

Episode 2.4 Bringing Yourself to Work with Baharak Yousefi

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Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] I'm Hannah McGregor is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Hey, hi. How's everyone doing this week? I'm not going to lie, I've had a real motherfucker of a week myself, but I have high hopes for it getting better. Getting to sit down and edit this episode definitely helped and maybe listening to it will help you too. I always feel better after hanging out with a rad feminist, and so I think you should meet Baharak. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Baharak Yousefi grew up in Iran. She immigrated to Canada as a refugee and lives as a settler on unceded Coast Salish territory. She is a librarian at Simon Fraser University, and an active member of BC's library community. With Shirley Lew, she co-edited *Feminists Among Us: Resistance and Advocacy in Library Leadership*. Baharak came over to my place for wine and fancy vegan charcuterie and also this conversation. Are you ready? Here it is. [Music: "Borders" by M.I.A.]

Hannah (Host): ...how intimidating! Alright, this is already going great. So what I'm going to ask you to do you to do is just introduce yourself, say your name and then I'll take it back and I'll ask you a question. And it'll be a good practice of passing the mic off. Are you ready?

Baharak: Hi, I'm Barack Yousefi.

Hannah (Host): Amazing work. It was perfect. So we are here in my living room being heavy breathed at by my cat. And we are here to talk specifically about bringing your whole self to work as a feminist, which I understand from previous conversations for you is pretty much synonymous with leaning in.

Baharak: That was mean. Yeah, so I was hoping that we spend whatever time we have together talking about how much I admire Lean In. Yeah. So I want to talk about this whole idea bringing your whole self to work, or I guess revealing yourself at work and I just wanted to make sure that folks know what I'm not talking about, which is like working yourself to the bone, or like giving it everything you have, or leaning in, or women with power behaving exactly like dudes with power. So like, none of the above is what I mean by this whole bringing yourself to work thing.

Hannah (Host): I really like the phrase "bring yourself to work." It's like bring your, bring your kids to work day, but it's bring yourself to work day. So there's a difference there between like, bringing your whole self to work is not dedicating your whole self to your job. It's not like, in order to be a serious woman in the workplace, I need to work 80 hours a week and sacrifice every other part of my life to careerism, which as you said is not a particularly interesting feminist

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intervention into capitalism, but is more just a like white feminist, like we become free by becoming more like men. Which is like two thumbs way down to that. So if that's not what bringing your whole self to work means. Then what does it mean to you?

Baharak: I should also say that I'm a big fan of like, if you can find the job that pays you what you need to be paid and you can manage to like, bring basically none of yourself to it and like then spend your energy doing whatever else you're doing. If that's a thing that exists and you can find it and you can then like, go home and do whatever else, fantastic. But I think what I find is that a lot of us are in jobs where to do well at it it's impossible to not give it everything in a lot of ways. Right? Like your creativity, your brain, and then so there's like nothing left. Right? But something that I think about a lot is that the institution, or the employer, or whatever it may be wants all of that, all the good stuff, but it's like, bring that magical brain, but like, leave this like, sack of flesh and bones at home. Pointing to my body, right? Like I'm just like, and that, that's just so like, like how is that possible? To, you know, give me all the good stuff and leave everything else at the door. So then there's this like BS divide of the personal and the professional. Also, can we just say PRO-fessional every time we say, like pause between, I don't know why.

Hannah (Host): [Laughs] PRO-fessional? Okay, Got It. This is so much like a conversation I was having with some friends of mine just yesterday about the sort of feeling that so many jobs, particularly jobs that are very mentally taxing, want your body to just be the thing that brings your brain into that space. And that anything that you come that is like, emotion or physical experience of any variety is like, not appropriate. I mean, the thing that I automatically come back to is women crying in the workplace, and how like, how stigmatize that still is, and how I have so many moments with women graduate students where they shamefacedly tell me that they like cried when they got some feedback from somebody or cried in a professor's office. And I'm like, "yeah, yeah, yeah. No, that's great. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with that. Like I've cried in so many people's offices. I cry at work all the time." That is inevitably going to be part of, of being my whole self at work is like, I'm going to cry a lot. Are you a work crier?

