Glossary of Terms

Acceptance	The act of taking or receiving something offered.
Amygdala	A ganglion of the limbic system adjoining the temporal lobe of the brain and involved in emotions of fear and aggression.
Amygdala Hijack	An emotional response that is immediate, overwhelming, and out of measure with the actual stimulus because it has triggered a much more significant emotional threat.
Anchor	Something that serves to hold an object firmly. The intended object of attention during mindfulness practice.
Attachment	The emotional desire for something, or not letting go when something doesn't go the way we think it would.
Attention	The ability to narrow the field of awareness to a specific set of stimuli, to the exclusion of distractions from other domains of awareness.
Autonomic Nervous System	A part of the nervous system that regulates key involuntary functions of the body, including the activity of the heart muscle; the smooth muscles, including the muscles of the intestinal tract; and the glands. The autonomic nervous system has two divisions: the sympathetic nervous system, which accelerates the heart rate, constricts blood vessels, and raises blood pressure, and the parasympathetic nervous system, which slows the heart rate, increases intestinal and gland activity, and relaxes sphincter muscles.
Avoidance	The unwillingness to remain in contact with unpleasant thoughts, feelings, memories, and other experiences.
Awareness	Fluid, sometimes pre-linguistic, perception of experience through the senses, thoughts, and emotions from moment to moment.
Axon	The long threadlike part of a nerve cell along which impulses are conducted from the cell body to other cells.
Axon Terminal	Any of the button-like endings of axons through which axons make synaptic contacts with other nerve cells or with effector cells. At the axon terminal, synaptic vesicles containing neurotransmitters are docked.
Bottom-Up Processing	The part of human information processing that comprises the reception of information from the senses, and the emotional response that

	information creates before the prefrontal cortex assigns words and meaning to the experience.
Catastrophizing	The projection of a “worst-case scenario” as the most likely outcome from an event or series of events. “My heart rate is up. I must be having a heart attack!”
Central Nervous System	The complex of nerve tissues that controls the activities of the body. In vertebrates it comprises the brain and spinal cord.
Challenge Time	Intentionally applying our mind to something new and novel. Learning something new.
Default-Mode Network	A network of interacting brain regions that is active when a person is not focused on the outside world.
Dendrite	A short branched extension of a nerve cell, along which impulses received from other cells at synapses are transmitted to the cell body.
Discounting	Playing down the importance or severity of an event.
Down Time	Intentional periods of time with no goals and nothing to achieve, other than relaxing.
Emotion	Pre-cognitive response to stimuli that we experience through a complex of neurochemical changes in the body, perceived as either positive or negative.
Focus Time	The use of intentional focus over a period of time.
Formal Practice	Using controlled circumstances to emphasize particular aspects of mindfulness, like the specific times and exercises you might do in the gym.
Hippocampus	The elongated ridges on the floor of each lateral ventricle of the brain, thought to be the center of emotion, memory, and the autonomic nervous system.
Hypothalamus	A region of the forebrain below the thalamus which coordinates both the autonomic nervous system and the activity of the pituitary, controlling body temperature, thirst, hunger, and other homeostatic systems, and involved in sleep and emotional activity.

Informal Practice	Applying focused attention or open awareness to an experience in “real life” (e.g. intentionally using open awareness while walking from your car to lunch, or intentionally paying focused attention to the sense of water on your hands while doing dishes).
Insight Network	The subconscious network that works to solve complex problems after periods of focused work on the problem. Requires downtime.
Mindfulness	The deliberate use of attention focused on the current experience of thoughts, emotions, and senses, without judgment or attachment.
Mindfulness Practice	The regular repetition of exercises designed to develop the ability to maintain both focused attention on and open awareness of the present moment, without judgment or attachment. Merriam Webster defines mindfulness as the ability to be aware of something that may be important. Oxford adds that this includes the inclination or willingness to do something about that which you have become aware of.
Neural Pathway	A series of connected nerves along which electrical impulses travel in the body.
Neuron	A grayish or reddish granular cell that is the fundamental functional unit of nervous tissue transmitting and receiving nerve impulses and having cytoplasmic processes which are highly differentiated frequently as multiple dendrites or usually as solitary axons which conduct impulses to and away from the cell body.
Nucleus	the large, membrane-bounded organelle that contains the genetic material in the form of multiple linear DNA molecules organized into structures called chromosomes. In cell biology, the nucleus function is to act as the *control center of the cell*.
Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)	The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) is one of the two divisions of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), along with the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), These systems primarily work unconsciously in opposite ways to regulate many functions and parts of the body. The PNS controls the "rest and digest" response.
Positive Interruption	Using an event that changes the course of your intended activity to take a few moments to notice how the body/mind responds.
Prefrontal Cortex	The cerebral cortex covering the front part of the frontal lobe. This brain region has been implicated in planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, and moderating social

	behaviour. It is highly developed in humans and plays a role in the regulation of complex cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning.
Salience Network (SN)	The SN is an intrinsically connected large-scale network anchored in the anterior insula (AI) and dorsal anterior cingulate cortex. The SN also includes three key subcortical structures: the amygdala, the ventral striatum, and the substantia nigra/ventral tegmental area.
Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)	The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) is one of the two divisions of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), along with the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), These systems primarily work unconsciously in opposite ways to regulate many functions and parts of the body. Colloquially, the SNS governs the "fight or flight" response.
Synapse	Also called neuronal junction, the site of transmission of electric nerve impulses between two nerve cells (neurons) or between a neuron and a gland or muscle cell (effector).
Central Executive Network (CEN)	The frontoparietal central executive network (CEN) connects areas of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the posterior parietal cortex. The CEN is commonly defined as being externally directed and is activated when we are aware of, and paying attention to, the environment around us.
Thalamus	The thalamus is a small structure within the brain located just above the brain stem between the cerebral cortex and the midbrain and has extensive nerve connections to both. The primary function of the thalamus is to relay motor and sensory signals to the cerebral cortex.
Top-Down Processing	Top-down processing involves the brain 'sending down' stored information to the sensory system as it receives information from the stimulus, enabling a plausible hypothesis to be made without the need to analyze every feature of the stimulus.