In his captivating book, *Dissident Doctor: Catching Babies and Challenging the Medical Status Quo*, Michael Klein, MD, takes the reader on a fascinating journey of his life as a physician who constantly challenges the medical status quo. I was fortunate to have worked with Dr Klein during a 2-year period, from 1976 to 1978, as a family medicine resident in training at the Herzl Family Medicine Centre of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, Canada, where he served as the Medical Director of our program. Even at that time, I knew I was being trained by someone very special. He has been a role model to me ever since; his mentorship and influence are reflected in the family physician I have been for more than 40 years now.

The book, written in a conversational style, reveals Dr Klein's unconventional life from childhood to the present. Growing up in the US with politically active parents and family, he learned at an early age to speak his mind when things were not to his liking. This upbringing was based on fostering the principles of social justice, correcting financial inequality, and promoting peace in the world rather than war. It is no surprise, then, that this path led him to pursue an education in liberally oriented academic institutions, as well as to question religious dogma. As he matured, he discovered that a career in medicine would best combine his quest for independence of thought with his desire to help others.

His education in medicine at Stanford University, CA, would not be conventional either. He decided to take extra training in Mexico and Ethiopia, where he was exposed to the full spectrum of medical care, including midwives providing maternity care, all under extremely challenging conditions. This training ultimately had a profound impact on his choice of medical specialization and his opinion on how physicians in financially prosperous countries should properly practice medicine. Initially this led Dr Klein to choose a career in pediatrics, while at the same time it sparked a lifelong interest in the birth process, as well as in medical research.

Dr Klein pursued further pediatric training in the Bronx, NY, followed by medical work in Rochester, NY, where he started to realize there was more to medicine than just pediatrics and obstetrics. He came to understand that the position of generalist physician, or general practitioner, which was then morphing into the new specialty of family medicine, spoke to his spirit and passion for effectively treating patients as whole human beings in the family and community setting. Dr Klein continually speaks of role models or mentors throughout the book, whether they be parents, children, family, teachers, physicians, nurses, midwives, researchers, students, or most of all patients.

Stresses in his life at this time caused his first marriage to end in divorce. However, he was able to learn from this experience, move forward with new priorities in place, meet and marry his current wife, Bonnie, a renowned filmmaker with the Film Board of Canada, and raise additional children. Another complicating element at this point in his life was the Vietnam War and the draft, which, given his background, Dr Klein wanted no part of. The process of being a conscientious objector would prove to be a minefield of paperwork and negative interaction with military authorities.

It comes as no surprise that at this point in time, Dr Klein and Bonnie chose to flee from the US and cross the border to Canada to begin work at the Montreal Children's Hospital. There he honed his skills in pediatrics and neonatology. As time passed, he and his family settled into their new life in Canada. No longer having to worry about serving as a physician in what he felt was an unjust war, he turned his interests toward the social welfare of his patients, his new country, and his medical research. He continued to follow his passion for improving the experience of women and families facing childbirth, as well as for caring for patients as people rather than as illnesses, in the family setting.

He became more interested in the new specialty of family medicine, which was also gaining popularity in Canada as well, and completed the education to become a certified family physician providing the full gamut of care, including prenatal and obstetrical care (specifically, the total birth experience by performing deliveries

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for his patients). Soon, he was offered the position of Medical Director for the newly formed family medicine residency training program at the Jewish General Hospital Herzl Centre, a McGill Medical School training program.

It was here that he was able to promote the idea and publish research that episiotomies were not always necessary, and that midwives and family physicians could collaborate to better provide care for childbirth in either the hospital or home setting. Convincing administrators, obstetricians, and pediatricians to adopt his views was no easy task. However, with his vast experience of family political activism, foreign medical training, and years of diverse medical experience in multiple areas of medicine, Dr Klein was able to convince medical educators to incorporate his ideas into the training of medical students, residents, and hospital providers.

As a result of his significant lifetime of work in medicine and social causes, Dr Klein was awarded the Order of Canada. Whether you arrive at the book as a patient, student, teacher, colleague, family member, friend, or simply as a reader, you will come away feeling rewarded by the lifetime of work of this Dissident Doctor.

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