

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([00:01](#)):

Who knows, maybe it is just for this moment that you find yourself in a position of leadership. I'm Rabbi Liz Hirsch and I'm your host. Inspired by the story of Esther, I will invite women in leadership to talk about women and leadership. As CEO of Women of Reform Judaism, the women's affiliate of the largest Jewish denomination in North America, I am committed to sharing powerful stories of women who stand out in their fields, who have stepped up just for this moment. Each week I interview women who are influencing the world around them. My guest today is Lisa Lerer.

([00:56](#)):

Sometimes one moment can change everything. When Esther steps up just for this moment to save her people, she changes the course of history. One moment changed everything. When the United States Supreme Court ruled in the Dobbs vs Jackson's Women's Health case in June of 2022, in one moment, they overturned 50 years of precedent, overruling the Roe vs Wade decision, and eliminating the constitutional right to an abortion. In one ruling, in one moment. My guest today, Lisa Lerer, is National Political Correspondent for the New York Times. She recognized that something significant was happening in that moment, at that moment, and she decided to document it. Together with her co-author and fellow journalist, Elizabeth Dias, the pair wrote and researched their book, The Fall of Roe, chronicling this significant moment in United States history. We spoke about the impacts of this decision as well as women's leadership in politics and beyond. We unpack the Jewish values and discuss what is at stake in this crucial arena in the months and years ahead.

Lisa Lerer ([02:16](#)):

I'm the National Political Correspondent for the New York Times, so that means that my job is, essentially, to sort of narrate and chronicle not just elections, but the political moment the country finds itself in, which over the tenure of my time in this position has been filled with unprecedented moments, so it's been a really interesting time to have this job. I worked as a journalist for, what, 20 years, more maybe, and I worked something close to 10 places before I came to the New York Times. I started out doing actually legal reporting, I did some business reporting, but I've largely been doing politics really since the 2008 presidential cycle. And, y'know, obviously there's been a huge number of changes both in terms of the country's politics, the parties, all of that over that period, so that's been fascinating.

([03:07](#)):

And then as part of my work have made a specific area of focus on women and women's advancement in our political system. In part, that's because I covered Hillary Clinton, who was the first woman to win a major party nomination, and then we had the 2020 Democratic Primary, where you had an unprecedented number of women running for the nomination. Then, of course, you had Harris and Nikki Haley this past cycle. So I've done a lot of work around that, and that's also led me to do a fair amount of reporting on the politics of abortion rights, and so that's sort of how I ended up writing this book. The more immediate story about the book is that I am quite close with the National Religion Correspondent at the paper, a woman named Elizabeth Dias, we're very good friends, and we've written a lot together over the years, particularly about abortion, but other kinds of cultural, political issues. And we happened to be on the phone during oral arguments on the Dobbs case, which of course is the case that ended up overturning Roe. And when it was over, one of us said to the other, wow, so the court's going to overturn Roe in some capacity. And we said, this sort of feels like a moment. It feels like a moment somebody should be chronicling, one for the history books. And of course our immediate reaction was, "oh yeah, somebody's writing this," and then it turned out that we would be the ones writing this.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([04:24](#)):

Yeah, I really think that it will be a "where were you then?" moment, "what was your life like?" As we look forward, I was in Canada when the decision happened, on vacation with my family, my husband and I turned to each other. We thought, "maybe we'll stay" and we were happy to come home because, as someone who works in this field, in this area, working at a Jewish women's rights and empowerment organization, that was one of the reasons I was so excited to speak with you today sort of thinking about this. Really, it's not so long since the Dobbs decision and the fall of Roe, and at the same time, so much has already happened and shifted and changed, right? And I almost think it divides up a little bit, and I'd be curious to talk with you about, from that point when the decision happened until the election and then after the election, what folks sort of saw was coming down the line and then looking forward to?

