

Nate Hegyi: This is Outside/In, I'm Nate Hegyi, here today with a couple of my favorite people. Felix Poon.

Felix Poon: Hey hey

Nate Hegyi: And Jeongyoon Han.

Jeongyoon Han: Hello.

Nate Hegyi: And Felix, you've got something for us?

Felix Poon: So we got an email from one of our listeners named Lucy Allosso. And Lucy has a problem - which is that she's heard that synthetic fabrics like polyester and spandex are bad for the environment, and bad for your health. But, she's also like...I would love to have a comfortable pair of leggings.

Lucy Allosso: And that's where I came in, I actually had to go down an escalator in Macy's to get to this level

So I actually called Lucy and we met up at the Mall of New Hampshire to do some shopping.

[MUX IN]

Lucy Allosso: 90% polyester, 10% spandex

Lucy Allosso: 50% nylon

Lucy Allosso: Do you know what fleece is made out of?

Felix Poon: [Fleece, by the way, is just another kind of polyester.](#)

Lucy Allosso: No!

Nope

Nope. No thank you.

Jeongyoon Han: This is really tough because most yoga pants are just all made out of spandex. Right?

Nate Hegyi: Yeah!

Felix Poon: Yeah, and so Lucy was looking at places like EMS or REI - it's all made from these synthetic, plastic-based fabric.

What the heck is that?

Felix Poon: And when we DO find something that's supposed to be more sustainable... we don't really understand what we're looking at.

Lucy Allosso: Ten...cell? Ten-cel?

Wood? Wood in my clothing?

[MUX FADE OUT]

Nate Hegyi: I've never even heard of Tencel. Is that what she said? Tencel?

Felix Poon: Yeah, Tencel.

Jeongyoon Han: I don't know what any of these words mean.

Felix Poon: So do you all pay this close attention to your clothes as Lucy does?

Nate Hegyi: I don't. No,

Jeongyoon Han: No.

Felix Poon: Well, after you hear what I'm about to tell you, you might never look at clothes in the same way again.

[THEME MUX IN]

<<NUTGRAF>>

Nate Hegyi: [Textiles account for up to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. That's more than all the international flights and shipping emissions combined. Not to mention the water pollution and health risks from manufacturing and wearing those clothes.](#)

Felix Poon: So today on the show – an installment of this, that, or the other thing: clothing edition.

Nate Hegyi: It's a series about the choices we make in our lives to try and build a more sustainable world, whether they have any effect, and what we can do instead if they don't.

Felix Poon: What fabrics are better for your health, and better for the environment? Are synthetics really

worse than natural fibers like cotton, or wool? And in the end, does it matter what you wear... or what you buy?

Nate Hegyi: Stay tuned!

[MUX OUT]

<<FIRST HALF>>

Felix Poon: Okay, so How would you describe your style?

Jeongyoon Han: Um, I really like dresses and skirts. One of my friends described it to me as cute business casual.

Nate Hegyi: That's an awesome style!

Jeongyoon Han: What about you?

Nate Hegyi: My wife would say monochrome. I do have these really cool whale shirts that you guys have seen. And these cool salmon shirts.

Jeongyoon Han: It was fun.

Nate Hegyi: Yeah, I have fun shirts. But for the most part I would describe my style as crap

Felix Poon: So generally do either of you care about the kind of fabric?

Jeongyoon Han: Definitely when I'm running or doing anything outdoors, I will not wear cotton. Because I don't want to feel the sweat. So any of those gym

clothing fabrics. I don't know what it's called, but make it sweat wick, or sweat dry.

Nate Hegyi: I do the same.

Felix Poon: So for Lucy, she's cared about her health and the environment since *at least* college. But she really got concerned about what her clothes were made of after scrolling on Instagram one day.

Lucy Allosso: There was some kind of post about Thinx underwear.

Felix Poon: Do you know what Thinx menstrual underwear is?

Nate Hegyi: Yes.

Jeongyoon Han: My sister was one of the biggest proponents of them and gifted me some, and the leggings too.

Menstrual underwear is a reusable alternative to disposable pads or tampons. Which, sounds pretty green right? Like that's part of what they're selling, that this is a sustainable product.

