

Transcript

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You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 242. Welcome to the My Simplified Life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life, and start taking action. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, author of How to Get on Podcasts, the podcast matchmaker.

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and CEO and founder of the MLG Collective. I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life.

00:44

Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. And today I am so excited to get to introduce you to one of my good dear friends now. We met at an award ceremony for our books in Santa Monica. Her name is Hitha Palapoo, and she is the author of the book, We're Speaking. It is a book that is going to teach you not only life lessons for yourself,

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but life lessons of Kamala Harris. When I met Hitha, I didn't even know she'd written this book. She was winning an award for another book that she'd written on packing because she is the ultimate packer for all of her business trips. And then suddenly this popped up on my Instagram that she had written this book about Kamala Harris. And it was in June of this year, and I purchased the book. I devoured it.

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I devoured it because it was not only an easy read, but it wasn't an enlightening read. I learned about Hitha, I learned about her life, but I also learned about Kamala Harris. Now as someone who lives in California and born and raised in California, I have seen Kamala

in action at work, but I've never gotten the chance to get to know her, to know the details of her upbringing, her childhood, her career path and journey.

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And so I read the book immediately as soon as it arrived on my birthday. And it wasn't until weeks later that it was announced that Kamala Harris was running to be our president. So I felt like with this announcement, I was eons ahead because I now knew more about Kamala than I certainly did when she first ran for president. I now knew the misconceptions that were out there and how to correct them with the right information.

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And I also had a better understanding of who she is and why she is the way she is today. So I reached out to Hitha to see if she would be kind enough to have this conversation with me that we could talk about some politics, but also talk about how we bring our children into civic engagement. We both have nine-year-olds and then she has a five-year-old, I have an eight-year-old, and they are all civically engaged right now. They understand citizenship. They understand...

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elections and they understand the big role that each one of us plays in all of this. We talk about how to have these hard conversations with other people and to know when it's just time to stop and move on and talk about something else. So I am so excited to introduce you to my good, good friend, Hitha Palapoo, and you all need to go out and get her book, *We're Speaking*. Without further ado, Hitha.

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Hello, my new best friend. Hi, how's it going? Oh, it's so much better now that we're talking in person that I'm not sliding into your DMs like creepy person and not creepy at all. Like you have made my life really with your incredible support and hype womaning it up. Like I just feel very, very lucky that the book world has brought us together. Albeit

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with a different book and that we've become friends. So it's great to be here. I am so excited. I'm blessed that you just called me your friend. I love it. Can you introduce yourself to everyone because we haven't even said your name yet. I'm Hitha Pallapoo. I am a self-proclaimed multi-hyphenate. I'm the author of *We're Speaking*, *The Life Lessons of Kamala Harris*, *How to Use Your Voice, Be Assertive, and Own Your Story*. I'm also the CEO of Rochon Pharmaceuticals, a company developing injectable aspirin for hospital use.

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I so when I read your book, I didn't even know that multi hyphenate was a thing. And I went, Oh, because I'm in this journey right now of writing down what do I want? What don't I want? And I'm like, Well, you know, I like to I like writing and I like to be an author and I like being a business owner, but I want it and I went, Oh, a multi hyphenate. Oh, okay. But let me write that down is that's what I can be. So thank you for that. I love it. And your book is so timely. It's

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I got to read this before Madam Vice President announced her running for president and it was eye opening. I wish that I had read it when she was originally running because we get to know Kamala on such a different level and the truth. We get to learn the truth. Well thank you. I am.

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I got approached to write this very specific book shortly after the election had been called in November 2020. And they had a really aggressive deadline in mind and getting it on shelves in less than a year. So I am grateful every day for my husband, truly my own Doug Emhoff, who was on a sabbatical at the time taking a pause from his career and consulting and thinking about his next move. And he fully handled our kids, our parents.

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in the middle of the pandemic with all the Zoom schooling and everything. So I could basically hunker down and write this book in about three months. So who called you and was like, you know what, Hitha, you, you write this book on Kamala because nobody has

called me to say, you know what, go write this book on this big person. It was my then editor, Marissa from Little Brown Spark.

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She sent me an email out of the blue and said, big fan of your first book and what you've done with your newsletter, Five Smart Reads, have really been enjoying your perspective on Kamala Harris. We are planning to do a book about her that's smart, serviceable, not full biography, not full self-development. Would you be interested in potentially writing it? And I was like, this is my dream book project. Oh my God.

