

U. G. KRISHNAMURTI



***MIND
IS A MYTH***

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Mind is a Myth

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Kendall Pierce

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Introduction

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What if the very engine of self-improvement—the mind that seeks—turns out to be the obstacle it hopes to overcome? *Mind is a Myth* confronts this paradox with austere directness, presenting U. G. Krishnamurti's unsparing challenge to cherished ideas about consciousness, freedom, and change. Rather than constructing a doctrine, the work persistently questions the utility of any doctrine, turning the reader's attention from interpretive comfort to the raw fact of experiencing. It is an introduction to a voice that neither persuades nor consoles, yet compels attention through its clarity and refusal of spiritual theatrics. The book's drama unfolds in the tension between cultural conditioning and bare actuality.

Situated at the crossroads of philosophy and spiritual discourse, *Mind is a Myth* is nonfiction composed largely of recorded conversations and informal reflections. Emerging from late twentieth-century exchanges with visitors and interviewers, the book circulated internationally as a compact, accessible volume of dialogues and remarks. Its setting is the conversational space itself—unscripted, immediate, and resistant to ceremonial trappings—as the author responds to questions about enlightenment, practice, and the structure of thought. The text does not offer a linear argument; instead, it assembles moments of encounter that reveal a consistent stance. This frame places readers inside an inquiry rather than before a finished system.

At its core, the premise is disarmingly spare: questions about how to live and what the mind is meet a responder who declines method, authority, and metaphysical comfort. The voice is plain, unsentimental, and often caustic, but it remains tightly focused on what can be verified in immediate experience. Passages arrive as succinct answers, abrupt redirections, and patient demolitions of cherished assumptions. The style favors repetition over ornament, insisting that understanding is not cumulative. The tone is uncompromising yet lucid, inviting careful attention rather than agreement. Reading feels less like acquiring ideas and more like watching concepts lose their footing.

Among the book's central themes is a radical critique of the entity we call the mind, treated not as an inner controller but as a web of cultural habits sustained by language and memory. The conversations probe the authority we grant to teachers, systems, and ideals, arguing that the promise of progressive transformation often strengthens the very patterns it seeks to end. There is skepticism toward psychological time and toward narratives that defer living to a future achievement. Throughout, language itself is shown as both necessary and treacherous, a tool that organizes sensation while smuggling in assumptions that harden into identity.

Another persistent motif is the priority of the body's actuality over the mind's stories, a reversal that unsettles cherished images of progress, purity, or inner control. The conversations resist translating sensation into symbolism, pressing readers to notice how effort, intention, and interpretation can amplify conflict. Ethical implications arise

without being preached: if authority and ideal are unreliable, how does one relate to others, work, and daily routines? The text refuses tidy answers, yet it illuminates how conformity, comparison, and self-description keep conflict alive. What emerges is not a program but a stripped attention that exposes the mechanics of seeking.

Mind is a Myth remains urgent for contemporary readers who navigate a culture saturated with optimization, self-branding, and spiritual consumerism. In an era of techniques and trackers, the book questions the assumption that better instruments automatically yield better living. Its suspicion of authority speaks to polarized discourse, while its emphasis on immediacy counters the deferral built into perfectionist narratives. For those immersed in therapy-speak, productivity hacks, or meditation apps, these pages pose a bracing question about whether methods may prolong the problems they address. The result is a critique that cuts across traditions and industries without collapsing into cynicism or despair.

To approach this book is to test one's tolerance for an inquiry that refuses consolation and refuses to play teacher. U. G. Krishnamurti's stance will not suit readers who seek a path, yet it rewards those willing to examine the reflex to seek itself. The introduction of no method is not nihilism; it is an invitation to observe experience before interpretation hardens it into aspiration or regret. As a document of late twentieth-century thought, it offers a distinctive countercurrent to both religious revival and therapeutic culture. Read patiently, it becomes less an argument than a mirror that will not flatter.

