I even start, like, rushing around, even if I don't have anywhere to be. I, like, run to the train station and things. Verses flow state, which is, you know, as we all tap into that at times. It's just, like, your life feels easy. It's like you're leaning back and being supported. And for me, it's those two things, it's, like, which version? And you can kind of dip in and out at all times. And the aim is to just try and stay as flat as you can into this, like, leaning back into life. And but, yeah, it's that... I'm the same, it's, like, two frequencies and one of

them doesn't feel like it belongs here, belongs to me. And I always know that I've popped back into the undesirable frequency.

Rebecca: Yeah, right. And I wonder how much that frequency is, like, the frequency of the mind as well. Like, because it's probably the logical one that is just what everyone else is doing, you know? So interesting. Yeah. Somatic work has been, like, it's, I feel it's the only thing that's probably healed my nervous system. And yeah, I have a great practitioner as well and I wonder if it's the same thing they're talking about. One thing she said to me is, like, when I'm, when you're laying down on the ground. You know when you can tell if you're kind of still holding yourself up versus, like, the earth rising to meet you. My gosh it's such a subtle shift. But it's huge, isn't it?

Maude: Yeah, it is. This is the thing with all of this stuff. And, you know, you can go through life completely blind to all of it because it's so subtle. And you can choose to, you can choose to ignore it, and we can all choose to ignore it. But when you tap into it, that tiny shift can feel the difference between anxiety and deep relaxation. It can feel the difference in being completely logical to being completely intuitive so, like, the internal shift is, like, a complete game changer. But it's, yeah...

Rebecca: So true. So, okay, I've got a question for you that I ask everyone. It is what were you like as a little girl that would help us understand you more today?

Maude: I was a complete people pleaser. I wanted to make everyone feel good. I didn't like anyone being unsettled and everyone thought I was going to be a nurse when I grew up because I always used to carry around a little, like, first aid kit. I'd, like, run around with plasters. And I think I was quite, I think I was quite shy. But my main sense of myself at that age was just, like, really wanting everyone to be okay. And very, looking back now, but in retrospect, I just, you know, I didn't really even connect to myself of what I needed ever. But I was very much a, kind of, deep empath that felt everything everyone felt and wanted to make life okay for everyone.

Rebecca: Wow. Oh I can see that in you. And how, yeah, you kind of give it to yourself now in order to give to everyone else as well.

Maude: Yeah, finally.

Rebecca: Beautiful. Yay. Woohoo. And then, yeah, then my final question, which again I ask everyone, what returns you to the wisdom within?

Maude: Meditation and, yeah, self inquiry. Journaling for me is really helpful as well. But for... Really meditation and nature walks. And yeah, when I can start listening to that inner voice.

Rebecca: Amazing. Thank you so much, Maude. Can you share what's coming up for you? What you're working on? What's lighting you up right now?

Maude: So I have some Oracle Cards coming out in 2024, which I'm really excited about.

Rebecca: Amazing.

Maude: That I've been collaborating... I'm very, very excited for them to come out. All around, kind of, transformation and what we've been discussing today. And then I have my membership, which is always continually going on, which I love. And it's a virtual membership and, kind of, we meditate, we check in. It's just the most beautiful community from all over the world and 1 to 1 mentorships and just helping people trying to find their intuitive voice and really know what that sounds like, using the really powerful tools of meditation and breathwork.

Rebecca: Amazing. Thank you so much, Maude. We will include all details on that in the show notes so everyone can dive more into your world if they don't already know all about it.

Maude: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Rebecca: Soul Inquiry is a practice where we enter into a direct dialog with our inner wise, intuitive self. Today's Soul Inquiry prompt is - what in your life is calling for a change in pace? What in your life is calling for a change in pace? What in your life is calling for a change in pace? And what is one baby step you can take in that direction today? Let's share a deep breath together as we close this Sacred Space we've stepped into. I'm so grateful for you being here. If you'd like to keep returning to yourself and returning here with me, then please hit subscribe. If you love this episode, leaving a five-star review really helps others to find it too. So thank you for doing that. And as always, you can find the show notes from today's episode over at rebeccacampbell.me/podcast. Thanks for returning.