Lisa Lerer ([05:20](#)):

Yeah, so I think before the decision, there was this sense, at least in the political world, that this had been a settled issue. That there were people against it, there were people for it, for abortion rights, against abortion rights, but there weren't really going to be any major changes. In fact, some form of federal abortion rights had been popular for decades. That had been a majority position according to multiple polls since, I don't know, at least the 1990s. So it was sort of broadly accepted. There was a sense that some form of abortion. Y'know, and people would debate over the number of weeks, over exceptions, over all those things, but some form of abortion was broadly popular with the American public, and it was something that both sides used to rally their base, but it wasn't something that was actually going to change, and that was the sense even among Republicans. But then when Trump took office, that began to change. And I think there was a sense among some conservatives, some social conservatives, that there was now the ability to go beyond, Trump had sort of shown them this ability to go beyond what they thought was possible. So actually, as we document in the book, about a week, 10 days after Trump wins, in 2017, some conservative lawyers meet as they do every year for the Federalist Society meeting in Washington DC and someone in that meeting suggested, "why wouldn't they try to overturn Roe?" This decision that they had previously thought was basically, they couldn't do it, and then they started laying the groundwork for legal plans at that point. So there was this period where it seemed like something that was really static in American life. Then there was a period of great change that you really see during the Trump administration where states start pushing more restrictive laws. They start banning the procedure earlier in ways they hadn't before. Conservative states start passing these laws, and there's a series, obviously, abortion rights providers and advocates sue, and those cases start headed up towards the Supreme Court, and there's a race for which of these cases will end up being the one that eventually challenges Roe head on. And also over this period, the court changes, and Trump gets multiple nominations and the court becomes conservative for a generation. So this is this period of great political and legal change that results in Roe falling. Roe falls and the politics change overnight. The switch in American political life happened. I think even the conservatives were not prepared for how quickly it happened, and nor were the Democrats for that matter. Nobody was because politically abortion rights had always been an issue that mobilized the right more than the left. And that makes sense, right? Because nobody's like, "I'm going to get out there and fight for the status quo." There's a sense that fighting for change is a more mobilizing activity, and the people who were against abortion rights, many of them were motivated by this sort of deep sense of faith that, this is one thing we really talked about in the book, which is something obviously that you and your listeners will understand, is that this is really a Christian belief. That these are Christian conservatives who believe that abortion is morally wrong, that is akin to murder, and they're motivated by that kind of moral drive. And so it always motivated people in that base in the Republican party more than people who supported abortion rights in the Democratic party, who sort of took it for granted and it seemed

impossible that this thing that had been well-established in American life for multiple generations could suddenly disappear. And then it did. And you're in Canada and you look at your husband and you say, "what just happened here?" And that's basically what happened to Democrats and Independents and even some moderate Republicans who support abortion rights all across country. And all of a sudden the balance of power in the politics shift dramatically, and it becomes this deeply mobilizing issue for the Democratic party once they decide to capture that. And we see it very profoundly in the 2022 midterms, and then we see it, in sort of a lesser way, in the '24 presidential race.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([09:15](#)):

Yeah, I want to talk about those races for sure. Just something that is interesting to me about the way that you set up that framework is, I live in Ohio now. I was living in Massachusetts during that time period prior to the Dobbs decision, but when there was starting to be conversation around something might happen, there might be a case that comes forward. And I was working with the folks who were organizing, not just the congregations and the synagogues and the communities that I was connected with, but throughout the state, around a preemptive enshrining of abortion access and rights in Massachusetts state constitution, kind of knowing that this was coming, and it was one of the few states where that was actually happening, because Massachusetts, being kind of a test case. It was really interesting to be a part of those conversations and then to see that, even post the Dobbs decision and the fall of Roe overall, to become a bit of a model and a template for some of the state-based ballot initiatives that happened in the succeeding years in those other two cycles.

Lisa Lerer ([10:25](#)):

A question that I often get is, "why wasn't more done?" Which I think is kind of where you're heading, "why wasn't more done by Democrats, by supporters of abortion rights ahead of time? How did they fail?" Because they did fail, right? They failed, right? So why didn't more people do what you did in Massachusetts? I think it's really hard to mobilize people around something that they do not believe is all that possible. It doesn't feel real. Obviously voters heard politicians get up there for years, Democratic politicians, and say, "Roe's on the ballot," "we have to fight to protect abortion rights," all these kinds of slogans. But I think there was a sense that that was just political electioneering, that this wasn't something that had been, this is now multiple generations of people who had grown up with this kind of backstop in their reproductive lives in a way. And the idea that it could suddenly disappear was just really hard to wrap your head around. And I think people didn't do it, I think there was also, from a political standpoint, for elected Democrats, it just wasn't something that mobilized their voters because the voters didn't believe it was going to happen, it wasn't a mobilizing issue. I talked to a number of people on Hillary Clinton's campaign, in the 2016 campaign, and they said that they tested Roe, they tested abortion, and it just didn't drive their voters the same way that messages around democracy, around how Trump would change the country, did. And there's one scene we have in the book after the debate, you remember the third presidential debate in 2016, Trump got up there and said he would appoint what he called pro-life judges who would overturn Roe. That was a promise he made very clearly in that debate. And afterwards, in the spin room backstage, the Clinton team laid out everything Trump had said in the debate to decide what they were going to push when they went out to the spin room, and they decide against it because against that being one of their messages, instead, they leaned into this idea that he wouldn't accept the results of the election, because they had found in all their focus groups and all their polling that it wasn't as potent a message among independent voters who support abortion rights and even among their own party as these other things. So I think it was hard in some ways, it was a failure of imagination. It was also, I think, a failure of organizing, right? There were so many things happening during that first Trump term that I think the progressive movement was very,