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And I immediately forwarded it to my agent. We hopped on a call individually. We hopped on a call with the Spark team the following week. And I was writing a week after that. That's amazing. That's a dream come true. That is, yeah, I wish that that would happen because it's a dream. It's amazing. And, but you were, you followed Kamala for a long time. And I love the story of you were

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on this journey as well. And you started listening to Kamala and you're like, I'm gonna write down all of her quotes that are really good. Yes. I was at the beginning of my pharmaceutical career, path that I gratefully and with such immense gratitude and respect to been able to follow my father in. So he gave me my first opportunity being a project manager at a company he had founded that was starting to grow and scale. So I jumped in not really knowing anything and-

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like figuring my way through. And so I also started a lifestyle blog at the time called Hit Tha on the Go, because I know myself well enough to know I need a creative outlet and I need something instant gratification because pharmaceutical development ain't it. I know, I know. Who knew? So as I was documenting how I was traveling, what I was packing, I got also a lot of questions about

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how do you dress for very conservative work environments? And that was something I had been struggling with, also being the only woman in a room usually, the youngest person in the room, one of the only people of color in a room. So many firsts. I also took me a while to find my confidence in those spaces too. And so by 2013, 2012, I still was in that, who am I in these spaces? And how do I present myself?

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assertiveness and confidence, but also with the humility, knowing I still have a lot to learn from a lot of people. And that's a fine balance to strike. And I remember I was on a business trip. I was answering emails on the bed, and CNN was on because it was just my consistent background noise that I could get no matter where I went. And I remember looking up and seeing this woman who literally looked like she could be one of my older cousins, truly.

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striding towards a podium and start talking about the settlement she had negotiated for California taxpayers and homeowners from the mortgage, from the Great Recession and the subprime mortgage fall. And I was like, that's Kamala Harris? I in my mind assumed Kamala Harris was much older, super, super experienced. I was expecting gray hair in a suit, not like...

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I could hang out with her and I want to hang out with her. And I also need to know where that suit is from. And like that hairstyle, I just was like, who? I need to know everything more about Kamala Harris. So I don't think I ever sent that email. I'm very sorry to the person. I doubt they're expecting it over 10 years later. But I really went on this sort of Google binge on learning everything I could about her because in that moment, I remember seeing her, I go, this is the kind of role model I have been looking for.

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someone who holds her own, someone who clearly feels confident and certain of herself, someone who is a phenomenal communicator. And these were all areas that I felt like I was struggling with in finding my own voice, my own style, my own confidence in many

of the rooms I was in. And I started putting together this little doc in my notes app of Kamalaism. So quotes that she said.

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different like outfit ideas of like suits and whatnot. And listen, I'm more of a dress and separates girl, not a suit girl. I like my hair pulled back instead of being down. And I certainly can be a little bit more flowery in how I speak and more descriptive. But I think studying her and being able to adapt what works for her and find things that worked for me helped me really find my confidence.

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my strength and my own style, especially at work. And that was the time I started overseeing business development and negotiating our own licensing programs, et cetera. So I'm very grateful for her on helping me find my own blueprint of how to show up, how to speak up, and how to feel when I'm in rooms, whether they're very impressive, intimidating rooms or just rooms with my own family.

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So when I got approached to write this book, I was like, I haven't really working on this book for over 10 years. So I think I can absolutely do this in three months. And even my own agent was just like, are you sure? Like your first book, like it took us a while to get into the rhythm of how to write a book. I go, no, Kim, like I can do this. And I sent her the doc and she goes, oh shit. Oh, you've been stalking him. No. Ban.

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I'm a stalker. I'm a stalker. It's okay. There's good stalking. She has secret service detail. I can't say words like that. I don't want to end up on a list. No, I'm very much admired, long time admired and respected and followed her from afar and followed her journey. And in so many ways, I'm so unsurprised that we are at this moment. For me, I really am like, oh, the rest of the country has finally caught up. Welcome. Welcome to my world.

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Welcome to my manifestation. I have been thinking about this since, no, and I got to tell you something like really, really eerie. Election night 2016, sobbing, crying on the couch, chugging wine. And between like sniffing and sipping, I told my parents who were sitting on the couch with me, albeit had way more together than I did. And I said, mark my words, 2020.

