

**Book Review by:** Daniel Casey — [www.misanthropester.com](http://www.misanthropester.com)

In 1989, Michael Doud realized he had been depressed for nearly 40 years and wanted to break free of it, "I've done this before. I'm doing it again, making yet another attempt to escape my unsatisfactory life and probably botching it one more time." What we read in his memoir of sorts, [Falling into Freedom](#), is a personal history, an inventory of all the successes and challenges that built up to that moment in the winter of 1989 where Doud decided he's have enough.

In the narrative mix, Doud isolates the causes of anger and frustration, those roots of his battle with depression, as well as the effects of poor decisions. Readers will find the book raw and open, a trait common in many memoirs, but Doud is able to present us with something more than just a personal narrative writ large. He is able to craft a work of nonfiction where he is actively striving to articulate and act on beliefs, concepts, and hopes to not merely 'right' his path but to allow him to live a life of meaning. Thus, we are presented with a sort of coming of age story regarding personal philosophy and one meant to be not just an inspiration to others but offer practical advice.

Nearly everyone who sits down to write about their life is insistent they've lived through something meaningful not just for themselves but for others. This imperative to tell, to share with others is a noble instinct yet as we all know, often times 'crazy adventures' are really just bland, self-absorb tales. Fortunately, Doud's vignettes avoid such tiresomeness by focusing on consequences rather than on the mere acts themselves, a simple distinction but one often lacking in works of the genre.

Recounting his fears and anxieties, Doud brings readers back again and again to his generation's greatest successes and failures as he stands a mirror for many Boomers to see themselves reflected. Discovering and embracing meditation but finding it elusive to truly capture due to seemingly ever-present desires, Doud as a young man seems to drift. The trauma of Vietnam sends him down a dark path but yet even in that dimness there is a flicker of that sense of ease and calm he first experienced in mediation.

Thus, when he and by proxy readers discover that this has been the goal all along, we can see a true change in how one relates to the world around oneself. Doud is his own test subject taking readers across the world in search of actualization. There is certainly success here. His method for self-examination is unpretentious with its great strength being it can only give out to practitioners what they are willing to put in. It may not sound like much, but this trait alone will often delineate authentic practices for self-improvement from those 'quick fixes' pedaled by many a guru. Many readers of the spiritual and self-help genre will find [Falling Into Freedom](#) at once touching and challenging as it is designed not just to inspire but to provoke action. As such, it is one of more superior works of personal growth and transformation one could find.