



This document is an extract from the full chapter which is available for download in the table via this [link](#) and is intended for use by participants of meetings.

48 - Deep Calm as a Support

The glassy sea and the cooling of the system

“There is no happiness higher than peace.” ~ Gotama (The Buddha)

“Calmness of mind does not mean you have no thoughts... It means you are not being held hostage by them.” ~ Anon

The calm after the joy

In this ‘Freedom’ stage of our journey, as our raft glides through the ‘Land of Perpetual Dawn’, we, the Navigator, encounter the fifth of the Seven Supports: ‘Deep Calm’.

Deep Calm often follows uplift. After the mind has brightened, the body and mind tend to settle on their own. We feel less driven and less on edge. The body isn’t bracing so much, and the mind isn’t pushing or scanning in the same way. Thoughts may still arise, but they don’t hook us as quickly, and they pass with less disturbance.

In the early teachings, Deep Calm (tranquillity) has two faces: a settling of the body and a settling of the mind. The body softens out of bracing – jaw, shoulders, belly, breath – and the mind softens out of friction – less push, less resistance, less inner arguing. This is why Deep Calm is placed as the natural follow-on from joy in the awakening-factors sequence: uplift refreshes and brightens, then the system cools and steadies, making it

easier for attention to gather. When the mind gets a little brighter and more uplifted, the whole system naturally starts to relax and quiet down. From that relaxation, a steadier sense of ease and wellbeing appears. And when we feel that kind of ease, it becomes much easier for the mind to gather, settle, and stay unified on one thing without strain.

Calm here isn't a blankness or the absence of emotion; it's a lowering of arousal – less threat-scanning, less muscle tone, a slower breath – so whatever is present becomes more workable rather than fought, suppressed, or acted out.

While Energising Joy (Chapter 47) provided the necessary uplift to pull our raft out of the heavy currents of dullness, it possesses a vibration or excitement that can eventually become agitating. Deep Calm is the subsiding of that vibration. It is the profound cooling, stilling, and pacification of both the body and the mind. It's the stretch of the journey where the water smooths out, and the raft runs smoothly.

Self-reflections

1. When things get quiet, what do I assume will happen next – and what am I protecting myself from by staying slightly tense?
2. Can I tell the difference in my body between calm (soft, open, present) and shut down (blank, distant, numb)?
3. Where does stress live most reliably in me right now (jaw, throat, chest, belly, hands) – and what happens if I soften that place by 5%?
4. When an emotion is strong, do I tighten to control it, or can I let it settle by staying close, breathing, and unclenching?
5. When something pleasant happens, can I enjoy it without getting carried away – and notice how joy can settle into calm ease instead of tipping into restless excitement?
6. What role does busyness play for me: does it energise me, distract me, or keep uncomfortable feelings at a distance?
7. Can I be alert without bracing – and what does *relaxed alertness* actually feel like in my posture, breath, and attention?

Journaling prompts

1. **The tension inventory:** Scan your body slowly from forehead to feet. List three places you find tension you hadn't noticed. For each, write: *What is this area bracing for? What is it trying to prevent?* Then add one line: *What changes if I soften it by 5% rather than forcing it to disappear?*
2. **Redefining boring:** Write about a moment this week that felt boring, flat, or *nothing's happening*. Now rewrite the same moment using the word peace instead of boredom. What shifts in your description – sensations, mood, meaning? What does boredom protect you from noticing?
3. **The cool engine script:** Choose a situation that reliably heats you up (rushing, criticism, conflict, uncertainty). Describe what usually happens in your body and thinking. Then write a *cooling script* you could run next time – two sentences maximum – focused on loosening and slowing (for example: *"This is heat, not truth. Let the body cool first."*). Finish with one practical step you'd take in the first 30 seconds.
4. **Joy versus calm (uplift versus ease):** Recall one memory of strong excitement or uplift and one memory of Deep Calm. Compare them in three lines each: *breath, body, attention*. Which one leaves you clearer afterwards? Which one makes life feel more workable for the next hour?
5. **The safety signal:** List the specific conditions that help your nervous system power down (privacy, warmth, low light, a tidy space, a certain person, silence, time). Then answer: *Which one is easiest to provide for myself today?* Write one tiny way you could signal *safe enough* to your body in under a minute.
6. **Letter from the body:** Write a short letter from your body to your mind beginning: *"Dear Mind, you drive me hard when..."* Let the body name its costs (tightness, fatigue, bracing) and then ask for three concrete changes (pace, breath, breaks, fewer tabs open, softer posture).
7. **The ripple effect:** Describe one interaction today where your steadiness helped, and one where your agitation spread. What did you

do with your voice, pace, face, and attention? End with one sentence: “*When I’m calmer, I tend to...*” and one sentence: “*When I’m stressed, I tend to...*”

Remember to remember

Resting in ‘Deep Calm’ is the point in the crossing where we’re no longer bracing against experience. The struggle softens: the body isn’t as clenched, the mind isn’t as jumpy, and the urge to push, fix, or rush eases. This is what it feels like when the *internal war* is winding down – not because life is perfect, but because we’re not adding extra friction. We begin to recognise calm as a real form of strength: a nervous system that can downshift, a mind that can stay present without needing intensity to feel alive.

The key is learning to value this *cooling* rather than mistrusting it. Stillness isn’t stagnation; it’s recovery and readiness. When the body is soothed and the mind is settled, attention gathers more easily and steadiness becomes natural – which is exactly what prepares the way for ‘A Unified Mind’ (Chapter 49). Calm is what makes things visible: like still water reflecting the moon, a quieter mind can see more clearly what’s happening, what’s changing, and what matters next.

“The more tranquil a mind becomes, the greater is its influence, its power for good, its success.” ~ James Allen

“It’s only through stopping, through pausing, through stillness, through quiet, that we’re able to... fully inhabit the world.” ~ Stephen Batchelor

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