**Episode 44 - We Get Angry**

[Intro music. "You are listening to Sandy and Nora's podcast."]

[At the same time.]

Nora: Hey Sandy.

Sandy: Hey Nora.

Sandy: Whaaat?! (Nora laughs.) Why you always trying to be first like that? Like why does it have to, why does it have to be a fight and a struggle every single time? (Nora laughs.) Like some parts of our lives don't have to be struggles, Nora.

Nora: I, I, I just felt like most recently it may have been you first so I actually just thought that I (laughs)...

Sandy: OK, let's do it again, you can go first.

Nora: (Laughing.) No it's fine. I don't care.

Sandy: I'm giving you the opportunity.

Nora: Ahhhh. (In a meek voice). Hey Sandy!

Sandy: (In a flat voice.) Hey Nora.

Nora: How, how you doin'? (Both laugh.)

Sandy: Well, I'mmmmm not angry right now.

Nora: (Sounding surprised.) You're not?!

Sandy: No, I'm always angry. (Laughs.) How are you doing?

Nora: I mean, OK, so how am I doing? I, so whenever we have a conversation I feel, I feel very happy to talk to you, um, I enjoy talking to you...

Sandy: Awwwwe, that's so sweet. Thank-you.

Nora: Yeah, it's true, it really is true. And I get worked up about stuff but I'm never, like, pissed.

Sandy: Oh, OK.

Nora: But I am. Mostly always pissed (laughs) otherwise.

Sandy: Yeah, I feel like I live a life of being angry. But it's also like my, perhaps, one of my favourite emotions.

Nora: Ohhhh.

Sandy: I mean, OK, I'm exaggerating a little bit. I'm not angry all of the time, though I am frustrated a lot of the time. Ummm, but, I, I think that anger is a really important emotion for those of us on the left. Because, I don't know how you feel about anger, but I feel like I learn the most about the world when I'm angry.

Nora: Ohhhhh. See, I don't think of anger as a, a learning frame although I can, I think I understand what you're saying. For me anger is what drives me to express myself and to tackle issues and so...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: Yeah, let's talk about anger for this episode, which is I think...

Sandy: Let's talk about anger!

Nora: It's like the last for 2018, I think.

Sandy: Yaaaaas and then we're going to go on a little break so...

Nora: Yeah!

Sandy: I think this is a good way to end 2018, which has been a pretty frustrating year in politics.

Nora: Totally. TOTALLY! Totally.

Sandy: So, anger.

Nora: Anger. (Makes angry grunting noise.) I'm so mad.

Sandy: Two women, two women, talking about anger (Nora laughs) on a podcast. One of them Black. Oooooof. (Both laugh.) This has the potential to be explosive (both laugh). Is there room for anger on. the. left?

Nora: OK. Actually, here. Let's reframe this. Is it possible to be on the left without being angry (laughing)?

Sandy: (Laughs.) Well when ya put it that way. No! (Laughs).

Nora: Because I think that this is and, and, and, this will touch a whole bunch of different stuff and let's, and let's even maybe define the left because I find that a lot of times men won't get women's anger...

Sandy: Mhmm. You, you, you want to define the left?!

Nora: Yeah, I mean, just broadly speaking because usually when I say the left, I usually mean sometimes the broad left, so anybody that would vote Liberal to actual like, like anarchists. And then sometimes I'm actually just talking...

Sandy: Mmm OK. because I'm not trying to define any of that stuff. Mmm mmm, I don't want to get into no arguments about that. (Nora laughs.) So you define it, I'll stick within your realms. Over here sittin' pretty. Mmm mmm.

Nora: The, the political spectrum I think actually has a bit um of a reaction to anger. Because I feel like the further you go to the centre - and I'm not gonna to talk about the right - but the further you go to the centre it's like the least angry you're allowed to be.

Sandy: Mhmm. No doubt.

Nora: That in the centre you're supposed to be rational, you're supposed to make good arguments, you're supposed to sit down, hold mother fucking hands with Steve Bannon, and be like "who hurt you?"

Sandy: (Both laugh.) Yes, and there's an assumption in that, in that everyone's playing by the same rules, everyone's interacting in good faith...

Nora: Oh yeah.

Sandy: Meaning that we all wanna have an honest debate and come to the best possible solution for the majority of people in this wonderful progressive democracy.

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: And there's no room for anger there, if you are angry, if you show such, such uncontrolled emotion because anger is, is an uncontrolled irrational emotion or that's how we're taught about anger, then you can't possibly be a part of a productive conversation that would lead us to an even better democracy, and so there is no room for anger in the centre.

