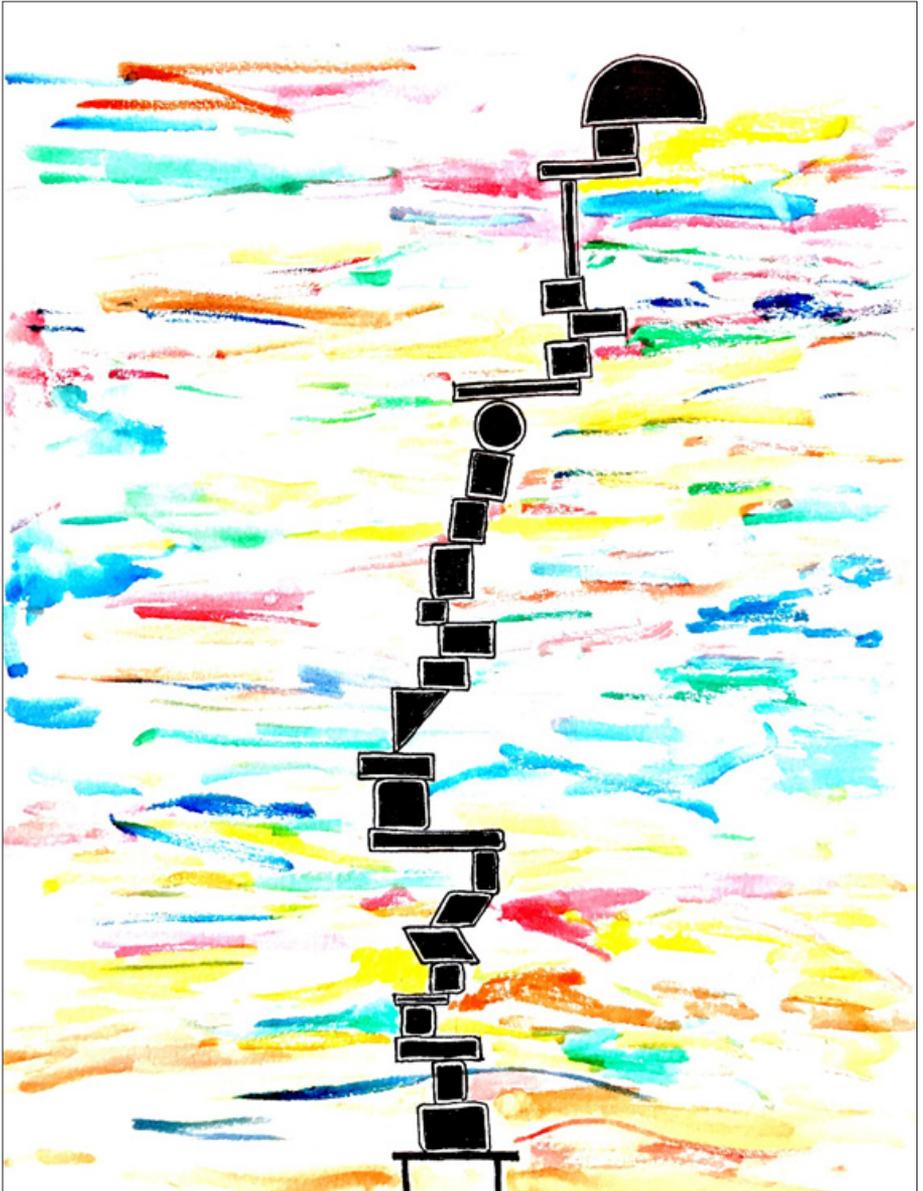


radix

MCGIL'S STUDENT SPIRITUALITY MAGAZINE



MARCH 2020
WELL-BEING

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RADIX is a student-centred magazine providing literary and artistic space for expression on spiritual themes, produced by the McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. Visit us at: mcgill.ca/morsl/radix-magazine

About our cover:

Jassim is a Bengali artist. He studies Computer Science and Philosophy.

About our partner for this issue:

Radix is pleased to collaborate with The Empathy Journal on this issue. They are an online McGill based publication composed of students' personal narratives of their own mental health, entirely student-run and non-profit.

website: theempathyjournal.com



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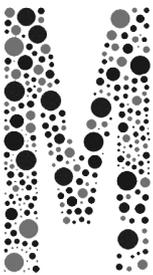
INTRODUCING WELL-BEING

For this Winter 2020 edition of Radix, we wanted to explore mental health in some capacity. But what prompt would capture such a broad topic while still remaining open and accessible? We moved towards the word “well”, but were again uncertain about its context. “Wellness” has been a buzz word for a while now, and it is associated with exercise trends and expensive skincare products. “Wellness” has been marketed as some sort of ultimate, perfect, healthy state that you can work towards, where every element of your life can be in service to your mental and physical health. We all know that is indeed unachievable. Though few may claim to reach the summit of well-being, for the rest of us it is an ongoing process.

