



Maintaining Vision, While Focusing, by Ajahn Thanasanti

It seems that the key to the practice is maintaining vision and focus. Vision keeps an overview of what one is doing and the greater context in mind. Focus is concerned with the specific task at hand. The whole thing is too big to focus on at once but I can start with one simple thing, the floors. I like sweeping the floors. I know how to do it. I don't feel anxious about it. I find it relaxing. And most days, people haven't taken away the dust pan and broom so it is actually possible to do. When I'm sweeping the floor, I enjoy it. I relax into the movement, feel my body and breath and focus on the bit of floor I'm sweeping. But I keep the whole floor in mind. So the vision is the whole floor and the focus is the little bit I'm working on. []

One of the problems with vision and focus is that they can get out of balance. When there is too much vision, then you get stuck in ideas. [] And the mind gets so stuck in everything that needs attending to, it becomes worn out just from thinking about it; there's no energy left to do anything. On the other hand when there is too much focus, the mind gets obsessed with the particular task at hand, like repairing something or building something, and the whole world becomes separated into that which helps me do my job and that which obstructs me. So if someone interrupts by asking a question, it's easy to snap or to dismiss them because; - they're interfering with my work. - People are growled at, [services] get missed, sometimes people can't even make it to the meal because they're too busy getting their work done. But one thing is for sure, the work is never done; there are always more things that need attending to.

So the challenge is to work in a way that keeps the vision alive, maintains the aspiration as well as the buildings, and strengthens faith and confidence in the practice. When we keep the vision alive, our hearts rest in the purity of pure awareness. There, one finds joy, peace and easefulness of heart. This is the real work we are doing here.

--Ajahn Thanasanti