Baharak: I have been known to be a work crier, but mostly a work rager and a getting red in the face kind of gal, which also is something that I think is frowned upon. And sometimes what I think maybe part of this issue about why this bringing yourself to work part is not really interesting to people is that, in response to that, let's say if that's something that's allowed to be done, then you as a colleague, or as a supervisor as, or whatever the person across the table will have to care about this person. Right? Like after like, show some empathy, some compassion. And I think obviously that happens now, right? Like people cry and people receive compassion, but if you were saying that that's okay, then that care work needs to be more legitimate than it is. Like, it can't be relegated to the margins in the way it is now.

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Hannah (Host): That's a really good point. It's not just a like allow me to cry. It's becomes a sort of much more fundamental like, reorganization of the way that the whole workplace works, in which like everybody's relationship and everybody's job shifts because all of a sudden we're like, treating people like humans, and that's like a totally different kind of workload that some jobs maybe have space for. I'm having trouble off the top of my head thinking of a career that I think like, actually builds that kind of care into it.

Baharak: I started thinking about this kind of late, I would say, this whole topic. And it was a few years ago, an article was written by a group of geographers called for slow scholarship. But I think what's at stake for workplaces in general, I think it's a couple of things. I think one thing is that, and this is gonna sound really kind of awful, but I think it's underneath it all, is that if, if people are suffering in silence, if you're not talking about how overloaded you are, how tired you are, because that's part of it, right? You're not expressing that part of yourself, then you're not getting to compare notes with others who may be experiencing exactly the same thing. And so then you work more and harder to try to get rid of this feeling of inadequacy that you're having, and you're not comparing notes, and you don't know that the person down the hall is also feeling the same way. And so what would happen if those notes got, you would be less productive. PRO-ductive.

Hannah (Host): [Laughs]

Baharak: Right? Like it would have to be because then you're like, "Wait a minute. Like, my coping strategies are not the problem here. I have like two people's jobs," or whatever it may be. So there's the shame thing, like if you're ashamed you will like really work way more because you're trying to get rid of that. And then the other thing is like, in any situation where people with less power when they start talking to each other, bad things happen for people with more power. Right? You know, you might start organizing. I think we just started talking to each other. I think there will be consequences probably, and that's part of bringing yourself to work, I think.

Hannah (Host): I mean, almost inevitably the thing that's coming to mind for me right now is all of the sort of major industries that are finally facing up to the rampant forms of sexual harassment and assault that exist throughout them, and that that culture is normalized when people don't talk to each other, and when particularly those kinds of conversations of like, experiences that feel like they are private experiences are things that you are not allowed to talk to in your, when you're in the workplace. And all of a sudden we have women who don't realize that the thing that is happening to them, which again, shame is so deeply attached to it, right? A sort of shame and internalizing of, of guilt and blame. I mean, you start talking to people and being like, "wait a fucking second. It's all of us. This is history's greatest conspiracy!" Just the act of sort of personalizing your relationships with other people in your workplace to the point where you, where you can actually start to understand in what ways your experiences overlap. Yeah, no, I've seen, I've seen all kinds of situations where people in

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positions of power have been obviously terrified by what happens when, when those, that they were hoping would internalize blame for dysfunctional workplaces start to compare notes.