We turned away from some abstract, ideal future with the theme of “well-being”. The hyphen puts emphasis on “being”, being in the present moment. And yes, this moment in time is full of uncertainties and confusion, with politic tensions, the Corona virus outbreak, and natural disasters. How do we reckon with the external world and the inner world? How do you exist in wellness right now; not tomorrow, not in a year. What are the choices you are making? How are you engaging with yourself? Do you feel well, not well, or unsure? These are the questions we hoped our contributors would contemplate and indeed they have, you just need to turn the pages of this magazine to see their many reflections.

To be well is to bring harmony between our being, our mind, us and the natural world. So, in this winter edition, we invite you to dive into the soul, recollect yourself, dig up the snow, and sow the spring. In collaboration with **The Empathy Journal** (theempathyjournal.com), we are excited to bring you the Winter edition of Radix! We bring our hearts and thoughts to you in the upcoming pages to help you reflect upon, not just your well-being, but our collective well-being. Well-being for the whole world.

Sonora Grimsted Yang, Muzi Li & Jassim Ahmed



**MCGILL OFFICE
OF RELIGIOUS AND
SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Our 2019-2020 Radix Advisory Board:

Written Word -- Andrew Yang & Muzi Li

Visual Arts--Sonora Grimsted & Jassim Ahmed

Promotion--Akshaya Upadhyay

Production--MORSL

JEFFREY MACKIE

New Life

Nobody asks what you need,
Not anymore.
The world no longer anticipates your every need
You no longer have the sadness that wins awards
The change within you, how do you talk about it?

Desperate nights in rain and beer
Long time ago
Come back in anxious night thoughts
Total honesty, you never thought you'd get this far
No one knows, how scary it was
But maybe this one time again
The pain won't come back again

And I wanted to feel
And you wanted to feel
Human again
No one wants to feel nervous again
Doubting their own thoughts.
Everyone wants to celebrate what they have achieved
And live again.

*Jeffrey Mackie is a seminarian at Montreal Diocesan Theological College
associated with McGill.*

What Time Did For Me

It changes. Give it some time, time heals.

These words ring in my ears, in the morning when I wake up and during bedtime right before I start drifting away into my own world of innocuous but at the same time fearful dreams.

I never thought it would be me. For a girl who had it all; a caring supportive family, the most amazing friends, good grades and a passion for writing. Not just to me, but to the world it seemed that I had it all together. Little did I know that in my mind, there was a different storm building up altogether. Little did I know it would all compound to something greater and bigger one day spiralling my emotions out of control. Little do we realise that even in the perfectly built homes of joy, security and love, there are crevices through which creeps negativity, self loath and panic attacks conjured by events that we may have ignored or even if suffered thought that they are out of our system when in reality they might just be feeding on our emotions, gnawing away at the remnants of our sane, happy selves. But time, time heals.

The time of suffering teaches us. You should realize you are the one who holds the timer all along, the one who could stop it anytime.

Go ahead and start the timer though it takes time to heal. We may be shaped by our past but we do not realize how malleable this design is for us. I am not feeling well today but I know I can always start if there is always a tomorrow.

Small steps lead to bigger accomplishments than you can ever think of. If there is something that time did for me, it was this. It opened my eyes yes, but it was my journey that made me realise, I can change, I can heal myself... with time.

Ibani is a first year masters student in Experimental Medicine who is a blogger, an avid reader and just figuring out life.

EMMA FELDHAKÉ

Adult Coloring Book for Relaxation

I think I know myself better
I think I worked it through
I don't have it all down yet
But at least the outline I drew

I'll try to start filling it in
I'll let the colors decide where to go
I know the aftermath of coercion
And that confusions all I'd know

I have a lot of goals for myself
I have a lot to work on
I just hope I'm doing the work right
I hope I have the right things drawn

But I feel I got it right
At least it's the most confident I've been
This outline's sat the most properly
When I tether it to my skin

I'm proud of my progress
My hope knows it won't end
My brains not nearly as certain
But my hope's making it bend

Regardless, I'll keep on doing
I'll try to expand what I know
I'll keep on looking for different colors
And I won't try to force where they go

Emma is a Cognitive Science student who misses writing.

