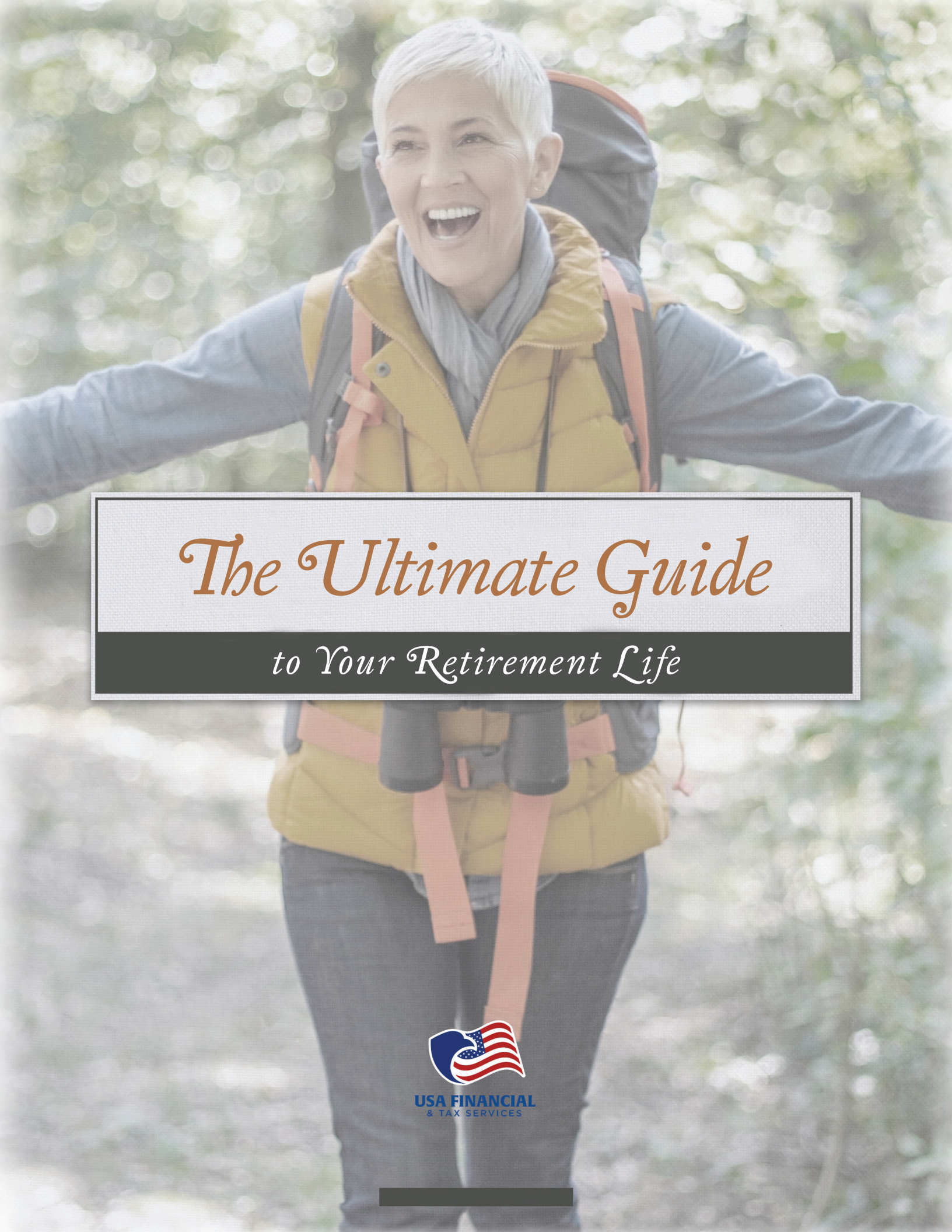


The Ultimate Guide

to Your Retirement Life

USA FINANCIAL
& TAX SERVICES

Understand Life in Retirement

Retirement can come with many assumptions about what your life will look like. Some people feel overworked and more than ready to just relax and do nothing in retirement. Others worry about the prospect of losing the purpose and challenge that working brought them. However, neither of these visions of retirement are comprehensive or accurate for what your best life in retirement looks like

In reality, your retirement life is the culmination of a journey to understanding what fulfills you—a concerted effort to plan a lifestyle and adjust that lifestyle as you live it. To do that, you need to take the important time to look inward. Worrying about your financial plan and trying to do retirement yourself not only takes valuable time away from your golden years but leaves you vulnerable to making costly mistakes that could derail your dream retirement.

