Things I've Read… So you don't have to!

But you might want to anyway!

A Richer Retirement, by William P. Bengen
The subtitle says it all: "Supercharging the 4% Rule to Spend More and Enjoy More." A data-based safe withdrawal strategy to plan for/employ in your work-optional phase of life.

A Random Walk Down Wallstreet**,** by Burton Malkiel
A classic, long-running investment guide that argues against actively picking stocks, advocating instead for a passive, diversified strategy like index fund investing, based on the efficient-market hypothesis.

A Wealth of Common Sense by Ben Carlson (blog). This piece provides a short summary of the 7 attributes of *The Millionaire Next Door.* A great writer who posts regularly and succinctly with fascinating, timely observations grounded in history. See his book below.

After the Death of Your Spouse, by Mike Piper
This is an invaluable guide through a very traumatic time when we often aren't able to think clearly. Thankfully, we don't have to. Mr. Piper has catalogued and *prioritized* the many logistical steps required. Just knowing what is urgent, and what can wait is a tremendous gift.

All the Money in the World, by Laura Vanderkam
What the happiest people know about wealth, and how each of us can figure out better ways to use what we have to build the lives we want. A rethink of personal finance, this book will challenge long-held beliefs and practices regarding money.

Anna Karenina, by Leo Tolstoy.
Just don't. Life is too short.

Atomic Habits, by James Clear.
The motivation behind the *Take 10 for 1% Better Forum*, this book highlights the ***aggregation of marginal gains*** to transformative levels. Mr. Clear builds out a powerful framework for habit formation/elimination centered on this purported truth: "You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."

Die With Zero, by Bill Perkins. Emphasizes living your best life by not dying as the richest person at your own funeral. A privileged perspective to be sure, but for those who have built wealth, using it to bring joy to yourself and others while you are alive is the recurring message.

Enough, by John C. Bogle
A short, but profound read. Mr. Bogle critiques Wall Street's obsession with short-term gains and complexity, advocating for a return to fundamental values like trust, stewardship, and long-term investment, and provides a framework for finding satisfaction beyond wealth accumulation.

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How an Economy Grows, **and Why it Crashes**, Peter Schiff.
This would be towards the bottom of the list of recommended books, but if you have already read the majority of those above and below, this does provide an edgy perspective. *How an Economy Grows and Why It Crashes explains the roots of economic growth, the uses of capital, the destructive nature of consumer credit, the source of inflation, the importance of trade, savings, risk, and many other topical principles of economics* (edited Amazon Summary).

Just Keep Buying, by Nick Maggiulli.
Odd title for a "Financial Fitness" book. Could you imagine a physical fitness book entitled, "Just Keep Eating?" The author highlights the power of automated, consistent investing (dollar cost averaging) in the market even, nay, especially when skies are grey. Emphasizes the power of compounding (and increasing probabilities of positive returns) in the long run.

More than Enough, by Mike Piper
Author of the blog Oblivious Investor, and he serves on the board of the Bogle Center. This short book's goal is to help you answer those questions that arise when you realize you have accumulated—or are on track to accumulate—more than enough

Mr. Money Mustache (blog), by Peter Adeney. Short, stoic, witty posts that provide an incredible against the grain approach to consumption, contentment, and incidental wealth-building. *The Shockingly Simple Math Behind Early Retirement*, *Getting Rich: from Zero to Hero in One Blog Post*, and *Killing your $1000 Grocery Bill* are top posts, easily found on the "Popular" tab on his website

Parent Like A Millionaire (without being one): Outsmart Big Baby, Save on Childcare, and Secure Your Family's Financial Future, by Kristy Shen and Bryce Leung.
The world's longest title captures the gist of it. Reading this *before* you have your first child would be equally as important as reading the ubiquitous *What to Expect When Your Expecting*. The baby-, toddler-, and child-industrial complex is designed to extract hundreds of thousands of dollars from well-meaning parents before each kid turns 18. This book blows a hole in the narrative that to love your child is to financially lavish your child. Money-saving tips and tricks paired with ingenious childcare hacks abound in this important read for any parent.

Psychology of Money, by Morgan Housel (2020) - Housel's central premise is that financial success has little to do with intelligence or technical knowledge, and everything to do with behavior.

- Money is deeply personal - Your financial decisions are shaped by your unique life experiences, not spreadsheets
- Behavior trumps knowledge - Smart people make terrible money decisions because emotions override logic
- Time and patience are your greatest assets - Compound growth works not through complexity, but through consistency over decades
- Enough is enough - The hardest financial skill is knowing when you have "enough" and avoiding the trap of endless more
- Your personal experience with money forms just 0.00001% of what's happened, but maybe 80% of how you think the world works

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Radical Problems, Simple Solutions: by Mike Macmillan (a local, Chapel Hill, author!)
How Markets Can Help Fix the Retirement Crisis and Solve Wealth Inequality. Elevates the story of a new generation of innovators working to introduce the previously disenfranchised to the benefits of stock ownership. Filled with humor, Mike (we are on a first name basis, seriously!) offers a roadmap for employing free market solutions to help solve the challenge of wealth inequality.

