

Walking the Eightfold Path with Jack Kornfield

Curated by Ganesh Braymiller

Step 1: Wise Understanding

Chapter 1: A Guide for Life: Buddha and the Origins of the Eightfold Path

Welcoming you to the course, Jack elucidates the Noble Eightfold Path as a guide for living life in wisdom, compassion and freedom. After outlining its three dimensions, he tells the story of the Buddha and the origins of the Eightfold Path and the first Turning of the Wheel of Dharma.

- The Eightfold Path as a guide for living life in wisdom, compassion, and freedom
- Three dimensions of the path: wisdom, action in the world, inner-training
- A story of the Buddha and the Origins of the Noble Eightfold Path
- Varanasi and Buddha's 'Turning of the Wheel' of Dharma
- Right Understanding as the truth of who you really are

“On Earth we have all we need to awaken, and the path is at your feet.” – Jack Kornfield

***“It’s said that the Buddha, in offering these teachings, said it was an ancient path that was there long before his life, stretching out through time for all beings who know the possibility of awakening. It touches something we already know deep within ourselves.”
– Jack Kornfield***

Chapter 2: Wise Understanding: The Medicine of Remembering Who You Are

In this second chapter, Jack explains our Buddha Nature, the fundamental nobility we are born with. Through this lens, he talks about Wise Understanding as the great medicine of remembering who you really are. Speaking on the First Noble Truth, he applies Buddha's Middle Way, along with a guided meditation, to help us transmute our suffering into the heart of compassion.

- Buddha Nature as our fundamental nobility and greatness of the human spirit
- Wise Understanding and the great medicine of remembering who you are
- The First Noble Truth of life coming packaged with suffering
- Buddha's discovery of the Middle Path beyond grasping and resisting
- A guided meditation practice on suffering and the heart of compassion

“Everything breathes. The breath breathes, the heart pumps, the galaxies turn—it’s all in flow. Right Understanding says that there is a different dimension of reality that is not dependent on changing conditions, but recognizing who you are is consciousness itself,

is loving awareness, is the witness to the openings and closings, and joys and sorrows, and beginnings and endings that make up life. It's remembering something bigger, remembering who you really are.” – Jack Kornfield

“Our difficulties become a gateway to freedom and a gateway to compassion.” – Jack Kornfield

“Wise Understanding asks, ‘Can we accept this too, that which we cannot change?’”

Chapter 3: The Sure Heart's Release: Suffering and the Practice of Letting Go

Now touching on the Second Noble Truth, the realization that suffering comes from grasping, Jack helps us learn how to hold our difficulties with compassion. Sharing on ‘The Sure Heart's Release,’ he explains how we can dwell in peace even amidst impermanence. Illuminating the power of releasing our negative stories, he helps us into the transformative practice of letting go.

- The Second Noble Truth and the ropeburn of grasping
- Working with suffering and learning how to hold it all in compassion
- The Sure Heart's Release and dwelling in peace amidst impermanence and suffering
- Ajahn Chah and how understanding fosters tenderness and care
- Releasing the negative stories we carry about ourselves
- The transformative practice of letting go

“Clinging, fear, anger, ignorance—they happen to all of us, but the beautiful thing of Wise Understanding is they are not the end of the story.” – Jack Kornfield

“The end of suffering is the letting go of these views we carry about ourselves, seeing them, and being in this life and in this moment with an open heart.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: The Eightfold Path: The Keys to Joy

In the final chapter of the first step, Jack outlines the Eightfold Path as a path of freedom which holds the keys to joy. Touching on how the universe is endlessly renewing itself, he invites us to trust in resting in the timeless mystery of existence. Illuminating his teacher Ajahn Chah's ‘Wisdom of Uncertainty’, he explores how we can care for the world from the deepest place of love in our being.