This Ultimate Guide aims to provide you with the tools you need to construct your lifestyle in retirement in a way that makes sense for you, your family, and your finances, by covering the following topics:

- *How to Turn Your Hobbies into Passions*
- *Visualizing How to Spend Your Dream Retirement*
- *How Your Life Has a New Beginning in Retirement*
- *What it Means to Appreciate the Little Things*
- *Constructing Your Life on Solid Ground*

Ultimately, a fulfilling retirement life doesn't just come when you leave your job and claim Social Security. Retirement should be a time when you feel financially secure and can enjoy the lifestyle you've worked hard to save up for, but that life needs a plan and a structure, the same way your working life did. Developing an enriching lifestyle takes a kind of work you might not be familiar with, so let's dive into what that work entails.

1 How to Turn Your Hobbies into Passions

Retirement is a time to reflect on what matters to you and pursue interests that may have taken a backseat during your working years. Hobbies can be a great way to keep busy and stay engaged, but during your working years, your hobbies may have been supplements to your life—filled a few holes to round it out. Now that your main activity is gone, can you expect your hobbies to replace your working life without restructuring them? Probably not.

The key here is to turn those hobbies into passions. In this article, we'll explore how to evaluate your hobbies, develop a lifestyle plan, and become an expert in your passions.

Part One EVALUATING YOUR HOBBIES

Not all hobbies are created equal when it comes to turning them into passions. To evaluate your hobbies, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this hobby challenge me?
- Do I feel a sense of reward when I engage in this hobby?
- Can I see myself becoming an expert in this hobby?

If you answered yes to all three questions, then you may have found a potential passion project. However, if you answered no to any of them, it may be time to explore new hobbies.

Part Two DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE PLAN

Once you've identified potential passion projects, it's important to develop a lifestyle plan that puts you to work on those hobbies. This could mean setting aside dedicated time each day or week, joining a club or group to connect with like-minded individuals, or investing in equipment or resources to help you improve. It's important to set achievable goals and stay flexible as you navigate your new passion projects.

Part Three BECOMING AN EXPERT AT YOUR PASSIONS

Becoming an expert in your passions takes time, dedication, and a willingness to learn. Seek out learning opportunities, whether it's through online courses, workshops, or mentorship programs. Don't be afraid to push yourself out of your comfort zone and try new things. As you become more knowledgeable and skilled in your passion projects, you may discover new opportunities to share your expertise with others.

Lastly, it's time to envision the output of those passions. If you answered no to all 3 questions or struggled to rediscover hobbies and passions you once had, envisioning your retirement life can help inspire you.

2 Visualizing How to Spend Your Dream Retirement

While some people already have a handful of hobbies they're ready to jump into, it's not always easy to envision how your hobbies can grow to become your passions. Without understanding that your lifestyle needs a tangible vision, you may struggle to adjust smoothly to an enriching life. So, if you want some inspiration on the expansive possibilities of what your retirement lifestyle could entail, start here:

Spend Time with Friends and Family

Although you might not consider it a passion or hobby, it's so important to remember to reach out to your loved ones and make time to support and spend time with them. Retirement presents a great opportunity to strengthen bonds and reconnect with friends and family. In many ways, doing so can lay the foundation for your retirement lifestyle plan—most activities can be made more fun by doing them with people you enjoy spending time with.

Volunteer

In retirement, there are so many ways you can spend your time giving back and making a difference in the world—big or small. You may find a community organization you care about that could use your time and skills to drive impact, whether it be a local political organization, community non-profit, or government organization. Volunteers are needed in nearly every field and institution, so put thought into where and how you'd like to spend your time and reach out to see if those places could use your helping hands.

Travel

One of the first things you may want to do when you retire is travel. Whether it's out of the country or in a nearby city or town, traveling is a great way to kick off your retirement with fun and exploration. However, it's important to have a plan for when you get there – will you be going to museums? Walking in parks? Seeing a play? Attending a sporting event? Without a solid plan, you could miss out on an authentic local experience.

Rediscover Sports

For many, sports have been a foundational part of our upbringings that carry over into our working lives and hobbies. Retirement poses an incredible opportunity to jump back into the sports that shaped you in your early years or pick up a new sport you always wanted to try. Sports can provide the physical activity you need to stay healthy, a sense of challenge and reward, and a community that can enrich your social life. Engaging in sports in some way is an excellent place to start your exploration of passions. Many retirees enjoy tennis, golf, skiing, and the new sport of pickle ball to name a few.

Enjoy Nature

There are so many ways to enjoy nature, whether it's simply going on a walk, taking a hiking expedition with a group, maintaining a garden, biking, or reading in a hammock; developing a connection with nature can be one of the most grounding experiences in life. Whether you're a nature or city person, there's always value to getting some fresh air and challenging yourself with outdoor activities.