Smiling through the tough times

Me time ...

just time ... for me...

life as a graduate student can feel like deadlines and emails incoming at hyper velocity.

A pattern of clocking into the library where the whirl of the printing machine and tapping of the keys keeps a steady murmur.

So sometimes I take me time ...

just time ... for me...

Talking to my cactuses, grabbing ice cream, smelling my scented candles and poring through fashion magazines.

Me time ...

a place where my hair comes down, a time for full body stretch into downward dog, as I scroll absent-mindedly through Instagram...

Just me time ... where the flow of time doesn't matter to me...

That is ... until I remember that until I graduate from McGill ... me time only lasts for the weekend.

Wakaba is a MSc student who takes "Me time" seriously with scented candles, sweet desserts and her various plants.





Artist's statement:

“It was quiet outside but chaotic inside; one of those days when my inner critic's voice was loud and distressing. I decided to get it all out on a piece of paper. Drawing makes my toxic thoughts run away. It reminds me that beauty can be painted with ashes.” - N.N.

Artist N.N. is working on a PhD in neuroscience, interested in Spirituality, Psychology, and the human experience generally. A Coptic Christian.



Artist's statement:

Well-being, for me, is positively correlated with my connection to nature. The more I can interact with natural processes happening in an ecosystem, the more connected I feel to life. I feel directly connected to life in the soil when I find mushrooms, the fruiting bodies of fungi. Fungi play a huge role in the well-being and connectivity of ecosystems. I can see the well-being of an ecosystem in the health of a mushroom. A mushroom's appearance can relay to me the quality of connection between the trees in a forest, the grasses in a savannah and the crops in a field. The essence of health and well-being is connection. I encourage everyone to find a mushroom next time they are out for a walk (you can see mushrooms all year-round even in St Anne-de-Bellevue!) and note how you feel.

Krisztina is a PhD student studying the relationship between agricultural soil health and human mental and physical health.

RIANNA DUTCH

From fullness to emptiness back to fullness

I'm Rianna.

The youngest of five children.

My siblings are Annie, Marta, Mason and Celine. They are my role models and the highlights of my family gatherings.

As a child, my life was filled with the usual naivety of a coddled little girl. My days were occupied with fun, joy, laughter and love. But on March 28th, 2012, I became empty. I was 14 years old. I had gone to bed with braids in my hair in order to have an effortlessly wavy look the next day at school. In the wee hours of the morning, I awoke abruptly to the sound of my mother sobbing in my brother's room, the room next to mine. I fearfully went to see what had happened. I quickly learned that my sister Celine had died. All my joy left my body. My brother earnestly proceeded to call my sisters to announce the news. I went downstairs to join the sad group of my parents and the officers who had come to bear us this. Then I went back to bed like nothing had happened. The next day, I bused to school with my effortlessly wavy hair. Once I arrived, I couldn't help but cry and tell my friends what had happened, and my dad eventually came to pick me up. The rest of that week is a blur. All I remember is my sister's lifeless, wax-figure looking body lying in a funeral home down the street from where we lived. Most of my life has felt lifeless since. You never think you'll lose someone until you do.

Celine's life came to a close when she was 23 in a car accident. When her life ended, I began trying to relive her. I wanted to absorb her into my being so that I could never lose her again. Instead of grieving her, I began to study her and her life to learn as much as I could about her in order to use this knowledge to guide my own life. Anything that I could learn, I would. I'd hangout with her friends. Listen to her music. Read her books and her journals. Move to cities she had lived in. Go to schools she had gone to. Anything to feel close to her. If she couldn't live anymore, I would live for her. And in this I lost myself.

I was seeking well-being by trying to be like my sister. Unsurprisingly, that didn't work. Then I started to seek it out in others, in myself, in experiences. Now, I develop my well-being in a multitude of ways that contribute to my health. I also discover new ways every day.

Well-being to me is doing yoga in my living room with some incense burning in the back, it's walking home from school as the sun sets while listening to my favorite songs, it's dancing in my kitchen to throwback songs with my friends, it's family board game nights, it's cuddling with the person I love. It's indulging in everything it means to be alive and young, like my sister did when she was around.

After what happened to me when I was 14, I never thought I'd be well again. But I'm able to find moments of well-being in all of my days. That's what makes them worth living. Even though my sister is gone, I'm still here and I can explore what gives me delight. I have to. We all have to.