Jessian Choy: my thinx underwear was like the only vice one of the few vices I had in my life that I just didn't want to know all those years that I was wearing it before this reader asked the question, if it had p-fas chemicals.

Felix Poon: So this is Jessian Choy, the reporter behind a sustainability advice column for Sierra Magazine called “ask Miss Green.”

And PFAS, for those who don’t know, stands for per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PAH-lee FLOHR-oh AHL-kuhl) substances.

Nate Hegyi: That’s a mouthful. What is that?

Felix Poon: So they’re water-resistant and grease-resistant, so that’s why they’re used in rain jackets and uniforms so they don’t have to be washed so often.

The problem is they’ve been linked to all sorts of health problems, [like increased risk of cancer](#) and [birth defects](#). And they pretty much never break down, which is why they sometimes get called “forever chemicals.”

Anyway, someone writes into her column and asks about menstrual underwear, which Jessian loves, and they want to know if they have PFAS chemicals in them.

Jessian Choy: So I mailed my menstrual underwear. My Thinx to professor Graham Peaslee.

And...surprise! There was PFAS chemicals in her Thinx.

Jessian Choy: And the plot just thickened like my uterus lining that sheds every month since then.

Nate Hegyi: What a metaphor.

Jeongyoon Han: So when you wear them, does it...how does that work?

Nate Hegyi: Yeah how does that work? Are, should we be panicking about the PFAS chemicals in our clothes?

Felix Poon: That's a great question. But hold that thought, I'm going to get to that, real soon.

So Jessian writes about her PFAS Thinx... Lucy eventually reads about it on Instagram...

Lucy Allosso: my reaction was like, what the fuck? Are you serious?

And that gets her totally freaked out, not just about menstrual underwear – but about ALL her clothes.

Lucy Allosso: it was kind of like a disbelief moment of like, Wow, can I really trust companies who are making me things or do we have to go back to like agrarian society where we all are all like waxing our our leather boots and hides because PFAS are like in Gore-Tex and on our rain jackets.

Nate Hegyi: I can definitely see how this story could really freak a person out.

[MUX OUT]

Felix Poon: Yeah - for Lucy, she's really focused on synthetic fabrics - like polyester, nylon, and spandex -

they're all basically made from plastic. And she's right that there are some big red flags when it comes to these things.

Joel Svedlund: when it comes to synthetic fibers. They are, of course, synthetically made.

So they are actually built in some ways, molecule by molecule by humans. So of course, there are chemicals involved in this process all the way.

Felix Poon: This is Joel (YOO-uhl) Svedlund, he's the co-founder of a [sustainable outdoor clothing consulting company in Sweden](#).

And some of them are stable and stay within the fiber and, some of them might leak out.

Felix Poon: And we're not just talking about PFAS.

Solvents and dyes can be toxic for example – studies have found [textile workers are at higher risk of cancer](#) from being directly exposed to them all the time.

All colors are chemicals. They can come from minerals or natural sources, but mostly they come from synthetic sources.

Felix Poon: And consumers can be affected too – like a few years back, Delta rolled out these new uniforms that gave a bunch of their employees rashes, fatigue, and migraines.¹

Nate Hegyi: What?

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/01/31/delta-uniforms/>

Jeongyoon Han: My god.

Felix Poon: Then there's antimicrobial treatments that are added for odor-control – especially to synthetic clothes because they are more odor-prone – but... they disrupt your endocrine system and microbiome, according to Joel.

And lastly I wanna mention microplastics, which are these tiny plastic particles that are basically everywhere now, [they're in the oceans, they're in the fish we eat, they're even in us, in human blood](#). And a major source for them are synthetic textiles...

Jeongyoon Han: Oh no.

Felix Poon: [they're always shedding them, especially when they're washed](#).

There's still a lot we don't know about just how harmful microplastics are to human health², but Jessian, the Sierra Magazine columnist, she says better not to take your chances.

Nate Hegyi: Everything I like about clothes is actually bad for me. This is terrible Felix, you're ruining my day.

Jeongyoon Han: I don't know what I'm gonna run in now.

Nate Hegyi: Give us hope Felix.

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0304389421028302?dgcid=author> says they damage human cells, but it's not known what long-term health impacts this has.

Felix Poon: Well, before I can give you hope, I think I need to uh, give you some more scary stuff.

