Chapter 7
Tending to Ourselves, Tending to Each Other: Nurturing Feminist Friendships to Manage Academic Lives

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Abstract This chapter explores how two feminist academics and close collaborators have tried to navigate the patriarchal hierarchies of traditional academic spaces. We unpack how those relational ways of knowing and being in the world have supported our living as women in academic worlds, how we have together navigated the pressures that discourage collaboration, and how those pressures affect us individually and as partners. Our epistemology of friendship empowers us to disrupt the institution and explore what that looks like in our day-to-day experiences as women, mothers, academics, friends, sisters, daughters, and teachers. It is important to consider our epistemology of friendship as means of resistance that sustains ourselves and our partnerships and within sometimes oppressive institutions.

7.1 Introduction

Michael Lewis, in his work *The Undoing Project* (2016), about the partnership between Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky wrote,

> In a funny way, they didn't even want themselves in the room. They wanted to be the people they became when they were with each other … 'They wrote together sitting right next to each other at the typewriter,' recalls Michigan psychologist Richard Nisbett. 'I cannot imagine. It would be like having someone else brush my teeth for me.' The way Danny put it was, 'We were sharing a mind.' (pp. 181–182)

As we sat down to write this chapter, Emily did a search in her emails for the phrase "one brain." Peppered throughout 8 years of emails is this expression, times when we noted bemusedly that the other had sent an identical response or articulated what the other had been thinking in the shower only moments before. Sometimes, it happens on social media or in a meeting; through either disposition or years of

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_7

collaboration, we make sense of problems in a similar, if not identical, way. We often speak to each other in a shorthand, something our colleagues mention with both a mix of frustration and amusement. When we are writing a piece together, we rarely use track changes or a different colored font because we do not think of our work as parsed out. We have become so comfortable with how we blend our knowing that it is not important for us to delineate who wrote what sentence. There is a fluidity to our writing, a symbolic representation of how we collaborate. We value each of our individual contributions but we also understand that together we are more insightful and detailed. Similarly, if we could, we would insist that our publications are all coauthored, with no designated first author. In order to address this tension, we take turns with the first authorship, rather than spending time determining who actually led the work or did the majority of the writing. We recognize how rare this collaborative model is within the academy and see it as a means of resisting or disrupting the academy's insistence on competition and individualism. We would not say that we are identical (for example, Monica tends to work hard and play hard while Emily prefers to pace herself). We are quite different in terms of personality and strengths, and yet these attributes complement one another rather than compete. We call each other "my work wife" acknowledging that we spend more time together than we do with our spouses.

More than once teachers with whom we work, who themselves collaborate closely, say "when we grow up we want to be Monica/Emily, but we are still deciding which one of us will be which one." In many contexts, we are recognized as an example of an effective collaborative team. Last spring when Monica was attending a meeting with the Provost and was asked to provide an example of a pilot assignment, she referred to "Emily," using an example from Emily's teaching to illustrate her point. Another colleague interrupted her to clarify that it was "Emily Klein" she was talking about, and the Provost said dismissively, "Oh you don't need to clarify who Emily is. I know all about this dynamic duo: Monica and Emily, Emily and Monica. They get things done."

Despite this acknowledgement, over the years, we have been told either that we are not collaborative, or that we make people uncomfortable. We do not seem to fit the mold of academics with whom we grew up. Yet others have noticed (as did we—most importantly) that we are more productive working together, that the synergy from our partnership is greater than us as individuals, and that our experience in academia seems less fraught and isolated than it was before our partnership began. Both of us have had and continue to have other powerful collaborations with female academics, yet we have noticed there is very little in academic culture about those relationships.[1]

As we sat down to write this, we realized that it is not just that collaboration is devalued in the academy, but that specifically feminine relationships and feminist ways of knowing are marginalized in the academy (Luxton, 2012). Our chapter

[1] For discussion of this see the work of Pauline Reynolds, specifically: Reynolds (2009). The celluloid ceiling: Women academics, social values, and narrative in 1940s American film. *Gender and Education, 21*(2), 209–224 and Reynolds, P.J. (2014). Representing 'U': Popular culture, media, and higher education. *AEHE, 40*(4), John Wiley & Sons.

explores how those relational ways of knowing and being in the world have supported our living as women in academic worlds, how we have together navigated the pressures that discourage collaboration, and how those pressures affect both our partnership as well as us as individuals. Our belief is that we do not have to comply with is that we do not have to comply with academic, patriarchal norms of individualism and competition. We understand that our epistemology of friendship empowers us to disrupt the institution and at the same time allows us to, as hooks (1994) writes, "maintain the fidelity to the idea of the intellectual as someone who sought to be whole," placing an emphasis on "spiritual well-being, on care of the soul" (p. 16).