- The Eightfold Path as a path to freedom and keys to joy
- The universe as endlessly creativity and constantly renewing itself
- Trust in resting in the timeless mystery of the universe unfolding anew
- Ajahn Chah, the Wisdom of Uncertainty, and keeping a beginner's mind
- Caring for the world from the place of deepest inner peace and love

“Instead of clinging to our views and attachments, we open to the timeless mystery of things unfolding anew and anew. We begin to realize our idea of how it should be gets in the way, and that it’s possible to step back and rest in what Ajahn Chah called, ‘The Wisdom of Uncertainty.’” – Jack Kornfield

Step 2: Wise Thought/Intention

Chapter 1: Wise Thought: A Doorway to Freedom

Opening the next step, Wise Thought, Jack helps us discern between wise and unwise thoughts. After outlining how the Eightfold Path is an invitation to freedom, he shares how maintaining our composure and responding with mindful loving awareness despite changing circumstances opens the door to nirvana.

- The difference between Wise Thought and unwise thought
- The Eightfold Path’s invitation of freedom despite changing outer circumstances
- How finding composure in impermanence opens the door to nirvana
- Responding with mindful loving awareness, rather than fear and confusion
- Terry Dobson, conflict resolution and the skillful wisdom of Aikido
- How the path to happiness, well-being, and freedom goes through the mind itself

“When you realize the fact that everything changes, and find your composure in it, there you find yourself in nirvana.” – Suzuki Roshi

“Freedom and joy is the capacity of our mindful loving awareness to be present for what’s there, and then to respond to it with loving awareness, rather than fear and confusion.” – Jack Kornfield

“Right Thought, Wise Thought, is to see all beings with the eyes of loving kindness” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: Planting Seeds of Loving Kindness: Nourishing Beneficial Thoughts

In this next section, Jack explores how metta, or loving kindness and thoughts of goodwill, can help us release our hostility and begin to plant beautiful seeds in our lives for ourselves and those around us. Speaking to how dwelling in beneficial thoughts nourishes the soil of our mind, he showcases this with a guided metta practice.

- Filling your bodhicitta (heart-mind) with thoughts of goodwill and metta
- Disarming our hostility for those who cause suffering by sending loving kindness
- Planting and watering “good seeds” as we move through the world
- Appreciating, nourishing, and dwelling within our beneficial thoughts
- A guided metta (loving kindness) practice

“What helps with Wise Thought? To plant and water good seeds as you move through the world. Notice those beneficial thoughts, appreciate them so that they don’t go by. Actually dwell in them, enjoy them, nourish them. Then they start to change your life in a wonderful way.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: Observing Our Waterfall of Thoughts: Witnessing and Discernment

In this third section Wise Thought, Jack helps us begin to observe the mind with the mind, providing us with various techniques for witnessing our waterfall of thoughts, rather than being caught in their endless stream.

- Observing the mind with the mind
- The “numbering technique” for witnessing our waterfall of thoughts
- Holding our thoughts in kindness
- Using discernment to not believe to your thoughts

“When thoughts take over, one of the things that helps people is to notice the recurrent thoughts, because 90% of what you think today are reruns. Honestly, it’s like you’re stuck in Motel 6 late at night with the shopping channel on and you can’t turn it off.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: Revolutionizing Your Life: Karma, Practice, and Your Best Intention

In the final chapter of Wise Thought, Jack explores how we can revolutionize our lives with our intention. Describing intention as the source of karma in our lives, he illuminates a practice he uses through his day, asking himself, “What is my best intention?” From here, he talks about Bodhisattva vows, and how we can begin to set the compass of our hearts towards compassion, service, and kindness.

- Intention as the source of karma (cause and effect)
- Revolutionizing your life by, as circumstances arise, asking yourself, “What is my best intention?”
- Bodhisattva Vows and setting the compass of your heart with compassion, service, and kindness

“One dimension of Right Thought is intention. Intention is the source of karma, cause and effect, which says: ‘If you plant a mango seed, you get a mango tree. If you plant an apple seed, you get an apple tree. If you plant seeds of anger, then anger increases. If you plant seeds of kindness or tolerance, then tolerance increases.’ All practice, it’s said, rests on the tip of intention.” – Jack Kornfield

Step 3: Right Speech

Chapter 1: Right Speech: A Factor of Enlightenment

Opening the third Step on the Eightfold Path, Right Speech, Jack explains how this is a key factor of enlightenment. Waxing with a poetic whimsy on the mystery of speech and communication, he shares the importance of speaking the truth, and how society can be transformed through this practice.