Nate Hegyi: Okay.

Jeongyoon Han: Great.

Nate Hegyi: Fine.

Felix Poon: So in a lot of cases, natural fibers like cotton, wool, linen, they're not necessarily any better.

Like sure, they're made from plants and animals instead of plastic - but the manufacturing process is more alike than you might think.

Joel Svedlund: If you take a wool or cotton or hemp, you have to produce spinnable fiber, which can then be turned into a yarn which can be turned into a fabric. And all along the this production chain, you have a lot of chemicals.

Felix Poon: the same goes for clothes made from bamboo and eucalyptus trees that are often touted as renewable eco-friendly materials. They're marketed on clothing tags as viscose, rayon, and lyocell. And Jessian Choy told me that these fibers especially can be pretty toxic to garment workers.

And then, even though we think of microplastics as being this really scary thing, Joel says natural fibers ALSO shed tiny particles. And even though they'll break down faster than plastics, they can have environmental impacts too.

And if you look at the Volume. ...generally, they see that the natural fibers are shedding more...

So, so you cannot point out the synthetic fibers as bad. And the. Natural fibers as good. You have to go from fiber to fiber and look what's the content of this fiber.

As for PFAS, it can be applied to any material, not just synthetics. The Thinx underwear Lucy got really freaked out about are actually made mostly from cotton... So you're not necessarily safer from PFAS just by wearing clothes from all natural fibers.

Nate Hegyi: So, should we just go naked? Is that the solution?

Jeongyoon Han: Just no fibers at all.

Nate Hegyi: Alright, end of episode.

Jeongyoon Han: There we go.

[MUX]

Felix Poon: Okay so before you all freak out about your clothes...Joel says it's probably not your clothes you should be worried about...because the dangers of PFAS come mostly from ingesting them – like through household items like non-stick cookware, and [even floss](#)? But mostly it's ingested [through contaminated drinking water and food](#).

Joel Svedlund: if you take a glass of water from somewhere, you you might have low trace levels of PFAs in them.

Nate Hegyi: So maybe we don't need to worry about Thinx underwear then, because the PFAS we're getting into our bodies are coming from stuff we drink and eat, and nobody is eating Thinx.

Felix Poon: I mean, menstrual underwear is in contact with one of the most absorbent parts of the human body.

But Joel says there isn't enough research to say that PFAS can be absorbed through your skin. So, you're right, worrying about PFAS in your clothes in general might not be worth the anxiety.

Nate Hegyi: Although... maybe the reason there's PFAS in our water is because companies are putting them in everything right?

Felix Poon: Yeah, manufacturing stuff and dumping them in landfills are major sources for contaminated drinking water.

Jeongyoon Han: So we don't need to be anxious about PFAS in our clothes, we should just be anxious about everything

[panel reax]

[MUX Swell]

Felix Poon: Moving on from impact on human health, but let's talk about the impact of clothing on the planet.

Because our listener Lucy also cares about her carbon footprint. Which is another reason she's avoiding synthetics, since they're made from plastics that are derived from fossil fuels – like literally manufacturers melt these little plastic pellets and then stretch them into threads. It's actually really fascinating you can watch this in YouTube videos.

But *just* looking at greenhouse gas emissions, which of these do you think has a higher carbon footprint? Polyester, or cotton?

Nate Hegyi: Polyester, which is oil-based, versus cotton. I'm going to say polyester.

Jeongyoon Han: I think cotton.

Felix Poon: Oh, head to head. Why do you say cotton, Jeongyoon.

Jeongyoon Han: Isn't it a very water-heavy plant or something?

I just think something about producing it, cleaning it. Like, process it to the form to use it for clothing might take a lot.

Nate Hegyi: Fair.

Felix Poon: So you're both wrong. Because they basically have the same carbon footprint.³

Nate Hegyi: No kidding. No we're both right then. No we'd both be right, kind of, right?

Felix Poon: I guess that's the positive way of looking at it.

Nate Hegyi: Yeah let's spin it right.

Felix Poon: Okay, so you're both right. Polyester is made from fossil fuels, which isn't great. But growing cotton comes with ALL sorts of agricultural impacts, like you were hinting at Jeongyoon ...think of the pesticides and fertilizer, which can be made from fossil fuels themselves.