We refuse to adopt male ways of knowing to be successful. We do not measure our worth based on the standards set by institutions with traditionally masculine values. Instead, we construct other ways of being that operationalize the importance we place on relationships and reject individualism and competition. We value an epistemology that is always under construction, dynamic, and in flux. Our epistemology stems from the whole being, connecting mind to body. We know through our minds, body, and emotions. Our emotional knowing is an epistemology that is dynamic, in flux, in construction. It draws from a feminism that is "a collective movement … made out of how we are moved to become feminists in dialogue with others" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 5). Our epistemology of friendship relies on how we are moved by our emotions to act.

7.2 A Feminist Epistemology of Friendship

What does a feminist epistemology of friendship look like? For us, we construct knowledge collaboratively, allowing for space to individually generate ideas that we weave together. We make meaning through collaboration, connection, cooperation, and caring (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Maher & Tetreault, 1994). Our ways of knowing, built through our feminist friendship, invite "multiple knowledges" that "are contradictory, partial, and irreducible" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 320). We recognize that this feminist paradigm of friendship helps us to destabilize the patriarchal framework of the academy which continually asks us to participate in hierarchical power structures that situate us as gendered subjects (Gore, 1993; Ropers-Huilman, 2001). We use this way of knowing to "confront the technologies through which we make ourselves into subjects" (Gore, 1993, p. 155) and promote socially just initiatives for more than just ourselves at our institution but for all who are mechanized by the system. We embrace the charge of our foremothers (Lather, 2006; St. Pierre, 2000) who ask us to shake things up, disrupt and destabilize norms, and invite new possibilities of who are becoming as feminist academics. Our feminist epistemology of friendship manifests in how we negotiate our personal and professional lives, through our teaching, scholarship, and service at the university.

Upon what is this feminist epistemology of friendship constructed? The key tenets of our friendship are humorously illustrated by Gay (2014) when she writes: "If a friend sends a crazy email needing reassurance about love, life, family, or work,

respond accordingly and in a timely manner even if it is just to say, 'GIRL, I hear you'" (p. 50). Regardless of the content of our communications, first and foremost we acknowledge that our experiences are shared, we actively listen to one another, and we demonstrate that we relate to what the other is saying. There is rarely judgment or critique. Rather those three simple words: "I hear you" convey that the other is not alone or isolated. Tending to our relationship and being there for one another supersedes all else. We embrace the feminist ethic of care drawing from the work of Lorde (1988) and Ahmed (2014) and have adopted "self-care as warfare" as our mantra. We do not think of self-care as it has been co-opted by spas and fancy yoga retreats (although we do not discount the importance of a massage). But rather, we understand that caring for ourselves, each other, and our colleagues and students is a politically disruptive activity within an academy which devalues such practices (Mountz et al. 2015). We understand that our own self care is part of the work of caring for others.

For us, our friendship transcends the personal and political and draws its strength from what Porter (1996) describes as a "shared participation in a common world" (p. 64). According to Porter (1996), three qualities encompass this shared participation: namely unique supportiveness, genuine affection, and a responsive particularity. Unique supportiveness to De Beauvoir (1975) involves "moral ingenuity" and "truthfulness" where "women help one another, discuss their social problems, each creating for the other a kind of protecting nest" (p. 55). We create a shared intimacy through countless heart to heart talks, emails, and texts where we share knowledge of ourselves and our feelings. We feel a genuine affection for one another which manifests in the ways that we interact and support each other. Our relationship is not superficial or filled with small talk. It is instead a dynamic force which helps us to grow and change for as Raymond (1986) writes "women affect, move, stir, and arouse each other to full power" (p. 229). Finally, our friendship exists because of a responsive particularity which dictates how we "care, be responsive, listen, be honest, and be good" (Porter, 1996, p. 69). We are committed to caring for one another in our personal and professional lives and believe that doing so has the potential to then nurture "caring academic cultures and processes" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1238) that exist beyond our collaboration.

7.3 Performance

By any objective terms, we have been successful in academia, have been tenured and promoted, and promoted again. We have gotten grants, published books, and articles, been invited to speak at conferences, planned them, and worked extensively with doctoral students. We have similarly been personally successful—we have long and deep friendships with people around the globe who we see and speak with regularly despite busy lives. We have marriages that have survived the rigors of academic life and children who thrive (one soon to enter college). And yet we both have found the

toil of this academic world to be high, with a relentless and demanding pace that has brought us to tears again and again.

