



## **The Four Truths**

### **Four Truths and Eight - Fold Path of Recovery**

The Four Truths of Refuge Recovery come from a Buddhist perspective that says "All beings have the power and potential to free themselves from suffering". We feel confident in the Buddha's teachings to relieve suffering of all kinds, including the suffering of addiction.

1. Addiction creates suffering.

We come to understand, acknowledge, admit and accept all of the ways that our addictions or addictive behaviors have caused suffering in our lives.

2. Addiction is not all your fault.

We come to understand that all forms of addiction have their roots in the natural human tendency to crave for life to be more pleasurable and less painful than it actually is. The addict is not at fault for the root causes and conditions that lead to addiction only for the habitual reactive patterns that perpetuated it.

3. Recovery is possible.

Freedom from the suffering caused by addiction is attainable, if we are ready and willing to take responsibility for our actions and to follow the 8-Fold path.

4. The Eight-Fold Path to recovery.

This is an abstinence based path and philosophy. We believe that the recovery process begins when abstinence begins. The Eight factors or folds of the path

are to be developed, experienced and penetrated. This is not a linear path, it does not have to be taken in order, rather all of the factors will need to be developed and applied simultaneously. Striving for a life that is free from addiction requires that the eight-folds of recovery be maintained throughout one's life.

### 1. Understanding

We understand that recovery begins when we renounce and abstain from all substances or addictive behaviors regardless of specific substances we have become addicted to. Forgiveness, non-harming actions, service and generosity are a necessary part of the recovery process. We can't do it alone, community support and wise guidance are an integral part of the path to recovery.

### 2. Intention

We intend to meet all pain with compassion and all pleasure with non-attached appreciation, to forgive and ask for forgiveness toward all people we have harmed or been harmed by, including ourselves, to be generous and kind to all living beings, to be honest, humble, to live with integrity and to practice non-harming.

### 3. Communication and Community

We take refuge in the community as a place to practice wise communication and to support others on their path. We practice being honest, wise and careful with our communications, asking for help from the community, allowing others to guide us through the process. Practicing openness, honesty and humility about the difficulties and successes we experience.

### 4. Action and Engagement

We abstain from all substances and behaviors that could lead to suffering. We practice forgiveness toward all people we have harmed or been harmed by, including ourselves, through both meditative training and direct amends. Compassion, non-attached appreciation, generosity, kindness, honesty, integrity and service are our guiding principles.

#### 5. Livelihood and Service

We try to be of service to others whenever possible, using our time and energy and resources to help create positive change. We try to secure a source of income/livelihood that causes no harm.

#### 6. Effort and Energy

We commit to the daily disciplined practices of meditation, yoga, exercise, wise actions, kindness, forgiveness, generosity, compassion, appreciation and moment to moment mindfulness of feelings, emotions, thoughts and sensations. Developing the skillful means of knowing how to apply the appropriate meditation or action to the given circumstance.

#### 7. Mindfulness Meditation

We develop wisdom through practicing formal mindfulness meditation. This leads to seeing clearly and healing the root causes and conditions that lead to the suffering of addiction. We practice present-time awareness in all aspects of our life. We **take refuge** in the present.

#### 8. Concentration Meditation

We develop the capacity to focus the mind on a single object, such as the breath or a phrase, training the mind through the practices of loving-kindness,

compassion and forgiveness to focus on the positive qualities we seek to uncover. We utilize concentration at times of temptation or craving in order to abstain from acting unwisely.

This is the path of Awakening, a path of Recovering from the addictions and delusions that have created so much suffering in our lives and in this world. All living beings have the ability to live life along these lines. There is no-one that lacks ability, only those who lack the willingness to take on such a radical task of transformation. Addicts who do not recover are not broken or lost, they just have not yet found the willingness to take the path of Wisdom and Compassion. We believe in the human capacity for change. We understand it from direct experience. If we can, you can.