Nate Hegyi: Nice.

Jeongyoon Han: Thank you.

Felix Poon: or just the energy of farming operations, even potentially from deforestation.

But when we do look at all environmental impacts, including water depletion and pollution, some say cotton is worse than polyester... Like, there's this thing called The Higg index, which is supposed to be this industry standard way of measuring all those things. And according to that – cotton is almost 3 times worse for the planet than polyester.⁴

³ Based on an email Natascha van der Velden sent me, and also in running numbers on the Higg Index website.

⁴ According to the [Higg app comparison feature I ran on 5/24/23](https://howtohigg.org/higg-msi/faq/#section2). See <https://howtohigg.org/higg-msi/faq/#section2> for how Higg scores are calculated

Nate Hegyi: Wow.

Felix Poon: But a BIG caveat. There are lots of critics of the Higg Index, [many who say it's got a pro-synthetics bent](#).

Nate Hegyi: Okay.

Felix Poon: And all of this back and forth over materials might be missing the point BIG TIME.

Nate Hegyi: Okay.

Felix Poon: There was a report released this year, that said the industry focuses its sustainability efforts too much on so-called "preferred materials"...when what the data really shows, is that making the material, whether it's polyester or cotton or whatever, it's only about 20% of the clothing industries' emissions. The rest of the process, like spinning the yarn, making the fabric, sewing the clothes, that all makes up 80%.

Nate Hegyi: Wow.

Felix Poon: So the *biggest* factor? It actually comes down to how clean or dirty the energy grid is where the clothes are being made.

Jeongyoon Han: So it's about the process where you bring the materials and turn it into clothing. That's what matters more.

Felix Poon: Yeah, the process – is it being powered by a renewable energy grid, or a dirty coal, fossil-fuel based energy grid.

[MUX SWELL]

Felix Poon: Yeah. So then are you saying that Lucy's assumption? Is incorrect, that it's kind of futile to say like, get rid of all synthetics and I'll only try to get naturals.

Joel Svedlund: I think I think, um...to Lucy, I would say if it makes you feel better to wear natural fibers to especially towards your body, please do. But make sure that the natural fibers you're choosing are. Free from toxins as far as you can know it. So you need to investigate what type of fibers are there and and what do the sellers say they actually contain.

Nate Hegyi: This kind of sounds like a lot of work. I think we need an intrepid reporter. To help guide us...

Jeongyoon Han: Like Felix. What do you got?

Nate Hegyi: ...towards making these good decisions Felix. We rely on you.

Felix Poon: Okay, thanks to Jessian Choy, and Joel Svedlund, I've compiled a few things you can do to make good decisions.

First, when it comes to being safe from toxic chemicals, you should look for third party

certifications, like Bluesign, GOTS, Okoe-tex, and ZDHC.

Jeongyoon Han: Do those mean anything though? Because I see some food items having some sort of certification. I don't know if this actually means anything or if it's just a branding gimmick.

Nate Hegyi: Yeah, like all-natural, you know? Like, it means nothing.

Felix Poon: Yeah Jessian says there are companies that'll make these bogus logos that look green, and look legit, but they're just, made up marketing.

We'll put a list of some legit certifiers in the show notes - but I'll admit, it's not like knowing these makes shopping easy or anything. You still have to find brands that are using them, and they tend to be a bit pricier, and you know - the stuff you do find might not be your style.

Felix Poon: And then when it comes to the carbon footprint of your clothes – according to data from the Our World in Data project, the worst places for greenhouse gas emissions where clothes are made are countries like Indonesia, India, and China. We'll put a list of countries and how they rank in the show notes.

Nate Hegyi: Right. I guess I was just hoping for a list of brands.

Jeongyoon Han: Like, just shop here for the rest of your life and you'll be good.

Felix Poon: Well, there are lists of accepted and rejected brands that ethical fashion groups have put together online. We'll put a link to them in the show notes.

But there is one *particular* brand experts say you should avoid. PLUS, there's a MUCH simpler framework for thinking about sustainable clothing... and we're gonna talk about all that...after the break.

Nate Hegyi: But first before we break, I want to share some of the voicemail we get from our listeners. In the episode, *The Race to Net Zero*, building a car-free future, we asked you to tell us about cars, commutes, and public transit where you live - and you delivered.