Academia is an institution built around hierarchies, and those hierarchies matter—from the titles (assistant versus associate versus full professor) to the lines of authority (were we funded to attend a conference? Is our work mentioned in the opening college meeting? Have we been invited to attend a meeting with a new funder?) to how our work is praised and acknowledged. Academia values the lone—often male—scholar. Noble's (1993) work, *A World without Women,* describes how the Christian church firmly excluded women from science (and therefore academia) building centuries long institutions where women and feminist ways of being and knowing were rejected. When you go up for tenure you are warned to make sure you have single authored publications, or at the very least first-authored publications emphasizing a kind of suspicion of collaboration, as if somehow collaborative work is not as meaningful—not as much "work." It is also harder to assess—how do we assess an individual outside the markers of individual writing and projects? Could one be riding the coattails of one's collaborators for one's entire career? Sheepishly we apologize for our collaborative work—"well that piece was good, but I was only second author."

Academia is based on the separation of mind and body; with images in popular culture of the solitary academic so lost in his thoughts that he cannot be bothered to tend to the body, being fed and clothed by a slightly frustrated spouse. As hooks (1994) notes, "Indeed the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structures seemed to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalization" (p. 16). For both of us, lifelong dancers with deeply held beliefs about the importance of the mind/body connection in our work, we found this both foreign and stressful. How could we exist solely in our minds, cut off from our bodies with only ideas to sustain us? We both knew that we worked best after an hour of running or barre class, yet we furtively hid those activities from our colleagues, fearing they conveyed frivolity—a lack of earnestness about our work. Yet our bodies spoke to us, insisting on their presence. Emily developed chronic, almost daily migraines, a new offshoot of her fibromyalgia. She largely hid this from her colleagues as well, worried that she would be seen as incapable.

Academia cares little for the connections you bring to the rest of your life. But as mothers, sisters, friends, wives, and dancers, we wanted to bring our whole selves to our work. Used to excelling in our chosen life arenas, we were forced to make unconscionable choices—did we stay at home with our sick kids? Make it to the Halloween parades at school? Or did we attend that additional meeting, write another conference or grant proposal? Our parents' words ringing in our heads, "Just do your best" became a kind of inverted curse—our best means being in two places at once—are we the best parent or the best academic? How is it possible we can sacrifice either?

Our collaboration became a way to disrupt those notions. We wondered, what would it look like if we worked in institutions that valued the whole person, ourselves in relation to others? How would it feel to work in a place where the responsibilities

were reciprocal and less competitive? What would the institution look like if it were a feminist institution? What supports would there be for faculty? In essence, disrupting these norms became acting "as if" instead of waiting for the change. Our partnership allowed for this—what if you went to the Halloween parade and I stayed home and wrote the proposal? And then, what if I stayed home with my son and you wrote the first part of that article? What if we said that author order did not matter and we just switched back and forth without evaluating who did what for each piece, but rather trusting that the work would even out because we both cared?

7.4 Setting

Our institution is one that will be familiar to many in academia. Originally a normal college to prepare teachers, it has grown to become the second largest university in the state and is what others refer to as "striving" in that it has become increasingly scholarly, seeking to continually grow in grant money, top-tier publications, and national prestige. We were recently ranked a research three school. Additionally, we work in a field that is hybrid—as teacher educators we are expected (and expect) to be practitioners who work with schools and teachers while we are also scholars.

Overall, the university structure does not support collaboration (not unlike many institutions). Those who want to co-teach will receive half the number of course credits and therefore those who value co-teaching would have to teach additional courses in order to meet the required number of courses a year. Whereas, private institutions have flexibility in how they navigate this, there is little to no space for such negotiations in a public university.

As it is typical at many universities, the work is literally endless. There are few boundaries, with students and colleagues emailing days, nights, and weekends. There is always another article to write, grant to apply for, and conference paper to give. The relentlessness of the workload and the few opportunities to collaborate for "credit" can be exhausting. Meanwhile, the rungs for promotion hang ever further out of reach; what was enough 10 years ago no longer is—one must not only be prolific, but publications must go in top-tier journals, and scholars must have both a national and international reputation.