they were very intersectional, right? So Planned Parenthood got involved with protecting immigrant rights and got involved certainly with healthcare and all these other issues. And abortion just never seemed to rise to the top of the equation for these groups, in part because what was happening was really happening at a state level, and it could be hard to see, and that was by design. Part of the strategy of the right was to flood the zone, to do so many laws in so many different states. It was a litigation strategy, on one hand because one of those states would eventually, one of those laws would eventually go up to the Supreme Court, a supreme Court that had tilted in their favor and would be likely to cut into, if not completely overturn, Roe. But it was also a political strategy. It was really hard for people who are overwhelmed with the amount of incoming news to track what's happening across all these different states, places like where you are in Ohio, but also Mississippi and South Dakota, all over the country where they're passing these laws and put it all together and see a full picture where the country was heading.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([13:56](#)):

Yeah, I think that it's really interesting to think about, that sort of the overwhelm, right? And also, if you are zeroed in on one particular issue, I was thinking about the Democratic National Convention from this past cycle. There was really several key moments of abortion storytelling. There, it was getting a spotlight, and, as someone who's done that kind of storytelling, has used that for organizing, really inspired by that. I want to use that I guess as a way in to talk about how did it play out in this most recent presidential election, and where did utilizing abortion as a galvanizing issue fall short knowing what the outcome of the election is now?

Lisa Lerer ([14:41](#)):

What we saw in 2022 was abortion was this galvanizing force, that the shock Dobbs, of course happened during that race. And the shock of it, Roe fell in January. The Supreme Court came out with their decision in Dobbs, and of course the election was in November. So this was all really fresh in voters' minds, and Republicans didn't really have a strategy for dealing with it. They were caught really flatfooted. They didn't have a message. They were all on the record as supporting overturning federal abortion rights, overturning Roe, voting for laws that were fairly restrictive. And so I think part of what happened during that race, was that the country had this very quick education campaign that happened, where they understood what people are actually talking about when they talk about abortion. I think there's a stereotype that this is some teenager somewhere that gets accidentally pregnant. And now we all know that that's not what abortion always is. Sometimes it's a wanted child and there's complications in the pregnancy. Sometimes it's about a miscarriage. There's many different kinds of reasons people need to end a pregnancy, and some of them are because they pose quite dire threats both to the life of the fetus and to the life of the mother. And that education campaign happened very, very quickly over the summer after Dobbs fell. So people entered that election with this very fresh sense that this right that they had taken for granted had been taken away and a much greater understanding of what it actually was. And so it was really powerful in that race. And that also, of course, midterms generally attract a different electorate. It's one that tends to be more educated. It's also one that tends to be more partisan and more sort of higher information voters.

([16:24](#)):

So then you get to the general election, and Democrats were hoping that they could basically repeat the play. I think as you point out, they talked about abortion more than they'd ever talked about in any presidential campaign. Harris talked about abortion more than any presidential candidate. She visited an abortion clinic, something no president or vice president had ever done. They really leaned into this