- Right speech as a factor of enlightenment
- The mystery of speech and communication
- The importance of speaking the truth, and how it can transform society
- How suffering arises from false or divisive speech, while Right Speech fosters benefit

“Right Speech is a factor of enlightenment because it is a direct gate to freedom and love, and it’s always an expression of the free heart.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: Buddha’s Five Marks: Deep Listening and Courageous Speech

In this next chapter, Jack lists and pontificates on the Buddha’s Five Marks of Wise Speech. Then, after reflecting on the various ways we speak to ourselves, he shares on the importance of being courageous and standing up for what matters, as well as the transformative power of abstaining from gossiping.

- The Buddha’s Five Marks of Wise Speech: In due season will I speak; truthfully will I speak; gently will I speak; with clear intention will I speak; and beneficially will I speak
- Reflecting on the ways we speak to ourselves
- How to use a strong and courageous Wise Speech to stand up for what matters
- The transformative power of deep listening and not gossiping

“Sometimes Wise Speech needs to be strong and courageous—not a brutal honesty, not a hurtful speech—but standing up for what matters.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: Speak Like A Buddha: Working with Truth and Anger

In the final chapter of Right Speech, Jack illuminates what it means to “speak like a Buddha,” and explores how we can work with anger by staying connected to the heart. Sharing more on speaking the truth and speaking with dignity, he sheds light on practices for noticing our true intention.

- Learning what it means to “speak like the Buddha”
- Working with anger by staying connected to your heart
- Speaking the truth, speaking with dignity

- Practices for noticing our true intention

“In mindfulness, compassion, and loving awareness, we are reminded in what the heart knows: the possibility of honest, caring, and courageous speech.” – Jack Kornfield

Step 4: Right Action

Chapter 1: Right Integrity: A Gateway to Happiness

Opening the fourth step of the Eightfold Path, Right Action, Jack shares on integrity, ethics, and virtue as true gateways to happiness and freedom. Highlighting Wise Action as a compass for living beautifully, he outlines its three dimensions and shares a story about how virtue helps us step out of clinging and become who we truly are.

- Right Action, integrity, ethics, and virtue as gateways to happiness and freedom
- Wise Action as a loving compass for how to live a beautiful life
- The three dimensions of Right Action: non-harming, embodying compassion, and our innate virtue
- The story of Abbott Anastasius showcasing the transformative power of integrity
- How virtue helps us step out of clinging, and shift our identity to who we really are

“Right Action is not a moralistic system of judgment; it’s an invitation to feel and know in your heart a timeless truth about what makes freedom in our life, our spirit, and our heart, individually and collectively.” – Jack Kornfield

“When you meet someone with integrity who speaks the truth, who acts with honesty and care, you can feel it. When you reflect on who you know who lives a life of integrity and spirit, it affects you, it uplifts you in this most beautiful way.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: Living a Wise Life: Embodying The Five Precepts

In this next chapter, Jack lists and explores Buddhism’s Five Precepts, adding his modern nuance and Middle Way wisdom. Through this lens, he sheds light on how we can begin to see with the heart instead of the mind, so that we can navigate life from a place of nobility, dignity, and conscience.

- The Five Precepts: abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and misusing intoxicants
- Not causing harm to ourselves and others
- Seeing with the heart instead of the mind
- Navigating life from a place of nobility, dignity, and conscience

“You individually and us as a society, when we listen and understand, we can see the direction we need to go to take care and not cause harm to ourselves and others.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: Reverence for Life: Our Mutual Garment of Destiny

In module three of Right Action, Jack shares how we can cultivate care, compassion, integrity, and virtue as we walk the path. Illuminating how we are all connected in our mutual garment of destiny, he highlights how we can live an intimate life devoted to the common good. From here, he dives into topics of generosity, eros, sexuality, playfulness, fearlessness, and living life with a passion.

