

The Eightfold Path

The Eightfold Path is the Fourth Noble Truth that the Buddha explained to his first disciples in the deer park. It is the path that eventually leads to the end of the ego and the end of suffering.

1. **Right Understanding/View** - To see and understand things as they really are: that is to understand impermanence, suffering, non-existence of self, karma, craving, aversion, attachment, and the unsatisfactory nature of all concepts, ideas, phenomena, and matter; and to realize the meaning of the Four Noble Truths.
2. **Right Intention/Thought** - The commitment to ethical and psychological self-improvement by means of overcoming the power of the ego. The Three Intentions: (a) The Intention of Renunciation - to resist (1) the pull of desire for impermanent things that help ground us to the sense of "me" and (2) the influence of the ego on our thoughts, words, and actions. (b) The Intention of Goodwill - to resist the temptation to become angry. (c) The Intention of Harmlessness - to resist negative (cruel, violent), harmful thoughts and behavior and to develop compassion.
3. **Right Speech** - To abstain from negative speech such as lies, deceit, slander, malice, insults, and talk which has no useful purpose to it. In other words, speak truthfully, positively, and only when necessary.
4. **Right Conduct/Actions** - Harm no sentient being, do not steal, and do not engage in sexual misconduct. In other words, be kind and compassionate, respect others' property, and keep sexual relationships harmless to others.
5. **Right Livelihood** - One should earn a living in an occupation that harms no sentient being.
6. **Right Effort** - Prevent the arising of unwholesome states of mind and abandon unwholesome states of mind when they occur. Arouse wholesome states of mind and maintain them once they have arisen.
7. **Right Concentration** - We must learn to focus our minds through meditation so that we may (1) understand our motives and correct them and (2) keep ourselves focused on the Path (concentrate on positive states of being).
8. **Right Mindfulness** - We must be able to constantly be aware of and in control of our thoughts. We must know our negative motivations so that they may be corrected and replaced with positive states of being. Right Mindfulness is paying attention to our thoughts.