



7 best personal finance books, according to experts

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At Bankrate we strive to help you make smarter financial decisions. While we adhere to strict [editorial integrity](#), this post may contain references to products from our partners. Here's an explanation for [how we make money](#).

If you're looking to master money management, chances are you have crunched your [spending numbers](#), installed [investment apps](#) and spent some time thinking about your [retirement strategy](#). Empowering yourself (and your bank account) doesn't just happen with online calculators and short articles on your smartphone, though. Gaining a deeper understanding about the dos and don'ts of personal finances may require turning the pages of some thicker texts.

What are the [best books about money](#) to add to your library? We asked some financial experts for their top recommendations. These are their favorites:

1. The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy

Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko

Why it's great: Because it proves that you don't have to win the lottery to be wealthy.

Who should read it: Anyone who wants to understand how their behavior impacts their bottom line.

Being rich doesn't mean being flashy. In fact, according to this book, it is quite the opposite. This book highlights that many affluent individuals often shy away from buying the most expensive cars and taking the most over-the-top vacations, opting instead for a disciplined approach to their dollars. Being a millionaire, it turns out, relies more on being thrifty.

“I enjoy this book since it provides a very common sense and digestible explanation, with supporting data and statistics, [about] the behaviors and attitudes and approaches for the wealthy,” says Elliot J. Pepper, CPA, CFP, MST, financial planner and director of tax at Maryland-based Northbrook Financial. “Specifically, there is focus on the ‘self-made’ of the wealthy population, and I believe that is particularly helpful, especially for those who were not born wealthy or experienced a lottery-type windfall.”

Stanley passed away in 2015, but he left behind an additional catalog to help navigate the twists and turns of money including “Stop Acting Rich and Start Acting Like a Real Millionaire” and “The Millionaire Mind.”

2. How to Make Your Money Last: The Indispensable Retirement Guide

Jane Bryant Quinn

Why it’s great: Because you’ll probably need your money longer than you think.

Who should read it: Anyone who wants to look forward to retirement instead of worrying about how they’ll pay for it.

Sheila Padden, CPA, CFP, founder of Illinois-based Padden Financial Planning, dedicates her time to walking clients through the ins and outs of investing, taxes and saving for retirement. For those who want to gain a more well-rounded sense of putting their money to work, she recommends Jane Bryant Quinn’s “How to Make Your Money Last.”

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“It’s really great – readable and with sufficient detail,” Padden says. “It covers the many areas of comprehensive financial planning well. It is the one book everyone should read.”

3. A Random Walk Down Wall Street: The Time-Tested Strategy for Successful Investing

Burton G. Malkiel

Why it’s great: Because it simplifies the stock market.

Who should read it: Anyone who wants to feel at home on Wall Street.

With a constant stream of news about movement in the stock market, investing your money can be a daunting and stressful activity. Instead of staying glued to the updates about stock prices and government stimulus packages, consider closing your screen and opening Malkiel’s book.

“This book should be required for all business students,” says Casey T. Smith, president of Georgia-based Wiser Wealth Management. “I like how it takes the reader through the history of market bubbles, how our behavior hurts our portfolios and the outline he gives for successful investing.”

Malkiel’s text has plenty of other fans in the financial advising community. Dan Herron, CPA/PFS, CFP, principal of California-based Elemental Wealth Advisors, says the book was required reading when he was in graduate school “and really shed light on finance-related topics [including] technical/fundamental analysis, historical boom and busts, basic personal finance concepts, modern portfolio theory and behavioral finance in a way that a normal person could understand.”

4. Why Smart People Do Stupid Things With Money: Overcoming Financial Dysfunction

Bert Whitehead

Why it’s great: Because money isn’t just about adding numbers – it’s about making decisions.

Who should read it: Anyone who is willing to recognize that their mind is a pivotal piece of their personal finances.

Perhaps you’ve been failing to pay off your credit card debt in full each month, or maybe you haven’t been contributing to any kind of retirement savings account. No matter how smart you think you are, you’ve probably made a misstep with your cash, and this book highlights that the error may be attributed less to your wallet and more to your mind.

“It is a book to help people understand their money personality type, how to use the best of that personality type to your advantage and how to overcome the things that are holding you back,” says Elizabeth Buffardi, founder of Illinois-based Crescendo Financial Planning.