Synopsis

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Mind Is a Myth by U. G. Krishnamurti is a collection of conversations and remarks recorded over years, presented in a plain, unsentimental voice. Rather than a linear argument, the book unfolds through interviews, dialogues, and brief statements in which Krishnamurti is pressed to clarify claims and refuses tidy systems. Its central thread is his repudiation of traditional spirituality and psychological ideals. The title signals his contention that what we call the mind is a cultural construct rather than an independent entity guiding life. Across episodes, he challenges cherished assumptions, discourages discipleship, and directs attention to immediate, factual functioning.

Early sections trace his disenchantment with orthodox teachings and outline the break that frames his later statements. He recounts how the search for enlightenment exhausted itself and gave way to a discontinuity he later referred to as the calamity, not a spiritual attainment but a collapse of the structures that sustained seeking. This shift anchors his subsequent remarks about how the body operates without the psychological center we presume. He maintains that invoking ideals only perpetuates conflict, and he counters questioners' assumptions by declining to supply practices, maintaining there is nothing to cultivate, acquire, or perfect in the realm commonly called mind.

At the core is his assertion that mind, as a separate inner agent, does not exist apart from learned images and

memory. What functions is a network of conditioned responses useful for survival, while life itself proceeds through the body's native intelligence. He argues that thought cannot touch the living movement of the senses and that psychological time—the projection of past and future—generates the very problems it promises to solve. By dissolving the authority of thought in these matters, he proposes that the division between an observer and observed is artificial, and attempts to bring about unity through will only reinforce separation.

He examines desire, fear, pleasure, and pain as linked movements sustained by memory and repetition. The pursuit of permanent happiness or freedom becomes, in this view, an endless loop that feeds on thought's images of continuity. Krishnamurti questions the utility of meditation techniques, therapies, and disciplines aimed at transforming the self, suggesting they organize and prolong the very conflicts they seek to end. His replies frequently redirect attention to sensory fact rather than introspective analysis. In this redirection, the book portrays a life that does not depend on psychological control, while leaving aside prescriptive programs or promises of progressive improvement.

The conversations also widen into social and cultural critique. He challenges the prestige of scientific and religious authorities when they address human suffering, arguing that explanations and ideals mask helplessness before facts. Institutions, he suggests, stabilize collective fear by offering narratives of purpose, while language reinforces a sense of separation that becomes self-

perpetuating. Yet he avoids building an opposing system; he declines to replace one doctrine with another. The result is a stripped-down view that treats morality as behavior arising from circumstances rather than from commandments, and treats meaning as a by-product of living rather than an abstract goal to be secured.

Formally, the book's dialogic structure keeps the tone immediate and unsentimental. Interlocutors press for practical guidance, compassion, or a clear method, and Krishnamurti repeatedly refuses the role of teacher or guide. He uses bluntness and occasional humor to unsettle assumptions, returning to the contention that life does not require a controlling center to function. The absence of prescriptions is deliberate: he holds that any program would strengthen the very center under question. The exchanges are concise, sometimes abrupt, and the cumulative effect is to dislodge expectations about spiritual literature without replacing them with a new vocabulary, movement, or belief system.

By the end, *Mind Is a Myth* stands as a provocation rather than a doctrine, inviting readers to reexamine the premises of self-improvement, liberation, and authority. Its enduring resonance lies in the rigor of its negations and the insistence that no method can deliver what thought promises. Without offering conclusions to adopt, it leaves a clarified field of questions about experience, language, and the limits of introspection. The book's significance persists in contemporary debates about consciousness and authenticity, not by resolving them, but by showing how

deeply they are organized by culture—and by urging attention back to the immediacy of living.

Historical Context

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Mind is a Myth emerges from the long arc of U. G. Krishnamurti's life, beginning in the Madras Presidency of British India, where he was born in 1918 and exposed early to the Theosophical Society headquartered at Adyar. The Society's prominent role in interwar India—especially its promotion of Jiddu Krishnamurti as a potential “World Teacher” through the Order of the Star (dissolved in 1929)—formed a milieu of organized spirituality and Western-Eastern synthesis. This institutional setting, mixing occult revival with reformist zeal, framed U. G.'s initial encounters with metaphysical claims he would later reject, shaping the critical stance that undergirds the conversations collected.