messaging of, they wanted to talk about abortion rights every single day, because they saw that it mobilized a broad coalition. It's not just Democrats, it's independents who support abortion rights and about 30% of Republicans who tend to be more moderate Republicans. But I think the reason it didn't have the same overwhelming pull in that race as it did in the midterms was twofold. First of all, voters have long had a sense that's been documented in focus groups and polling that Trump doesn't actually oppose abortion rights. They believe that, and he did. There were periods in his life where he supported abortion rights, and particularly when he was in New York. And he switched positions as he got more political in 2012. When he was flirting with running for president that year, he came out and said that he was opposed to abortion rights. But voters have maintained that sense, that this is a guy who's just doing this for political gain and doesn't really believe this. And for the book, we heard focus groups from after Trump won in 2016, of voters who supported Trump, Trump voters who went into focus groups and said, "he's not going to really defund Planned Parenthood, he's not going to do anything for abortion." They just didn't believe it. And Trump was really savvy in this past election about encouraging that disbelief. He staked out a position where he would leave it to the states. He was really coy on whether he would support a federal ban. He basically said, such a thing would never come to my desk, which is, honestly, that's pretty true. The idea that either side would get 60 votes for that kind of legislation feels pretty hard to imagine in our current political climate. So he didn't promise not to support a federal ban, but he didn't say he would, he certainly wouldn't promise to support a federal ban. And he just took the gamble that the social conservative segment of his base would support him anyhow, because he was the guy that had delivered the Supreme Court that overturned Roe, and that was the right political calculation. They did support him in very strong numbers. His position cost him nothing with his base, and it might have gained him some votes among more moderate Republicans or even some independents that wanted to vote for Trump for economic reasons. And he was sort of giving them a permission structure, even if they cared about abortion rights, to do so.

[\(19:04\)](#):

The other thing that happened is that the strategy that abortion rights advocates had used was the state referendums. Let's find a way to enshrine abortion rights in state constitutions, just like you did in Massachusetts. They did that, of course in Ohio, in '23. They did it in Arizona. And that's really the only way that supporters of abortion rights can protect abortion rights in many states. They can't get, as I said before, they can't get federal legislation passed. They tried with some acts in Congress, they couldn't get it through. They can't get 60 votes for that given the tight margins in Congress. And so the only thing that they could do was these state referendums. And they're all being challenged now, as you know, in Ohio, but they tend to pass, certainly in states where they pass by a majority, they tend to pass. It's hard for them to break 60%, which is what they needed in Florida. But the other effect of that is you basically allowed voters, for example, in Arizona, which of course is a key battleground state to support abortion rights by voting for a referendum and also then vote for Republican candidates, vote for Trump, vote for Senate candidates. So I think some of it was that too, that the referendums had, while they were effective and enshrining abortion rights in certain places, they actually politically worked against Democrats in some way. And I also just think it's kind of natural. I do think people adjust to whatever the political reality is, and the shock of Dobbs had worn off a little bit two years in. And then, as I said, you had this candidate who didn't sell himself and really isn't a hard anti-abortion Republican.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch [\(20:46\)](#):

Yeah, I do think it's a really important object lesson that some of us have only begun to unpack that all of this work and organizing and mobilizing around the abortion access ballot initiatives may have enabled voters to feel more comfort that they were voting for the protections within their own state.

And then they could choose who they more aligned with for whatever other reason for their presidential candidate that, that's a little bit of a gut punch of, "oh, we were working so hard on this, but were we heading in the wrong direction?" And something that I've definitely been reflecting on for sure. And to hear you state it so plainly, it's interesting to think about and for future campaigns or tactics or approaches,

Lisa Lerer ([21:30](#)):

But this is also a long fight. When I, in the course of the book reporting asks abortion people fighting for abortion rights, like, "okay, so it took 50 years of opposition for road to fall. How long does it take to get back some form of federal abortion rights?" And nobody's saying it's going to be here. Right? Those answers, I mean, it's an unanswerable question. I'm asking them something that they're not, no one's a fortune teller, but people are talking a decade, two decades. And I know that a lot of the organizing that's happening in Washington is around a really long-term plan. The first step abortion rights advocates in Washington tell me is to get agreement within the movement around what legislation that would enshrine some form of federal abortion rights in law looks like. Let's get everyone, even just on the side of abortion rights to agree. Particularly without, Roe set a certain standard of viability, and Roe set that standard at about, well, now it's about 23 weeks. It was the point at which a fetus could survive with medical assistance, obviously outside the womb, but there's no reason. I mean, there are pregnancies that are six weeks that are nonviable, there are pregnancies, right? That's sort of an arbitrary line. So in a post-Roe world, what does that line look like? And so the first step may be to get agreement just in the abortion rights movement around what that legislation looks like and, with Democrats, who would support it, and then move from there. But this is something that's going to take a long time. And I think that was part of the strength of the anti-abortion movement is they thought about this in generations. In part because they were rooted in this sense of Christianity, that they saw that battle not as an election, not as winning more Senate seats in the midterms, not as getting the right president, but as a generational civil rights struggle. And they fought it that way, and after 50 years, they were successful. And that's a really striking contrast to how supporters of abortion rights thought about it, which was always much more like, well, if we fight for the right people in Congress or the right president and make sure that person will put in the right Supreme Court justices and this will be secure. So I think now in some ways, the roles are reversed and people who want to restore some kind of federal abortion rights have to think on just such a longer timeframe.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([23:50](#)):

