

## Sīla: Ethics & Wise Action. The 8-fold Path for laypeople:

Wise View: Taking the 4 Noble Truths as your personal orientation.

*Setting aside unskillful belief systems, we begin to seek the end of suffering.*

Wise Intention: Commitment to letting go, good will, & non-harming.

*All actions begin in the heart as intention, the choosing of peace over discord.*

Wise Speech: Speech that is true, useful, kind, & timely.

*Opening to others through deep listening & skillful dialogue.*

*Speech is how we define & understand the world through relationship.*

*Expands to: Speech & writing as a vehicle for healing, inclusion, liberation.*

*Wrong Speech: false, divisive, abusive, & idle chatter.*

Wise Action: Refraining from taking life, stealing, or sexual misconduct.

*Action is the physical expression of our intentions.*

*Positively framed: Protecting life, property, & relationships.*

*Action widens the circle of practice as we see the results of all our choices.*

Wise Livelihood: legal, peaceful, honest, harmless livelihood.

*How our actions affect the entire world through our work & spending.*

*Expands to: business, community, ecosystem, global relationships.*

*Livelihood connects us, through the exchange of resources, to the whole.*

Wise Effort: Going deeper to cultivate skillful states of heart.

*Replacing unskillful & painful states with skillful & pleasurable ones.*

Wise Mindfulness: Learning how to direct our attention skillfully.

*Investigation & discernment, cultivation of states of clarity & peace.*

Wise Concentration: The heart/mind can finally settle in stillness.

*Integration & deep ease, the ground for true healing & liberation.*

## The 3 Refuges

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Buddha: the historical Buddha, Gotama.

*More broadly: your wise teachers, or your own Buddha-nature.*

Dhamma: the teachings of the Buddha.

*More broadly: all wisdom teachings, or Truth itself as natural law.*

Sangha: the community of enlightened monastics.

*More broadly: your practice community, or the community of All Beings.*

## The 5 Ethical Precepts

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Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

I undertake the training precept

...to protect life,

...to take only that which is offered,

...to express sexual energy wisely,

...to speak the truth with kindness,

...to not cloud my mind with intoxicants.

## The virtues of lay followers (from AN 8:54)

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*That which leads to happiness in the present life:*

Persistent effort: skill & diligence in livelihood.

Protection: safeguarding the wealth one has earned.

Good friendship: association with wise & ethical friends.

Balanced living: moderate, with income exceeding expenditures.

*That which leads to happiness in the future life:*

Faith: in the enlightenment of the Buddha.

Moral Discipline: observation of the 5 Ethical Precepts.

Generosity: devotion to giving, sharing, charity, relinquishment.

Wisdom: into the arising and passing away of phenomena,  
that leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

## Sigāḷaka Sutta: The “6 Directions” of Relationships (DN 31)

### East: mother and father

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Child respects parents: I will support them who supported me,  
I will do my duty to them,  
I will maintain the family lineage and tradition,  
I will be worthy of my inheritance,  
I will make donations on behalf of dead ancestors.

Parents reciprocate: by restraining you from wrongdoing,  
guiding you towards good actions, training you in a profession,  
supporting the choice of a suitable spouse,  
in due time, handing over the inheritance.

### South: teachers

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Student respects teachers: by rising for them,  
regularly attending lessons, eagerly desiring to learn,  
duly serving them, receiving instruction.

Teachers reciprocate: by training in self-discipline,  
ensuring the teachings are well-grasped,  
instructing in every branch of knowledge,  
introducing their friends and colleagues,  
providing safeguards in every direction.

### West: spouse & family

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Husband should respect wife: by honoring, not disrespecting,  
being faithful, sharing authority, by giving gifts.

Wife reciprocates: by being well-organized,  
being kindly disposed to the in-laws and household workers,  
being faithful, looking after the household goods,  
being skillful and diligent in all duties.

### North: friends & colleagues

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Friends & colleagues respected by: generosity, kind words,  
acting for their welfare, impartiality, honesty.

Friends & colleagues reciprocate by:  
protecting you when you are vulnerable, likewise your wealth,  
being a refuge when you are afraid,  
not abandoning you in misfortunes,  
honoring all your descendants.

### Below: employees (“workers & servants”)

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Employer respects employees by:  
allocating work according to aptitude,  
providing wages and food, looking after the sick,  
sharing special treats, giving reasonable time off work.

Employees reciprocate by:  
being willing to start early and finish late when necessary,  
taking only what is given, doing work well,  
promoting a good reputation.

### Above: spiritual guides (“ascetics & Brahmins”)

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Devotee respects spiritual guides by:  
kindly actions, speech, and thoughts,  
having an open door, providing material needs.

Spiritual guides reciprocate by:  
restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you to good actions,  
thinking compassionately, telling you what you ought to know,  
clarifying what you already know,  
showing you the path to heaven.