Acknowledgments

A few years ago, shortly after my only child was born and I had just moved across the country, leaving behind a place and job I loved, I experienced a terrible event in my personal life. I went to see a therapist. He asked me to explain what had happened. As I laid out the details and described the difficulties I was experiencing as a result, I also spoke of the future and what I could do to make things better. When I stopped, the therapist said, "In my 25 years in this line of work, I've never met someone more hopeful than you are." I was a bit taken aback by this comment, unsure of whether it was actually a jab at me for being naïve in the face of an awful situation or whether it was a compliment about the outlook I maintained even in that predicament. I responded with a line that I shared with many concerned friends at the time, "I cannot change that this happened to me, but I can determine how I respond to it." I left, wondering, "what makes me so hopeful and how might I nurture hope in others?" I realized that my hopefulness extended well beyond my personal life and into my civic and political life also. This book is the result of those reflections, questions that were magnified as I looked at the hopelessness many people have experienced recently within American democracy. Certainly, there have been many friends and family along the way, more than I can name here, who have supported my hopeful demeanor. This includes my mother, who passed suddenly during the final stages of completing this book and whose death has once again brought me back to the more difficult moments of sustaining personal hope and yet also helped me see her as an important influence on my inclination to hope. And there have been teachers who have identified and cultivated my habits of hope. I'm grateful to each of you. May you continue to do so for others.

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