



THE WISDOM WHEEL

"Complete attention is the closest thing to a perfect prayer."

— **Margareta Ekström**, from her book *The Day I Began My Studies in Philosophy*





Where is your Awareness going to right now? And what Awareness is coming in?

My husband has just been diagnosed with COVID-19. Nothing quite focuses the mind like the potential loss of my partner of these past 20 years. He started feeling unwell several days ago and so did I. We'd been sharing and comparing our snuffle stories on Facetime since he's working eight time zones away in Doha, Qatar since 25th November. After these many careful months, of near quarantine and mask wearing, my own COVID test just came back negative and we'd hoped his would to, but his was positive.

I want to get on an airplane and go to him. But they would quarantine me for seven days upon arrival. And he'll be in quarantine (again) once he leaves Hazm Mebaireek General Hospital. He's receiving excellent care and says most of the nurses are male and Filipino. "Stay put," he says. "Don't take the risks."

What can be done from here, beyond praying and paying attention, as he endures this so far away? More than ever I feel a tremendous solidarity with the loved ones of the 425,000+ American souls who have already departed since this pandemic began. And I feel more anger at the cavalier deniers whose behaviors are perpetuating this contagion. It is so cruel. Too many are suffering after not being allowed to be beside their loved ones, to help them back to health, or at the end. Also prohibited from giving those who've died a proper send off, via traditional funeral gatherings with extended family and friends, they grieve in isolation. This makes it more immense and unbearable.

Careening between the thought poles: "he'll be fine" and "what if he doesn't make it," I revert to my habitual modes of redirecting and distracting. I am

trying to push away the overwhelming Awareness of what cannot be controlled or circumvented. Yet Awareness prepares us. Reality must be faced. We cannot ignore truth. The refusal to look and learn is at the root of all ignorance. This week I lashed out (online) at one of the faux "spiritual" types. She was praising her followers for refusing to watch the news. No wonder they fell for the QAnon conspiracies. Inside their reinforcing echo chambers, they pass around the kool aid, remaining incapable of holding themselves, or anyone else, accountable. Who profits from disarming the critical thinking of an entire population?

"Humankind cannot bear very much reality," wrote poet T.S. Eliot, after surviving two world wars. But we need more Awareness, not less. Why are we refusing to look or listen? This has been a problem for centuries addressed in Old Testament Torah verses like this from Ecclesiastes: "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." But this is no excuse.

News & Events

This month we held our first two virtual gatherings for those using the 2021 Return to Wisdom planner journals. Such an eclectic mixture of ages and stages, each person sharing their wisdom stories, from as far away as Florida, Utah and California, the newbies along with 20 year Wisdom Wheel veterans.

We have less than a two dozen Return to Wisdom 2021 planners left, and are selling them at half price now, \$13.50 includes tax, shipping & handling. These gently guide users on a 12 month tour of the first 12 Laws on the Wisdom Wheel. Balance started us off in January, and we take up Awareness for the month of February. Participant feedback is helping us prepare future planners, for 2022 and 2023, to cover the all 36 Laws on the Wisdom Wheel. We will gather via Zoom on the 10th and 24th, Wednesday evenings, 6:30 pm EST. Contact me for meeting ID.

Would I, Could I, Should I Write a Memoir? starts March 15th via my collaboration with Story Circle Network. All new classes will be posted in February and you can sign up via this link. This overview course is in two parts, each four weeks long. Part 1 covers the creation/writing parts of the memoir. Part 2 covers what happens after your manuscript is ready for publication, like marketing and distribution. The emphasis is on indie and self publishing and all

the things I wish I'd known starting out!

You do not have to be a member, although SCN members receive discounts, and I recommend joining this organization. Having been with them for over a dozen years, I am pleased to collaborate with them, to bring this eight week series to a larger audience.

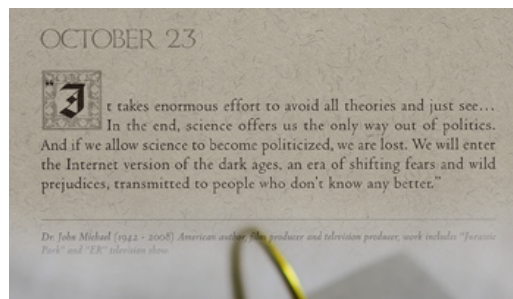
We won't do much writing, although we might form an ongoing group at the end, for those who decide to make the commitment. Bring your questions and concerns so I can help you make a fully informed decision, about what is required, not only to write a book about your life, but to get it into happy readers' hands. I will tell you the unvarnished truth about what it took to write my award-winning memoir, *The Importance of Paris* and what I've learned from other memoirists.

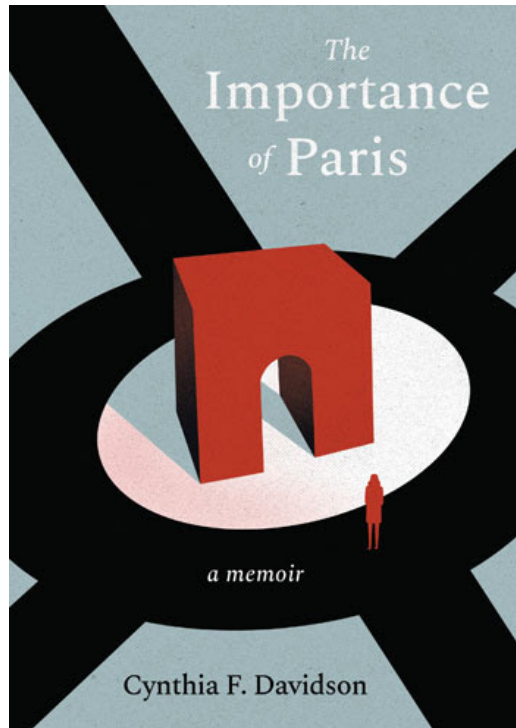
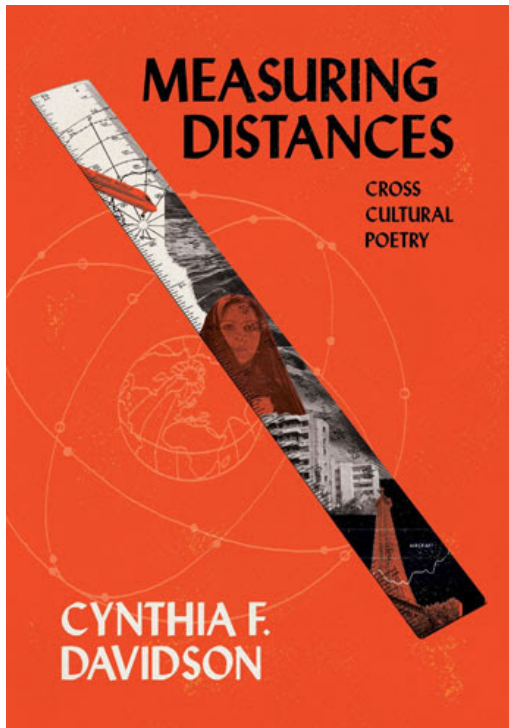
Very proud of our Westerly writing group, and our *Homeland* anthology being featured in the local paper.

For some comic relief, let me recommend my husband Malcolm's musical *Company Matters* now available via streaming podcast.

Ceremonies

Several have asked about the 2021 four day group Bear Fast, leading up to Spring Equinox. The dates would be from the night of March 17 to 21st and a lot will depend upon the pandemic situation by then. We are considering allowing those who have been vaccinated to attend. Check [HOPE HOUSE Facebook page](#) for updated news about this and other ceremonies.







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