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It will be Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, and they will have the exact same electoral college number that Trump had. And my parents look at me and they're just like, okay, sweetheart, like. You got some weird stuff. Whatever you got to say to get yourself through the next four years. And I'm like, just you wait. And as the primary started, and I was like, I saw her like peak and I was like, this is great that I saw her falter. And I was like.

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Listen, it's both things. Like you can have a campaign that may not be ready for a jungle primary, which 2020 for the Democrats absolutely was. I also think the press has a really hard time reporting women that isn't extremely caricaturistic or puts them into a box that they are very comfortable with versus trying to push through and report accurately.

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with nuance and with the kind of respect that they give and afford men. So it's a both end. And everyone also thought I was an idiot for thinking Joe Biden would somehow make it through and they're like after Iowa, after New Hampshire, they're like, are you sure? I'm like, South Carolina is really where the primary starts. So, so when Biden like trounced everybody in South Carolina, I'm like, see. And then super Tuesday when he won, like almost every single state, I said, see.

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And then it came to no surprise, but it came with much joy when he announced Kamala as his running mate. And then I am like, let's go. So I am weirdly prophetic about politics. That's the third thing you've told me even off the air. And so when all this happened in ways I was like, I think it could happen this way. Listen, I think Joe Biden has been one of the most successful and best presidents of my lifetime.

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to have gotten as much done in the past four years that he has, both bipartisan and then muscling things through his own very diverse caucus, and his character and his humility. I have nothing but immense, immense respect and admiration for him and how he has served this country for such a long time. And the way he has

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in many ways been like a Lyndon Johnson and been the white guy who was not afraid to be the champion and be the first black president's vice president and potentially be the predecessor for the first woman president, as well as our second black president for South Asian president, like really the first multicultural president we'll have in our country's history back on wood. So I think we can't talk about Kamala Harris without talking about

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the Bidens, both Bo as her longtime friend when she was AG, and her partner in governance and the person who really prepared her and got her to this moment, Joe Biden, indirectly and directly, of course. I mean, she's phenomenal on her own, and she's also benefited and been supported and in turn supported this other incredible political family. So I just want to give Joe Biden his flowers because I feel like he's not getting enough

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love and appreciation and acknowledgement for what he's done both as president and stepping down. He's so kind. I refer to him as Uncle Joe or Papa Joe. I'm like, as if I know all these people on a first name basis. I'm like, yeah, they're like our family and our friends because he's just so good. He is a decent human being, something that we lack a lot of.

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I say that and yet I want to take it back at the same time because I feel like there's a lot more of us who are like-minded, but the noise is overshadowing all of that and

overshadowing the kindness that truly needs to come to the forefront. He's a really good, decent human being. We've been blessed to have a leader for four years who is kind, who stops to talk to people, who...

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sees a child with a stutter and takes that time to say, I've been there too, and I get it. And it brings, I'm going to cry. It brings me to tears when, you know, I'm now seeing like tweets of saying, let's not forget him. We need to thank him because he's stepping down. And that's got to be really, really tough. That has to be such a choice to say, you know what, I am going to sit back because I know that the betterment of our country is going to be passed on to Kamala.

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And to step down to make sure he protected his successor and the vice president who stood by him, one who has gotten, she's at a hard job. Being number two without a clearly defined path or to be given kind of the unwinnable jobs is not easy. But I also think she took a lot of press hits. Like she took so many hits. And I remember

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so many times reading these articles and being like, I learned way more about the person interviewing her than I am seeing reporting about what she is actually doing. And it frustrated me as someone who like really went deep on this person to write where speaking, I got extremely frustrated that I go, this isn't the Kamala that I have studied in detail and have a ton of verified research and reporting on. And...

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It really pissed me off because I found ourselves like, I've seen this before, I hope we'll stop seeing it, but it's a really troubling pattern of how women in power are reported and portrayed on both sides of the aisle because Nikki Haley went through something very similar in this past primary. And that is sort of the buildup where there's enthusiasm around this person, but it's still nascent and brewing.

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the sort of anointment whenever that person hits a certain milestone, and it's incredibly favorable, flowery, giving the flowers, accomplishment, groundbreaking, etc. Like I think of the Vogue and the Elle covers right before the election and after the election. And then there's the teardown, because it's easy, because it sells. And then there's the erasure, where you purposefully don't report on this person.