Liz: Hi my name is Liz calling from DC...I lived in Boston for a while, I actually lived in Somerville, so when you guys were talking about the orange line and public transportation in Boston I kind of had to laugh... And driving in Boston, oh my god, when that woman was saying it's insane, I felt that so much, anyway...I really like this program and glad I found it.

Garret: Hey this is Garret from Washington DC. Washington DC actually has really great public transportation, I think.

Meanwhile, DC has really improved its biking and pedestrian infrastructure, so I bike into work a lot. But I am convinced I'm gonna be killed by a car one day. Uh, yeah, hopefully I'll hear this on the radio. Thanks.

Nate Hegyi: We love hearing from our listeners, so if you have any thoughts about this episode, or any Outside/In episode you listen to, let us know what you think! Give us a call at 1-844-Go-Otter, or send us a voice memo at outsidein@nhpr.org.

Okay, we'll be right back.

<<MIDROLL BREAK>>

Nate Hegyi: Hey you're listening to Outside/In, I'm Nate Hegyi, here with Jeongyoon Han, and Felix Poon, who was just telling us about a much easier way to dress sustainably and to figure out what stuff we should buy. Felix...

Jeongyoon Han: Help us out here.

Felix Poon: so let me start by asking...

Do either of you know what "haul videos" are?

Nate Hegyi: Haul videos? No.

Jeongyoon Han: No. Is it on Tik Tok.

Nate Hegyi: Oh wait. Yeah, on Tik Tok. Where they're like, I went to Costco and this is my haul. Like I hauled all this stuff.

Felix Poon: yes.

Nate Hegyi: It is? I've seen those. I do know what those are.

Jeongyoon Han: Ohh.

Felix Poon: Okay, let me play you some clips from a few haul videos...

- https://www.tiktok.com/@elizasvids/video/7225743638020607275?_r=1&_t=8cYjm2EMnjH
So I have an insanely large Shein haul
- <https://youtu.be/7FFXIWG7S0Q?t=20>
Oh my god, I think this is the biggest unboxing I've ever done on YouTube. This is crazy, it's like Christmas.
- https://www.tiktok.com/@elizasvids/video/7225743638020607275?_r=1&_t=8cYjm2EMnjH
So I ordered over 80 items, and I'm so excited to open them all up!
- https://youtu.be/L9kqGWBn_r0
I have a very bad addiction, I know, tell me in the comments, because someone seriously needs to take my credit card away from me. It's getting so bad at this point.

Jeongyoon Han: Yeah, I would watch these all the time on YouTube. So, this is, these are the kinds of things i used to watch when I was very young.

Felix Poon: So these Tik Tockers and YouTubers we just heard are part of the bigger cultural trend of fast fashion – where you buy tons of new clothes for super cheap and you only wear them a few times. Like, literally, some of these clothes can only survive a handful of washes, they're basically disposable clothing.

Nate Hegyi: I've had clothes like that that I didn't want to be disposable and then they fell apart, and I was just frustrated, and I was like, I'm never going to H&M again.

Jeongyoon Han: and you could guarantee that they would come out with these Youtube videos like every season, because it was just not durable enough so the same video would come out every single time, every single year.

Nate Hegyi: That seems so wasteful.

Felix Poon: Yeah, a lot of these haul videos feature clothes from the #1 brand everyone should avoid – Shein. They add thousands of new styles every single day, and it's cheap...like, they have pretty stylish shirts that cost just a few bucks.

Felix Poon: I mean, I don't want to yuck anyones yum here, but the number one thing every expert I spoke to for said, if you take nothing else from this episode, it's that you should simply buy... ..less...clothing. Wear your clothes for longer, and take care of them more sustainably.

On that last point, it's pretty straightforward, it just means don't wash your clothes until you really have to...wash on a cold cycle... and hang dry your clothes instead of using a machine – you'll use less energy and extend the life of your clothes.

It also means learning to patch a ripped pair of jeans, or hem something that doesn't fit anymore, or take

your shoes to a cobbler to fix rather than throwing them out.

Jeongyoon Han: I ripped a skirt on accident, so I think it's time to learn how to sew that up now.