Nora: Right.

Sandy: But there's all sorts of debates like, in the last like five years I'd say, maybe even three, maybe even less, about anger, about use of force, like punching Nazis is what I mean by that. (Laughs). You know? About frustration on the left and how, how the left expresses frustration and whether or not that should be allowed or not.

Nora: Mhmm, mhmm. And then, and then within the left how do you address when you are angry with someone or the notion of tone policing, which I, I think is actually a very interesting phenomenon, when people are talking about tone policing, like “why are you getting so mad at me?" And it's like "woah I can be mad if I want!" And then that becomes its own argument.

Sandy: (Laughs.) Yeah.

Nora: (Laughs.) And I just love, I love seeing when people are angry and pissed and ready for fucking action. I love that.

Sandy: Yeah.

Nora: And so, what is happening when people are, like, put off by that?

Sandy: (Deep sigh.) Well I think it says a lot about our culllltuuuure and I think, well I don't know, well I.... OK, why don't you tell me what you think there, like where are you going with that question?

Nora: There's a push on the far right to get people on the left to act out, to do something aggressive or violent or just to just to push them to their limit and then you film it and it becomes a big to do, a big hubbub because this person like displayed you know actions that were bad or whatever. And I, I feel like that, that kind of happens like you know being provoked at a, at a, at a, you walk by someone that's telling you that abortion is murder and you kick over a sign and then it's like "woah fuck you that was like the worst thing you could do." Or like the first time that I met the far right was when, like online, was when I was saying that, um, you know in response to Faith Goldy being a complete Nazi just saying like, I said I was getting closer to advocating smashing her cameras and they were like "Oh fuck, that's so fucking bullshit that you would say that." That was the far right orchestrating this stuff, but so many people who would call themselves progressive get caught up in these kinds of flash points.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: And so, it's like if we were more comfortable with anger, I feel like we on the left would be much easier to say "yeah, I'm not condoning that" if let's say if someone like punched someone. Or maybe I'm condoning it, maybe I'm not condoning it, but this is obviously created to make me condone or not condone it, so I'm not even going to say shit about it. How 'bout that?

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: Or smashing windows, right? "Do you condone violence and smashing windows?" It's like, I'm not going to sit here and be like "yeah, let's go smash every window" or "nah, put that guy in jail". I'm not going to play this game. But we're so unable on the left to deal with anger and to deal with the expressions of anger, or even internally to have a debate about tactics that may be fuelled by irrationality or fuelled by anger...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: That we find ourselves really at a disadvantage to be able to soberly respond to these provocations. And the provocations are so effective that they keep happening and they are going to continue to keep happening and they happen either by swarming people online or as I say filming someone in an untenable situation or whatever because there's this liberal-ey emotion of "oh my god, like, we have to appeal to, we have to be nice to people, we can't insult people." I mean every time I call Lisa MacLeod trash because she's mother fucking trash (Sandy laughs) I always get women telling me that that is just unprincipled language, "how can you call her trash? She's still a woman."

Sandy: Why is it, why is it unprincipled? (Laughing.) Where, what principle did you lack in describing a trash bag as a trash bag? Like what, what principle is there that has been attacked? That has not been respected?

Nora: Uhhhh, liberalism.