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and then you toggle back and forth between tear down, erasure, tear down, erasure. So when people ask, well, where has Kamala been and what has she been doing? I go, she's been out there. You just haven't seen it because it's not, it doesn't fit in the business model of a lot of major media. And that has been as a fan of hers, but also as a lifelong student of politics and a news nerd.

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extremely frustrating because I'm like, there's so much more that's happening here that isn't being reported because of a bottom line. Trump netted a lot of media companies record high profits during his presidency. You have to think about the business of media when you are consuming your news and thinking about where you're consuming the news from. And so when Kamala started to be the administration's champion on abortion access,

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starting from the Dobbs ruling onwards, when she was the first highest elected leader to go to an abortion clinic, the way she said abortion, abortion, abortion, but also raised the issue and elevated the issue of maternal mortality, talking about gun violence prevention and the impact of gun violence in our communities, talking about voting rights. When you've let her prosecute the case on some of the massive injustices happening in the country, that's when she's at her.

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best. She is also at her best when she's allowed to be joyful, when she's allowed to be herself. And so I've been so happy to see her like letting Kamala be Kamala since that announcement, since Biden announced he's stepping down and the joy and the

celebration and also the firmness. I mean, the way she handled the pro-Palestinian protesters.

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her rally in Detroit, which is a very stern, you have your right to speak, I'm speaking now and then meeting with them privately afterwards to hear them and to hear their concerns, to share where she's currently at and where she wants to get to, I think is, and that last part doesn't get reported on nearly enough. I was just going to say, because I read that this morning, it was a very quick morning with banana pancakes and first day of school.

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But I read that and I saw the video of, you know, I'm speaking and the rest was- And then that Indian mom death glare. Like, I have received that glare from my mom and I'm pretty sure I've given that glare to my children. I was like, oh, that's Shyamalan tea right there. But the rest I didn't see reported. I did not see and what I did see was, I want to say that somebody mentioned like Trump

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conference he was doing when this happened to him and was like, you have a riot, let's hear you out. And, you know, well, at least he listened. Well, obviously she took time out later and, you know, went and had an actual discussion, not let me, I think there's also the difference of what happens behind closed doors later on that none of us know about versus what's performative and look at me and this is what I do and I'm doing it just so you can look at me. Yeah.

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Listen, I respect everyone's right to protest and demonstrate peacefully. I think it is one of the hallmarks of being an American and one of our rights that should always remain inalienable. And I also think a lot about what is the best way to achieve this thing I am fighting for. And it's not through protest alone. So I just sincerely hope those actions are also combined with

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letter writing and pressing your current elected officials in very specific manners and to consider how you're talking to people too, because sometimes it's not necessarily the message, it's oftentimes the messenger and thinking about how to have open and honest conversations that don't just end up in people screaming at each other because they now feel heard or they're just trying to get their point across and trying to...

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force someone to accept their argument without really having a conversation about it. And I think these are, we've seen right now that the loudest message is often the message that wins the news cycle. And while that might be great for clicks and revenue, it's not good for democracy. It's not good for humanity. So I will always value and respect the people who walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

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really go into when you find the right accurate reporting, you will find that she walks the walk. And she doesn't, she's someone who doesn't like talking about herself or her specific accomplishments. She's focused on talking about the work, asking questions, learning more, and working relentlessly to advance change. And that is who she's been from when she was a district attorney and even before as a prosecutor to who she is now.

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how she's led as vice president and how I believe she'll lead as president. And I love that you bring up some of her record too, because now I'm seeing more and more of it, of people correcting that, no, she didn't put thousands of black men in jail for marijuana charges. It's so funny to me. It's like watching reality TV when they start questioning each other of, well, did you really say that? There's a fucking tape. Yes, go look at the tape. There's obviously a record of what she's done and what she didn't do.

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Let's look at it instead of making up these lies of what she didn't actually do when it's so negative. Mm-hmm. And she's someone who showed that she's evolved on issues too. Part of the job as a DA and an AG is to prosecute. That is the job. But as she's advanced later in her career, she has made a lot of inroads with activists in the community to learn.

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Maybe that what some of the unintended consequences of the policy her office pushed for that you're not gonna necessarily know everything. And the types of legislation she introduced specifically around criminal justice reform with bipartisan support in the Senate reflects an evolution of those issues. So I also think it's not, it's so important to look at this. Did you just fall out of a coconut tree?

