**Heart Lab**

**Mindfulness teachings and the Eightfold path of Buddhism**

Heart Lab draws its recovery wisdom from many sources including the Mindfulness teachings of Theravada Buddhism. Mindfulness practices like wise ethics, right awareness and skillful mediation can all be found in Buddhist teachings going back over 2500 years. It is beautiful to see how many similarities are shared between it and modern recovery practices. And integrating these infinitely refined practices can take us much farther along our awakening and recovery pathways. We support people in taking what they need and leaving the rest. And we have found that sometimes medicine that wasn't right for us before we may find later to be perfect. What follows is a summary of Mindfulness teachings of the Eightfold path of Buddhism as taught in the oldest recorded texts in the language of Pali.

**The Four Noble Truths**

In Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths about existence state that:

***Dukkha*** (literally "suffering" or "unsatisfactoriness") is an innate characteristic of our existence.

There is a ***Cause***. Dukkha arises or continues with craving, desire, thirst or attachment.

There can be ***Cessation***. Dukkha can be ended or contained by the renouncement or letting go of clinging. The confinement of clinging releases the excessive binds of dukkha.

The ***Noble Eightfold Path***, is a path leading to the confinement of clinging and dukkha.

**The Eightfold Path**

The Eightfold Path consists of eight practices: *right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right samadhi* (meaning equanimous meditative awareness).

Buddhist teachings say that our body-minds are subject to hindrances which corrupt our functionality. To be freed, we enter a path of self-observance, self-restraint, cultivating kindness and compassion. This culminates in samadhi, which reinforces these practices for the development of the body-mind.

The eight Buddhist practices in the Noble Eightfold Path are:

**Right View:** Our views have consequences. They lead to actions which also have consequences. The Buddha followed and taught a successful path out of suffering.

**Right Resolve or Intention:** the giving up of that which causes suffering and adopting the life of awakening. Practitioners aims at peaceful renunciation, that is being in balance with our sensual impulses. We practitice moving away from habitual states of ill-will towards loving kindness and away from cruelty towards compassion. Such a mindset aids contemplation of impermanence, suffering, and non-Self.

**Right Speech:** no lying, no rude speech, no telling one person what another says about him to cause discord or harm their relationship.

**Right Conduct** or Action: no killing or injuring, no taking what is not given, no sexual misconduct, minimizing the harm that could be caused by unobserved craving and aversion.

**Right Livelihood:** we do not support ourselves in professions that harm others in ways like trading in weapons, or poisons.

**Right Effort:** preventing the arising of unwholesome states, and generating wholesome states, through practices like "*the 10 perfections*" (see below.) This includes guarding the sense-doors, through moderation of what we take in.

**Right Mindfulness** (sati) is a quality that guards or watches over the mind; the stronger it becomes, the weaker unwholesome states of mind become, weakening their power to take over and dominate thought, word and deed. In vipassana teachings sati is interpreted as "bare attention": never being absent minded, being conscious of what one is doing; this encourages the awareness of the impermanence of body, feeling and mind.

**Right samadhi or concentration**: is practicing four stages of meditation, which includes samadhi and reinforces the development of awakening, culminating into equanimity and mindfulness. In vipasassa teachings, this is interpreted as concentration or one-pointedness of the mind, and is supplemented with vipassana meditation, which aims at insight.

**The 10 Paramis**

The 10 perfections (paramī) of character are taught to be necessary to achieve awakening and liberation. These practices are part of the path of **Sila** or ethical conduct. In the Buddha's system of teaching these practices are taught first. They are thought to be a necessary foundation to practicing the more subtle practices of meditation and insight. The 10 paramis are;

***Generosity …giving of oneself***

***Morality…proper conduct***

***Renunciation…moderation***

***Wisdom…discernment***

***Energy…diligence…effort***

***Patience…tolerance…acceptance***

***Truthfulness…honesty***

***Determination…resolution***

***Goodwill…friendliness…loving-kindness***

***Equanimity…serenity***