Sandy: (Laughs.) Exactly! (Nora laughs.) Which is like fuck that! It's just, you know it's just like... So when I said earlier that anger is like an emotion that is really useful for learning (laughs) I truly mean this, and this is something that I've thought through quite a bit because I'm often understood as angry as a Black woman, whether I'm angry or not. And it like, there are multiple ways by which communicate with one another. Like, we use our words, because you guys are listening to us. We use our silence, right? And we can use our tone of voice, how we are expressing if we are in front of someone and someone can see us, like how we're gesticulating and all of that right? If someone is communicating to you like in an angry way, in a sad way, in a happy way, whatever it is, they're also helping to communicate how much of an issue whatever they're communicating is. So, like, for example if you are communicating an issue of say state violence against your community, why should you be expected to communicate that without anger? That would be, that makes no sense to me. You should communicate it with anger because it's an extra level of communication that says to whoever the listener is "this is important" (laughs) "this is fucked up" and "this is unacceptable" or whatever. And in our culture, which I guess is I don't know an offshoot of victorianism and liberalism, like we don't like to express these other levels of communication which are so necessary to truly understanding what somebody is talking about. But also, because some of us, like Black women, are constructed as angry all the time, and therefore irrational and therefor not worth listening to. Like the idea that you, you, you put anger or emotion regardless in the category that is called irrational in a category that is called like not worth listening to rather than in a category of it is rational to feel angry about these things and it is in fact irrational to pretend that you don't, um, is also putting whole identities of people off the table to listen to. Like you know, like just saying that they are not worth listening to, and that's ridiculous. I think that there, as I said last week, the world is ending (laughs) and how can you not be angry about that? You should. Like there's, it doesn't make sense for us to say (in an unemotional voice) "um, Nora I'm going to talk to you about this issue OK? And the issue that I need to speak to you about, is climate change, and so we're all going to diiiie, very soon and you know I feel no emotions towards this" (Nora laughs) "but I just want to have a reallly, you know, honest conversation and debate in fact, let's debate this and perhaps we can come to a conclusion that makes sense" and then Nora responds with "well actually capital is king and I don't care if we're going to die in 50 years" (Nora laughs) and I say (in a dainty voice) "OK Nora, well that's an interesting perspective, that's really good, um, I like the way that you made your point very clear, um, but you know I think..." Like, that's ridiculous! (Laughs). That doesn't make any sense, why would we expect that that is the way that conversations should go? End rant. (Both laugh.)

Nora: I, I liked the idea that you're a, having a really positive and rational conversation with someone about climate change. I think this, there's, that made me think of two things and I'll first start with and maybe I'll remember to come back to the second. But, it's one thing to have these conversations one on one.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: It's one thing to have someone be angry about something that happened to them, but when you actually generalize that across entire populations, that's where that dehumanization and full scale marginalization of people is really easy. Because if you're community is constantly under threat or constantly being attacked by police or constantly having members of your community go missing or are murdered...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: You will have expressions of anger because anyone in those situations, in those conditions would have expressions of anger. And so we've got a situation where society doesn't facilitate the translation of that anger very well and we have disproportionate people feeling that anger and who are fuelled for change by an anger rooted in senseless violence, horrible unspeakable violence, and then you have some piece of fucking shit who's like "well I've never experienced that, why the fuck are you guys so angry"...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: (Laughs.) It's like, this is how the entire construction of Canadian society has, has happened politically and in the media. And then it's managed to infect itself on the left where there's this belief that you know our campaigns have to be positive, we have to call for something not against something. (Sandy laughs). No one wants to be, "don't be such a downer when you're talking about climate change, like there's things that we call can do" and then you, you do it and then you fail and you're like "fuck man, that sucked and I'm never going to get involved again" (Sandy laughs) "because I tried and I was positive and now I'm angry". And anger is only like good for talking with you friends when you're at the bar, maybe yelling at your partner (laughing). Anger's been so personalized.

Sandy: Yeah!

Nora: That there really isn't a proper public expression of collective anger, collective rage.

Sandy: Or an accepted proper... yeah.

Nora: Well so, so what does this mean for us on the left? So like, I don't know, here's like an ode to being angry all the fucking time. Like 1) You can't not be angry. (Both laugh.)

Sandy: How would that be possible? It is not.

Nora: Literally it's not possible. 2) When you see someone who's being angry, don't tell them not to be angry. That's enraging. (Laughs.)

Sandy: Yeah. So, so OK tell me about this interaction that you had on Twitter, or an interaction that you've had on Twitter and let's, let's go through why it's ridiculous.

Nora: Sure! Uh, so there's two that I’m thinking of in particular. One, uh, is related to, as I say, you've got Lisa MacLeod who's a provincial, member of provincial parliament in Ontario, who's like one of the fucking worst of Doug Ford's people. And the stuff that they're diong, and the stuff that she's promoting, like she's the kind of person that says "the best welfare program is a job." And it's like, I want to throw rocks at someone that says that (laughs).

Sandy: Yeah.

Nora: And you know, you're like, I can't say I want to throw rocks at you because then people are going to be like you're violent, the police are going to be called and all of that stuff. I once said that Glen Murray should be kicked or something in the knees and literally someone was like "I have reported you to Toronto police they're going to call you soon". So it's like, OK, that's fucked up.

Sandy: Whaaat?

Nora: Yeah, yeah, that happened to me once. So you know I'm always very aware of when you say something that could be construed as a threat, like you've got to be very fucking careful when people are watching you all of the time. So it doesn't help that, you know let's say in this case Lisa MacLeod she's a trash bag piece of shit that needs to be fucking be put into a cave and never allowed to come out. Like that's where she should be. (Sandy laughs.) For example.