Baharak: When you talked about history's greatest conspiracy. I have no idea if this is true or not, this is just a story of heard and it's just, I always think about it. So I grew up in Iran and there were public baths in kind of the old part of the city in Shiraz, where I was raised. And by the time I was old enough, most homes had their own, had plumbing and so people weren't using the public baths, but it was still this like, super cool thing to do. With that, there was always this, this idea that public baths were haunted. Like as a child, I grew up knowing the story just like, oh, they're haunted. You don't want to go there. And someone told me that the reason that rumor got started was that that was the only place where women gathered freely without men, and they could talk and compare notes and then when plumbing came and people's homes, where they weren't going to the baths, women found, "wait a minute, I'm losing this huge support network." And so women wanted to go back to the baths, so this, this rumor got started that they were haunted. I've tried to actually find some kind of a citation, if anyone can find, and I've never been able to find it, but it's fascinating, right? Like there's always been these powers that are trying to make it so people don't talk, don't compare notes. So we're like, we're gaslighting ourselves and our institutions are gaslighting us, and when you compare notes, that becomes harder.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. I guess the whole podcast really is comparing notes. Yeah. The, the thing that feels particularly insidious about a lot of workplaces these days is a desire, like stated desire on the part of a number of industries and institutions to "diversify." That was in scare quotes because I feel dubious about the language of diversity. You know, I've read my Sarah Ahmed. I know that that diversity is has sort of troubling history in universities, which is maybe worth an aside to say Sara Ahmed has a book called— Oh my God, what is this book called— On Being Included. Thank you. Good pull. She talks about the shift in institutions from the language of equity to the language of diversity, and that diversity thus becomes a sort of depoliticized and non-specified goal that has, never needs to acknowledge the existence of systemic bias and racism, but instead sort of apolitically values a sort of tokenistic inclusion of a certain number of visible minorities or of white women, which is the problem. Like, diversity language also then allows you to, sort of, hire a white woman and call your workplace diverse. But we see these sort of equity or diversity hires happen in which institutions try to make a point of bringing like, a white woman or a person of color into the workplace and then that person is provided with none of the supports to make their job livable and is expected to simultaneously embody a particular kind of political capital. Like, "look, I'm here physically representing the legitimacy of your institution," but is very clearly told not to bring any of the experiences or embodiment that allow you to represent that political capital into the workplace. So like, yes, please check a diversity box for us, but in terms of how you perform, please be exactly like a white man. That would be ideal. Yeah.

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Baharak: Yeah. And I mean, like Ahmed talks about, for example, this idea of where institutions simply say they are diverse.

Hannah (Host): Oh, yeah.

Baharak: Right?

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Baharak: And then they may even hire this one person that is supposed to show that, but that's it, right? Like there is nothing else that is done. Yeah. And even, I mean, cluster hiring for example, is something that a lot of institutions are doing in order to provide a bit more of a support network for people that are being hired into these positions. But even that, as you look at it, it's like, okay, yeah. So you have, for example, you hire three faculty of color and somehow they're all supposed to like share some kind of experience with each other. Right? So like if I had these three brown people across this university and then you have like an orientation day where of course, because all brown people immediately become best friends upon meeting, from different backgrounds and disciplines and then you're like, "okay, see you later." And they go back into their respective department. Like, sometimes things are so bad that even numbers are a win. But at the same time if the structures are staying exactly the same, then nothing is going to change in the long-term. But then since, we're talking about Ahmed, she also talks about the fact that this is all assuming that we're meant to survive, and like, we're not meant to survive. Right? Like she talks about this and Audre Lorde has talked about it, many feminists of color have talked about this. We're talking about it as if it's a bug, but it's not. It's a feature and you're not meant to survive. You're meant to be there long enough for boxes to be checked for things to look a certain way. So I think this does relate back to kind of what we're talking about, about bringing yourself to work, because I think that would make a difference even in the survival of folks who are maybe the only one of X, Y or Z in our area.