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Right. You have to consider what has happened in the overall context and stop cherry picking very specific details, putting them out of context because they fit your narrative. We need to, I think we've lost the ability to think critically in many ways. My husband and I talk about this often. Before we became parents, we were like, oh, our kids are going to be brilliant at math and they're going to eat everything and da-da-da. We're never going to watch TV.

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My kids definitely ate chicken nuggets for like the eighth time in the past like week. Ro hates double and triple digit multiplication. And I am like working with the balance of we need to have a growth mindset and push through hard things. And we could do this to just take a break. And then they're definitely watching TV right now. I'm sure they're watching something extremely like engaging that's gonna have them jumping off the walls even more. It is what it is. Yeah.

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But my most important thing is I want them to learn how to critically think. I don't want them to accept. So when I say something and they're like, but why? I have to remind myself in the moment that like as annoying as this is, this is exactly what I want them to do. It's like they want to know what the impact of them sitting down and eating lunch or the impact of them doing a math worksheet is. Granted, I wish they would just go with it a little bit faster and more, but we're not going to win everything.

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We're not going to win everything. So that's something when I was researching and writing the book, it was, Hey, everything that's ever been like negatively portrayed about her or her record. Let me go deeper in and really study it. We're human. We all make mistakes. There are some things I don't agree with her on. I'm not a blind fan, a blind follower who's just going to accept everything. I certainly have my disagreements on.

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certain positions she's taken on issues or things she has championed in policy, that looking back now, I'm like, this did not have the impact it was intended to. And I've also seen her evolve on some many, many things. So I think it's really important we stop holding, especially women, especially black women, to a level of perfection we never demand from white men. And it's important to call that, to raise awareness to it. I also think...

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necessarily calling things out if there isn't like an intended follow up action in a way you want to move people. I like to use the term raise awareness because I like to give people the benefit of the doubt that they genuinely did not properly understand or were aware of a certain perspective. That's your kindness showing through sometimes. I just know. I mean, I've definitely

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I yelled at my children like at least five times today when I was on calls and they were barging through, but motherhood in the summertime, we all have our limits. How old are your kids now? They are nine and five. Okay. So fourth grade, going into fourth grade and kindergarten. So we're just went into fourth and third. Do you involve, Ro is the fourth grader, right? Do you involve Ro in any of these conversations?

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Yes, I can actually talk about an experience they had at a new summer camp, which- Oh yes, this is good. We're in Pennsylvania in Bucks County, which is very much a purple district. And I happened to have signed them up for a camp where there are a lot, a lot, a lot, mostly Republicans, Trumps, very, very passionate Trump supporters. And Roe one day, he was just-

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reading his Kindle quietly. He knew he needed to tap out of the activity. His counselors were supportive. And he's like, when you need a minute, bud, go ahead and take it. So he was just reading on his Kindle. And a boy came up to him and said, why are you reading? Boys play video games and only girls read. And Ro looked up at him and said, that's a weird thing to say. Why are you being weird? And went back and started reading his Kindle. So one, thank you, Tim Walls.

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Actually, thank you, George W. Bush, for calling this all weird back in January 2017. But then Tim Walls for re-weirding everything. And then it also was like, this may not be the best fit for our family. So let's come up with a plan and pull you out and let you have just a normal kid summer. Now that they are home and not in camp, I am like, we are writing postcards. We are signing up to volunteer.

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you are not just going to sit around and do nothing. Like we have our little, we have our little school prep work. We have our activism work, and then you can go play and watch TV and do whatever you need to do. So Rocky too, even though he's only five, he can color a postcard. He can write his name. He can have a conversation about this is an election. Do you know what an election is? My kids are annoyed that I make them watch a lot of Schoolhouse Rock, but I'm just also like.

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listen, thank you, Disney Plus. And two, you need to learn these lessons. I will not have a child not knowing what the role of the executive branch, the role of the legislative branch, and what the role of the judicial branch is. And like, you need to know this. You are a citizen. Like, we practice citizenship. It's an action. It's a regular action in our household. It is not a state of being. I love that. We started, it's been at least three years ago when our council member ran for mayor.