Sandy: Are you angry right now?

Nora: No, no, no, no. Yeah, fuck, of course I'm angry.

Sandy: I'm kidding. Yeah, OK.

Nora: It was good, that was good. (Sandy laughs.) So then what is it that makes someone come to me and say: "Hey Nora, like what the fuck? Why are you, why are you so angry about this? Like I agree with the politics but we're never going to get anything done if you're going to call Lisa MacLeod trash because she's a woman and we are women." And that is some fucked up white feminism! And fuck you! And now I want you to live in a cave with her too! (Both laugh.)

Sandy: Yeah, it's a, I mean like let's take a look at like the record also of, of Lisa MacLeod and the types of things that she is supporting, the end of the Child and Youth Advocate, like her statements on the, the changing the sexual education program, like her blatant disregard for workers and her like you know we were talking about decorum in the house or whatever, like how people are wearing T-shirts, let's have a look at the way that she responds in the house, like in terms of deorum it's like she's just a vile person.

Nora: Yup.

Sandy: And not to say that people can't be vile, like go do your thing, be vile if you are. But like we're going to be able, like I should be able to respond and say you're a vile human being (laughs)...

Nora: Yup.

Sandy: ...as a response. Um, why shouldn't you be angry about that kind of a record? I think that the ability to not be angry about whatever politics is happening of the day really just like is a reveal of how much privilege you have.

Nora: Mhmm.

Sandy: Like if you are able to just put it aside and not be scared and not be sad or whatever it is, sometimes that means that perhaps whatever it is isn't touching you in the same way that it is touching someone who is very, very angry.

Nora: Mhmm.

Sandy: And like, organizing is fuelled by anger. Social change is fuelled by anger. And I, you know I don't know why we would be in the place that we are in, on the left, and thinking to ourselves that we can't be angry in this moment. We have to be angry in this moment. Uh, and like, I don't know I like, I, like my type of organizing doing Black liberation organizing like we are angry, of course. Like how can we not be? Like, this is, this is the condition under which we organize, and there are people who you know criticize that by saying like "you guys appear too much..." but those are people who believe that like our, our political engagement should come from a place where we very strategically think about how we are going to dampen all of our feelings first (laughs), dampen all of our asks or demands, or the way that we present ourselves, which is about compromise, and you know perhaps people are still in, in, in the idea or the like misconception that compromise is what's going to win the day in this day and age. But if you're past that, if you have recognized that "Oh OK we can't compromise with like Nazis and the alt-right and the conservatives and wherever the hell they're going" like how can you not be angry? How can you not be angry? It's just so irrational to me (laughs) it doesn't make any sense.

Nora: Listening to what you're saying and I'm thinking about like the Liberals. Right? So like the Liberals got elected, the federal Liberals got elected in direct confrontation to Stephen Harper.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: And they got elected because they had a guy who like you know was more together than the other guy, right? Like the the collapse of the NDP because the campaign was really long and there was some missteps versus the Liberal party that's a machine that you know managed to get through the entire election with fewer missteps or press made less of a big deal about certain things. And you had a guy who, like I don't think Justin Trudeau can get all that angry, um, he we've seen him be like aggressive in the House of Commons...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: But he doesn't come across as an angry dude, he comes across as a guy who loves love, and a guy who loves to love, and you know I don't get the sense that he's probably been abusive to his wife, right, there's some politicians where you can kind of see it and you're like "woah." And Trudeau?

Sandy: I would never have described him that way?

Nora: No?

Sandy: As a guy who loves love, no. But he comes across very bumbling to me, like I don't understand why he's taken so seriously, but.... (laughs)

Nora: Ah, OK that's a whole other fucking issue. Yeah.

Sandy: It's a whole other podcast.

Nora: (Laughing.) Yeah. Please, I fucking, I hope that someone in the PMO listens to this, because that would be wickedly fucking hilarious. And fuck you then, actually. He's the kind of guy that you know “you grow the economy from your fucking ass to the fucking sky and it's just glorious” and all this kind of stuff, and that's how we lift each other up. Um, and then you know, you look at the NDP and what was super fascinating from the perspective of Québec was that the NDP ran, ah, in 2015 of course with Thomas Mulcair and Mulcair in this province was known as an angry politician.

Sandy: Oh, interesting.