Retire before Mom and Dad, by Rob Berger
A huge name in personal finance, this "retired" partner level attorney spends his days elevating the belief that "the best thing money can buy is financial freedom." A super book! The 5 money myths that are keeping you from a life of financial freedom, the step-by- step plan you need to save money without sacrificing your favorite hobbies, and the superpower you have to become wealthy on just about any income are just a few topics. You could also just watch him here.

Simple Wealth, Inevitable Wealth, by Nick Murray
Makes the case that building wealth, like losing weight, is simple, but not easy. Invest consistently over time into equity (stock) funds and hold for the long-term. Most people cannot do this, so most benefit from having an advisor to guard against our natural behavioral finance foibles that drive irrational behavior (e.g. selling low and buying high). Sticking with your plan through ups and downs is the key.

Tax Planning To and Through Early Retirement, by Cody Garrett and Sean Mullaney.
These guys are frequent podcast guests and do an excellent job of deconstructing the ever-changind tax code and its overly complicated structure. They "crack the code" by highlighting how one might legally take advantage of this byzantine system, and dispel the urban myths and rules of thumb assumptions that often create problems for retirees of any age.

The Four Pillars of Investing, by William J. Bernstein
A neurologist teaches investors to build wealth through four core principles: Investment Theory, Market History, Investor Psychology, and the Business of Investment Services, emphasizing diversification, long-term thinking, and avoiding conflicts of interest with financial professionals.

The Intelligent Investor**,** by Benjamin Graham
One of the pillars of investing history and analysis, Ben Graham goes into great detail delineating between speculating and investing, using "Mr. Market" to teach fundamental truths about how equities (stocks) work, individually and collectively.

The Little Book of Common Sense Investing, by John ("Jack") C. Bogle
Highlights the power of compounding, the safety of broad market Index Fund/ETF investing, and the impact of fees, commissions, and other expensive ways to invest.

The Millionaire Next Door. by Thomas J. Stanley Ph.D. and William D. Danko Ph.D
The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy, this research distinguishes between the posers and the players. Lays out the common principles, behaviors, and characteristics of those who are *actually* wealthy, and exposes classic displays of those who project wealth, but are actually struggling financially.

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The Paradox of Choice, by Barry Schwartz
Illuminates the negative psychological and practical impacts in the modern world's created by "Choice Overload" and "Maximizer" over "Satisficer" mentality. Perfect can be the enemy of the good. The insane amount of options we have these days for goods and services can lead to anxiety, dissatisfaction, and decision paralysis. The incredible bounty of choice can limit our freedom and happiness.

The Price of Everything, by Russ Roberts
"A parable of possibility and prosperity," this short, fictional story raises an accessible economic narrative focused on the principles of price, markets, and emergent order that would make Adam Smith proud, and Mao Zedong lose his lunch.

The Simple Path to Wealth, by JL Collins
All you need to know about investing until you reach your first quarter million dollars, or are within five years of financial freedom. The simple path to a "Work-optional" life. Easy read, written for his daughter. JL Collins is one of the godfathers of the FIRE movement

The Wealth Ladder, Proven Strategies for Every Step of Your Financial Life, by Nick Maggiuli.
Breaks wealth down into 6 distinct levels, each with its own challenges, opportunities, and strategies for rising to the next rung of the ladder. Smarter choices, reduced stress, and better outcomes are possible with the appropriate money mindset and order of operations tailored for each level. Most educators can limit their focus/reading to their current and proximate rung of the ladder. A huge innovative conceptual takeaway- The 0.01% Rule of thumb for guilt-free spending along your journey to financial fitness.

TL;DR: Financial Literacy for North Carolina* Public School Teachers, by Karl Fisch
While not particularly a page-turner, it is short, can be read in a couple hours, and the only book out there to give an overview of your NC TSERS benefits. Bizarre Title of the Year Award (?) *There are versions each of the states published or in production.

What Money Can't Buy, by Michael Sandel
Grappling with the moral limits of markets.What is the proper role of markets in a democratic society, and how can we protect the moral and civic goods that money cannot buy?

You Can Retire Sooner than You Think, by Wes Moss
Based on a research study of 1,350 happy retirees, Moss identifies simple, effective financial practices that can help individuals retire successfully, without needing millions of dollars or complex investment skills.

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A work in progress

The following have been read, but not summarized, yet.
Feel free to reach out with questions on these as well.

The Retirement Savings Time Bomb Ticks Louder, Ed Slott

Common Sense on Mutual Funds, Jack Bogle

Saving for Retirement, Ben Carlson

Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science, Charles Wheelen.

The Warren Buffet Way, Robert Hagstrom, Jr.

Free to Choose, Milton Friedman

The Excellent Investment Advisor, Nick Murray

The Book on Rental Property Investing, Brandon Turner (Bigger Pockets podcast host)

How to Retire, Christine Benz

Stop Doing Nothing, Al Otto

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