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And we canvassed. They've canvassed. They know that I do postcards they couldn't really write at the time. Um, and they've been to election night parties. Like it's very rare that we will ever be invited to an election night party for a mayor of a million people. So we will go every year he invites us, but they know. And I think it's so important that they do know because they're going to be 18 and voting here in a hot second. And if they don't know how important it is.

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then we're in trouble. And everything that we're voting on right now is for their future. It affects them. And it really baffles me, especially when you look, different people, I mean, it's across the board that there are people who are voting just single-mindedly, like, how does this affect me? Well, how does it affect your children? How does it affect your grandchildren, your cousins, your aunts, your uncles, your neighbors? There's so much more.

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that it needs to be, I love that Tim Walz who just said, you know, like, what was it? He just said something about whatever happens to you, it's like none of my business. Yeah, that's golden rule of the Midwest. None of this is anybody's business, you know? And I don't feel that your religious belief should be what's affecting the rest of us. Good for you. If this is what you believe, this is what you choose, then that is you.

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but it's not up to me to make sure that my neighbor's making the right decision to ensure that they go to the heaven that I think is existing. And I think especially when it comes to reproductive freedom and specifically how restricting abortion care affects obstetric care as a whole, this...

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narrative that abortion seems to be an elective choice for people who only wish to terminate an unwanted pregnancy is false. I needed an abortion to manage a miscarriage and I needed a second one to address complications that could have killed me. And at the time, Roe was still law and I was in Pennsylvania and in New York where I could get that care immediately. I could have died.

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if I were in Texas and this happened post-stops. I could have died in Montana. I would have died in more states of the country than the states I would have been safe in. And that needs to be the conversation is that what is a convenient...

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What fits in someone's narrative and fails to address the actual reality is something we need to question because when people realize how dangerous these quote unquote bands are, they're just killing women. They're just killing people. And it has nothing to do with life. It really has everything to do with control and weakening. Yeah.

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I'm the same way. My first was a miscarriage, so I had to go in for a DNC. It was weeks later because my body didn't know what to do. If you leave an unborn child in you, something is going to happen to you. That is why there are these procedures so that we can live and that our bodies don't get infections and shut down and whatnot. I mean, this talk of post-birth

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The what?

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And he's not a thing. Partial birth abortion is not a medical term. None of these terms that sound official and scary happen in clinical care. They just don't happen. The rare times someone would need an abortion in a second or third trimester is a heartbreaking moment because at that point you have a list of names for your child. You've started decorating and planning for a room. You've started.

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buying things for them, you're envisioning them in your family. No one gets to 25 weeks pregnant and decides, you know what, I don't really want to be pregnant anymore so let's not do this. It is to do with life of the mother, the stillbirth, the most heartbreaking moments anyone could face. And to add additional trauma to force a birth or to deny life-saving care.

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at the moment they need it, not when it is on death's door, is an atrocity. And I think that's what people need to get their heads away from these very narrowly defined terms that are going to scare you. And instead, look at the reality.

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I couldn't agree more. I'm like, yep, uh-huh, yes, I agree. And like, I think the vice president has been the most senior person in our country's history who has addressed these issues on an offense, not on defense. And I think Tim Walz being one of the few men talking about the care economy and the need for accessible and affordable childcare.

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who's done something about it and treated it as the major economic issue it is, and not relegating it or minimizing it to a women's issue, makes me so excited for this ticket. His legislative and governing track record on these issues is outstanding. And these are truly the true pro-life policies, because it is about the quality of life and the dignity of the life you're affording people, not mere survival.

37:47

I love the way you put that. I love it. And I adore him because, and I did not know Tim Walls before all of this. I love Minnesota. I have some clients from Minnesota and Minnesotans are the best, don't you know? I lived in the Midwest for a while and I covered Minnesota and I was like, these Midwesterners are just the kindest people there are. If I could handle that winter, like I'd live in Minnesota in a heartbeat. I am too weak.

38:14

It was six months of snow on the ground in Chicago and I was like, yeah, okay, take me back to California because I wear flip-flops year round. So that wasn't really convenient. What I love about him is he brings, our mayor here talks about common sense and how there's such a lack of it and Tim Walz has the common sense. He's a gun owner who's for common sense gun laws.

38:41

volunteered with mom's demand action and I'm like, yeah, you can own a gun. There's no problem with that. That is not a problem. I don't want to take away your gun. Yes. So stop with the second amendment, right? Bullshit. Again, extremely like blowing out of proportion one part of a larger policy or even a larger rule. Like it pisses me off that we haven't adequately funded the ATF.

