

Day Eight Notes for Reflection

The Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones

Unrealized and Realized Eightfold Path

One can see these two versions of the Path as the Path and Fruition of having practiced each step of the Eightfold Path. The Unrealized Path is the entry into the Path, while the Realized Path is the Fruition of that same Path. In other words, while one is yet to be Fully Realized, one is still on the Path. When one attains Arahantship, the factors of the Eightfold Path have been fully developed and one then accesses the Ten Factors of the Realized Path.

For one who is training to the end, the Path is still being developed, Suffering is still being understood, the Cause is still being recognized, and Cessation is being exercised. In this way, the Four Noble Truths are being discovered as one continues to study, contemplate, and practice Effective Choice, Effective Speech, Effective Behavior, Effective Living, Effective Application and Effective Observation in daily living, thereby getting in touch with Reality as it is through Attention rooted in Reality. In doing so, the mind becomes less distracted, more collected and naturally tends towards Effective Collectedness, the final fruit of which is the complete knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, i.e. the Realized Effective Vision. Let's unpack each step of the path from development to fulfillment.

Effective Vision

Ultimately, Effective Vision is the experiential knowledge and insight into each of the Four Noble Truths. One who begins on the Path must make an effort to understand how Suffering arises. It's through the link of Craving, which is to take the link of Feeling as personal, and to take delight in it or avert it through a false sense of self. Whenever one practices the 6R process both during meditation to free the mind of hindrances and during daily living where Feeling arises constantly and one continues to Release and Relax any Craving that may arise, they are effectively beginning to realize that the way out of Suffering is through Cessation of that Craving.

This practice of Cessation is systematically understood and exercised through the rest of the factors of the Eightfold Path. In this way, as one continues to understand Suffering and Release Craving with the Realization of Cessation through the development of the Eightfold Path, one is living the Four Noble Truths every time these are done, thus reconditioning Formations, breaking away at the fetters which are rooted in the Projections. At a certain point, one has a complete breakthrough and fulfills the work needed in order to Cease Birth, end Suffering, and know in every way the Four Noble Truths. When this is done, Effective Vision is realized, which includes not only the insight into the Four Noble Truths, but also the Three

Symptoms of Reality, the mechanics of Kamma and therefore the knowledge of ending Rebirth.

Effective Choice

Effective Choice is the cornerstone of the practice. It is the choice one practices in every given moment to give up, abandon, to let go and Release and Relax Craving and replace it with a wholesome quality of mind. Effective Choice is what conditions one's next set of Old Kamma. Effective Choice is the New Kamma when one applies it, but such a choice does not create good, bad, or neutral Kamma, because in such a choice, one is choosing to see every arising and ceasing of Contact, Feeling and Perception as impermanent, and therefore not to be considered worth holding onto, and therefore not considered to be self or pertaining to self. In doing so, one effectively stops the arising of Craving and therefore the rest of the links of Dependent Origination thereafter. Moreover, one responds instead of reacts. One doesn't take anything personal and one naturally chooses to behave in accordance with the Brahmaviharas.

In the Realized Effective Choice, the choice is automatic. There is no exercise or practice involved. Effective Choice has been made so many times that it roots out the Projections and weakens and ultimately breaks apart the fetters in the Formations. Then, every choice one makes is an Effective Choice. One always sees through the lens of the Three Symptoms of Reality. One understands it and doesn't need to think about it. It is Reality as it is. There is no study or thinking involved. One intuitively, without hesitation, continues to make Effective Choices – that is always staying free and Unconditioned by the links and always stay non-abiding in any link in any way, shape or form. No Formations or the links thereafter are ever held on to, because in the holding on to something, Craving arises. There is no choice to Release because all that needed to be released was done so and sustained in that way at the Final Realization of Arahantship

Effective Speech, Behavior and Living

Whenever one is practicing Effective Choice, one is always responding, and never reacting.