Rianna is a third year History student who, like most others, is just seeking for the reason why she's here.

Greetings

Hello, weary man!
So tired, what'd you do?
You have to carry the weight of the world,
Nothing could be farther from being true.

Hello, dreary man!
Do they not hear you cry?
One can't hear the angels weeping,
No matter how hard one tries.

Well, hello clueless man!
I see you don't know who you are.
Do they know that they give beauty to life,
The trees, the sun, and the stars?

Hello, fearful man,
What is it that you fear?
The bravest keep going in times of dread,
And so you are, my dear.

Oh, hello smiling man!
Wait, I don't know what is true.
Whether you're blissful or full of hatred,
I haven't the slightest clue!

AB is an engineering student who finds his voice in the words he writes. Never be afraid of anything. Fortis Fortuna adiuvat.

Instructions

Care for your grief as you would a sick child
Speak tenderly to her,
Nourish her with good food
Tuck her into bed with a hug and "I love you,"
She needs to rest. And so do you.

Alex (they/them) is a writer and Bachelor of Theology student preparing for ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada.

PATRICIA KAMARA

Heaven

If I were to have a heaven it would look a lot like you
It would taste like Oreos and candy corn and breakfast pizza that's a little cold
It would be paved with all the types of cheese and crackers would grow as weeds
It would rain juice and wind fruits and hail the soup of the day
And when it snows the snowflakes would fall with fortunes of (come) what may

If I were to have a heaven It would have somebody new
With light eyes and dark hair or bronze skin and warm lips
Who would love me and love me and love me
And I would love him and love him and love him
And we would love you and love you and love you
And as time goes by, we would have more reasons to continue to

If I were to have a heaven it would be named kind
The streets would be called after those who gifted me with smiles
The avenues named after those who gave me their time
And from point A to be B you wouldn't have to pay a dime
Because somebody will always be there to help if you need a ride

If I were to have a heaven it would be open to all
As long as you don't make other people fall
My heaven would help the people on Earth
to see that maybe their heaven is right where they are
I'd visit hell and Earth also as often as I should
Because I'm only human and I might need to remember why my heaven is so good

If you had a heaven what would yours be? Would I be in it? Would you have lots of trees?

Write me a letter and mail it to my heaven
Be sure to write you signature or the angels will forget to send it

Patricia is a second year student studying food science and nutrition. She is from Kenya and all she wants is for it to get a little warmer.

Everything I'm Not Made Me Everything I Am

I was excited to see that the prompt for this season's submissions was "well-being," because I felt like I had things to say about this topic. But it didn't take much preliminary writing to see a pattern of thought emerge which was far more concerned with the idea of improving one's self rather than finding wellness for the self. This conflation didn't surprise me. On the contrary, it was familiar to me – a place I had operated from for a long time. How can I get higher grades, how can I be healthier, how can I know and do more, etc. But I've come to learn that it's a troubling thing to confuse wellness with improvement – and in the end, this belief sets you on a path that can't earnestly lead you to either.

As soon as we make improving ourselves our sole priority, we begin to operate off the logical basis that we're "not there yet." And while self-improvement can be a healthy and realistic space to motivate certain goals, it's also a deeply fraught place to seek wellness. Sure, we all need things to strive for – that is certainly a part a full life of wellness. But when you live in the space of "not there yet" it can start to sound an awful lot like "not good enough yet."

Soon, this habit of confusing the two in my pursuits became a sure way of limiting the self, when I was trying to nourishing it! And while it's true that I couldn't really imagine my life (or myself) without the idea of 'self-improvement,' it can never be the foundation for being "well."

The true backbone of wellness, in my opinion, is acceptance; the practicing of persistent awareness and acceptance of the self as is, in any moment. Because we can't become any more than we are if we aren't already enough.

So, I did get a C on a paper last semester, and no – that friend didn't keep my confidence, and yes this eternal winter does have me so far in my feelings that my hopes of seeing daylight again are waning. But really, all of that is okay. As it turns out: a C, one less friend, and overcast skies are enough – and it's up to me to say so. So here's what I pose to you: surrender as far as you can into acceptance (and maybe a little ways into vulnerability, too), and see if wellness doesn't surface. In fact, see if all things in your life, including your goals of self-improvement aren't made the better because of it.

Wishing you wellness.