39:08

the bureau that regulates ammunitions, tobacco, and firearms. Is that it? Yeah. Adequately to uphold the laws we already have on the books. The fact that their database is still completely on paper, not digitized, that for under now a number of presidents, we have failed to appoint and approve through Senate, give Senate confirmation to a director from like the Obama years.

39:39

It's by design, it's not by accident. And it's not a two party issue, it's a one party issue who will rather strike fear and stoke hatred versus for the most part, work together to find ways we can make things better for as many people as possible. And so I can't control their actions, I can't control what they do, but I can.

40:08

do what I can, which is have hard conversations, be willing to listen, but also temper my own passions to speak clearly and as honestly and as factually as possible, to know when to leave those conversations be, and quietly say, I'm glad we had this dialogue. It's not about changing either one's point of view, but presenting new information. I'm grateful for the information you presented me. Let's talk about baseball. To practice citizenship.

40:37

And remember that the rights we have were well, were fought for against a tyrannical empire. And granted, we have the formation of this country and who we displaced and killed and created great harm to is something we also need to reckon with. However, I think a lot about the fact that we fought for these rights over and over and.

41:04

over again and for such a young country we have accomplished so much. It's not about

41:12

Resting on our laurels or accepting what is, I really do believe in George H.W. Bush's vision of being a shining city on a hill. And we've never really gotten there, but it's about getting closer with every little action we take. I talk a lot and we're speaking about my parents and my family's American journey. And my uncle has a very similar story to Shamala Gopalan Harris in that he came to this country

41:42

There was only 100 visas allowed for Indians to come to the United States to study or work. He was one of those lucky people who got it by being a Fulbright scholar. Shamala got it as part of her acceptance into Berkeley to study nutrition science and then endocrinology. Because my uncle was able to come here and teach chemistry at Rutgers and bring his own family members here, my aunt came here as part of a really rough marriage.

42:12

Only in America could she have left her husband, been able to work really hard to become a real estate agent and support her son, who is now a Fortune 100 CEO. That my dad could come here. He pushed through in India, not being able to have impaired vision, couldn't hear out of one ear and had very minimal hearing in another. Get through IIT Bombay to get his masters in chemistry. Come here, finally get a hearing aid.

42:42

start as a bench chemist at Pfizer, which you could get with a high school degree, not necessarily what a master's in chemistry would get, and work his way up the pharmaceutical industry to develop hundreds of lifesaving medications. And then when he should have been retiring, decides to become an entrepreneur. My mother was the first entrepreneur in our family, and the way she built businesses while...

43:09

handling our many, many moves, making sure my dad and I's lives was smooth sailing. Like it was like magic. And the way she now shows up and practices citizenship with me, with my kids and on her own and galvanizing the community at the temple she attends. These are American stories that don't often be viewed as American stories. There's always that.

43:34

It's an Indian American story. It's always sort of in being defined in a very specific way. I think sometimes it gets minimized of we too sing America. And so in the book, it was really, really important for me to make this point of these stories, like Shamala Gopalan's Harris's story is an American story. Kamala Harris's story is an American story. And my parents and my family's American story is an America story. And my story is an American story. It is not.

44:04

just an Indian American story. It is not just a South Asian American story. It is not just a black American story. It's an American story. And I hope people in widening their perspective and maybe hearing this, start to see where there are American stories that they might have otherwise appended in some way to put into a space that maybe made them feel more comfortable, but unintentionally minimized.

44:34

those stories. I love that. That was perfect. That was beautiful. Damn, you're good. Thank you. I love it. Everything is in this book and it tells your story as much as it tells Kamala's

story. When I say that I think everybody should read it, I feel that way because we need to hear these stories.

45:04

I don't want to jinx it, but from my lips to someone's ears, we need to learn everything we can about our next president and the truth and to recognize all of her accomplishments and the person that she is. It's so amazing that you wrote this book. Oh, I do want to ask about getting to meet her. Yes.