At first, there is effort involved through the 6R process to pause and Release and Relax Craving already arisen and as one does so, the mind is pure and responds intuitively to what is required in every situation and for every Being that one interacts with through Speech, Action, and one's daily living. One makes choices in harmony with the principles of the Dhamma – one acts and speaks rooted in the Brahmaviharas, without ill will, and with a view to let go of Craving in general, not taking anything personal, and acting with Observation in every given present moment.

Once the Formations have become unfettered and unhindered – that is the Projections have been removed – there is no influence that creates Intentions rooted in ineffective vision. In other words, with the destruction of the Projections, one can no longer even at the subtlest level identify with any of the processes that arise or cease and since nothing is ever taken personal, even when one receives negative reactions from other Beings, the response that is aroused still comes from Effective Vision and Effective Choice, and therefore in the Realized Effective Speech, Effective Behavior and Effective Living, one always chooses that which causes no harm and is void of any sense of self-interest.

Effective Application

One aims to continue to activate the Seven Awakening Factors, while effectively Recognizing and Releasing one's Attention from the hindrances during meditation. In daily living, one aims to apply the same principles by continuing to remain in a wholesome Mindset and Releasing any Craving and other hindrances that may arise in one's mind by using Attention rooted in Reality.

As one's mind becomes purer and purer through the Attainments, when it is fully released, there is the Realized Effective Application, which is simply to enter jhana without any identification, or Cessation of Perception, Feeling and Consciousness if one has developed the mind for it, and to enter into Conscious Cessation by merely attending to the Nibbana Element. In the fully released mind, the Seven Factors are naturally present and remain balanced and one is in a state of mundane Nibbana, always attending to the Cessation of the links instead of their arising or in between the arising and Cessation. In this way, one's mind is naturally quiet, in Equanimity and automatically Collected in every given present moment.

Effective Observation

In the unrealized factor of Effective Observation, one uses Attention rooted in Reality to see with wisdom how the Four Aspects of Conditioned Existence arise and cease, namely the Body, Feeling, Mindsets and Moods, and Phenomena. One begins to know the Three Symptoms of Reality of each Aspect and in doing so, the fetters of Craving, Conceit and Ignorance are loosened. As one continues this practice, both in daily living and in meditation, the Formations continue to be reconditioned until one finally experiences Effective Insight and Effective Release.

Then, the Realized Effective Observation is the automatic way of functioning for a fully release mind. It is how the mind continues to function – being Observant of every aspect of Reality and of every situation that arises in a given present moment. When this is the natural way of one's perspective, Effective Choice and therefore Effective Speech, Behavior and Living are always the default setting for the mind.

Effective Collectedness

In one developing the path, one is training the mind, making it softer, more sensitive, and easier to work with in terms of reconditioning Formations. Through the process of traversing the jhanas and higher dimensions of perception, one begins to unravel deeper and deeper layers of the mind. In doing so, one surgically dulls the sharpness of Craving, making it less prone to occur, and more importantly, one develops the ability to Recognize when Craving arises, so one can Release and Relax it and rouse up the wholesome qualities of the mind. As the work of Effective Collectedness is fulfilled, the Projections are deactivated and destroyed, unable to fetter the Formations ever again. This creates a mind that is prone to Nibbana. In other words, the mind naturally tends towards the Cessation of the links. Mind is Collected without effort and thus is able to enter jhana, Cessation of Perception, Feeling and Consciousness, and be in a state of Conscious Cessation.

Effective Insight

When the fetters are destroyed, when the Projections are destroyed, Ignorance can no longer be the influencer of the links of Dependent Origination, nor can Craving arise ever again and one can no longer identify with anything as permanent or self, having destroyed Conceit. Effective Insight is the knowledge of the destruction of the Projections and the wisdom that arises from fulfilling the Eightfold Path. It is the irreversible establishment of the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths in the mind.