Our heretical and relentless partnership emerged partially from administrators who understood what it meant to be subversive. Shortly after the birth of Emily's first son, we embarked on a years' long project to build a grant funded program in a nearby urban center. Monica, whose husband took a position that allowed him to work from home and be more present in the lives of their children who were 10 and 7, saw the grant as an opportunity to innovate and grow professionally. The largesse of the grant bought us some freedom, and an understanding dean urged us to think creatively about how to structure the work. She literally invited us to dream, and dream we did. With young children and a significant amount of responsibility in our homes, the flexibility that emerged was considerable. As mothers, we understood the pulls from home that meant we sometimes had to cover for each other (and now as

co-facilitators and teachers we could). Grateful for that space, we compensated and even overcompensated. Out from under the watchful eye of institutional bureaucrats, we merged courses, co-taught, and co-wrote, entering one of the most productive times of our careers both in terms of scholarship and in terms of our work in schools.

And yet, further tensions existed as this collaboration blossomed. At our home institution, administrators and colleagues expressed concern that we were too isolated from the lion's share work of our programs. Others worried that we did not have independent research agendas (although we both did and continued to write with others). Feeling the responsibility and obligation of those needs meant continual negotiation and renegotiation of the work we did. In some ways, it means the setting of our work has shifted dramatically over the course of our partnership—it exists both in the schools where we work throughout the state, as well as in the corridors of our university, and in our conferences and national and international academic lives. Our partnership also exists in our lives outside of institutions. Throughout our years of work together, we have lost parents and friends, served as caretakers, collaborated on pieces while in hospitals, sick beds, and even abroad on vacations. These shared events have strengthened our awareness of the power of our friendship in the ways in which we uniquely provide tailored care and support for one another.

7.5 Appearance

How do we navigate the tension between our collaboration and the expectations and norms of the university? Resistance and disruption often have to be subversive and therefore we have cultivated, and sometimes the hard way, strategies to mask the strength of our feminist friendship in order to appear as if we fit into the academy. These strategies can be as superficial as how we dress and physically present ourselves to our academic community but they also manifest in the language we use, the ways in which construct relationships with students, staff, faculty, and administrators, and in how the personas we don in our professional lives.

We have a reputation for wearing fierce fashion and in many ways, this is a kind of armor. We dress to the nines, disrupting the frumpiness more common of academia, and of academic women in specific—who are often urged to tamp down on their female expression. Since we have been told that our collaboration can at times intimidate, we assert ourselves through our clothing, shoes, makeup, and accessories. This is also a way for us to flaunt our womanhood with pride. Our students and university colleagues often comment about how we dress, remarking that they never see us in jeans, are impressed with the height of our heels, or even situate us in a fashion magazine. We are conscious of how we are perceived and therefore take care in the way we look. We each have our own unique style but we dress the way we engage in the world: boldly, taking risks with new trends, and often without fear.

Aware that our boldness and assertive nature and collaboration sometimes threatens others, we counter by very consciously developing caring relationships with our students, staff, colleagues, and administrators, something we doubt would be required

of male academics similarly perceived. We painstakingly craft emails, letters, and even presentations that are positive, gentle, and nonauthoritarian, inviting others to contribute or decide for themselves rather than be told or commanded. We are careful to always buy birthday presents, flowers, and small gifts for administrative staff and for faculty who have been ill or had a child. It is not unusual for Monica to ask questions like: "Does that make sense? What do you think? Do you understand what I am trying to say? How do you feel?" These questions serve to soften authority and create a more democratic relationship. Emily has even noted that Monica uses more exclamation points in her texts and emails, demonstrating her enthusiasm for others' ideas.

We know how valuable blending our personal and professional lives is for our own collaboration and therefore, we intentionally try to do the same with others in our workplace. Rather than get right into business, we often begin conversations by asking personal questions: "How was your weekend, party, play, or concert?" or "How are things going with your daughter, mother, sick friend, or partner?" We try as much as possible (and sometimes this involves taking turns) to show up to personal events, again acknowledging that we care for those with whom we interact as whole people. When we worked on our grant-funded project, it was not unusual for us to attend the weddings of our students and their mentor teachers, funerals of family members, or even a bris or baby shower. We always try to give a thoughtful gift or card as an extension of our care for others. This may be just because or to recognize a birthday, accomplishment, or celebrated holiday.