“I find that sometimes when you understand the ‘why’ it makes it much easier to take certain actions,” Buffardi says. “If someone tells you to do something, most people aren’t going to run out and do it. But if you understand the logic – or the ‘why’ – it is easier to implement the advice.”

5. All Your Worth: The Ultimate Lifetime Money Plan

Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi

Why it’s great: Because it’s based on more than 20 years of research.

Who should read it: Anyone who wants to get control of their cash flow.

You may know Elizabeth Warren from her work as a United States senator and her work on the campaign trail, but you may not have read the book she co-wrote with her daughter about money. Katie Horton, CFP, CPA, founder of Financial Cairn, calls it “one of the best basic personal finance books” for its ability to help anyone outline steps toward building a better budget.

“This book does a great job simplifying cash flow,” Horton says. “Fifty percent of your income goes to your needs, 30 percent to your wants, and 20 percent to savings. It’s as simple as that. My clients who have consistently followed this system for cash flow have more peace in their life and are on track to meet their retirement goals early. If you can stick to it, it works.”

6. The Intelligent Investor

Benjamin Graham

Why it's great: Because it reminds readers of the big risks of investing.

Who should read it: Anyone who wants to speak on the same level as his or her financial adviser; this is a more advanced (and 600-page) read.

This book was originally published in 1949. While plenty of major changes have occurred in the past 70 years, this text remains an enduring tutorial on mitigating the risks of the stock market. Andrew J. Feldman, CFP, president of Illinois-based AJ Feldman Financial, calls this read “a classic.”

“The ideas here are to get rich slowly and to be mindful of losses along with gains,” Feldman says. “The book, along with [financial journalist] Jason Zweig’s commentary, can help readers understand in plain English the building blocks to long-term investing.”

Feldman isn’t the only one who believes this book can add to your financial credentials. Warren Buffett calls it “by far the best book on investing ever written.”

7. Bunny Money

Rosemary Wells

Why it's great: Because Personal Finance 101 isn’t part of most elementary school

curriculums.

Who should read it: Your kids.

The best personal finance books don't all involve investing titans and PhD-level economic theory. Instead, they can use fictional characters and simple arithmetic.

Danna Jacobs, CFP, ADPA, MBA, founding partner of New Jersey-based Legacy Care Wealth, says that Wells' "Bunny Money" series "does a wonderful job of making money accessible to children without overwhelming them with math."

"For the younger ones, they enjoy following along the stories of [main characters] Max and Ruby's mini-adventures, and the older children can track the money in the wallet on the bottom of the page and realize the impact of saving and spending as they work through the stories," Jacobs says. "Experts believe that children establish money habits by age seven, so they are never too young to start learning basic money principles and habits that you want them to have in their future."

Looking for more books that can make a difference with your money? Check out how ["Your Money or Your Life"](#) changed the way that one of the members of the Bankrate team approaches spending and saving.

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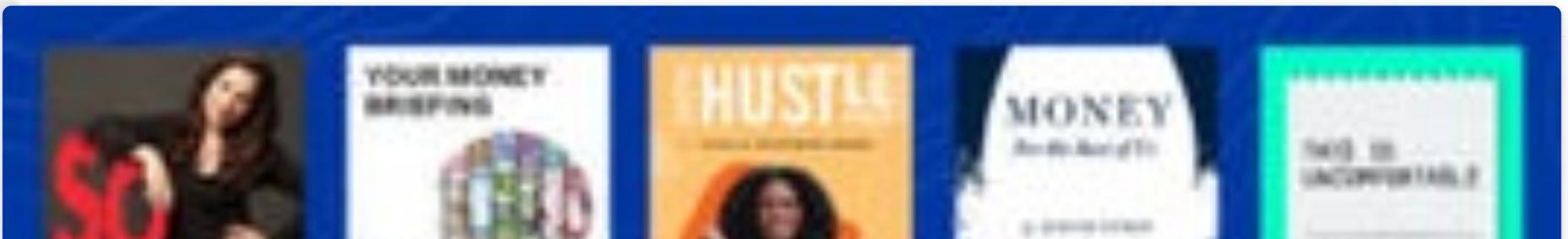




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