

EDITORIAL

IN-BETWEEN WISDOM

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One of my greatest challenges is to move forward in the face of uncertainty. As a kid I would play chess with my dad – outmatched by his skill, I would agonize over each move, desperately trying to avoid a mistake. Lately, I've been feeling like that chess-playing kid – wanting to move, *needing to move*, but frozen by not knowing which move to make.

When I settled on the theme for this issue, it was an entirely different season. It was summer and my swager was in full bloom. My focus for this editorial was on some far-off ideal. I wanted to hold something up to be celebrated – *See this! This is Wisdom!* – the embodiment of Solomon's virtue.

But then came fall and – *Poof!* – my confidence abandoned me. I was left searching for wisdom. Both in my own life and for this article.

And, now, I am left somewhere in between. I look out the window and large white flakes swirl lazily through the air. It's mid-January in Montreal and we've had two solid weeks of snow and cold. I've been teaching my daughter to ski over recent years and it's a bittersweet endeavour. Each trip a joy, but always left wondering about the sustainability of it all. Last year, the snow never really came, and I thought this would be our new normal. Nature is so full of grace.

As the articles for this issue stream in, I start to appreciate a theme – wisdom seems to live in these in-between spaces. There are evidence-based guidelines, institutional protocols, right from wrong. But wisdom isn't really needed to navigate the black and white. We need it most when facing uncertainty.

And, so, as the seasons change, my image of wisdom starts to evolve – from some objective ideal, to how I hold myself in these moments of doubt. Finding a way to stay rooted to something deeper than my current crisis.

I think this is what I lost in the fall. There's a sense of centredness that's been missing. This inner equanimity seems to be an important source of my wisdom. Without it, moving forward feels like stepping into the abyss. With it, I still don't *know* – but I can trust. It's this trust that allows me to tread more confidently into darkness.

During our last ski trip, my daughter got herself lodged into a powdery drift of snow. Normally a fall is followed by a flash of anger. But this time was different – with only her head and limbs sticking out, she sat frozen in startled awe before a broad smile slowly crept across her face – *like sitting in a cloud!*

I worry about what the future holds for my kids. How different their lives may be from mine. My hunch is that uncertainty will be on the rise. How can I prepare them to face the unknown? Celebrating simple, unexpected joys feels important. So does trusting that an inner sense of *good* may be enough.

The articles in this issue helped me cultivate a new understanding of wisdom and its various roots in my life. As you read through the issue, I invite you to reflect on your own sources of wisdom and how they might be nurtured into a foundation for venturing into the unknown. ■

Biographical note

Timothy Wideman is a physical therapist and associate professor at McGill University. His research aims to help clinicians better understand and address suffering associated with pain, and to improve how future health professionals are trained to care for people living with pain. He has been serving as Editor-in-Chief since 2023.