If our fierce fashion or caring relationship building does not work, then we resort to sharing of ourselves through humor, lightheartedness, and enthusiasm. We tell funny self-deprecating stories about ourselves that are not boastful, trying to help others see that we are humans who make mistakes, have sleepless nights, and struggle. With a teenage son who is a budding actor, Monica often shares stories with the professional staff in her office about her own nervousness about auditions and callbacks. After a particularly stressful day, we may bring chocolates or talk about needing to go to a happy hour. Recently, Monica shared with one of the professional staffs that her day had gone so badly that she went home and drank an entire beer in one seating. Emily is clear to make fun of her own compulsiveness with email or the foibles of her son. We realize that these strategies soften our perceived authority and invite others to trust us and value our potential.

7.6 Manner

In an ideal world, we would be able to maintain our professional appearance and remain calm, positive, and cool-headed throughout the interactions in our professional lives. We would perpetuate personas who are fierce, but caring and collaborative, and smart but also quirky, endearing, and human. Unfortunately, it is not always easy for us to control our emotions and the ways in which we are perceived especially in the context of the university where we are bombarded with meetings,

problems to solve, demands to produce, and the constant reminder that what we do as a team is not valued. If we react with strong emotion or passion, we have been accused of getting hysterical or overreacting, something noticeably lacking in critiques of passionate men. Our quick responsiveness and urgency has been perceived as overly emotional or even inappropriate. We are reminded to "calm down," "not to get hysterical," and "to slow down." Our minds are continually encouraged to be privileged and used over feelings or the body. Our academic context often feels like an insurmountable weight that we cannot remove from our shoulders and often we reach our breaking point and begin to feel like we will explode. Our explosions are often emotional—ranging from fear, anger, and even sadness or a combination of all three. Over the past 7 years, on more than one occasion we have found ourselves sobbing in a meeting, angrily verbally attacking a colleague, or defending one another. Monica has shared that when she gets the sense that Emily is under attack, her response is visceral, almost feeling how she feels when she is trying to defend or protect one of her children. On a couple of very unfortunate occasions, she has composed an email to Emily expressing her anger that mistakenly is addressed to the very person with whom she is angry. Embarrassing as those emails have been and the aftermath of the apologies, Monica realizes that they occurred because she could no longer contain her emotions to appear stable, calm, and approachable. As she works on a more balanced mind/body connection through the work of Five Rhythms as well as Theater of the Oppressed, she has begun to realize the tensions that emerge when attempts are made to repress emotions or conform to a persona that is feelings-free. Together we work to find ways to support one another to use the emotions rather then shut them off.

7.7 Front

Using the body has been one way that we try to navigate the strains of so carefully measuring our outward manner. At moments our passion and our commitments—to each other, to ourselves as whole people, have backfired against us. When we fight too hard, come on "too strong" in our commitment to our work, we have shut down others, even if inadvertently. We have constantly turned to each other in frustration that our carefully applied strategies do not always serve us. It could perhaps be in an attempt to be democratic that comes across as authoritative despite the attempts to engage our colleagues through humor, self-deprecation, and connections to their lives. Because all of those strategies may do little to compensate the underlying deep passion we have for our work, our belief that we do, in fact, have talents and knowledge that matter and should be heard; that we should not have to subvert the system to engage in the work we want to do it as well as *how* we think it should be done. The emotional engagement that sustains us and is so deeply central to who we are, has been challenging as it bubbles over into rage or despair when we feel isolated or weighted down by the burdens of institutional forces. Some of the practices that have helped us work through the strains and tensions include:

1. We encourage each other to find spaces for our needs as humans in a world where constant work is the norm. We support our efforts at turning off email, in taking vacations, now often rotating who takes a vacation because we know the other will guard our time away as nobody else will. Dance, running, and friendships—hours for these must be jealously guarded. Sometimes one of us needs the other to give permission to the other to miss one of the endless numbers of meetings scheduled (often without thought to the scheduling demands of parents), to say no to an invitation, to take some days away from the university and work from home.
2. We seek to model collaboration for others, particularly our students, thinking about what it looks like to honor the person and the professional. We attempt to bring this to our work when we lead the department, mentor faculty, mentor doctoral students, and write collaboratively. We believe we grow through empathy, listening, and through giving back to one another. We nurture each other's intellectual and emotional needs, sometimes in partnership and sometimes through encouraging work with others or on our own. Recently, Monica published a book dear to her heart that she had labored on for years, a book deeply personal and cherished. Our partnership meant the obvious—that Emily would encourage her writing of it even if it meant collaborative projects were placed on the back burner (although Monica's strong and overwhelming sense of obligation meant that was rarely the case) that Emily would read it and be able to talk with her about it. Imagine how this scenario felt for Monica—to have her research partner provide her space and encouragement to work on a project dear to her heart amid the pressures of academia. Even though Emily was not involved with the book, she helped to finish it through her love and support.
3. We make space to celebrate one another's accomplishment, however, great or small. The daily affirmations of the ways in which we succeed serve as a means to resist the ways that academia limits our accomplishments to numbers of publications and dollars of grants. We recognize that what is often meaningful for us are the connections we foster and build, the ways in which we challenge ourselves. Celebrating these moments sustains us.