CLASSIFIEDS

MCGILL CHAVURAH (GHETTO SHUL)

The McGill Chavurah continues on the legacy of Ghetto Shul as a community intent on creating inclusive spaces for Jewish students. We host regular Shabbat services and other events in the McGill neighbourhood which aim to integrate the peace and comfort of shared Jewish experience into the hectic feeling of student life. We are progressive, sustainable, inclusive, traditional, non-hierarchical, and egalitarian in both structure and practice. Because we are student-run, we evolve to fit the needs of our changing community every year. Learn more about us on Facebook: [Facebook.com/themcgillchavurah/](https://www.facebook.com/themcgillchavurah/)

MCGILL YOGA CLUB

The McGill Yoga club offers accessible, by-donation yoga classes within 5 minutes from campus. Our goal is to improve the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the community.

[Facebook.com/mcgillyc/](https://www.facebook.com/mcgillyc/)

MCGILL SIKH STUDENTS

The Sikh Students' Association aims to provide an inclusive space and platform to connect with Sikh students and come together for Sikh-oriented events.

[Facebook.com/sikhsatmcgill/](https://www.facebook.com/sikhsatmcgill/)

HILLEL

Hillel McGill is an organization on campus to provide Jewish life and education for both Jews and non-Jews at McGill. They offer a wide variety of programs, events, internships, and connection opportunities for everyone to take part in. From socials to Shabbat services, fashion to politics, Hillel's vision is that every student be inspired to take part in Jewish life on campus. Find them by their handle HillelMTL on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, or by email:

hillelmcgill@ssmu.ca

MUSLIM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (MSA)

The Muslim Students' Association brings together Muslim students to provide resources, essential services, and educational tools needed to enhance their university experience. Through the services and events provided, the MSA aims to facilitate the spiritual and social growth of its members and the larger McGill community, supporting student needs. Our "Discovering Islam" event will take place in Spring 2020. Like MSA on Facebook to get updates on this event, as well as all our other initiatives! Email Communications@MSAMcGill.com to join the listserv.

[Facebook.com/MSAMcGill/](https://www.facebook.com/MSAMcGill/)
www.MSAMcGill.com

**McGILL CHURCH OF JESUS-
CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
STUDENT GROUP**

We meet every Friday at the chapel across from Laurier metro for a free delicious supper and various scripture study classes given in English, French, and Spanish, with fun activities afterwards. Everyone is welcome! For meeting times, and more info on specific scripture study classes and activities, check out the Montreal LDS Institute Facebook page: JAS de Montréal | Montreal YSA, or send an email to:

celeste.groux@mail.mcgill.ca

FALUN DAFU

Falun Dafa (aka Falun Gong) is a Chinese self-cultivation practice which takes the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance as guiding principles. It includes five meditative exercises and, different from other qigong, emphasizes the role of virtue in improving health. McGill's Falun Dafa club meets every Friday for weekly exercises (free instruction provided on site) in Room 361, 688 Sherbrooke W, from 5pm-6:30pm
Email: falundafa.mcgill@gmail.com

[Facebook.com/falundafa.mcgill/](https://www.facebook.com/falundafa.mcgill/)
falundafa-mcgill.com

**NEWMAN CATHOLIC
STUDENTS' SOCIETY**

Through our vibrant spiritual and social life, we seek to grow in the love of Jesus and spread the joy of his Gospel to the McGill University campus and beyond in a spirit of friendship and service. Inspired by the legacy of Cardinal John Henry Newman, we strive to provide a point of intersection between our lives as students and our lives as Christian disciples. We are based out of the Newman Centre at 3484 Peel Street, where students are welcome to hangout during the day, as well as attend various social, spiritual, and academic events held at the centre. Everyone is welcome! You can find more information at our website or on our Facebook page.

McGillCatholics.ca

[Facebook.com/McGillCatholics/](https://www.facebook.com/McGillCatholics/)

MIDWEEK QUAKER MEDITATION

During the academic year, the Montreal midweek Quaker Meeting meets Wednesdays 17:30-18:30 in the Ryan Library on the 2nd floor of the Newman Centre (3484 Peel Street). Keep an eye on our Facebook group for updates:

[Facebook.com/groups/mtlmidweek](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mtlmidweek)

Looking for more community connections?

Visit MORSL's website (mcgill.ca/morsl) for additional listings, or come visit our drop-in centre! Open M-F, 10am-4pm. 3495 Rue University, Level 2.

radix

McGill's Student Spirituality Magazine



*About our back-cover artist:
Asma Ferial is a bioinformatics student who lived in Middle East, Africa
and North America - crafting an art piece per memory!*

Interested in this magazine?
Read back issues and submit your work online:
mcgill.ca/morsl/radix-magazine