- The cultivation of care, compassion, integrity, and virtue
- Creating a world in reverence for all beings in our “mutual garment of destiny”
- Standing up for what matters and living an intimate life devoted to the common good
- Generosity and shifting from “mine” to “ours”
- Eros, sexuality, playfulness, fearlessness, and passion for life

“In reverence for life, there’s some way in which it calls us to stretch out our hands and to heal or mend what we can touch, to extend ourselves because we love it.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: Adi Sila: Our Innate Virtue

In this final chapter of Right Action, Jack explores Adi Sila – the innate integrity and virtue born within each of us. Through this lens, he outlines the ways that sharing and compassion spring forth from an open heart. Helping us shift from the small self’s body of fear, he welcomes us into a place of trust and inner abundance, where we can choose love over fear as we walk the path.

- Adi Sila, the innate integrity and virtue born within each of us
- The ways that sharing and compassion come naturally with an open heart
- Shifting from the small self ‘body of fear’ to a place of trust and inner-abundance
- Overcoming our addictions with strength and integrity
- Choosing love over fear as we walk the path

“Better than rosebay, sandalwood, and jasmine, is the perfume of a virtuous heart.” – Jack Kornfield

Step 5: Right Livelihood

Chapter 1: Right Livelihood and Enlightenment: Living a Free and Joyful Life

Opening the fifth step on the Eightfold Path, Jack outlines how and why Right Livelihood is a crucial step on the journey to wholeness. Exploring how we can redefine our relationship with money to living a free and joyful life, he helps us begin to see work as a way to bring blessings, happiness, wellbeing, and loving awareness to our lives and to those around us.

- The way half of the Eightfold Path is relational
- How and why Right Livelihood relates to enlightenment
- Redefining our relationship money to living a free and joyful life
- Exploring work as a way to bring blessings, happiness, wellbeing, and loving awareness to our lives and the lives of those around us

“Right Livelihood can be a vehicle to move from a small separate sense of self, to freedom. It’s a way of bringing forth goodness, it’s an expression of our Buddha Nature, and it’s central to the Buddhist path of happiness, to living with a liberated heart.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: Making It Beautiful: Intention, Interdependence, and a Wise Society

In the second chapter of Right Livelihood, Jack talks about how we can begin to embody our intention, and how this is connected with the importance of making things beautiful. Taking a look at our collective history as a civilization, he shares hopes about us moving away from systems of oppression and injustice, and explores how we can begin to align our work with our heart’s deepest wishes, wisdom, and love.

- Our intention, the spirit we bring, and how we embody it
- The importance of making things beautiful
- Taking a look at our collective impact and history as a civilization, and moving on from outward systems of oppression entwined with racial, economic, and environmental injustice
- Aligning our work with our heart’s deepest wishes, wisdom, and love

“How we work—is it in harmony with our heart’s deepest wishes, our deepest wisdom and love?” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: The Myth of the Perfect Job: Presence, Joy, and the Sacred

In this section, Jack busts the “myth of the perfect job,” and shares wisdom from Aldous Huxley and Thich Nhat Hanh about the magic of the present moment. Illuminating how we can make whatever situation we are in a place of awakening, he highlights the power of making your work joyful and sacred.

- Exploring the “myth of the perfect job”
- Aldous Huxley, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the present moment
- Making wherever we are, whatever situation we are in, a place of awakening

- The power of making your work both joyful and sacred

“There’s no perfect job, but our work can be a place to perfect our love.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: Understanding Livelihood as Service: Money, Possibilities, and Generosity

Finishing out the step of Right Livelihood, Jack helps us begin to understand livelihood as a service, and gives the history of Buddha and Right Livelihood. From here, he sheds light on generosity and the possibility encased within giving, and shares how we can start to be with money in a way that has a sense of care, play, reverence, and sacredness. He closes this section by sharing a story of Siddha Ma and Jai Uttal about the power of offering your unique service.

