

GLOSSARY

Throughout this book, I use various words somewhat differently from those you might be familiar with and possibly even from the definitions you might find in a dictionary. So I've provided some of the key definitions below for your reference.

Affliction: A troubled state of mind—like stress, anxiety, sadness, anger, or mental agitation—that feels bad. In this book, *affliction* doesn't just mean pain, but also the inner turmoil that comes from fighting reality, fighting emotions, judging yourself or others, or being caught up in destructive habits. Affliction is the opposite of ease, peace, and clarity. It's what we experience when our relationship to what's happening is based in resistance, fear, or craving.

Ataraxis: A deep, lasting sense of inner peace, calm, and ease—the kind that doesn't depend on things going your way. Ataraxis is what it feels like to be grounded, content, and free from the mind's constant worrying and chasing. It's not just the absence of stress or pain, but also the presence of a steady, quiet joy.

Awareness: The knowing aspect of the mind, the primary level of intelligence. It is likely uncaused and, therefore, the primordial cause of everything. In this book, awareness is the calm, clear space in which all your experiences happen. It's who you are at the deepest level—not the thoughts you think or emotions you feel, but the knowing presence that sees them. While vast and all-per-

vative by nature, awareness can also be experienced in a localized way (see Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2).

Consciousness: That which turns physical phenomena into an experience known by awareness. There are six primary types: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental. Mental consciousness includes thoughts of all kinds, including the other five types of consciousness (you can think using images or sounds, just as you think using words). Buddhism also defines a seventh type called the *afflicted consciousness*, which results from ego function identification. The seventh consciousness is dissolved when resting in awareness.

Happiness: A somewhat complicated term that means something different to everyone. Most people believe happiness results from having their pleasures achieved. As such, I've largely avoided using the term and greatly prefer *joy* instead.

Joy: A *state* or *trait* of mind resulting from a *positive relationship* to what's happening (pleasure and pain), based heavily on a particular perspective and grounded in *ataraxis* (a state of serenity, tranquility, contentedness, peace, and ease). The opposite of suffering, joy is a deep sense of wellbeing that doesn't depend on everything going your way. It's not the same as pleasure—it's more like a quiet, stable inner happiness that comes from being at peace with life as it is. Joy isn't about chasing good feelings or avoiding bad ones. It's a trait of mind you can cultivate by changing your perspective and how you relate to each moment—even the hard ones.

Meta-Awareness: Being aware that you're aware. It's the ability to notice not just what you're experiencing (like a thought or emotion), but also the fact that you're experiencing it. For example, instead of just being lost in anger, meta-awareness is noticing *Oh*,

anger is happening right now, I am aware of that, and I am aware that I'm aware of it. It's like stepping back from the movie of your mind and realizing you're the one watching it, not the character on the screen. This kind of awareness gives you more freedom and choice in how you respond to life.

Mindfulness: The simple act of paying attention to what's happening right now—in your body, your mind, and the world around you—without judging it, fighting it, or spacing out. It's noticing your experience as it is instead of getting lost in thoughts, stories, or distractions. Its achievement represents access to Level 2 mind, known as subtle mind, as outlined in Chapter 6.

Non-Arrogant Pride: A healthy sense of satisfaction or gratitude for who you are and how far you've come without feeling superior to anyone else. It's the feeling of "I'm a good person who is working hard and evolving, and I'm proud of that," but without needing to compare, impress, or inflate yourself. This kind of pride is grounded in one's true nature as awareness, the Great Self, humility, and self-respect—not ego. It is the joy of diligence.

Nonconceptuality: Nonconceptuality means experiencing reality directly, without mentally labeling, analyzing, or explaining it. It's what happens when you're simply aware without thoughts, stories, or filters. In this book, nonconceptuality is a key aspect of nondual awareness—the quiet, open presence underneath all the mental noise.

Nonduality: Literally, it means "not two." It points to the deep truth that we are not separate from the world around us. In ordinary life, we feel like there's a separate "me" inside here (the small self) experiencing a world "out there." Nonduality reveals that this split is an illusion—that there's only one seamless reality, and

we're not apart from it. In moments of nondual awareness, the sense of being a separate self fades, and there's just peaceful, open knowing of what is.

Pain: A *state* of mind resulting from the *negative subjective appraisal* of a particular moment of consciousness, reflective of *what's happening*.

Peace of Mind: A somewhat complicated term that means something different to everyone, though most people define it as the absence of affliction. It's an inner stability that isn't so easily shaken by pain, problems, or people. In this book, peace of mind comes from changing your relationship to life, not from trying to control it. That said, I've largely avoided using the term and prefer *ataraxis* instead.

Pleasure: A *state* of mind resulting from the *positive subjective appraisal* of a particular moment of consciousness, reflective of *what's happening*.

Pride (vs. Non-Arrogant Pride): The feeling that comes from believing you're better than others—smarter, more successful, more important, or more “right.” It often shows up as superiority, arrogance, or the need to prove yourself. While it can feel good for a moment, pride tends to disconnect us from others and fuels self-absorption. In this book, pride is seen as a subtle form of suffering—a fragile identity that needs constant defending. It blocks growth, openness, and genuine connection.

State of Mind (vs. Trait of Mind): How your mind feels and functions in a given moment. It includes your mood, thoughts, level of energy, and how you're relating to what's happening. For example, being anxious, angry, joyful, calm, or focused are all

different states of mind. States come and go; they're temporary and can shift quickly. This book explores how these shifting states are shaped by deeper traits and habits, and how to relate to them skillfully.

Suffering: A *state* or *trait* of mind resulting from a *negative relationship* to what's happening (pleasure and pain), based heavily on a particular perspective and grounded in *affliction* (a state of turmoil, agitation, discontent, anxiety, and stress). The opposite of joy, it's what happens when your mind says, *This shouldn't be happening* and you get stuck in anger, fear, sadness, or stress. Two people can go through the same situation, but only one might suffer, because suffering depends on how you *relate* to what's happening, not just what's happening. Suffering can be eliminated entirely and is not experienced by the Great Self.

Trait of Mind (vs. State of Mind): A long-term pattern in how your mind usually works or reacts—like a mental habit that sticks around over time. Traits of mind include things like being generally anxious, joyful, patient, or reactive. Unlike temporary states of mind, traits are more stable and automatic. In this book, we focus on cultivating positive traits (like equanimity or joy) through repeated practice, so that peace and wellbeing become your default, not just a passing experience.