

Episode 4.11 Cozy Resolutions

JANUARY 10, 2020

Hannah McGregor: [00:10](#)

Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is Secret Feminist Agenda and happy new year. I hope everybody had entirely tolerable holidays. I mean I hope your holidays were amazing and restful and free of all forms of stress, but that seems like a lot to ask. So instead I'm going to say entirely tolerable and that if they were not tolerable that they are over now, that's a pretty safe wish. I had a downright relaxing holiday. I feel like this year I did a good job of keeping my expectations really low but like in a good way. I took some time off. I saw some people I love. I went to a lot of movies. Gosh y'all, I went to a lot of movies. And I very effectively resisted the desire both to make a top 10 list of my own life and then also to do the thing that takes over on January 1st which is resolutions. And that, actually, is what I want to talk about this week.

So as I was thinking about what kind of mini-sode topic we would use to welcome in 2020 I was browsing around on Twitter and I saw this tweet by Tori Glass who wrote, "If you live in a cold climate, January may not be the ideal time to commit to personal growth. Instead of trying to chase down resolutions, consider finding ways to make rest sustainable." And I thought, gosh, what a significantly more delightful way to think about what energy is useful to bring into the next three months, which are going to be, for those of us who live in the Northern hemisphere, cold and dark. And if the news of the past couple of weeks has been any indication, bad, it's going to be bad. 2020 is going to be bad. So instead of adding to all of the other things that are hard about this time of year about what's going on in the world right now, what if we counter the hardness of the world by introducing some softness instead? What if instead of doing this, this new year's resolution thing where we try to discard the person we are in favour of some other imagined optimized person, we were gentle and soft and kind to our actual selves.

I've been thinking a lot about an essay in Jia Tolentino new book *Trick Mirror* about optimization and in particular about how contemporary feminism can get tied up in these ideas of optimization that if you optimize yourself, your routine, your workout, your skincare, your wardrobe, your everything around your life that it'll be easier to be happy and productive and to do the stuff that feels like it matters and optimization is of course a deeply capitalist impulse. It is also surprise, surprise, a white supremacist and ableist impulse, a fat phobic impulse, and just also wildly boring, like God, what a nightmare hellscape of us all eating chop salads and doing barre classes. I just don't trust resolutions because I don't trust self optimization. At the same time, it is for me the beginning of a new semester and that does always feel like a nice time to reflect, to check in on myself. I've been doing a lot, a lot of tarot readings. I like to think about what I'm up to and where

I want to go next. You know, resisting resolutions and the kind of harmful way that they can encourage us to think about ourselves in our lives doesn't mean that checking in on yourself doesn't have value. So I'm proposing that instead of hard resolutions, we focus on cozy resolutions. We drink more tea, we sleep for longer, we take more hot baths.

So I talked to Twitter, as is my want, and asked people to share with me some of their own creative ways of coping with this time of year, I'll share the link to the thread in the show notes. There's so many great ideas in here, like taking lots and lots of baths, like wearing comfy, cozy, comfortable clothes, lighting candles, using light therapy, speaking of therapy, actually going to therapy, listening to or singing or making music that makes you feel powerful and affirmed or safe and happy. Making soup, eating more hot bread, making things with your hands, snuggling with animals or babies. Treating your body gently by going for walks or yoga or daily stretching, getting outside if the weather permits it to snowshoe or cross country ski or just walk your dog and so many other beautiful, soft, cozy anti-resolutions to help us focus on sustainability and rest and gentleness because I really do think when we practice gentleness towards ourselves, we are better at practicing gentleness towards other people and toward the world. And I don't know, things feel really hard right now, so gentleness is good. And remember gentleness doesn't stop us from responding to the urgency of things that are going on. You can wrap yourself in a giant blanket scarf, make a huge cup of tea and write a letter to your MP about why Canada should not be participating in a potential war with Iran. You can get into a hot bath full of epsom salts and make plans for how you're going to cut plastics out of your life. Like, we can be gentle and radical at the same time. We can be soft and also hold firmly to the things we believe in.

Okay. Speaking of things we believe in, let's take a look in this week's Killjoy Survival Kit. I just got a beautiful email from Rudi B who says, "a couple of months ago I began learning my language. Gamilaraay, along with my mum. For the past three years, I've been interviewing people from all over Australia who are involved in language work, so it's been really exciting to finally take language reclamation work myself. It can still be a fraught experience, for example, I don't love that I'm an adult taking a class to learn what should have been my first language, but when doesn't colonization leave a mark? Anyway, I know it's niche, but that's my Killjoy Survival Kit: reclaiming and reintroducing myself to my language as like a Gamilaraay woman." I love this so much that it made me cry when I first read it and it's literally making me cry right now as I read it back. Don't think it's niche. I think it's incredible and radical and beautiful and exciting and I'm really grateful to Rudy B for sharing it. Don't forget, you can always email me at secretfeministagenda@gmail.com if you want to tell me what's in your Killjoy Survival Kit. That's it for this week.

As always, you can find show notes and the rest of the episodes of Secret Feminist Agenda on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter at [@HKPMcGregor](https://twitter.com/HKPMcGregor) and you can tweet about the podcast using the [#secretfeministagenda](https://twitter.com/secretfeministagenda). You can also rate and review the show. There is a new review from JAmberMcD. that's my guess about how those letters should be separated, but it might be Jim berm coulda. That's unlikely. Anyway, thank you so much for your lovely review.

The podcast 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.

Secret Feminist Agenda is recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, the Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations where I'm grateful to live and work.

This has been Secret Feminist Agenda. Pass it on.