Hannah (Host): I've been using the phrase, "this is not a bug, but a feature" a lot in the last couple of weeks as people talk about like, "God, how broken are all of these systems that this has been allowed to happen?" And it's like, oh, they're not broken. They're working great. They're doing exactly what they were designed to do. And most of the institutions in the world, we're not designed for white women to be part of it, or for people of color to be part of it, or for disabled people to be part of it. Like, it's just, just not designed for us. And not only not designed for us, but designed to keep us out, designed to like, keep us out of positions of power. And so then when you get into one of those workplaces and find that you are not thriving personally and internalize it as like, "I must be an idiot or I must be lazy or I must be, you know, whatever is wrong with me. I'm not cut out for X, Y, or Z because I go home from work everyday and cry." You personally drive yourself out and then the institution of whatever kind can say, "oh, well, you know, we made every effort we could. We hired, we hired all of these people of color, but everybody just left. So I guess what more are we

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supposed to do?" And it's like, yeah, that is working out perfectly for you, isn't it? Like you, the institution, this is all working out perfectly in your favor. And so there's sort of two different facets here that we could keep coming back to, of bringing your whole self to work. One is it's a sort of audacious claim that you are allowed to thrive in your workplace. And two, it's the idea that when you, sort of, stake that space for yourself, you then open that up for the other people around you as well. You like, deisolate yourselves and build in these possibilities for like, solidarity and community that might actually then turn that workplace into something that like, other people can also enter into and also like find a way to survive in it. But all of that, all of that, bringing your whole self into work is deeply exhausting compared to like, head down nine to five, go home, do something else. So like, I don't know. Like, to what degree does it feel sort of worth it to be doing that work? What inspires you to do that work? As opposed to just saying like, "I'm going to keep my head down and just plow through this."

Baharak: That's a really good question. One that I asked myself like, if not daily, weekly, and it usually is in the form of "what is the matter with you."

Hannah (Host): [Laughs]

Baharak: Right? Like, "why can't you just keep your mouth shut, honestly?" because they, the normal, "normal"— I would like to take this word back.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. [Laughs]

Baharak: So the, but, but like one reaction would be to whatever the dumpster fire is, right, a reaction would be to move away from it. But I find that I have a tendency to move toward the dumpster fire.

Hannah (Host): Same.

Baharak: 'kay. So then you think, "what is wrong with me?" And I honestly, I have not like, done a study. We should totally do a study. Want to do a study? But I, but I sometimes think those of us, those of us who have either in a familial situation, like in a very small family or community, or say if some of us say grew up in a fascist country for example, you just think, "okay, when things look bad or catastrophic they like, are." And knowing that, I just, I find that that's a piece of knowledge that, you know what, honestly I could live without, but I can't because it's part of who I am. This is part of, once you see it, you can't like, unsee it. And so a lot of people that can walk away from the dumpster fire, it's not because they don't care. It's because they really don't think it's that bad, I think. But those of us who've seen it really like, no, like, seriously, it's really bad. And sometimes I'm envious you know, because like you've, you've been in situations where you've tried to like tell someone with power how, you know, the dumpster is on fire. And so a couple of things happen. Juno Diaz talks about this. He talks about the fact that if you're standing outside of a, well, in his case it's a whole building and it's, it's on fire and you yell "fire" somehow instead of

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people like, putting out the fire, they're like looking at you as if like, you've caused it. You're like, I'm doing you a favor. I'm like, saying this, this building is on fire and you're all of a sudden you're in trouble for exposing that and lots of people have talked about that. And so that's one. And then the other thing that happens is obviously this kind of condescension, right? Like you don't understand. You don't understand, you don't know the rules, you don't know the policies. If you had read policy 2.6, 2.8, if you knew such and such law. And you know, that happens when people get into power, they become part of that and then they spit it back at you. And so yeah, I don't know, walking towards the dumpster on fire is not a great idea.

Hannah (Host): I referred to it with some friends the other day as a, as being a raccoon. Like you just

Baharak: [Laughs]

Hannah (Host): Like, just unbearably drawn to that dumpster. This reminds me of, of--

Baharak: Also adorable!