Nate Hegyi: Yeah, sewing skills. I like those.

Felix Poon: You can also bring them to a tailor. I've had some pants repaired by tailors.

Nate Hegyi: By Taylor Quimby? Sorry that was stupid.

Jeongyoon Han: We can bring all of our clothing to Taylor, to tailor them!

Nate Hegyi: Perfect! Alright, bring all your clothes to Outside/In's senior producer Taylor Quimby. You can send it to Pillsbury Street.

[swell]

Felix Poon: Yeah, point is - sustainability advocates say it's best to think about "[cost per wear](#)" which shifts the focus away from fabric type, to the number of uses per item. The more uses the better.

Jeongyoon Han: This is what my coworker and I were just talking about. To justify buying an 80 dollar shirt. We would say, 'cause that for us is quite expensive. But we would say, well, it's gonna last longer. It's also cute. And we'll keep it for a long time.

Felix Poon: Yeah! Also...clothes are more than just keeping us warm. Right? It's culture, it's identity, and these are fluid, and they change?

So if you DO want to get out there and add some new clothes to your wardrobe... why not buy something used, right? Like, have you two ever hit the thrift store?

Nate Hegyi: Oh yeah. Or REI? REI has got like a garage sale thing where you can go and buy the stuff that people have return for like steep discounts, and it's been gently used but it's great.

Jeongyoon Han: I didn't know that. But yeah I'm a big fan of thrift stores. I have a membership with my local one.

Felix Poon: Oh a membership?

Nate Hegyi: Membership?

Jeongyoon Han: So, good discounts. Yeah, it's a deal

Nate Hegyi: Thrift stores are great.

Felix Poon: Yeah, thrift stores and those donation boxes you sometimes see in parking lots, they're great, but they do have some problems of their own. The amount of clothes that get dumped on thrift stores is way more than they need. Most used clothes actually end up getting exported to African countries, where some clothes are resold, but a lot of them just end up in landfills, burnt in open fires, or littered in riverbeds or washed out to sea.

Nate Hegyi: Okay, so the literal three bags of clothes that I need to bring to Good Will this week because I just did a total spring cleaning of my closet...should I bring them to Good Will?

Felix Poon: Well there is a different way to donate and thrift your clothes, and it seems to be getting more popular, that maybe you can think about.

Blue: I got this varsity skirt situation. And, I also got like a, I don't know, like baseball-esque hoodie.

Taylor: Nice!

Blue: It's fire.

Taylor: What did you get rid of?

Blue: I got rid of a Nike vintage hoodie from the 90s.

Recently, our show's senior producer Taylor Quimby stopped by a clothing swap in Bed Stuy in New York City. Bed Stuy is a predominantly black neighborhood, and also, fun fact, the largest collection of Victorian era buildings in the US.

So Taylor was chatting with folks browsing through some clothing racks set up in one of those pandemic-era restaurant booths on the side of a busy street.

Giselle: I feel like there's some really good finds here, we came a little late...

And the way it works is that if you bring clothes to the swap – then you get to take clothes.

I really try to thrift as much as I can, so this is just a lot more fun way to do it. Yeah.

Taylor Quimby: Can you show me? What'd you bring?

Giselle: Oh, my God. No. Right. When you talked to me, my friend, like, picked up this dress, and I was like, Oh, it's my dress. I was like, I brought this over.

Friend: I was like, Lily might like that.

Akiera Charles: just that process of letting it go is usually hard... you know, capital is attached to clothing.

Felix Poon: This is Akiera Charles. Akiera was the one who started Bed Stuy Clothes Swap in 2018 because she didn't have a lot of money. And then it quickly grew into something bigger.

Akiera Charles: I think what we're doing is also like a healing movement too...getting to the root of racism and all these other colonial elements and how we connect with consumption and letting go of things.

Felix Poon: So, clothes swaps are not like thrift stores. Akiera says – dumping our clothes in countries that we don't want anything to do with – is colonialism. And they don't want to replicate that here at Bed Stuy.

And clothes swaps can also be these vehicles for community organizing. Like, someone in Boston I spoke to said their swap last fall helped an Afghan refugee family get some warm clothes for the winter. A homeless man stopped by to get a jacket. And a person in recovery got some things to rebuild his life.

