

Noble Eightfold Path

In

Early Buddhism

Myth 5

Not all eight
factors are
equally
important.

Factors that are
typically singled out

Right view is not required

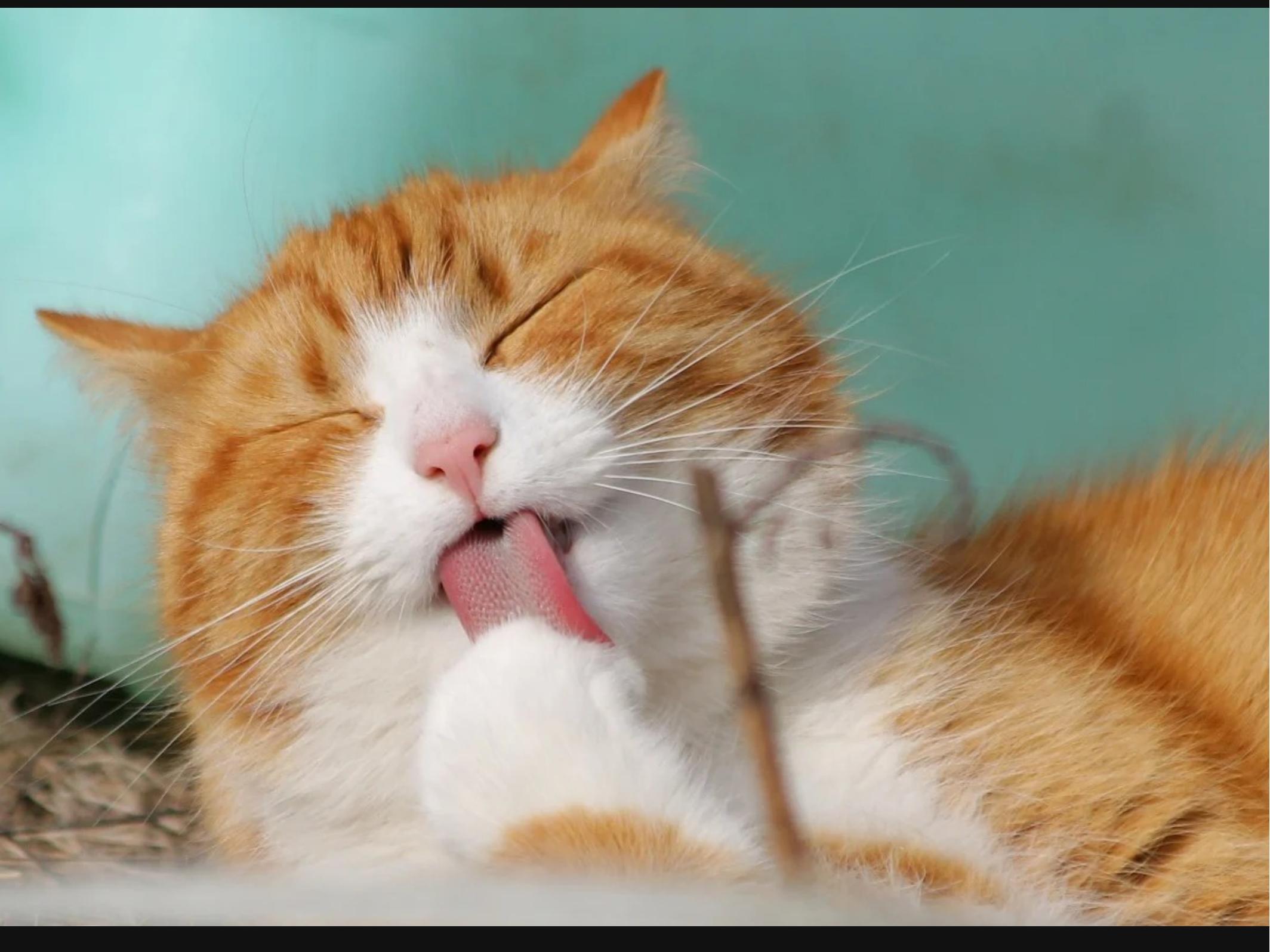
Morality is less important

Right mindfulness is sufficient

Right stillness is not required

Right view is not required

“‘If it turns out there is another world, and good and bad deeds have a result, then—when the body breaks up, after death—I’ll be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ This is the first consolation they’ve won.”



Right view is not required

“If it turns out there is no other world, and good and bad deeds don’t have a result, then in the present life I’ll keep myself free of enmity and ill will, untroubled and happy.’ This is the second consolation they’ve won.”

AN 3.65 With the Kālāmas of Kesamutta

Right view is not required

“The doctrine of rebirth is meaningful in Buddhism only insofar as it provides a basis for the continuity of ethical consequences. Although rebirth and karma are often linked together, it is karma that is of primary importance; rebirth is secondary.”

(Steven Batchelor)

Morality is less important

“What is the starting point of skillful qualities? Well purified ethics and correct view. When your ethics are well purified and your view is correct, you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation in three ways, depending on and grounded on ethics.”

(SN 47.3)

Morality is less important

“Without fulfilling the practice of a trainee, it’s impossible to fulfill ethics.

Without fulfilling ethics, it’s impossible to fulfill right view.

Without fulfilling right view, it’s impossible to fulfill right stillness.”

(AN 5.21)

Morality is less important

“Monks, an unethical person, who lacks ethics, has destroyed a vital condition for right stillness.

When there is no right stillness, one who lacks right stillness has destroyed a vital condition for true knowledge and vision.”

(AN5.24)

Morality is less important

For a person endowed with virtue >
freedom from remorse

Free from remorse > Joy

For a joyful person > Rapture

For a rapturous person > Serene in body

For a person serene in body > Pleasure

For a person experiencing pleasure >
concentrated

Right mindfulness is sufficient

“It’s always auspicious for the mindful;
the mindful prosper in happiness.
Each new day is better for the mindful,
but they’re not freed from enmity.

But someone whose mind delights in
harmlessness,
all day and all night,
with love for all living creatures—
they have no enmity for anyone.”
(SN 10.4)

Right stillness is not required

“Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood. It’s not possible to cut out the heartwood without having cut through the bark and the softwood. In the same way, there is a path and a practice for giving up the five lower fetters. It’s not possible to know or see or give up the five lower fetters without relying on that path and that practice.

And what, Ānanda, is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters? The four *jhānas* ... ” (MN 64)

Right stillness is not required

“When there is no right stillness, one who lacks right stillness has destroyed a vital condition for true knowledge and vision.” (AN 10.3)

The path is just right

“Just this is the path, there is no other,
For insight and for purity.
You should enter this path;
This is the confounding of Māra. (Dhp)”

“If anyone were to refer to a spiritual life as well-proclaimed and complete in all aspects, with nothing lacking and nothing superfluous, it is this spiritual life they would be describing.” (DN 29)

Myth 6

Don't attach
to the path.



“Mendicants, I will teach you how the Dhamma is similar to a raft: it’s for crossing over, not for holding on. ...

And when they’d crossed over to the far shore, they’d think, ‘This raft has been very helpful to me. Riding on the raft, and paddling with my hands and feet, I have safely crossed over to the far shore. Why don’t I hoist it on my head or pick it up on my shoulder and go wherever I want?’” (MN 22)

Don't attach to the path (Snp 4.3)

Attachments to views are not easily overcome; having decided among teachings, one tightly grasps [a view].

Therefore, among those bases of attachment, a person rejects and takes up a teaching.

...

One involved is embroiled in disputes about teachings;

but how, about what, could one dispute with one uninvolved?

Nothing is taken up or rejected by him; he has shaken off all views right here.