

## 0.1 Chapter 4: self: Calm

## 0.2 Calm

### 1 On Calming Places

There are some places that seem almost designed to shatter our peace of mind, places where there is too much human chatter and noise, where there is always a screen in view, where the phone rings incessantly, where we cant put our problems into perspective. It seems that calm depends to a rather humbling degree on being able to travel, either in person or in our imaginations, to places well suited to dampening our anxieties.

One of the most calming of all such locations is the sea: a spot (perhaps a bench on a promenade or a patch of grass on top of a cliff) where we can let our thoughts merge with the grandeur and scale of an ocean and thereby feel (in the nicest possible way) how much a lot of what worries us doesnt matter in the grander scheme. . .

Another traditionally very helpful place is the graveyard, where the sight of graves helps us to remember the brevity of our lives and thereby moves us to reorder priorities.

Part of what adds fuel to our stress is an inability ever to be sufficiently alone, and to have a chance to sort out our thoughts. Thats what can make a long drive an ideal place to wind ourselves down.

What brings supreme calm is space being made to feel that we are but a tiny element in something far larger and more mysterious. Deserts know this point well.

And of course, the ones who understand it best are the stars. . .