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 skillful 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 skillful 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