After Indian independence in 1947, a Nehruvian ethos of scientific temper and secular modernism influenced public discourse, while older reform movements persisted. U. G. moved through these currents, traveling widely and engaging with philosophical debates that bridged India, Europe, and the United States. By the 1950s and the 1960s he was a frequent presence in European circles where Asian thought was avidly discussed, including Switzerland's summer gatherings associated with Jiddu Krishnamurti. The cross-border conversations of the postwar period—fueled by lectures, study groups, and cultural exchange—provided the transnational stage on which U. G.'s uncompromising skepticism took shape, apart from academic or monastic institutions.

The 1960s saw a dramatic surge of Western interest in Indian gurus, meditation, and yoga, coinciding with countercultural critiques of authority. Public figures such as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and movements like Transcendental Meditation brought spiritual practice into mainstream media. In this climate U. G. spent time in Saanen, Switzerland, where Jiddu Krishnamurti held annual talks. In 1967 U. G. reported a drastic, non-mystical “calamity,” which he insisted was physiological rather than spiritual. That insistence on de-romanticizing experience became central to his later dialogues, countering the era’s enthusiasm for techniques, experiences, and attainment narratives that promised personal transformation or enlightenment.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, global spiritual marketplaces expanded alongside the human potential movement, New Age publishing, and psychological therapies. Simultaneously, public scandals around charismatic teachers, debates on cults, and growing media scrutiny fostered skepticism. U. G.’s conversations directly engaged this moment: he rejected doctrines, methods, and the very idea of teachable enlightenment, and cast suspicion on both religious authority and scientific reductionism. His rhetoric, spare and iconoclastic, contrasted with systems promising measurable progress. The climate of consumer spirituality and therapeutic self-help provided a vivid backdrop against which his insistence on the futility of seeking stood out, unsettling seekers and critics alike.

Mind is a Myth took shape as verbatim conversations recorded over many years in India and abroad, then transcribed and compiled by associates into a book circulated in the late twentieth century. The material reflects informal salons in places like Bombay/Mumbai, Bangalore/Bengaluru, and European towns where visitors questioned U. G. without ceremonies or initiations. Eschewing institutions and discipleship, his circle facilitated free redistribution; transcripts and later digital editions traveled through photocopies, small presses, and early websites. The book's unadorned dialogic form mirrors the circumstances of its production—impromptu, portable, and resistant to ownership—while situating it within a broader cassette-and-pamphlet culture of spiritual discourse.

Jiddu Krishnamurti's long-running public talks, notably in Saanen from the 1960s onward, shaped the broader discourse U. G. addressed. Jiddu's 1929 dissolution of the Order of the Star had already dramatized a rejection of organized authority, yet he continued to speak, write, and teach. U. G. advanced a harsher conclusion: there is no "teaching," method, or mind to perfect. This internal debate—within a lineage of reformist anti-guru critique—helps locate Mind is a Myth historically. It arises from decades of conversations in which listeners, steeped in Jiddu's language and Advaitic revival currents, tested U. G.'s refusal to offer frameworks, paths, or promises.

In the 1990s, India's economic liberalization amplified transnational flows of media and ideas, while a growing urban middle class sought both pragmatic and spiritual tools amid rapid change. Video recordings, desktop publishing,

and the early internet increased the reach of informal teachers and iconoclasts. U. G.'s dialogues circulated widely without formal promotion, finding audiences among readers wary of institutional religion, guru scandals, or commodified self-improvement. The conversations' plainspokenness and portability fit a moment when seekers sampled diverse lineages across borders and screens. *Mind is a Myth* thus reflects the distribution technologies and consumer skepticism characteristic of late twentieth-century global spiritual culture.