Effective Release

Effective Release closely follows Effective Insight. When there is Effective Insight, there is Effective Release, which is the untainted, pure mind, the luminous mind void of fetters, defilements or any conditions. It is Nibbana, pure and simple. Release of the mind that can never be shaken or reversed. These last two, Effective Insight and Effective Release, are not factors to be developed – they are the fulfillment of the Path, the Fruition of the Path.

Fulfillment of the Thirty-Seven Qualities Required For Awakening

When one follows the Eightfold Path, one fulfills through development the Thirty-Seven Qualities Required for Awakening. These are divided into seven sets, which include the Observation of the Four Aspects of Conditioned Existence, the Four Effective Applications, the Seven Factors of Awakening, and the Eightfold Path, as one has already seen and understood through the course of the retreat. The remaining three sets include the Five Faculties and Five Energies, and the Four Bases for Psychic Development.

The Five Faculties are the faculties from which the Five Energies arise. In the same way there is the faculty for Contact within Mentality and the process of Contact which functions through the faculty for Contact, the Five Energies are the output of the Five Faculties. Therefore, the faculties and energies both include Conviction, Application, Observation, Collectedness, and Intelligence. Conviction is cultivated

through Effective Vision, Application through Effective Application, Observation through Effective Observation, Collectedness through Effective Collectedness, and Intelligence through Effective Insight.

The Four Bases for Psychic Development are Cultivated Intention (Chanda), Application, Mindset (Citta), and Reflection (Vimamsa). Cultivated Intention is rooted in Effective Choice, Application in Effective Application, and Mindset and Reflection in Effective Observation and Effective Collectedness through Attention rooted in Reality. While these Four Bases are the launch pads for so-called Psychic abilities including but not limited to telepathy, remote viewing, recollecting past lives and knowing the Rebirth and destinations of other Beings, they are also utilized in Collectedness in order to attain the supreme of all Psychic abilities – the Destruction of the Projections.

Restful Clarity

Samatha (Restfulness) and Vipassana (Clarity) are joined together.

It is through the development of the Eightfold Path that one gains a mind that is prone to be in a restful, tranquil, and undisturbed state. When the mind does not utilize one-pointed focus but the tools provided by the Dhamma, it is naturally restful and in this restfulness, Clarity of the Dhamma arises. One understands in a way that flows rather than through mere analysis and being entranced through just noting what arises. Restfulness and Clarity are interdependent – without Restfulness, true Clarity will not emerge. If one does not have Clarity that is at ease, mind will not flower into Restfulness. These two go hand-in-hand. Through developing Effective Vision, Clarity emerges and when that Clarity matures, there is the Realized Effective Vision. Restfulness is the natural way that develops and is then fulfilled through Realized Effective Collectedness.

Interconnectedness of the Realized Eightfold Path and its Fruition

When Effective Vision replaces Ignorance in Dependent Origination and therefore directs Formations, Formations code mind, body and speech activities with Effective Choice. From these Formations, Cognition and Mentality Materiality are rooted in Effective Vision and Effective Choice. The Six Sense Bases and Contact and Feeling are all understood and seen with wisdom through Effective Observation with Attention rooted in Reality. When Old Kamma terminates at Feeling, then Perception rooted in Effective Choice nullifies any ability for it to create more Kamma, with Effective Observation conditioning new action that arises. Through Effective Observation, one acts in sync with Effective Behavior, Effective Speech and Effective Living, according to what any given situation's requirements.

Effective Application has perfected the tranquilizing of pure Formations for the purpose of Conscious Cessation where one attends to the Nibbana Element by

attending to the Cessation aspect of each link starting from Formations or stopping the Formations for the purpose of Cessation of Perception, Feeling and Consciousness. Effective Application determines Effective Collectedness. Effective Collectedness has developed Effective Vision. Effective Insight has informed Effective Vision. Effective Release has perfected and established Effective Vision. Instead of the Projections influencing Ignorance, there is now Effective Collectedness, Effective Insight and Effective Release influencing Effective Vision.

In essence, the Wheel of Dhamma has replaced the Wheel of Samsara.