

The Eightfold Path

Wise Understanding: At the beginning, includes what we need to know in order to begin to engage with the practices: Learn about

- the four noble truths
- which actions are skilful and which are unskillful
- karma
- the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, not-self)

Wise intention: the intentions that lead away from suffering in self and other. The intentions towards

- Renunciation (letting go of things that cause suffering)
- Non ill will (metta – kindness)
- Non cruelty (karuna – compassion)

Wise Speech: Cultivation of skillful speech by avoiding four kinds of speech:

- False speech
- Harsh speech
- Divisive speech
- Idle speech

Wise action: Cultivation of skilful action by avoiding

- Taking life
- Taking what is not given
- Sexual misconduct

Wise livelihood: avoiding occupations that require one to engage in:

- Unwise speech and unwise action
- Additional occupations to avoid: trade in poison, weapons, living beings, meat, intoxicants

Wise effort: Engaging in the cultivation of wholesome states and the avoiding of unwholesome.

- Avoiding unwholesome states that have not arisen
- Abandoning unwholesome states that have arisen
- Cultivating wholesome states that have not arisen
- Maintaining wholesome state that have arisen

Wise mindfulness: Mindfulness supported by wise understanding and wise intention

- Classical definition: mindfulness cultivated by the four foundations of mindfulness.

Wise concentration: Concentration cultivated through the practices of the eightfold path.

- Two classical definitions:
- “unification of mind equipped with the factors of wise understanding, wise intention, wise speech, wise action, wise livelihood, wise effort and wise mindfulness.” *Majjhima Nikaya 117*
- The four jhanas