Yeah, it's really interesting. And you've mentioned a couple times now about the Christian values rooting in the movement, and I'd love to talk a little bit more about the faith dynamics that you share about in the book and that you've seen. And I think for me, as a rabbi and a Jewish leader, that's one of the other reasons, in addition to just having a core commitment to reproductive rights and abortion access, that I feel like I need to speak up and speak out sort of doubly more often to help adjust the perspective that abortion access and reproductive rights is a religious issue only to one side. There's this amazing debate in the Talmud, a collection of Jewish text, and the rabbis are going back and forth and saying, trying to make an assessment about a pregnancy and a miscarriage, and then one of them shuts down the debate. He says, "p'shita, gufa hi, it's simple, it's her body." So I think to hear it's going to take the generations and the decades to bring it back, in some cases, Jewish values and Jewish wisdom, ethics start from that place of it's her body. And this is simple. We can't believe we're having this debate, but I think that that's going to be both driving forward, but also in tension with that length of the struggle to move beyond, well, this is simple. This is her body, the body, the person who can become pregnant.

Lisa Lerer ([25:15](#)):

Right, and look, as you were saying, Jews have a very different view of abortion, a very different take on it. And there's of course the concept of the rodef and all of that, which I'm sure you can explain far better than me. But for Christians, for Catholics, and for evangelicals who made this alliance over this issue back in the 1970s, this is something that's much more a core part of their faith now. It wasn't always, and if you look back in Catholic teachings, there was a period where Catholics believed that life didn't start at conception, but at the quickening, which is the point usually around 18, 20 weeks in pregnancy where a woman can feel some movement, sometimes it's a little earlier, of the fetus. So all these views, none of these views in Christianity have been as stagnant as I think people now believe. And they also haven't been stagnant in the history of the United States before the Civil War, before the time of the Civil War. So that was the belief also in the United States, that some form of abortion should be legal until the quickening, which was what it was in English law, which of course is where the country came from. Then around the time of the Civil War, there was sort of a larger push after the Civil War around morality, particularly sexual morality and Christianity. And that's when you have the Comstock Laws be passed, which banned the mailing of obscene material, which now some people believe could be used by the Trump administration to ban the mailing of abortion pills or other tools used in abortion. So as part of this larger societal move to sort of establish more Victorian sexual morays in the country, and as part of that state started criminalizing abortion, and that's when you really first start to see that movement. So our views on this issue haven't been as stagnant or as divided politically as we often believe that they are. There has been some shifts over history and over time.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([27:12](#)):

I think I want to bridge from focusing in specifically on reproductive rights to expand out the political framework a little bit. And you mentioned at the top of our conversation that you've reported on both the Clinton campaign and the Harris campaign. Something that's really interested me, and I'd love to chat with guests periodically on the podcast about is we're inspired by the story of Esther by the Purim story, which in and of itself has many different political usages now, which are fascinating and could be a whole other conversation about how her story is used. But the title of the podcast is just for this, and it's based on that moment of Esther stepping up just for this moment into leadership. She has the unique position to do that. Something that I found really interesting about Esther's character is she's the queen of all of Persia, right? She's reached the highest point even in that ancient society that a woman could get to, but her leadership is also so limited. She goes and approaches the king at risk to her own life. She could be killed for seeking audience with him because she wasn't invited in to do so, and kind of expresses the limits to that. And I would love to hear your reflections reporting on both those campaigns, just about the successes and advances and the progress that women have made in politics and as leaders and even approaching the highest offices in the land, but then also kind of hitting that limit and still being restricted. It's, it's an interesting dynamic to be figuring out and playing around with using that ancient model, but also seeing, we're still up to that point, up to that point, but we haven't gone beyond that point yet.