- Understanding livelihood as service
- The Buddha and the history of Right Livelihood
- Generosity and the power and possibility encased within giving
- Being with money in a way that has a sense of care, play, reverence, and a sacred manner
- A Jai Uttal and Siddhi Ma story about offering our unique service
- Making your work and service a place of joy that plants seeds of goodness

“Beings become wise and liberated depending on the state of heart. American dollar bills say, ‘In God we trust.’ You know how far that goes in our financial markets. But can we trust that our work and our exchange can be done in a joyful way? When you exchange money, can you do it in a way that also has a sense of care, play, reverence and appreciation, even a sacred manner?” – Jack Kornfield

Step 6: Wise Effort

Chapter 1: The Energy to Awaken: Directing Our Attention

Opening the next step on the Eightfold Path, Wise Effort, Jack shares a simple recipe for living a happy and wise life. Sharing on Wise Energy as the effort to awaken, he explores how we can begin to act from the heart with awareness and compassion, and leads a guided awareness practice around how we can direct our attention.

- A simple recipe for a happy and wise life
- Wise Energy as the effort to awaken
- The Way as an invitation to freedom
- Acting from the heart with awareness and compassion
- A guided awareness practice on directing our attention

“Wise Energy, Wise Effort, is the effort to awaken, to come to that inner-freedom and wellbeing that is your true nature, that is your birthright.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: Disentangling the Tangle: Resistance, Curiosity, and Discernment

In chapter two of Wise Effort, Jack illuminates how we can start to live wisely with that which is not under our control by “disentangling the tangle” and changing our relationship with our caughtness and suffering. Through this lens, he highlights the true alchemy of meeting resistance with curiosity, the importance of using discernment to choose what is skillful and healthy, and how we can use our energy to live in fullness, pleasure, and wellbeing.

- Learning to live wisely with that which is not under our control
- Disentangling the tangle – changing our relationship with where we are caught and suffering
- The alchemy of meeting resistance with curiosity
- Using discernment to choose what is skillful and healthy
- Ajahn Sumedho and the abundance of letting go
- Using the energy you’ve been given to live in fullness, pleasure, and wellbeing

“I get really interested when there is resistance. If you are resisting something, instead of trying to overpower it, get curious. Resistance is a call for attention.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: The Middle Way of Effort: Ambition, Constancy, and Playfulness

In this section, Jack explores the ‘Middle Way of Effort’ by telling the story of the Buddha and the stringing of the lute. After sharing how we need to balance our striving and ambition with a looseness and openness, he tells a Ram Dass story on dropping judgements, and defines the balance of Wise Effort as a constancy, mercy, kindness, and playful fun.

- The Buddha and tuning the lute/sitar – not too tight, not too loose
- Meeting effort, striving, and ambition with the balance of the Middle Way
- Ram Dass’s lesson on ‘dropping the judgment’
- Wise Effort as a constancy, mercy, kindness, and playful fun

“You’re not going from ‘here to there,’ you’re going from ‘there to here.’” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: What We Seek is What We Are: The Sacred Effort of Enlightenment

In chapter four of Wise Effort, Jack spelunks the spiritual adage of ‘Be Here Now’ to discuss the timeless dimensions of Wise Effort. Defining enlightenment not as a becoming, but as the end of grasping, he relays wisdom from Krishnamurti on stillness, truth, and freedom. Then he goes into the ‘Sacred Effort’ of opening in loving awareness to the mystery of the way things are.

- Being Here Now, and the timeless dimension of Wise Effort
- Enlightenment not as becoming, but as the end of grasping
- Krishnamurti’s wisdom on how stillness leads to truth, and truth leads to freedom

- The Sacred Effort of the willingness to open to the mystery of the way things are with love
- Shifting identification from the body of fear to enlightened loving awareness
- Living our life and practice with a simplicity, restfulness, and patience

“Enlightenment is not grasping to become something, it’s the end of grasping.” – Jack Kornfield

“What we seek is what we are.” – Jack Kornfield

“The nice thing about pretending you’re enlightened is that it might just happen.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 5: Why the World Can’t End: Infinity, Mystery, and Compassion

Closing out Wise Effort, Jack offers a powerful Indigenous myth of ‘Why the World Can’t End.’ Inviting us all to live in the mystery of ever-present infinity, Jack explains the importance of showing up for life in a beneficial way with awareness and love, stretching out our hands and offering true compassion.

