

# Eightfold Path – Right Consideration (2 of 3)

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We will continue with the topic of the Eightfold Path and with the second factor of the path that I am calling right consideration. I want to step back and discuss the Eightfold Path with some different words. One of the things I have been saying is that there are two tracks or two lanes to the Eightfold Path. The word *magga* – path in Pali – more literally means road. We could call it a two-lane road. Today I'll call it the wisdom lane and the liberative or liberation lane.

I have called the wisdom lane the conventional Eightfold Path, and the liberative Eightfold Path is for the other. The wisdom path is engaging the Eightfold Path based on wise understanding. That can be learned from a book, a teacher, or a place where you understand things.

The wise understanding is that actions have consequences. Wholesome actions have wholesome results, and unwholesome actions have unwholesome results. Therefore, pay attention to your actions. Be careful with them. Choose wholesome actions for even the most subtle, small actions. That is a wise understanding.

The wise lane continues to wise consideration. As we engage in actions, wise consideration is an extension of attention to wholesome and unwholesome. Consider how to do whatever you do so that there is no craving for sensual pleasure. We are not caught in desire, greed, ill will, or delusion. A wise understanding is to be careful and considerate. We should look at ourselves and really understand, feel, and recognize when we are caught in desire, aversion, or delusion.

Why should we do that? The motivation to do this is because we have learned that it is wise and beneficial. There is a bit of a cognitive understanding that this is what we are doing. We can be very motivated. We do it until we get the feedback that, "Oh, this is true. My life is so much better when I follow this wise lane."

In considering right view, the liberative, or the liberation lane, has to do with a deep insight into the changing nature of phenomena. Everything is constantly changing and in flux. That is the catalyst to help the mind to not latch on to anything, to not hold on too tight, or to not take things as being permanent or enduring. It allows the mind to learn how to swim in the currents rather than resist or try to stop the currents.

Standing on the edge of the ocean and trying to stop the waves doesn't work. Trying to take the waves home or hold onto them doesn't work. We stand maybe knee-deep in the ocean waves and just let them wash by and come and go. In that way, we are free and not struggling with the waves.

The right view is to see the changing nature of reality and let that be a catalyst for freedom. We let go and something deep relaxes. We let go of clinging. If letting go of clinging is clear enough, then the liberation lane feeds into right consideration. This is not based on considering what is wise, but rather considering where freedom is.

Freedom is freedom from clinging. Maybe the fast lane has been opened. Stay in the fast lane because it is easier. There are fewer obstacles. It is just an open lane or an open highway. We keep looking for that openness, that openness of non-clinging. Non-clinging is expressed in non-greed, non-ill will and non-delusion.

It is the same three things as on the wisdom lane, but how we get to it is different. One is based on understanding, wisdom, and some experience that shows that it works. The liberation lane is based on a palpable experience, understanding, and insight into the nature of the heart being free – the heart being liberated.

It is not always liberated and free, but when liberation is clear enough, then the Eightfold Path lives in us. We really know that the expression of how we live our life that comes out of that freedom is expressed in the Eightfold Path. Freedom is expressed in non-greed, non-ill will, and non-delusion.

Right consideration for the liberative path is to consider, take in, be oriented, or understand that greed is not the way. Ill will and delusion are not the way. It is putting a little more detail into the idea of avoiding the unwholesome by specifying what it is. That would be right consideration.

Sometimes it is called right intention or right resolve. There can be some benefit in calling it that, but when we understand the original meaning of the word and the way it is used, we find it has more to do with how we apply, consider, or think about things. When we start thinking with both modes – the wisdom and the liberation lane – we are thinking more about non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion.

There are three ways that right consideration is listed. I believe that they correspond with non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion. The first is *kama* or non-sensual craving. *Kama* is the same word that is used for the first of the five hindrances. It could also mean renunciation. Here we understand it is renunciation from sensual craving. It is the opposite of sensual addiction. That is the desire part.

The ill will or the hatred part has to do with ill-will. It is the same word that is used for the second hindrance – ill will, hostility, or something like that. Sometimes it is called aversion.

The third is cruelty or avoiding cruelty. Non-cruelty is the wise, liberating one. I associate this with delusion. Being actively cruel, causing harm in the world, or harming other people is based on a variety of delusions. There are misunderstandings about the nature of self and others. We do not understand where our real benefit or safety comes from, or how we care for ourselves.

We must shut down our human connection to another human being. Part of our own heart is diminished or frozen. It shrinks. We can't see clearly when we get involved in causing harm in the world, and I associate this with delusion.

Right consideration looks at greed, hatred, and delusion. As we go about our world finding our way down the highway, or the path of life, we can actively consider, or recognize that these things don't work. We understand that greed, hatred, and delusion don't work, and the opposite – non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion – do.

Or we understand, feel, and experience how freedom is diminished by greed, hatred, and delusion. We experience and understand how freedom is realized, expressed, and manifested through non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion. Freedom is experienced through non-sensual craving, non-ill will, and non-cruelty.

When we are on the Eightfold Path there is a practical, immediate application that all the things we do are done in a way that they are an expression of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-cruelty. If we must think and reflect on it, we are better off thinking, reflecting, and considering things through that perspective.

If we have some taste of freedom, we don't have to think about it so much. It is automatic, just like we would take our hands off a hot stove. It is very clear that it is a kind of self-harm, self-diminishment, or harm for others when we are involved in things that are characterized or influenced by greed, ill will, and delusion or cruelty.

The first two factors of the Eightfold Path, right view and right consideration, are related. They overlap. They are both considered the wisdom factors of the path. This is the basic understanding, orientation, point of view, reference point, or frame of reference for what is going to follow on the Eightfold Path.

The next set of factors on the Eightfold Path is right speech, right action, and right livelihood. They all have to do with how we act in the world. The idea is to act in the world from this place of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion or non-cruelty. This will come in a few days. We will spend one more day on right consideration. We will talk tomorrow about the positive wording of the right considerations and what that looks like.

In the meantime, you might give yourself a heightened exercise, attention, and consideration of how and if there is any movement inside of you in the direction of greed, craving, sensual craving, or addiction. Is there any movement towards ill will, hostility, or hatred? Worse yet, is there any movement towards delusion that gives birth to cruelty and wanting to harm other people?

Try to come to that still place within, that place of freedom or wisdom, where you take refuge. We rely on, and trust that the best way to respond to the world, to live in the world, to support this world is in fact from places of right consideration. It is considering things from the point of view of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-cruelty. A day spent really centered on this idea is a day well spent. May each of you contribute to more sanity in this world today. Thank you.