Nora: Oh yeah! He, angry Tom, he was a pitbull, he was the guy in the Liberal caucus that would really go after the facts, and we saw that in the House of Commons, whenever he made an intervention it was, it was, it was, it was angry, it was good. Right? He took on Stephen Harper.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: And then Trudeau won and I feel like it reinforced bad analysis around the use of happiness and hope and love versus being pissed all of the time. (Sandy laughs.) Because a lot of my complaints certainly come from people like that you describe, people that don't probably, probably have benefit of not having to be angry about certain things or whatever. But some of it also comes from people who are just really partisan and who...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: ...are attracted to the Liberal party and are attracted to this politics of fucking hope and like all of this stupid shit that I can't fucking believe attracts people (laughs). Like maybe I'm just playing my hand that I'm a cynical fucking asshole but, ummm. It's funny because there is a limit to that because the NDP now is in a situation where they can't be angry because Jagmeet Singh has become hope and courage, love and courage, you know coming off of the, of the hope and love and whatever the fuck of, um, Jack Layton. And then they tried to make Mulcair into that and of course it wasn't authentic, you could see through it. They guy was like (in an angry gruff voice) "lemme out lemme out!" Like huh, OK. (Both laugh.) So there's a natural limit to it because now you have you know Andrew Scheer can play both like this goofy skippy kind of character but also an angry kind of guy pissed that Justin Trudeau's making errors but then the NDPs kind of handcuffed itself to be love, and happy (both laugh).

Sandy: Well do you think that, like, so much so that they can't turn that around?

Nora: I don't think that Jagmeet can turn it around for a lot of racist reasons.

Sandy: Ahaa. Ahaa.

Nora: I don't think that he can be angry. So there's, there's, there's certainly that. I also don't think that he's the kind of guy to get angry (laughs).

Sandy: I, I wish that I, I had seen his... Like I don't know, like I've never seen him perform angry.

Nora: See this is my point. Like, I, I don't recall him, uh, you know Deputy Premier in Ontario, sorry Deputy, um, Leader when he was a Member of Provincial Parliament.

Sandy: Yeah, yeah.

Nora: I don't recall him being angry. He talks very calm, he talks like kind of a guy who's pretty good with what's going on with his life and he's happy, and certainly the whole first two years of him being leader have been you know - or two years? one year? - of him is he's just got married and things are wicked and he's like super happy to meet people and he's travelling Canada and it's awesome and, there, I have not seen him express anger. And I suspect that...

Sandy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Nora: .... part of it is, is racism. Although I'm also sure that part of it is because there's this dominant thinking on the social democratic left that you get more flies with honey, that you attract more people talking about love, that you can attract people being positive. And I think that's a mistake.

Sandy: And people are still trying to emulate like the hope and change Obama campaign. Rather than like...

Nora: 100%.

Sandy: Guys, the Tea Party is way bigger than it was in 20, 2007 or whenever it was. Remember the Tea Party? (Laughs.)

Nora: Oh my god, yeah, I do.

Sandy: It's a different world now.

Nora: And it doesn't even have to be Justin, ah Justin, Justin Singh. (Laughs.) Jagmeet Singh.

Sandy: Woooow. (Laughs.)

Nora: Um. It's. (Laughs.)

Sandy: Oh god.

Nora: It could be easily someone in his caucus or it could be someone in the house. Like it could easily be Guy Caron, right, he's the guy, he's the House Leader. He could be angry. But there's just, so that's what tells me that it's it's also a construction of the party's pol, ah umm, strategy right now.

Sandy: Whether intentionally or not.

Nora: Yeah, well I suspect it's intentional, I don't think that there's anything that the party's doing that's unintentional.

Sandy: Yeah. Fuck, no. But people must be angry. Like, I just don't under..If you are, if you are not angry I, I, I like maybe you have other feelings. Like maybe you're sad. (Laughs.) Or something. (Nora laughs.) But the conditions under which people are living right now, if you are concerned about them, if you are wanting to work for you know, workers or women or, um, you know Trans liberation or whatever it is it's like, I just, I can't understand how you're looking at the condition of like the, the, the political debates that are going on in official and unofficial arenas and not be angry, like what does that say about you is the question that I ask. Like, to, like again to me anger is a really revealing emotion and when someone's angry they're like really communicating something to you and so I, when someone's not angry it's also communicating something to you. And I, I just, I can't understand how certain issues, like you're expected to not be angry, to me, it's, it's just, it's false. It's, it's, it's, it's false, it's irrational, it's inauthentic, it's all sorts of words that are jumbled up in the my head right now (Nora laughs) that I, you know it just doesn't make sense. It just doesn't make sense simply.