- Michael Meade and the powerful Indigenous myth of ‘Why the World Can’t End’
- Living in the mystery of ever-present infinity
- Showing up for life in a beneficial way with awareness and love
- Stretching out our hands and offering compassion

“With our awareness and love we can show up for our life in a beneficial way, release that which is unhelpful and unhealthy, foster the garden of this world, stretch our hand out to the places that we can mend and touch, and offer our compassion.” – Jack Kornfield

Step 7: Wise Mindfulness

Chapter 1: The Miracle of Mindfulness: The Abode of the Wise

Opening to the seventh step on the Eightfold Path, Jack describes Wise Mindfulness as the most revolutionary step. Illuminating the miracle of mindfulness and its invitation to be truly open and present for this life, he relays how we can begin to identify with conscious loving awareness in order to overcome greed, hatred, and ignorance.

- Wise Mindfulness as the most revolutionary step on the Eightfold Path
- The miracle of mindfulness and its invitation to be present for this life in a fully open way
- Enacting mindfulness and love to overcome greed, hatred, and ignorance
- Identifying with conscious loving awareness that you really are

“It is sometimes called the ‘abode of the wise.’ It’s like a refreshing pond after being in the scorching desert. It’s called a miracle by, Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh. What it means is that we are invited and have the capacity to come be present for this life with a fully open mind and heart.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: The Mindful Pause: An Open Heart Amidst it All

In this next chapter of Wise Mindfulness, Jack spelunks the mystery of awareness and how we get so entangled in our thoughts. Through this lens, he describes how mindfulness allows us the capacity to be present with the Eight Worldly Winds, and emphasizes the life-changing transformation of enacting the mindful pause.

- The mystery of awareness and getting lost/entangled in thought
- How being mindful makes our lives like the pages of the Holy Books
- The capacity to be present with the Eight Worldly Winds
- The life-changing transformation of the mindful pause

“They say when you become mindful and awake, the leaves on the trees become like pages in the Holy Books.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: The Gateway to the Deathless: Seeds of Presence

Chapter three of Wise Mindfulness sees Jack exploring how mindful loving awareness can help us disentangle ourselves from suffering, trading in our fear body for something much more vast. Then, describing mindfulness as the gateway to the deathless, he shares how and why we can meet death with a lightness, graciousness, and ease.

- How mindful loving awareness can help us disentangle ourselves from our suffering
- Stepping out of the body of fear into something much more vast
- Mindfulness as the gateway to the deathless
- Meeting death with lightness, graciousness and ease

“Mindfulness is called the ‘gateway to the deathless’ because it’s beyond birth and death. It’s innate in us, and it also can be trained. When you practice mindfulness, when you train and cultivate it, you are watering seeds of wellbeing, openness, balance, and presence.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: Mindful Loving Awareness: Enlightenment and Intimacy

In this next section of Wise Mindfulness, Jack defines enlightenment as an intimacy with all things. Through this lens, he shares how we can move beyond our stories and truly be in the mystery of the present moment. Teaching us how to be present for our feelings, thoughts, and humanity, he shares techniques to help loosen their often powerful hold on us.

- Enlightenment as an intimacy with all things
- Moving beyond our stories to be in the mystery of the present moment
- Learning how to be present for feelings, thoughts, and our full humanity
- Using noting/naming to familiarize ourselves with our stream of emotions so they no longer hold power over us
- Tears of the way, and acknowledging and accepting our emotions

“Zen Master Dogen said that, ‘To become enlightened is to become intimate with all things.’ When we become mindful, when we awaken in a moment of presence, there is an intimacy with pleasure and pain, gain and loss, body and heart, all of these.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 5: Becoming the Loving Witness: A Quiet Mind and Open Heart

To close out the Wise Mindfulness section, Jack helps us shift from being lost in the content, to instead become the loving witness. Investigating our feelings of stuckness, he sheds light on how Nirvana is in the here and now with a quiet mind and open heart. Exploring how to see the mystery of life through the awakened eyes of the Buddha, he invites us to embody the peaceful world we want to see in the future.

