

What Is Right Action?

Right Action means being upright in our activities. With reference to our *personal* actions, this means adhering to the three principles of virtuous conduct:

1. *Not killing*, harming, or harassing other people or living beings.
2. *Not stealing*, concealing, embezzling, or misappropriating the belongings of other people.
3. *Not engaging in immoral or illicit sex* with the children or spouses of other people.

With reference to our work in general, Right Action includes our undertakings achieved through physical activity.

Before engaging in them, we should first evaluate them to see just how beneficial they will be to ourselves and others, and to see whether or not they are clean and pure. If we see that our actions will cause suffering or harm, we should refrain from them and choose only those activities that will lead to ease, convenience, and comfort for ourselves and others.

"Action" includes every physical action we take: *sitting, standing, walking, and lying down*; the use of every part of the body, for example, grasping or taking with our hands; as well as the use of our senses of *sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feeling*. All of this counts as physical activity or action.

In short, Right Action means:

First, being clean and honest, as well as faithful to our duties at all times.

Second, before we engage in any action so as to make it upright and honest, we first have to examine and weigh matters carefully, being thoroughly circumspect in using our intelligence and judgment. Only then can our actions be in line with right moral principles.

Source: Adapted from "The Path to Peace and Freedom for the Mind", by Ajaan Lee Dhammharo, translated from the Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*, 1 December 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/thai/lee/pathtopeace.html>