Lisa Lerer ([29:02](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting. Hillary Clinton was such a unique figure because she had for so long been the one and only, right? The first lady who became the senator who became Secretary of State, who ran for president against Obama in 2018 and got farther than any woman had ever before, and then ran again in 2016. There was no other model really. She was the model for what it looked like to run for president as a woman. And her story was also bred with all these other things because she had been in our public

life as this very prominent political woman for so long. So she's a boomer, she'd come of age with that era of feminism. She dealt with all the stereotypes in the nineties as the First Lady. So she's just this really unique character with very unique baggage. And she chose in her campaign to really lean into this message of being first. In her book, she talks about how presidential campaigns, successful ones, that the present fits into some narrative about American life. So she talks about, for her husband, it was the man from hope, and this belief in America is this meritocracy, right? And for President Obama, it was this sense that America could overcome one of its most sharpest divides, one of the most painful scars of its history with these racial divisions in slavery and become, if not post-racial, a more harmonious country. And for her story was really about the rise of women in public life. Like she went to Yale, there weren't a ton of women in her class. When she graduated, she became this public figure. She was always this historic first. And that story she came to realize later just didn't resonate with American voters, even female voters, in the same way as the stories of those two men did. But I think when she ran in 2016, there was a fair amount of unique baggage and unique historical stuff, for lack of a more articulate word, around her. But she also opened the door for other women to run. So in 2020, you have multiple women run for the Democratic nomination, and they run in really different ways. You have Elizabeth Warren who runs a liberal campaign, and you have Amy Klobuchar who's running a more moderate campaign, then you've Tulsi Gabbard who's running a totally independent campaign, and now who's in the Trump administration. And so voters were really presented with these different models of female leadership that I think was a bit of an education for the country. So then Biden says that he needs to have a woman as vice president, and eventually it's Harris through that complicated kind of crazy twist of events gets the nomination.

[\(31:44\)](#):

When she runs, she takes a totally different approach. She does not talk about her gender at all. She rarely mentions it. And her argument on that when she's asked about it is, "look, everybody knows it's obvious. We don't need to belabor this. It's part of who I am. It's not how I'm going to lead for everybody, not just for women." And so she tries the opposite approach of Hillary Clinton, don't celebrate it. Don't lead into being a historic first, just sort of accept it and move forward. And that doesn't work either. And she loses. I mean, it's always hard with these races to know how much of it is gender and how much of it is not gender. I mean, it's all sort of wrapped up together. There's certainly evidence that women on the presidential level face a higher bar to demonstrate competency, to demonstrate leadership and authority and all those things. But voters have now seen a number of women run for president. And this race, just like Hillary Clinton's race, was so unique, it was so short, she captured the nomination in such a bizarre and untraditional way that many voters really did not like. Voters, Democratic primary voters did not vote for her, right? They didn't have the opportunity. So it's really hard to know. I think there's a lot of people who feel like, oh, America just won't elect a female president. I'm just not sure that's true. I suspect with every race, we are getting closer and certainly in 2028, which is disturbing to think about right now, that we're going to be in another election cycle, but it'll start before we realize it. And potentially it could be open on both sides. And there's no doubt in my mind that we will have multiple women running both for the Democratic primary and potentially for the Republican primary as well, and they'll all look really different.

[\(33:31\)](#):

And so it's not clear if any of those, or which one of those with the profile of the first one present will be. Many people, including people like Bill Clinton and even some conservative senators, Lindsey Graham has said that they believe the first one president will be someone more in the Margaret Thatcher mode, like sort of a tough on crime, no nonsense kind of female leader. And historically, that is the profile that Golda Meir, yeah, Golda Meir to capture these, to break these sort of glass ceilings. But



it's not a question we can answer, but I would like to think that with all these races, the country is moving closer, but when it happens, how it happens, what it looks like, that's not something I can possibly predict.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([34:15](#)):

That leads me into the last question that I want to ask you. I've been reflecting with guests this season about finding a moment for hope, and I think that there's a lot of intensity and tension and a sadness about some of the state of the world and just a lot of heaviness going on. And wondering if based on the reporting that you've done over the years, either specifically on reproductive rights or more generally on the state of politics with a lot of wherever you come down, divisiveness and division and lack of civility, anger with people at each other where you're seeing a moment for hope or for uplift in the future?

Lisa Lerer ([35:02](#)):

I do think there's a sense that people are getting more involved locally, which I think is really important actually, and really powerful because it sort of gets you out of the internet. I think that the social media, the internet, everyone's dehumanized in a way, and you're just yelling at people across like your computer screen, but in your own community, it's harder to do that. You see these people at your kid's school or at the dump or at the grocery store, wherever. And I do think part of what happened for conservatives during the Biden administration, now, I suspect part of what is happening and will to happen for liberals during the Trump administration, is people sort of look more locally. "What can I do at home? How can I work," as you were saying, "if you support abortion rights with that kind of initiative in my community or in my state?" And I think that's really powerful. And I think if we are going to break the grip of the dehumanizing kind of social media and communication over the internet, it's going to happen with real relationships, like real life, real human relationships.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch ([36:12](#)):

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