

*From [Every Breath, New Chances: How to Age with Honor and Dignity](#) by Lewis Richmond © 2020. Reprinted with permission of [North Atlantic Books](#).*

Becoming calmer is one tangible benefit of meditation. But the deeper purpose is not to be calm per se, but most of all to be *real*—in other words, to be grounded in the truth of what is happening to you. If you are stressed out, then it is part of your meditation to become fully aware of being stressed out. Don't make a big effort to push it aside, don't try to be some other way. In that moment, being stressed is who you are. Being stressed is deeply true.

The minute you [embrace that fact](#), you will actually become less stressed and more awake. You will be rooted in what's real *and* hopefully calmer. But whether you are calm or not, your meditation is working. In a real emergency, you don't have time to meditate or to be calm. You just have to be completely present.