

## **Prologue: Paths Toward a Clearing**

### **Eve**

This is a co-authored invitation to pause and to listen.

Imagine you've found yourself in a small, sunlit clearing in a deep and tangled forest.

Whoever you are and however you've journeyed here, whether on foot over perilous mountains or on horseback across a gently rolling meadow, this space is for you.

What does it mean to feel safe?

To have the refuge of a shelter from the rain? The warmth of a fire? Or a community of fellow travellers?

As you stay here a while, ask yourself what you need to feel safe enough to listen.

Can you give it to yourself, or ask for it from others?

Can you demand it? Reclaim it?

This is an invitation to listen to yourself, your needs and emotions.

And to be curious about what you hear, sense or experience as you move your way through this book.

The desire to turn from pain. To run.

The pull to abandon yourself. Others.

The presence of fear, sadness, despair, rage, guilt, shame.

Or an absence of feeling. Apathy. Burnout.

Whatever it is you experience as you listen to yourself and to us – you're normal, you're human, and you're not alone.

Sometimes listening is too much. Too painful. Dangerous.

Sometimes when we think we're on firm ground, hidden roots can trip us.

If during the listening process you feel too unsafe to continue, this is an invitation to move away and return only when, or if, you want to.

This space belongs to us all.

How will you use it?