- Shifting from being lost in the content, to become the loving witness
- Investigating when we feel stuck: how it feels in the body, the stories it tells, and opening to it
- How Nirvana is in the here and now, in a quiet mind and open heart
- Becoming peace and compassion to embody the world we want in the future
- Seeing the mystery of life through the awakened eyes of the Buddha

“Gradually you become able to shift from being lost in the content of experience to being the loving witness.” – Jack Kornfield

“Nirvana isn’t some place in the Himalayas, it’s here and now, a quiet mind and open heart. When you realize that everything changes, and relax into loving awareness, you find your composure in it.” – Jack Kornfield

“Mindfulness refreshes us to see the mystery again.” – Jack Kornfield

Step 8: Wise Concentration

Chapter 1: A Steady and Peaceful Heart: Concentration and Calm

Opening the final step on the Eightfold Path, Wise Concentration, Jack explores how concentration and calm allows for deeper understanding and wiser response. Exploring how we can live with a steady heart in a fulfilling way, he connects western psychology with Buddhist

psychology to help us shift our identity to our Buddha Nature and its nourishing ‘still small voice within.’

- How concentration and calm allows for deeper understanding and wiser response
- Living with a steady and peaceful heart in a way that is truly fulfilling and wise
- Connecting western psychology with eastern Buddhist psychology
- Shifting our identity to remembering our free, liberated, Buddha Nature
- Listening to the ‘still small voice within’ that cools and nourishes our heart

“As you deepen your calm and concentration and steady your heart it allows for a deeper understanding, clearer intention, wiser speech, and wiser action.” – Jack Kornfield

“You have Buddha Nature, you have the capacity to live in a free, liberated, and compassionate way.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 2: The Doors of Perception: Attention, Focus, and Compassion

In chapter two of *Wise Concentration*, Jack highlights how steadiness of attention helps us shift our consciousness, and how true focus opens the doors of perception. Then, inviting us to open to the mystery of awareness itself, he offers a story of chess, death, focus, meaning, and compassion.

- How steadiness and concentration of attention shifts consciousness
- How when our attention is truly focused and deepened, the doors of perception open
- Opening to the mystery of awareness itself
- A story of chess, death, focus, meaning, and, compassion

“You are not your thoughts, thankfully. You are the consciousness that was born into this body and that will leave it when you die. You are consciousness itself, you are spirit. This isn’t just a story or a myth; it’s the reality.” – Jack Kornfield

“When our attention is truly focused and deepened, the doors of perception open.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 3: The Art of Attention: Practice, Resistance, and Freedom

In this chapter, Jack illuminates how spiritual practice helps us open the gates to freedom. Sharing how we can use the art of attention to take mindful interest in our practice, he invites us to work directly with our resistances, habits, and fears—reminding us that when we relax and let go, life supports us.

- How spiritual practices help open the gate to freedom
- Undertaking a practice with the spirit of Gandhi’s ‘blessed monotony’
- Learning the art of attention and taking mindful interest in our practice

- Working directly with our resistances, habits, and fears
- How life supports us when we relax and practice letting go

“The harder you concentrate the more resistance you will encounter. So, to truly learn the art of calm and concentration, you discover it’s born of letting go, not by struggle, but by patience and ease.” – Jack Kornfield

Chapter 4: Becoming the Buddha: Fruits of Walking the Path

To close out the final step on the Eightfold Path, Jack illuminates the spiritual fruits of walking this sacred path. After relaying some of his mind-opening spiritual experiences that came from practicing, he shares the importance of training our concentration to be like a microscope or telescope. Welcoming us to be the loving witness to life’s ever-changing phenomenon, Jack reminds us what the Eightfold Path leads to: freedom and becoming the Buddha.

- The spiritual fruits of walking the path
- Jack’s mind-opening spiritual experiences while practicing
- Training our concentration to be like a microscope or telescope
- Becoming the loving witness to life’s ever-changing phenomenon
- The Eightfold Path as the path to true freedom
- Becoming the Buddha – remembering who you are

“When the mind becomes single, everything is filled with light.” – Jesus

“As concentration deepens, it becomes like a microscope or telescope depending on how you want to point it.” – Jack Kornfield