ntention is fundamental to any project, endeavor, or journey. We begin the second edition of this book with a deep intention that it may benefit both those who read it and those whom they are dedicated to helping. Our aim is to explore the art and science of mindfulness, drawing on Eastern wisdom and practices as well as Western psychological theory and science. We believe that mindfulness is fundamental to effective therapy and that sound empirical investigation of mindfulness is necessary and valuable for advancing the field. We hope that this book will speak to a general audience of psychotherapists, health care providers, caregivers, educators, students, and researchers interested in weaving mindfulness into the fabric of their work.

The purpose of the book is to demystify mindfulness, drawing on the concepts of this 2,600-year-old practice and

1Although we draw from and are inspired by the Buddhist teachings and practices of mindfulness (drawing particularly from the Theravadin tradition), we introduce mindfulness as a universal concept and attempt to place it within a Western medical and psychological context. We view mindfulness as a universal human capacity that anyone can cultivate.

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exploring its potential within the current Western psychological and biomedical framework. We believe that incorporating the perennial insights of mindfulness into the Western tradition offers something unique and profoundly healing to the field of health care. There is a growing need for new ways of seeing and new ways of being in the health care professions. Mindfulness helps us expand our vision of self, other, health, and healing and invites us to inhabit our own bodies, hearts, and minds with greater presence, aliveness, and awe.

We have been teaching mindfulness to health care professionals for almost 2 decades, and during this time, we have seen the yearning to reconnect with the deeper calling that initially drew these students and professionals into the field of healing. Often practitioners express feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and burnout. They share that the intentions that initially drew them to the helping profession are buried under seemingly impenetrable stress and pressure. They are seeking refuge, honesty, and authenticity, a new way of relating to the chaos and suffering around and within them. They are seeking a wholeness of being and presence out of which they can facilitate their own and others’ healing. Mindfulness offers such a path.

Our intention here is to offer a simple yet nuanced definition of mindfulness so that we have a common foundation upon which to build. From this common ground, we explore the role of mindfulness in psychotherapy and health care, exploring it as an empirically supported clinical intervention across a wide range of populations; a means of fostering self-care for helping professionals; and a catalyst for going beyond the profession’s focus on pathology to include positive growth and development.

Specifically, the book is divided into three sections. Part I, What Is Mindfulness? And How Is It Applicable to Clinical Work?, is composed of four chapters. Chapter 1 defines mindfulness, attempting to elucidate its multifaceted nature as both a meditation practice and a fundamental way of relating and being. Chapters 2 through 4 explore applications of mindfulness in psychotherapy from the perspective of the mindful therapist (Chapter 2), mindfulness-informed therapy (Chapter 3), and mindfulness-based therapy (Chapter 4).

Part II, Does It Help? And How Does It Help?, focuses on a summary of the research on mindfulness-based interventions for mental health (Chapter 5) and medical (Chapter 6) populations. This section also discusses potential mechanisms of action for the salutary and transformational effects of mindfulness (Chapter 7). Finally, Part III, Expanding the Paradigm, offers new ways of envisioning health care and mental health, expanding the field to include the well-being of the clinician as an essential part of the system (Chapter 8) as well as expanding our definitions of health and human potential (Chapter 9). Finally, Chapter 10 offers directions for future research and applications of mindfulness.
When we conceptualized and wrote the first edition of this book, the field of mindfulness was still quite young. Seven years later, we could only have dreamed of the degree to which the field has exploded into a well-studied and deeply exciting arena of exploration. This revised edition includes the current research and theory related to mindfulness, with new sections outlining the neuroscience of mindfulness, boundary conditions of its growing application, and updated research on mechanisms of change and yet keeps the fundamentals central. It is essential to have a clear foundation, which can be continually augmented with current publications that highlight the most recent research, theory, and clinical applications. Our intention is to offer those in the helping profession a foundation to explore the potential of integrating mindfulness into their work and their lives. Although an academic text, it is offered as part of a much larger conversation within psychology and the helping professions as a vehicle to explore and expand our visions of health and healing. We invite you to read this book as a form of mindful contemplation, and we hope that it challenges you to discover new ways of being with yourself and the people whose lives you touch.

Most important, we offer this book as a journey into the richness and beauty of mindfulness. We invite you to discover for yourself what is true.