

Financial Independence/Retiring Early (FIRE) Reference list

"They deem me mad because I will not sell my days for gold. I deem them mad because they think my days have a price" Kahil Gibran

We spent ten years (1992-2001) planning for early retirement (age 35-35) and another nine years (so far) experiencing it. We've read dozens of books and experienced what it's really like. These are our favorites.

If you think I've left something important out, please drop me a line to: *Kathy at blessley.net*

Work Less, Live More

Bob Clyatt, Nolo Press, 2007

Best summary of financial advice and lifestyle alternatives this is for someone who wants to revamp their life/work paradigm. This is the book I would have written based on what we've learned over the last 20 years of researching & living; now I don't have to.

Cashing in on the American Dream -- How to Retire at 35

Paul Terhorst, Bantam Books, 1988

This is the book that started us on the journey to early retirement. An excellent introduction to understanding how it is surprisingly realistic for a professional couple to retire in style at a young age. Out of print – will need to find it via a used book store.

Your Money or Your Life

Joe Domiguez & Vikki Roberts, 1992 (updated 2008)

Probably the most widely read book on the topic. I didn't find the first half that useful -- it's about why one shouldn't overspend, build up big balances on credit cards, etc. Second half is good - some good methods for thinking about finances; I especially liked the part about understanding the benefits one gets from "working" (e.g. income, socializing, learning,...) and how to reassemble the components in alternate ways. Can be a bit heavy on the philosophizing on over-consumption.

The Joy of Not Working,

How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free &

Career Success without a Real Job: The Career Book for People Too Smart to Work in Corporations

Ernie Zelinski, Visions International Publishing, Edmonton, Alberta

Insightful and lighthearted book that leads the reader through the process of thinking through life without a traditional "job". Asks all the right questions, but less philosophically-heavy than "Your Money or Your Life"

The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich

Timothy Ferris, Crown Archetype 2009

How to build a career from the ground-up on the premise that it can be done from anywhere in the world & doesn't take much time. Internet & outsourcing centric.

Wishcraft -- How to Get What You Really Want (and others by the same author)

Barbara Sher with Annie Gottlieb, Ballantine, updated 2003

So, how do you want to spend your life? Barbara Sher's books are a good place to get started in figuring this out. Wishcraft was one of her first; she has many others.

Get a Life: You Don't Need a Million to Retire Well

Ralph Warner, Nolo Press, updated 2005

This book is written for traditional retirees, and has very non-typical advice on the typical set of retirement topics. Two things make it unique, and worthy of reading by very early retirees. Most interesting is the set of insights developed from interviewing people who are having a healthy, fulfilling, and joyful old age. The commonalities that emerged (read the book to find out what they are) in many cases are based on capabilities or actions that must be begun in midlife or earlier. The second interesting part of the book is its questioning of much of the conventional wisdom on retirement (“you don’t need a million” ...)

Live it Up Without Outliving Your Money!

Dan Merriman, Wiley, 2008

The only real investment “secrets” you need to know are asset allocation and safe withdrawal rates. Dan Merriman is one of the best thinkers on these subjects.

"The Four Pillars of Investing" and "The Intelligent Asset Allocator" and "The Investor's Manifesto"

William Bernstein

This is our other favorite investing book on asset allocation & withdrawal rates.

Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment

Martin Seligman, 2004

So, if you’re not going to work, how will you spend your time? There are hundreds of books on “happiness” out there, but this is probably the best place to start.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Psychology of Happiness

Arlene Matthews Uhl, 2008

A good summary of all the research on positive psychology with practical hints on how to apply it

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (P.S.)

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 2008

Talks about the happiness beyond simply “pleasant experiences”. During flow, people typically experience deep enjoyment, creativity, and a total involvement with life.

Resources on the Internet

See what we've done during our retirement <http://blessley.net/>

The Retire Early Home Page <http://www.retireearlyhomepage.com/>

"The online magazine for people who used to work for a living". Aimed right at the topics in this course, some good reviews/pointers. Some financial calculators tuned specifically to early retirement.

Paul Terhorst ("Cashing in on the American Dream") home page <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Shores/5315/> / An update of what they've done in the last decade+ since retiring

Financial Planning

www.morningstar.com My favorite financial web site. Great planning and analysis tools. Lots available for free, but the \$60 fee for full access is well worth it. Their financial classroom (on line training) is outstanding – learn the basics all the way up to the most sophisticated.

Quicken Financial Network

<http://www.quicken.com/planning/>

A comprehensive personal finance site.

New Road Map Foundation www.newroadmap.org *This foundation was set up by the authors of "Your Money or Your Life", and has the latest speaking engagements, news letters, etc. There are local/online courses as well.*

Simplicity/Frugality

Simple Living Network <http://www.slnet.com> *Both content and pointers, free email newsletter. Very nicely organized with good content.*

Voluntary Simplicity And Financial Independence <http://www.scn.org/earth/lightly>

Seattle-based, associated with the New Road Map foundation, started by the authors of "Your Money or your Life". Both content and pointers

Part-Time Work, Free Agents

<http://www.freeagentnation.com/> All about becoming a free-agent.

www.guru.com Connects free lancers with work.

<http://talentmarket.monster.com> Connects free lancers with work