

Episode 2.11 Emotional Burritos

March 30, 2018

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. And we're back. And boy howdy, did I struggle to come up with a topic for this week's minisode. Seriously, I'm in a late-March funk. You know how I know? Because I just tweeted that it was April, pals. It is definitely not April yet, but it's going to be April soon, and spring is coming and the cherry blossoms are coming out here in Vancouver, and so it's time for me to tell you what my secret feminist agenda is this week. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Let's talk about burritos. I spent a lot of this week thinking about de Certeau's differentiation between tactics and strategies, about what it means to practice nuanced forms of feminism that are responsive to particular contexts. But in the background of all of that thinking has been a lot of pain and a lot of struggle in my personal communities. A lot of the people who are really dear to me are really struggling right now.

One of my best friend's moms is dying. Another of my best friends is struggling really seriously with chronic illness, another is struggling really significantly with their mental health. A lot of people I love very dearly are deeply burnt out, deeply sad, deeply injured. And a lot of my life this past week, but also these past months has been about providing all of the support and care that I'm capable of and figuring out ways, particularly for my many dear friends who are geographically very far from me, ways to to express my love and care. And sometimes just ways to answer people's texts when they reach out and say, you know, "I'm really struggling right now." And the thing, a thing that I've ended up recommending to a lot of people is the fine art of burrito-ing, which in this case is metaphorical. By which I mean, when the world is very overwhelming and much too hard and it is hurting you, is okay to roll yourself inside of a duvet like a human burrito and just hide for awhile.

I'm reminded right now of a web comic that I will link to called "How to Care for a Sad Person," where essentially, what you do is lay out a blanket place the sad person in the blanket, roll them up like sushi, place them in a comfy place, put on some favorite movies, feed them snacks, make sure they're well hydrated. It's is, it's all of these is all of these forms of care that I so desperately wish that I could offer to my community when they're struggling, but my community is really geographically dispersed. Most of the people who I love are not physically near enough that when life is treating them harshly, I can go and actually roll them in a burrito or a little blanket sushi roll. So in part just the ability to say, "this is what I would do for you if I were there. So could you please do me a favor and do it for yourself." Is, is one really important way of telling my friends that I love them and want them to take care of themselves. And sometimes when people are really struggling with self care, saying, "I know you don't want to do this thing for yourself, so please do it for me instead" can be a way of of, I don't know, can be helpful. I think. Maybe. It is for me, I hope it is for other

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

people. And part of why I like the metaphor of the burrito here is that burritos also remind me of this really precious time in my life when I was living in Edmonton and working at the University of Alberta, and a lot of my closest friends and community also worked there. And every day we would get together and eat lunch together, and with semi-regularity we would get burritos, which our very own Kaarina Mikelson at some point, as a feminist gesture renamed "burritas," which I really love.

And even though Kaarina and I have both left Edmonton, we're both still on the lunch planning thread, which is really precious way to stay in touch with that community. But for me, burritos have become this kind of metaphor for what it means to hold people close and to tell people that they matter to me and to really hold my community with care. I've been trying to think more about other things that I can do to try to bridge those distances and I'm reminded of a, a conversation that I had on another walk in the woods with my pal Sophie, of wading through a flooded bog up to our thighs fame, in which we were talking about the desire to care for our friends and what it means for us to reach out to people and to, to let them know that we're thinking of them, ideally in ways don't necessarily sort of add to their burden, you know.

Ways that, that can reach out and offer support to people who are struggling without somehow making your support more work for them. Oh, we got into a conversation about emotional earthquake kits. Some context there for those of you who don't live somewhere with a higher earthquake risk. In Vancouver, we're all supposed to have earthquake kits in our homes. And earthquake kits are, you know, a stocked kit of everything that you would need to survive in an emergency, You know, both if you needed to sort of grab it and evacuate, but also you know, if all the power and water went out and you just needed to survive in your home for a few days. And so you stock them with nonperishable food and with water and with batteries and flashlights and candles and all of this, you know, kind of sensible stuff. But we got to talking about what it would look like to send friends who are struggling emotional earthquake kits.

So as sort of "In Case of Emotional Emergency" here are the things that you need to feel safe and to survive for a couple of days. And just the practice of, of talking about these and of thinking of what I would put in these kits made me so happy because they felt kinda like a, like a long distance burrito. You know, like a, like a way of reaching out and wrapping somebody up in your love and reminding them that there are people who care about them. I have not actually followed through on making any of these earthquake kits yet because it is the end of the semester and I am slightly in survival mode myself, but I'm definitely going to and I'm really excited at the prospect. And as I think about other ways to support my friends who are struggling from afar, I'd really love to hear from you. Tell me what you do for your friends. Tell me how you reach out to people and make people feel really held and cared for when they're really struggling. Or maybe tell me what does that for you, what your friends do for you that make you feel cared for? I think figuring out how to articulate our needs is a, is a really useful skill in our friendships as well. Or tell me what would be in your

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

emotional earthquake kit. Mine would for sure have like a box of wine in it. That would just be really important. And if you are also struggling right now, then may I recommend that you go and find a duvet and a roll yourself up in it like a burrito for awhile. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] All right. Speaking of burritos, let's go hang out with Kaarina. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Kaarina:

Hello and welcome to Kaarina's Cozy Self Care Corner. So today I'm going to share a nice experience, and you can take from that what you will, lessons may be folded in there. I dunno. So at roller derby practice, as I start all my stories, at roller derby practice I was crying because things were too much and there were too many things going on in my body and my head and all around me and I just needed to cry for like a good 20 to 40 minutes. And my lovely teammate was sitting with me and talking me through it. And they asked me the usual things if I needed water, what I needed, if I was hungry, what had happened. But they also asked me if it was alright if they put their hand on my shoulder. And I just want to say that being asked that and being given that tiny bit of agency in a moment when I was so overwhelmed was just what I needed. And it was so lovely and it was so gentle. And after thinking about it I said yes. And they put their hand on my shoulder and it was reassuring. And I felt more in control because by asking my consent for a small thing, they had given me agency in a situation when I felt like there was nothing in my control. So shout out to my beautiful friend Rooks for their kindness and care. And shout out to the whole concept and practice of consent, which applies to so many situations including nonsexual and nonromantic ones, and which adds so much to our interactions. And in that moment, consent was really small, like it was a really small gesture and it was a really small thing that they were asking of me, but felt really significant and it meant a lot. That's a small way we can take care of each other. Have a great weekend. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Hannah (Host):

Per usual, you can find show notes and the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor. You can follow Kaarina @Kaarinasaurus, and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And don't forget, if you literally want to pass this on, you can help do so by rating or reviewing the podcast. It makes a huge difference in helping other people find it. The podcast's theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org, or follow them on Facebook. Kaarina's theme song is "I Will" by Mitski. That is it for this week. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]