45:29

I'm incredibly lucky that I've gotten to meet her twice. The first was one of her very last campaign events when she was still running for president, November 2019. I got to meet Stacey Abrams earlier that day. So that was just like- The mother load. One of the greatest days of my life. And then the next was during the White House's AANHPI forum last spring that-

45:55

I was invited to attend a photo line and get my photo taken with her and just share a few short words. I didn't get to speak to her too much the second time, but in the first time, I had an opportunity to attend an even smaller private reception beforehand and actually have a conversation. I mean, those pictures are on my Instagram feed where I got a hug from her and I'm like, this is the best day of my life. She makes, it's not that she makes everyone she meets feel important, she treats.

46:23

every person she meets as the most important person in the room. She asks your name. She makes sure she's pronouncing it properly. She'll ask what the meaning is of it. She'll ask about your family. She will ask you what you care about. She will ask all the questions and she'll remember them. And it is, it is how I hope I could make everyone I come into contact with feel.

46:51

when I'm not having a bad day, because when I'm having a bad day, I just apologize to everyone that comes in contact with me. She's special. There's no other way to say it, but.

47:06

I feel like the moment has finally met the person and the things we could achieve as a country, as humanity under a Harris Walls presidency would be... Will be. Will be incredible for, and healing, I hope, for us all. I think as you say that, I feel like maybe we need to get through what we went through to appreciate what is...

47:36

going to come. I have the enthusiasm of 2008 with the battle scars of 2016. So I'm coming in it with excitement, but with also not taking anything for granted about this election. Yeah. Oh, I appreciate you so much. I, oh, I'm so glad we're friends now. And I'm so grateful you wrote this. I, I'm really grateful. And it came into my life at the most

48:04

expected. You know what I mean? She wasn't even running yet. And I went, oh, I'm going to get this book and I'm going to support my friend Hitha. And oh, it's really good. Oh, good. Now I know everything there is to know. I think I can be a little snarky. So whenever I did gift guides the past couple of years, I had a list of things to buy, snarky gifts to give people who annoy you. And so this book is for your MAGA family member. And How to Pack is for...

48:34

the most disorganized person in her life. I'm going to need to buy more copies because they're coming out of the woodwork. I mean, I will say some of the best compliments I've gotten about this book have been from the conservative people in my life who really said I had no idea about any of these things and say, listen, I categorically still disagree with her on policy.

49:04

that I have a greater respect for her as a person. And I'm like, that's cool. Yeah, if anything, that's huge because kindness and respect is lacking and we need more of that. So you are literally changing the world with your words. If that is what people are coming away with, then that's amazing. I need like a clip of that, of this, like what you just said. So whenever I'm having a bad day, I could just replay it.

49:30

We can do that. I'll send you a voice memo too. You can just replay my voice saying that to you over and over. Thank you. I need it. And we all need it. We all need these. We all need our little hype files to keep us going in the hard moments. Oh, I will hype you every day, all day long. I am your hype person forever. Back at you. Can you share with everyone where they can find you, where they can buy the book, follow you? Yes, there's a limited number of hard covers still available exclusively at Barnes & Noble.

49:59

The paperback is now available on Amazon. And if you buy lots of copies, I will get to write an updated version when she becomes the next president of the United States. So please, please, please buy multiple, share that, give it to everybody. Makes a great gift. You can find me on Instagram at Hitha Palapu. Same on threads. Those are the two platforms I am the most engaged or on my Substack, which is hitha.substack.com. Thank you so much. I appreciate you.

50:29

Thank you.

50:32

Friends, we know we have a big election coming up. You can't hide from it. It is coming. And it is so important for each of us to not only know the issues, but to know the people that are running for President of the United States. This is such a huge deal. And I really feel that it is up to each and every one of us to know who these people are. What do they stand for as human beings, not only on what issue they stand on which side of. But.

51:01

Who are they truly as humans? Are they kind beings? Are they people who bring joy and happiness and light us up? Because if that's who they are as a human being, then that's who they're going to be as a leader. I encourage you, I ask you, I beg you to please go purchase We're Speaking because it is going to bring you so much insight into the person that Kamala Harris is.

51:28

whether or not you are voting in that direction, this is going to let you know about this one particular human being and she's someone we should all know. So thank you for listening. Don't forget that when you do purchase, we're speaking, leave Hitha a review and while you're leaving her review, go ahead and leave how to get on podcast a review too. I would greatly appreciate it as I'm still trying to climb up to that 50 review mark.

51:55

Thank you for listening. Thank you for your civic engagement and thank you for simply being a participant in this game that we call life.