Hannah (Host): --so cute. So cute. It's a little trash panda. This reminds me of two things. One is a conversation I had with a friend today while we were hiking in knee deep water through a flooded bog, and we were talking about how people who are, sort of, precariously located within institutions who say no to risk— which is a right you always have, to say no to a risky choice— but say no to risk because of your precarity, with the sort of claim implicit or explicit that eventually you will no longer be precarious and then you will take the risks. And how years and years of saying no to risks becomes a habit. And when you're in the position where you could very safely take that risk, you just won't anymore because you're just not in the habit of doing it. But it is true that those of us who take risks when we are still precarious are less likely to ever end up in the position where we can actually make change. Which is why it is a totally reasonable thing to say "I'm not going to do this risky thing," but, but it is how this behavior sort of perpetuates itself. And the other thing is a conversation I keep coming back to with friends lately, which is about like, the ways in which trauma becomes a skillset. And like, what an experienced of trauma gives you as you move forward in the world. And like I, I think that you have expressed that really beautifully, of like, you look at things and know how serious they are because you have seen the world and in some way before, whether that is like a small and personal apocalypse or a national one. You have seen what that looks like and so you know what it means for something to be world ending and you know what the stakes are in some way that is like, visceral, like it's, it's inside of you. And that capacity to say "I'm just not going to be bothered by this because I'm too tired. Because I don't have the time. Because I'm already overworked. Because it doesn't directly affect me." Whatever. It's like you, it's almost like you can't. Like, you just can't. You can't look away. Like, there's something in you that is just attuned to these kinds of crisis and it's not like, it is a gift of sorts. Like, I think it could make you a lot more compassionate. And I think we need people

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who don't turn away from the dumpster fire, like we desperately need people all through every industry to not be turning away from them.

Baharak: So we, we've just both like self-identified as the people who are drawn, in some way because we can't help ourselves, to the dumpster fire. So what role do you think we're playing in this whole system? Right? What are we doing in all--

Hannah (Host): [Laughs]

Baharak: What is wrong with us, Hannah?

Hannah (Host): Do you mean like why are we working in these institutions that we look at and are like, "this is a garbage fire?"

Baharak: No.

Hannah (Host): [Laughs]

Baharak: Because like, we have to live.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Baharak: Yeah. No, I mean like, so we've acknowledged that we're not meant to survive.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Baharak: Right? Like this is, you know, the whole, this is not a bug, it's a feature. And we've also acknowledged that this role of pointing out the fire saying, "this building's on fire" is something that we take on because we can't help ourselves for whatever reasons. So do you think that is also part of this whole system? Like, we are playing a role that we're meant to play? I mean, I realize that's like deeply cynical, or is it?

Hannah (Host): There is a great Fred Moten essay where he talks about, and I, you know what, I'll link this as well even though red Fred Moten is very hard to read, but I will link it anyway. And he talks about how the university, and he specifically talking about the university as an institution, thrives on including people who are professionally critical of the university. And that only serves to re-legitimize the university as an institution because its capacity to take critique of it and absorb that in and make that critique part of the system, then means that the system can continue unchanged. And my friend Marcelle once compared Canadian nationalism to that as well. That Canadian nationalism has this particular capacity to absorb all forms of critique and just keep on going, to sort of self-effacingly say, "yes, Canada is a genocidal state and we do need to come face to face with our monstrous history." But somehow that can be like, absorbed into nationalism rather than destroying nationalism, which is what it should do. Like,

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the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should have broken our idea of Canada apart, but for a lot of settlers, it made them feel better about Canada.

Baharak: Absolutely. Yeah.

Hannah (Host): Which is wild. And so there is this way, that as long as you have consented to be like, knowing that you have been hired by this institution to represent a particular kind of political capital and you work within the institution and you bring your emotional energy and your whole political and physical and emotional self into the institution, you are consenting to be used by it like, to some degree. Yeah, because there's no good solution. Saying, "I'll have nothing to do with the institution." It's a legitimate solution. Like, that's a legitimate answer to say like, "fuck it. I don't want to have anything to do with you" is legitimate. But if we all say that. Then it's all, it's just gonna revert back to the same way it was 50 years ago. And the thing I say to myself a lot when I'm sort of thinking about what I'm still doing it at a university for all of my like, "universities are white supremacist institutions saturated with rape culture." [Laughs] But there are a lot of people who need to move through this institution. I'm not saying everybody has to go to university, but a lot of people do and I don't want to leave them to the people who will be left behind if we all said no. Like, and that God, that makes me sound like I think I'm some fucking like, savior, which I don't. But yeah, I think you choose to either be absorbed and see what you can do from within, or refused and see what you can do from outside. And I think it takes all of these choices to, you know, to build a revolution. Is that what we're doing?