Nora: So do we need to get more angry on the left? Is anger going to turn the NDP’s chances around? Or is anger gonna make a social movement be more powerful in 2019? Or are they right and we're actually just wrong that actually you only can get elected by talking about love?

Sandy: (Laughs.) I think that, I think that, um, passion is really important in any sort of political ahhh social movement, any sort of move to try to change society, passion is really important. And passion is expressed in many different ways and one of those, those expressions can be anger. And so to me, yeeah, hell yeah, I think that getting more angry and being more honest about being angry and like normalizing anger in the world like being able to see people be angry helps organizing. If there's a place for people to put their anger and to make it productive, that is organizing in a lot of ways.

Nora: Yes.

Sandy: And I think that that is so useful, it's so helpful to capture passion and made it productive I think that it could only help the left. I think that pretending that, you know, there is no passion there, or really trying to be as dispassionate as possible about really important issues, I don't think it's serving us. (Laughs.) To be quite frank.

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: And I don't think it's serving us to pretend that, uh, the type of passion that we want to express is another type of passion that in fact I'm gonna hug a Nazi today, you know? (Laughs.) Like I just...

Nora: Until his head falls off!

Sandy: (Both laugh.) Right? I just I don't think that that, that that false passion, like I'm so passionate about the love that I want to put into the world that I'm going to like very inauthentically, uh, pretend that I'm, I'm gonna like hug a Nazi. Like, that doesn't make any sense.

Nora: Mhmm.

Sandy: I think that it can only help us to accept different manifestations of passion including anger, and like people are angry and scared. There's a certain passion in being scared as well and I think that it's OK to be honest about, um, about our feeling sad to not drive an artificial wedge between what is rational and what is emotional. I've always that that was such a strange dichotomy to force upon... Like it is a very rational thing to be, um, to have emotions or emotional response to whatever the fuck is happening around you (laughs) like that is, like it just seems kind of obvious to me, and so I, I hope that we can live in a world where that's accepted. I think it would take some work to do that, but I, I, yeah! I think hey, there's always time to turn things around. Or there's not, but it probably benefits us to believe that there's time (Nora laughs) so I’m just going to go with that. Um, there's always time (Sandy laughs) to turn things around and so fuck why not? What do you think?

Nora: I'm, I'm totally there and I think that, I think that the way to think about anger is to not see anger as the flip side of love, ‘cause I think that that's, I think that that's fucking not helpful actually. That love is a very specific kind of emotion that I know I hope everyone gets to feel tand that you feel it in different ways and you feel it with different things that you do and that the absence of love or the opposite of love is not anger. And so anger, yeah, finding ways to normalize anger to show people that being angry is OK, I think that is sooooo, that is such a good point that you made, because people feel so isolated and so lonely and when you see the injustice around you and that someone like I don't know like people like big, big personalities on the, in the social democratic left talking about love and being loving and everything's OK and optimistic and stuff, it can be really alienating actually.

Sandy: Yeah, yeah.

Nora: Because you're like wait. What, how, why am I the only one that's feeling this anger? And then there is this whole discussion around self care and how do we take care of ourselves when we're angry all the time and all this. And it's like but we don't even have a pressure valve to allow us to express our anger.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: That you cannot say certain things because you will be filmed saying it or you will be attacked because because your anger isn't really acceptable like as much as we says that social change is fuelled by anger the second you get angry in a lot of groups on the left it's, it depends on the group. Sometimes that goes really poorly actually, you're very quickly dismissed.

Sandy: Yeah, yeah.

Nora: And they are, you know in the labour movement for sure, if you're angry about something in the labour movement, if you're anger isn't exactly the anger that kind of is acceptable you can quite quickly find yourself being labelled as irrational or marginal or whatever.

Sandy: Mhmm.

So that's really important. But for me the flip side of anger isn't love it's, it's, it's humour. I think that those two things have to...

Sandy: MMMMMMmmmMMMM. Provocative.

Nora: I think those two things really are what has to go, what has to be driven. You know if you're a politician let's say, or if you're the NDP, you've got a program and your program isn't just based in anger, you want pharmacare not because you're pissed about, the, the, the system as it is but you want to make sure that people don't die, can afford drugs, OK.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: So it's not anger driving that. But when you're expressing emotions anger should be counterbalanced by humour, and should be counterbalanced by finding humour in situations that are untenable because I think that that's actually way more natural for how humans exist, that when you're angry about a situation that you survive it through developing humour, developing good humour around certain things.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: And we, we're (laughing) we're really bad at being humorous like in general, like we're not funny.