As a historical artifact, *Mind is a Myth* crystallizes late twentieth-century disenchantment with authority, the commodification of spiritual experience, and the tension between scientific explanation and interior life. Rooted in venues from Saanen to Mumbai living rooms, it turns the era's cross-cultural dialogue back on itself, questioning the premises of seeking that animated both counterculture and New Age movements. Its refusal of systems echoes broader critiques of ideology after the Cold War, while its conversational immediacy channels the small-press, cassette, and early-web ethos. The result is a document that mirrors its time even as it dismantles the narratives that time popularized.

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I. The Certainty That Blasts Everything ..

CHAPTER 1

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THE CERTAINTY THAT BLASTS EVERYTHING

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U.G[1].: I can never sit on a platform and talk[1q]. It is too artificial. It is a waste of time to sit and discuss things in hypothetical or abstract terms. An angry man does not sit and talk and converse pleasantly about anger; he is too angry. So don't tell me that you are in crisis, that you are angry. Why talk of anger? You live and die in the hope that someday, somehow, you will no longer be angry. You are burdened with hope, and if this life seems hopeless, you invent the next life. There are no lives to come.

Q: Well, it certainly cannot be said that your talking gives hope to anyone. Why do you talk if not to console or instruct? U.G.: What am I to do? You come, I talk. Do you want me to criticize you, to throw stones? It is useless, for you are affected by nothing, having erected an impenetrable armor around yourself. You feel nothing. Unable to understand your situation, you react through thought, which is your ideas and mentations. Reaction is thought. The pain you are going through there is clearly reflected without having to experience the pain here. Here there is no experience at all. That is all. In this natural state

you feel the pain of others, whether you personally know them or not. Recently my eldest son was dying of cancer in a hospital nearby. I was in the area and visited him often. Friends said that I was in intense pain during the whole time, until he died. I cannot do anything. It (pain) is an expression of life. They wanted me to attempt some kind of healing for his cancer. If I touch that tumor it will grow, for I am adding life to it. Cancer is a multiplication of cells, another expression of life, and anything I might do only strengthens it.

Q: So you can appreciate the suffering of others and yet are free of it yourself, is that it?

U.G.: Suffering is an experience, and there is no experience here. You are not one thing, and life another. It is one unitary movement and anything I say about it is misleading, confusing. You are not a "person", not a "thing", not a discrete entity surrounded by "other" things. The unitary movement is not something which you can experience.

Q: But to talk of living without experiencing sounds irrational to our minds.

U.G.: What I am saying conflicts with your logical framework. You are using logic to continue that separative structure, that is all. Your questions are again thoughts and therefore reactive. All thought is reactive[2q]. You are desperately protecting this armour, this shield of thought, and are frightened that the movement of life might smash your frontiers. Life is like a river in spate, lashing at the banks, threatening the limits that have been placed around it. Your thought structure and your actual physiological

framework are limited, but life itself is not. That is why life in freedom is painful to the body; the tremendous outburst of energy that takes place here is a painful thing to the body, blasting every cell as it goes. You cannot imagine how it is in your wildest dreams. This is why it is misleading no matter how I put it.

Q: The gurus and priests teach us also that there is no separative structure and that that is the source of our problems. How do you differ from them?

U.G.: For you, and them, it is just words. Your belief in a unitary movement of life is just a groundless belief, lacking any certainty. You have cleverly rationalized what the gurus and holy books have taught you. Your beliefs are the result of blind acceptance of authority, all secondhand stuff. You are not separate from your beliefs. When your precious beliefs and illusions come to an end, you come to an end. My talking is nothing more than the response to your pain, which you are expressing through questions, logical arguments, and other mentations.

Q: But surely your sitting here and talking hour after hour indicates that you have a philosophy, a message to give, even if it is poorly understood by your listeners.

U.G.: Not at all. There is nobody here talking, giving advice, feeling pain, or experiencing anything at all. Like a ball thrown against the wall, it bounces back, that is all. My talking is the direct result of your question, I have nothing here of my own, no obvious or hidden agenda, no product to sell, no axe to grind, nothing to prove.