Baharak: Yeah. I think first I just want to say something about you saying, "fuck, I think I'm some kind of savior." Just would like to suggest here, for all your listeners, that I think in some ways that you are actually. Like, I remember walking in Stanley Park last season of your podcast and you said something along the lines of you were talking to your white listeners and you said, "okay, this is just for you guys." And you said something along the lines of "you're either actively resisting pushing back against white supremacy," I can't remember exactly what words you used, "or you're complicit within it." And I realized that like for you, you think, yeah, like as even as I'm saying this to you, I can see you. You're like, "yeah, that makes perfect sense to me." But that is not something that you hear, that I hear, you know, in my daily life. And so, so, and this relates directly to this idea of there are a lot of people that are in this institutions that go through this institutions as, as our students, as staff, as other faculty. And so in terms of like, bringing ourselves to work like, people like yourself, what that looks like is this sense of responsibility to each other and this compassion for each other, as opposed to this sense of responsibility to the institution, wherever that may be. Right? And we're lucky to be in like, public institutions can imagine if you like worked for a corporation? Like, that's a whole other discussion. But, so yeah, I think there is some saving for sure that's being done, you know? And that's what it looks like. This responsibility to each other I think is part of bringing yourself to work and part of allowing this kind of figure of the hysterical feminist killjoy that's having the best time ever--

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Hannah (Host): [Laughs]

Baharak: --calling these people out like, to be allowed to be a legitimate figure. Right?

Hannah (Host): Yeah. Sometimes I feel like the best thing that I can do is just see people. Like, I think that that's a thing that, that really beats us down is having what's happening to us we're not seen. And to just listen to somebody who is telling you what their experience is, and is telling you the ways in which the system is crushing them and to say "yes, this is really happening to you."

Baharak: Yes, yeah.

Hannah (Host): Like, this is not in your head. You are not making this up. You are not dumb or lazy. This is, this is true and this is really happening to you. And maybe I can't do anything to help you right now, and I really, really wish I could. And like, don't have much I can materially offer you, but like, will say "yes, your experience is real." Though I also recently, a friend of mine around a lot of the sort of public revelations about sexual assault had been doing a lot of visibly exhausting activism and education on social media, and another mutual friend of ours reached out to her and said, "I just want to tell you that like I am seeing all of the work that you are doing and I just recently went to see this really incredible feminist theater piece and I would like to buy you tickets to it because you were working really hard and I think that you would really enjoy this show." And it just like, kind of blew my mind as this model of what that next step of care might look like, what that next step of bringing your whole self might look like. Especially for those of us who are lucky enough to be in careers and in lives where we have, you know, enough to give to people, to actually say like, "I'm not just going to sort of see and acknowledge and lift you up. I'm actually just going to be like, I would really like to buy you dinner. Because life has been really hard on you." Like, I can't fix the world, but like, I can concretely try to offer you something right now. But all of that is part of this like, what does it mean to, to reach out to somebody and say like, "I'm really seeing you" and how incredibly valuable that is, especially in contexts that want us not to be seen.