Sandy: I think that that is a really interesting point. Yeah, well you are (both laugh.)

Nora: I mean like other than me!

Sandy: (Laughs.) No, I think that that's a good, I think that's a really good point. Ummm that I'm going to think about for a while, like is the opposite of anger humour? Hmm. But, but the other, the other piece of this to discuss and you kind of touched on it a little bit is being angry in an amongst the left.

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: Within, within our organizations, within the place that we organize in and very often it can be the way that people justify excommunicating someone.

Nora: Yeaaaaaah.

Sandy: Or taking them out of their organizing spaces. You know they got angry or they you know they expressed the wrong type of emotion at the at the wrong time or whatever. Just as you were explaining with like labour union or whatever. And (pshhhhh) well one there's not enough of us to justify doing that, so stop. (Both laugh.) Ummmm, but, but also what a travesty! Right? Anger, it is, it is a form of communication.

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: If someone's angry there's, there's something behind that, like someone has experienced something where they're telling you, like maybe you disagree, but you know try to listen to what they are telling you....

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: ...they're so passionate about. Like instead of dispelling someone because you're like “oh my god they're so angry. I, I, I just can't listen to them.” Like why? (Nora laughs.) That's ridiculous. You're being ridiculous. Like try to understand what has made them so passionate about this particular issue so as to express it in this way to you. They're being honest.

Nora: Yeah.

Sandy: (Laughs.) Like it's really important. And you know I see this, you know, in a lot of organizing that I've done. I've seen this around issues of, say sexual assault, where people will be angry talking about an experiences that they've had or knowledge that they have and and people dispelling that type of reaction. But why shouldn't she be angry about that?

Nora: Mhmm.

Sandy: It's a very important form of communication.

Nora: It it often exposes, ah, discomfort. Right? That, that we're not, we're not actually comfortable with what is being discussed and so if someone's getting angry, and I you know I'll say this, like in some spaces where you have, um, someone who doesn't want to look like they are a bad person or that their politics are bad or something like this and in my case if it's it's written I tend to go for the jugular (laughs) so like maybe my bad. And I'll, like a really basic example might be, um, you know like just average people talking about "well you know I'm selling girl's pants" and you say "well what about those pants make them girl's pants?" and then they lose their mind. And then all of a sudden they're like "why, why, why are you being so angry about this. Why are you turning this into something else? Like, I'm just trying to sell girls pants,” or something like this. And then I'm all like "well, I'm actually trying to make this a teaching moment but sorry I'm actually really fucking angry about this too because you're attitude kills people, literally. And let me explain to you how" and then it's a bit like "bahhh" and these are people again who would consider themselves like broadly progressive but you know are imbued with all of the same societal impressions that we all are and you're struggling with that all of the time. But, because we have this inability to debate and the second that you kind of poke on something just a little bit with someone that's not comfortable with that issue, often that's where you get that, that whole like, that whole phenomenon of tone policing, of why are you responding to me like this? Why are you yelling at me like this? Why are you being unfair to me? What did I do? This doesn't have anything to do with me. That kind of, like very defensive. And it's kind of like, why don't we just like embrace the fact the people are angry?

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: And be like "woah, OK, something here is going on, I'm going to step back and be like what exactly is it?" And then, and then, but again we also have lost like the whole art of debate. So maybe this whole discussion is actually shadow boxing on a dog.

Sandy: That people everyone that's like "no but we just need a debate" don't actually know what they are talking about? (Both laugh.)

Nora: Yeah, well, like it's hard too for me to untie some of the, the places that people get angry that I'm angry versus...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: Um, how difficult to like consistently be bumping up against things that make me really angry on the left. So you know bumping up against leadership that won't move or people that manage to actually get rid of your work or something like this. You know I'm always trying to get pieces placed and that's always very difficult and I find especially with men, it's like I want to men to be angry about the things that I'm angry about and I don't see it enough. And then I'm like...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: What the fuck man? Why are you not angry about that. And I don't know if it's because it's an oppression thing and men just can't see what I'mseeing/sayingin this situation and therefore they actually can't get angry about it or there's just a lack of knowing how to be angry because we also are very bad at untying anger and aggression.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: Which I actually think are two very different emotions.

