

The Noble Eight-Fold Path: The checklist to reduce suffering.

Thus, I have heard...

The fourth part of the Four Noble Truths: Known as the Path. The Buddha taught for 45 years, and this is the Buddhist guide for living a simpler life. It was explained again and again, differently for different people and their situations. For a person to be in balance there are two qualities to develop equally; compassion (Karuna) and wisdom (Panna). This is often viewed as the eight spokes of a wagon wheel. There is not one really above or before another, they all hold the hub and wheel together.

The 'right' or skillful way of.

Prajna/Wisdom)

1. View, belief or understanding – Am I seeing what is there, or what I want to see? “It is what it is”. Seeing things in their true nature, without name, judgement or label. This is possible when the mind is free of impurity and developed through meditation. This is the process of understanding the Four Noble Truths.
2. Intention /thought– Am I truly living compassionately and wisely? Offering thoughts of love and non-violence toward all beings with selfish detachment. Unconditional. Making spiritual growth and having/making a good life our purpose.

Silla/Morality or virtue

3. Speech – Am I saying anything behind anyone’s back I would not say to them directly? This includes any talk that would bring about suffering; slander, harsh, idle, useless, gossip... Sometimes the only answer is ‘noble silence’
4. Action – Do I practice what I study and preach? Promotion of honorable, moral and peaceful conduct. Avoid taking what is not given, destroying life, harmful sex actions, speech and thought. We realize our actions have consequences.
5. Livelihood- Have I lost sight of my calling? Am I living my calling? Avoid a profession that harms; weapons, war, killing animals, making intoxicants or poisons, cheating...

Samadhi/ Concentration

6. Effort -Am I pushing myself too hard or not hard enough? Prevent evil and unwholesome states of mind, get rid of those already arisen, promote and cause good to arise in the mind and action. The action of holding onto good and avoiding bad in mind, body and spirit.
7. Mindfulness/Meditation- Am I fully aware of this moment? Diligently aware of our minds, attentive to the body (Kaya), sensations (Vedana), mind and thoughts (Citta) and things (Dhamma). Being aware of one’s own mind is key. This is where you really can have control of your mind and its processes.
8. Concentration- Am focusing on the right things? This leads naturally to the four stages of Dhyana or trance. 1. Passionate desires and unwholesome thoughts are discarded, and happiness is maintained, even in daily life. 2. Tranquility and one pointedness of the mind, with joy and happiness remaining from 1. 3. Joy as an active feeling also subsides and equanimity is maintained. 4. All sensation, happiness and unhappiness, joy and sorrow disappear and pure awareness remains. It is a feeling that you have awakened from a dream, the dream and delusion of being (independent).