So they can be vehicles for mutual aid.

[MUX IN]

For Bed Stuy, it's a vehicle for racial justice. The group centers people of color, and is led by people of color, and they see themselves as filling in the gaps in the sustainable fashion movement.

Akiera Charles: usually like climate justice information is just not written for people of color. Um, and we realize like we are going to, you know, fill in those gaps and be that collective to do that work.

Jeongyoon Han: In college we did this all the time with people we didn't even know across campus. But it felt really nice to know that the clothing that we brought would go to someone else and there'd be a story to go with it. It felt more personal to see everyone committed to the idea of reusing clothing, caring for each other, I always felt heart warmed by it.

Felix Poon: Yeah, it's good stuff. So maybe instead of dropping off those 3 bags at the Good Will...well I don't know, I don't want to say don't do it.

Nate Hegyi: Well that's what I want to get at too, because in the hierarchy of great things you can do, a clothing swap is something you can start with your friends. It also, it takes a lot of organizing and ingenuity like...is it bad to take it to the thrift store as well?

Felix Poon: Well, my takeaway is like, it's not on you, as an individual to solve these big problems, right? Like, but the big take away is, try to buy less. We as a society need to buy less.

And, thrift stores have a place in this solution...and it's complicated...and you can avoid some of those complications if you swap your clothes.

And, you know I think the thing about living sustainably is that there's nothing that doesn't require any work.

Nate Hegyi: yeah.

Like, it takes some effort to change. And chances are with clothes swaps, it's not that much more effort. If you Google them, or just search on Facebook, they're kind of everywhere.

And even if you don't have time for a swap, you could just make a post in your local Facebook group or marketplace to get rid of your clothes.

Nate Hegyi: This reminds me actually of, back when I was living in Juneau Alaska, there was like a Juneau buy, sell, trade, where you could just put stuff up. So when we were moving, we had a tent, and some

clothing and some other things we just couldn't take with us. And instead of throwing them away, we just put it up on Facebook and said free. And people came by and picked them up, and they were able to use it. And it seems like there's a lot of these swap situations in a lot of different towns if you're willing to look just a little bit.

[MUX IN]

Felix Poon: Thanks for hopping on this call with me, it's good to see you.

Lucy Allosso: Yeah, it's good to see you too and your fuzzy mic...

Felix Poon: The same fuzzy mic, that we went to the mall with.

Felix Poon: So, I called Lucy back up on Zoom and told her everything I reported on.

Lucy Allosso: in some ways these findings of yours, like, can confirm that I'm doing good and like, confirm that things are as complicated as I thought they were

Felix Poon: Well, I'm glad we could all kind of join in this journey together.

Lucy Allosso: Yeah. It's cool to feel like there's other people out there who are interested in these things, cause yeah in my own head it can get lonely.

[THEME MUX IN]

Nate Hegyi: Okay, that was a lot of knowledge we dropped on you in one episode, so we're gonna put the big take-aways in the show-notes, like certifications, accepted and rejected brand lists, and links to apps and websites geared toward slow fashion and buying, selling, and trading used clothes.

Felix Poon: And another thing we didn't mention. The New York State legislature is considering a bill called The Fashion Act that's looking to hold big brands accountable to better labor and environmental standards. We'll put a link with more info in the show notes, and some links for our New York listeners on how you can contact your [assembly members](#) and [senators](#) about it.

Nate Hegyi: And if you end up going to a clothes swap, or organizing one yourself, tell us about it! Send pictures to us. We just might share them in our newsletter, which you can sign up for at outside in radio dot org – or we might share it in our social media. We're @outsideinradio.

<<CREDITS>>

Nate Hegyi: This episode was produced by Felix Poon.

Nate Hegyi: It was mixed by Felix Poon and Taylor Quimby, and edited by Taylor Quimby.

Our team also includes Jeongyoon Han, Justine Paradis, and Jessica Hunt.

Rebecca Lavoie is our executive producer.

Felix Poon: Special thanks to all the researchers I spoke to in this episode, including those we didn't hear: Natascha van der Velden, and Gustav Sandin Albertsson.

Nate Hegyi: Music for this episode from Blue Dot Sessions. Our theme music is by Breakmaster Cylinder.

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