Sandy: Yup. Very much so. Very much so. That's a good point.

Nora: And, and, ya, but because it's like the second you get angry then you're getting aggressive and it's like well are you getting aggressive or is this aggression coming from anger or is this coming from power or blah blah blah? There's a lot of ways to untie this.

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: But we don't have any good role models for how to be productively angry because being angry is so easily marginalized on the left and in general...

Sandy: Mhmm.

Nora: ... and that makes me so angry.

Sandy: (Laughs.) Yeah, I, I agree and I, I as a final point on how like what an instructive, uh, emotion anger is. I, like, when I think back to all the times when I've learned the most, like, in my coming to consciousness, like on the left, becoming you know this person who I am today. Often times it's because someone has been angry at something that I didn't understand, or I was understanding it incorrectly, or I didn't get it, and I was responding in a way that was maybe fucked up and people were angry and, uh, told me about myself (laughs) and we were actually on a panel a couple of weeks ago where, uh, this type of question came up in a different way where someone was asking about being defensive or so on when you're trying to learn stuff on the left. Um, but that, that anger and learning how not to respond defensively and learning how to listen for what the anger is telling me has taught me so much more than any workshop, more than any being in school, even like an organizing experience of somebody telling me what's up, the experience of listening to someone who is angry um talk about what their experience is, has taught me so much. So I'm not saying this as some sort of weird philosophical "I think anger is like instructive" whatever. I'm like literally talking from experience. Like I really believe that when someone is angry and is is telling you something, there is a lot of opportunity to learn there and so I really hope you know that as a, as a final message from Sandy and Nora in 2018 that, uh, you know people get a little bit more angry and accept a little bit more anger.

Nora: And generalize that anger like and and look at where that anger is generalized and understand it. Understand what hurt, what hurt can do when turned into action. Which tends to be anger. Right? Because sadness is not mobilizing, sadness is sadness but anger is like we are fucked, we have to stop this injustice, whatever injustice it is. It's so clarifying. I just find it so great. Anger is fucking awesome.

Sandy: That's a great word, clarifying. Anger is very clarifying.

Nora: It's like, it's, it's it just lets you see exactly what the issue is. Like sometimes you know I get accused of being so like set in my ways and you know "you think you know it all" and it's like, I fucking don't think I know it all, but I definitely know a lot thanks to (Sandy laughs) being so pissed about stuff all the fucking time. And you're like "OK, OK, what exactly is the source of this issue?" And then I go and find it and then you learn a lot of stuff and then I've got a good memory and so there's like a lot of ways to be able to stay on top of whatever. But the corruption, the injustice, the, the, the tragedy the oppression that is in every single aspect of all of our lives should be enraging the fuck out of you.

Sandy: Mhmm. Mhmm.

Nora: And then find that flip side of anger which is, which is as I said humour so that you don't feel like it's so hopeless. Because that's the thing too is anger isn't hopeless, anger is survival.

Sandy: Mhmmmmm. Anger is survival. Embrace anger!

Nora: Yeaaah. Stay angry in 2019! Should we say when we're coming back?

Sandy: (Both laughing.) Yeah, well I'm just going to say Happy New Year to everyone. We're, we're signing off for 2018, thanks for listening, thanks for being so supportive. Ummm, this podcast has done more than I ever imagined it could, so I'm feeling pretty good about it. And I'm glad that we've got a little community of people out there listening to us. We'll be gone for about a month, probably, so we'll be back in mid January.

Nora: Yup.

Sandy: And you know, stay angry. Or get angry. (Laughs.) One of those two. (Laughs again.)

Nora: Between, yeah, between now and then if, ah, if you've got any show suggestions or feedback you can get us, you can leave a comment on our website, or you can send a message through the website which is SandyandNora.com. Or you can find me on Twitter, I'm happy to take your messages. Um and I share the best ones with Sandy. (Both laugh.) Um but we are open, 2019 for us, like we don't have any grand plans for the show, *other than revolution*. (Sandy laughs.) But, um, short of that if you want to bring us somewhere, you want to do a live show, totally that's an option, just be in touch with one of us and let us know the details and we'll let you know if it's possible. But um thanks everybody, this is where I show love (Sandy tee hees). You guys are great for listening.

Sandy: Or it's humour. One of those two.

(Both laugh.)

Nora: No this is humour. (Makes arrrgh noise.)

Sandy: Thanks for listening! Happy New Year!

[Outro music.]