Baharak: I love that story. That's a great story. Yeah, I'm just thinking about how scary that would be for a lot of people who are in positions of power to see that level of connection between the folks who are not supposed to be seeing each other and caring for each other and having that be one of the priorities in your work day, for example. ,And how much time and resources— I'm using air quotes—that that would take, and I, and I just kind of love it. And I'm just kind of picturing how terrifying that must be, cuz you've got past the note sharing, you've got past the, "I am so ashamed of how lazy I am" BS, and now you are actually giving time to caring. Which of course lots of people do now anyway, which is also sometimes a source of further shame because I didn't get my work done because I was a decent human today. I'm going to feel really ashamed about that, because like, somebody that either like, reports to me even, or a colleague down the hall needed an ear and I chose to be a human being and

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now I feel really bad about it because I wasted this time. So this is terrifying, this world that you're describing in a workplace. I bet it is.

Hannah (Host): You know the number one form of workplace theft.

Baharak: What, love?

Hannah (Host): [Laughs] Love! Is love! I'm gonna make a t-shirt that says "the number one form of workplace theft is the friends we've made along the way." Such a confusing meme mash up. This has been my, my past two weeks has been like 50 percent of my work day is spent texting, Face Timing, calling, tweeting with friends and colleagues, dealing with the fallout of a series of events and then feeling awful about myself for not being productive enough.

Baharak: Meanwhile, you're like, literally saving lives.

Hannah (Host): Like doing work that is so much more important than writing a fucking article about anything because it's real humans with real things happening to them, but that's what like, capitalism does not want me to spend my time caring for and loving my community. It would like me to produce, please. And then having a day this week where I was having a crisis and like, another colleague of mine— who's so fucking busy also— just being like, "oh, you're having this crisis. Let me come and sit down with you and we will talk this through and I will give you all the time you need for us to work this out." And like, then three more women doing that for me again that day. And that being like, by the end of the day I was like, "Oh, this is solved now. Like this is solved. Because all of these people were willing to put the time into helping me figure that out. And now a thing that was, that felt like an unsolvable problem is like, like we figured it out because all of these people helped me." Which, which is an incredible feeling, but like undeniably made me feel guilty because it's like I'm taking time away from other things you need to be doing. But like, even to just continue to like, despite the messaging of my brain being like, "you're wasting your time, you're wasting other people's time," just to keep being like, I'm gonna do it anyway because I can't not because they're my people. And I can't not because I can't survive without it. And so fine. Like, that messaging will still be in my brain that is constantly saying like, "you are being lazy," and then you like reach out to somebody to be like, "am I lazy?" And they can be like, "Haha no. That's very dumb. No, no, you're not."

Baharak: And what's like super messed up about all of this, just in case you think you are actually taking whatever away from the system, is that that meant that you were actually back in it far quicker than you would have been otherwise. The thing is like, if you are in a supportive work environment— I sold books for many years before going to library school and I think back to those days as some of the best work relationships I ever had, and the thing was that we cared deeply for each other and that meant that we did better. So, and I think in any workplace, if you care for each other, you'll look after each other. You will do better, you'll produce more. But in the long run like, it means that you're not,

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you know, then spending all these days trying to sort this out on your own, and it actually works better for the system anyway. So that's what's so kind of fucked up about it, right? It's like, if you let this be, things actually work out better and people are happier and healthier and imagine that. So even that doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

Hannah (Host): Or it only makes sense because to really acknowledge the degree to which all of these institutions work better when there are people there who are doing care work, that means that you would have to acknowledge that people who are experienced in care work are valuable and we don't. We super don't want to do that, so that's so dangerous.

Baharak: Because in a lot of ways women's work but will become valuable and you know, imagine that? [Music: "Borders" by M.I.A]

Hannah (Host): [Laughs] For more Baharak, you can follow her on Twitter @BaharakY. That's B A H A R A K Y. As per usual, you can find the show notes and all the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor, and tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And don't forget to recommend the podcast. For reasons that I will probably explain at some point, I currently have all my social media on lockdown, so I'm relying on you to spread the good news. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album *Chub Rub*. You can download to the entire album on freemusicarchive.org, or follow them on Facebook. Baharak's theme song is "Borders" by M.I.A. I'll be back next week with another minisode, but in the meantime, this has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]