7.8 Front Stage, Back Stage, and Off Stage

In addition to the concrete ways we describe above, as the strains of academia have intensified, we have turned towards each other to help us navigate the pulls and pushes at our time and ourselves. We have resisted the ways that academia demands us to be isolated, solitary, hierarchical, and competitive—and have brought our feminist values to our work and collaboration. Below, we detail the overarching philosophical shifts we have tried to make in our friendship as a means of resistance:

1. *Changing time*: Our collaboration disrupts the neoliberal university's agenda. We value each other's time. We understand that to be thoughtful scholars and teachers we need time to think, process, and reflect. In order to do this, we resist

continually being on the proverbial hamster wheel. Besides pressure to produce, produce, produce, we could potentially attend meetings and answer emails all week long. Our collaborative partnership has helped us to get off the hamster wheel. We share the work as much as possible and divide and conquer. We rarely both attend meetings or answer the same emails. Instead we take turns, allowing for the other time to work on scholarship or participate in some self-care.

2. *Engaging as full humans*: We acknowledge each other as full human beings. We do not separate out the work and the person—both in our conversations and in the enactment of that work. This manifests in a variety of ways; in our conversations, we move effortlessly from a conversation about a student, an assignment, or scheduling demands to one about our families or lives outside of work. Those conversations about our lives are not incidental or "outside"—they feed our work and our thinking. Once at a conference, sightseeing along the water in Chicago with Emily's son (when we were "stealing" time from the conference) became the source of the introduction to a chapter that had been stymieing us. We do not assume that the person is meant to be outside of work, rather we understand and view the two as inextricably connected.
3. *Tolerate change*: We recognize and accept the contradictions in who we are—that we are ambitious and not ambitious at the same time; we know that humans are complex that we change and that we have to allow each other to be different from who we were yesterday.
4. *Express gratitude*: We intentionally express gratitude to one another for every act and favor and to those with whom we work. These are ways to acknowledge what the other has done, another disruptive tactic to the academy that asks us to produce, produce, produce but rarely demonstrates gratitude. We are building each other up because we know that this care for one another nurtures the whole self. We try to infuse gratitude in our everyday interactions with staff, faculty, and students as a way to model and disrupt the normal tone of our community.
5. *Resist*: And finally, we continue to push boundaries even if that means making others in the academy uncomfortable. We value our relationship over what we are able to produce. We strive to put into practice Mountz et al. (2015)'s call to action: "What if we counted differently? Instead of articles published or grants applied for, what if we accounted for thank you notes received, friendships formed, collaborations forged?" (p. 1243). Our intentions echo Mountz et al. (2015) further as we too value collective authorship even amidst the pressures for individuality. We too believe that "collective authorship and the decision not to identify individuals by name or otherwise represent a feminist politics: a commitment to working together to resist and challenge neoliberal regimes of time and the difficult, depoliticizing conditions they impose on work and life for all of us" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1239). Together, we have the strength and determination to challenge the patriarchal structures and epistemology of the university.

7.9 Conclusion

Recently, we have wondered, what it might look like to dramatically try to restructure the academic world to reflect both the feminist values, particularly as they relate to caring, friendship, and mind/body connections and wholeness. We wondered—how do we make time for our whole selves in the work place? We are reminded by Meyerhoff, Johnson, and Braun (2011) that we should not be focused on "making more time" for our work. Rather, we need to think about ways to change how we frame time. We do not need more time, "but rather eventful time; not just more hours to work within the linear time of capitalist development, but rather conditions in which our work—individually and collectively—can become its own productive, self-positing and self-differentiating movement" (p. 487). We wonder what it might look like to "change time?" and to move beyond our small collaborative resistance (and in some cases rejection) to better align the university to the self. Do our actions of resistance amount to any meaningful change when, ultimately, we continue to work within the same structures we find oppressive? Is the act of our blossoming friendship enough to change institutions that deny it? Is saying "GIRL I hear you" enough? Even if that hearing is enacted within spaces that would have us not hear each other? These are the questions with which we are willing to live in limbo because our collective mind and body know intuitively that without our feminist friendship, we might now be able to continue to exist within the academy.

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