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What do you do when the try goes wrong? Not a little wrong, not a cute, funny, someday we'll laugh about this go wrong. I mean the kind of wrong that drops into your stomach like a stone. The kind of wrong that makes your brain start sprinting through every what if scenario before your feet have even stopped moving. Do you curl up? Do you get mad? Do you blame yourself? The map?

The universe? Professor Angus Fletcher says our reaction depends on one surprisingly simple thing, how many plans we believe we have. And in this episode of The Life of Try, I want to take you straight into a moment when one of my tries went very, very wrong. If you heard the episode about motive and means equaling opportunity, you know the short version.

My kids and I rented our house on Airbnb so we could visit our friends in Europe. But the fuller version was bigger. Friends in the Netherlands, friends in France, friends in Europe. And because our house was rented, we had to be gone longer, so we went to Hawaii first. By day sixteen out of nineteen, we were travel tired, suitcase heavy, and headed from our friends in France to the southwest of England.

It was supposed to be a five train day. Two Paris Metro trains, the Eurostar from Paris to London, the London Underground to Paddington Station, and then a British train from Paddington Station to Totnes. Five trains. Three people, all our luggage, and yes, mind the gap, it becomes a very real thing.

When hauling your suitcase in and out of train cars. The problem started on the second train. I checked my phone to confirm where to get off for Gare du Nord. The map told me something different than what our hosts had told me. But the app had been right all over Paris so far, so I trusted it. And suddenly my kids and I were standing on a random street in a Paris neighborhood, nowhere near the train station.

The app kept on insisting we were just three hundred and twenty feet away. In reality, we were two miles away. We had one hour to make our train to London. One hour, two kids, three suitcases, no clear direction, and a tiny blue dot on a phone that seemed to be lying to me with great confidence.

After several blocks of dragging luggage towards a destination that never appeared, I had to say the thing I did not want to say. We were lost in Paris. So I booked an Uber, and when we got in, the route showed thirty six minutes to go two point one miles. That was the moment I knew we were gonna miss the train to London. And if we missed the train to London, we were probably going to miss the train to Totnes.

And if we miss that train, then what? The what if rabbit hole opened beneath me? What if I had to buy the EuroStar tickets again? What if I had to buy the British train tickets again? Could I afford it? It wasn't one ticket, it was three. And that pit in my stomach, it felt like a

black hole, swallowing every ounce of energy I had left. When we finally reached Gare du Nord,

There was no obvious place to fix the problem. No big sign that said, Tired mother with two kids and too much luggage, come here. I wandered, I asked, I redirected, I tried again. At one point I told my kids to stand still while I went to find help. When I came back we had to shimmy through between two columns just to get all of us into the right place. And then Grace.

We did not have to buy our Eurostar tickets again. We did not even have to pay a penalty, but we did have to wait four more hours for the next train to London, and I still had no idea what would happen with the tickets after that.

Here's where I need to say something that may sound ridiculous, but it's absolutely true. There is a Five Guys Burger in Gare du Nord, Paris, and I think it saved my life, or at least my sanity. My kids and I squeezed ourselves and our luggage into a tiny booth in the back corner. We ate French fries because we were in France after all, and drank milkshakes. It was expensive, it was not glamorous, and it did not solve the train problem.

But it gave me a place to breathe, a place to laugh, a place to remember that I was not only a problem solving machine. I was a person, a mom, a traveler, a human being who needed food safety and a minute to regroup. When we finally got to London, my six year old said his head was pounding. So we stopped again. We found a table in the beautiful Saint Pancras station. I brought fruit. My anxiety wanted to sprint ahead to the next train, the next ticket,

Next disaster, but my son needed to feel better first.

Then the London Underground turnstiles jammed up with people. So we changed the plan again. We caught a taxi with a charming London driver. Then the route got delayed because a flyover was closed. Then we finally got to Paddington station. Then we had to find customer service. This time we did have to buy new tickets, Fortunately with a discount, thanks to a sympathetic agent.

Then we had to run for the train. And we made it. three hours later we arrived in Totnes. We missed the school play. One of our friends' kids was in. What was supposed to be a seven hour travel day had become more than twelve hours. It was scary, maddening, frustrating, expensive, sad, exhausting.

I considered flying home directly from Paris. I considered going to England, but not all the way to Devon. I considered sitting on the curb and crying. I considered throwing all of our luggage in the trash. But here's what saved me. One. Sequential gating. I could only solve one problem at a time. Not all the trains, not all the tickets, not all the consequences. Just the next thing. Get to the station. Find the counter.

Feed the kids, get to London, help the child with the headache, find the next ticket office, run for the next train. When I tried to solve the whole day at once, I drowned. When I focused on the next step, I could breathe. Two, regrouping. That booth at the Five Guys did not change our itinerary. It changed me. It helped my nervous system come back online. It helped me remember

That calm is not a luxury. Sometimes calm is the strategy. 3. Gratitude. We had 15 days of great travel luck before that day. Early check-ins, standby flights that worked, free boat tickets, fresh baguettes from our friends for the journey. When I remembered what had gone right, it gave me strength for fixing what had gone wrong. That matters.

Because gratitude does not erase the difficulty. It expands the room inside us, so the difficulty is not the only thing there. Professor Angus Fletcher, the American professor of story science at Ohio State University, has studied what helps people adapt under pressure. His point is not that successful missions go perfectly. They do not. The point is that resilient people

People practice creating alternative plans. Think about every James Bond movie you've ever seen. The plan fails, the guard appears, the car crashes, the mountain shows up, suddenly there are skis involved, and somehow the hero is still moving towards the objective. That is the lesson.

When we have no plans, we can feel helpless. When we have only one plan, we can get angry because anger tries to force reality to cooperate. But when we believe we can create many plans, when we trust ourselves to improvise, we become more flexible, more creative, more alive inside the uncertainty. So when your try goes wrong, and it will, because that's part of trying.

Do not ask yourself to solve the whole future at once. Ask, what is the next step? Ask what would help me regroup. Ask, what is still true, still good, still supporting me? Then take the next step. Not because you know the whole way, because trying has never required certainty. It only asks for movement. One step, one breath, one new plan.

That is how we keep going, that is how we stay brave. That is the life of try.