

Wise Speech is preceded by Wise View and Wise Intention

From Jack Kornfield: The Eightfold Path for Householders

Skillful Understanding/Right View

Right view is the recognition that what we do counts. We're not in a pre-determined cosmos, we can be effective. We can be a source of benefit or harm for ourselves and others; and such a responsibility is not so much a moral obligation as a mandate: if we develop clarity and kindness, we can live with that kind of mind. If, however, we sustain prejudices or indifference, we become narrow and insensitive. We can act clearly and be at peace with ourselves, or we can act out of compulsion, and get stuck in the impotence that compulsion brings – addictive behaviour and loss of personal authority. And in all cases, the chances are that we'll end up being associated with people who mirror our attitudes. So right view is the recognition that our own integrity has to be the center of our lives. And that feels empowering.

Skillful Thinking/ Right Intention (Attitude)

Right intention, sometimes called right attitude or even right thought, proceeds from that understanding of cause and effect; it means setting up the intention to bring around skilful results through body, speech and mind, and to relinquish the unskilful ones. This is the foundation of the teachings on action, or kamma, as it is called in Buddhism, of which mental intention is the agent. Since actions of body and speech proceed from mind-states and emotions, if we can get the mind and heart clear, we can both act from a place of balance, and be able to discern the results of our actions. This is what right speech, for example, is about.

Skillful/Right Speech

If we could do just Right Speech we would change our lives, we would change the world, and we would become enlightened. Just in that. "Enlighten" means awaken to what we do and what's true, because to speak truly means that one has to touch one's heart, one has to listen to it, one has to be there. Then all the rest of what one calls The Path with Heart follows from that.