

# Noble Eightfold Path

Insight Meditation South Bay

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## The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-magga*)

### Key Ideas

- Rather than eight stages to be completed one before the other, the eight components of the path are presented as eight significant dimensions of one’s behavior—mental, spoken, and bodily—that are regarded as operating in dependence on each other and as defining a complete way of living.
- Ordinarily the eight aspects of one’s life may be either “right” or “appropriate” (*sammā*) or “wrong” and “inappropriate” (*micchā*). By means of Buddhist practice the eight dimensions are gradually and collectively transformed and cultivated.
- The one who has established these eight qualities—a noble one (*ariya*)—has, in fact, found a way to the cessation of suffering. But the ordinary person who is still plagued by greed, hatred, and delusion must first negotiate the mix of one’s views, behavior, and emotions in order to find the eight qualities. Much of the Buddhist path is therefore concerned with *finding* the noble eightfold path rather than *walking* it. Once on the path, one may further perfect the eight qualities and follow the path to the complete cessation of suffering.

Noble Eightfold Path	Notes	Threefold Division of the Path
1. Right View ( <i>sammā diṭṭhi</i> )	<p>Includes the cognitive aspects of wisdom which can be categorized as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law of Karma:</b> Understanding that every action will have karmic results. Wholesome and unwholesome actions will produce corresponding results and effects.</li> <li>• <b>Impermanence:</b> Understanding the nature of impermanence (<i>anicca</i>); everything that arises will perish. Leading on from the perception of impermanence is the understanding that what is impermanent is not a reliable basis for our happiness (<i>dukkha</i>) and is not a stable foundation for self (<i>anatta</i>).</li> <li>• <b>Suffering:</b> The Four Noble Truths:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Suffering must be fully understood.</li> <li>2. The origin of suffering is attachment, which is to be abandoned.</li> <li>3. The end to suffering is realized through the end of attachment.</li> <li>4. The Eightfold Path is to be developed to end suffering.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	Wisdom ( <i>Paññā</i> )
2. Right Intention ( <i>sammā sankappa</i> )	<p>Refers to volition and the commitment to ethical and mental development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intention of renunciation:</b> “Letting go”, generosity</li> <li>• <b>Intention of non-ill will:</b> metta/loving kindness, refraining from anger and aversion</li> <li>• <b>Intention of non-cruelty:</b> refraining from cruelty and aggression, cultivation of compassion</li> </ul>	

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3. Right Speech ( <i>sammā vācā</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refraining from false speech:</b> No deliberate lies or deceitful speech</li> <li>• <b>Refraining from slanderous speech:</b> No malicious words designed to create disharmony or discord</li> <li>• <b>Refraining from harsh speech:</b> No words designed to hurt others</li> <li>• <b>Refraining from idle chatter:</b> Refrain from speech with no purpose</li> </ul>	Ethical Conduct ( <i>Sīla</i> )
4. Right Action ( <i>sammā kammanta</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refraining from killing other beings</b></li> <li>• <b>Refraining from taking that which is not given</b></li> <li>• <b>Refraining from sexual misconduct</b></li> </ul>	
5. Right Livelihood ( <i>ājīva</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Not dealing in weapons</b></li> <li>• <b>Not dealing in living beings:</b> Slavery, raising animals for slaughter, prostitution</li> <li>• <b>Not working in meat production or butchery</b></li> <li>• <b>Not making or selling intoxicants or poisons</b></li> <li>• <b>Abstaining from any mode of livelihood that breaks the precepts</b></li> </ul>	
6. Right Effort ( <i>vāyāma</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid and prevent the arising of unwholesome states which have not yet arisen.</b></li> <li>• <b>Abandon unwholesome states which have already arisen.</b></li> <li>• <b>Cultivate and bring forth wholesome states which have not yet arisen.</b></li> <li>• <b>Maintain and develop wholesome states which have already arisen.</b></li> </ul>	Mental Discipline ( <i>Samādhi</i> )
7. Right Mindfulness ( <i>satī</i> )	<p>Clear perception of the interaction of the Five Aggregates, expressed in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contemplations of the body:</b> Mindful breathing, body postures, clear comprehension of physical activity, repulsiveness of the body, etc</li> <li>• <b>Contemplations of feeling:</b> Feeling tones of pleasantness, unpleasantness and neutral feeling</li> <li>• <b>Contemplations of the states of mind (consciousness):</b> Attention to how consciousness is affected by various mental factors</li> <li>• <b>Contemplation of phenomena (mental objects):</b> Attention to the occurrence, context and function of mental objects</li> </ul>	
8. Right Concentration ( <i>samādhi</i> )	<p><b>One-pointedness of mind:</b> a state in which all mental faculties are unified and directed toward an object of consciousness</p>	