Become an Artist

Art is one of the most enriching, intrinsically human activities we can do. Even if art never really moved you when you went to visit museums or the last time you touched a paintbrush was in high school, there are many ways in which making art can be an enriching dedication. Creating art takes a plan, a foundation, a process of trial and error, and a commitment to studying what works and what you like. If you follow that process, you might end up creating something meaningful to you.

And of course, if you see yourself as an artist who never got to truly showcase what you can do, retirement is your chance to shine!

Make Pottery

Pottery-making is an artistic activity with a therapeutic, structured quality to it. With patience and attention to detail, you can create pottery you can use or decorate your spaces with. Also, pottery- making classes aren't few and far between. You may live in an area with a pottery-making class near you where you can make friends while learning this awesome skill.

If pottery sounds fun to you but you want something more unique, see if there are glass-blowing classes near you. You can make gorgeous vases, pots, sculptures, and more with quality glasswork… and an added benefit: it's quite a workout too!

Play a Musical Instrument

In our youth, we often got put in piano, violin, or cello classes as an extracurricular activity. It stuck better with some more than others, but regardless of how far you took your musicality, retirement is a wonderful time to rediscover your musical side in a more mature context. There are online resources to teach yourself and teachers available for personal lessons.

If you're more advanced, now is your chance to join a chamber group or audition for a local orchestra if available. You could even learn more advanced music theory and compose a piece!

Do Woodworking

If you've always been a hands-on person who felt comfortable crafting and constructing things with your hands, woodworking may be just the passion for you. You can start with a simple box to store items, you can construct a desk or dresser, you can create a game setup such as a cornhole set, or you can even go big with a creative wood sculpture. All you need is the right toolset and the time and dedication to take woodworking classes or learn via online sources.

Write: Penny for Your Thoughts?

Writing is one of the most universal and innately valuable skills you can have, especially when it comes to engaging in rewarding activities in retirement. The reason for this is that you can write about anything! You can create prose or analyses on anything that comes to mind, whether it's a funny-looking blade of grass you stared at for a few seconds or your comprehensive study on geopolitics… or both in the same piece! You can even write fiction stories or screenplays for fun! You can write reviews on travel experiences, food, movies, TV shows and more. With a pad and pen or keyboard, the world is your oyster.

Combine Your Hobbies

If you go on a hike, bring a journal and write what you see. Set an objective: "I'm going to catalog 5 plants in my field notebook". If you're more artistic, bring your brush and easel and paint the landscape. You could even simply bring your camera and take photos.

If you're an athlete, other than journaling about your recreational sports league, attend sporting events and write what you analyzed and make predictions. Take photos of the events in action, maybe you'll get a beautiful action still if you learn how to properly use your camera!

If you enjoy theater, write reviews on the ones you attend. Sketch the costumes you saw. Maybe even write your own play!

If you get good at pottery, try selling it. Try entering it into an art show. You never know what opportunities could lie ahead of you!

We've only scratched the surface of the activities and passions you could have. You may be an excellent cook who has a bright future if allowed to flourish! You might be a talented photographer waiting to find your stage… You might even be a bold graffiti artist in the making, you never know until you try!

3 *Your Life Has a New Beginning in Retirement*

For some people, retirement isn't just the end of your working life, it's an opportunity to start a new life path. There are plenty of people who develop a whole new resume of accomplishments in their later years.

Colonel Sanders

Before achieving worldwide recognition for his finger-licking good chicken, Harland Sanders tried his hand at multiple professions, including farming, firefighting, selling insurance, and conducting streetcars all before the age of 50. In his 40s, he started running a service station in Kentucky and began offering his famous fried chicken to customers. By 1935, his recipe became so popular that he was awarded the official Kentucky colonel title by Governor Ruby Laffoon. At the age of 62, Sanders franchised his business, and when he sold his interest in KFC in his 70s, he earned a staggering $2 million.

Laura Ingails Wilder

Laura Ingalls Wilder, the author of *The Little House on the Prairie*, initially started her professional journey as a teacher at the young age of 16, even though she did not find it particularly interesting. Along with her husband Almanzo, she became skilled at farming and started writing articles for local farm journals in her spare time. She also worked at the Farm Loan Association, where she helped the local farmers in securing loans. However, the Wilders faced financial difficulties during the Great Depression, which led her to write novels. The Little House books were first published in 1932 when Ingalls was 65, and they have been a source of delight for both children and adults ever since.

Julia Child

Before becoming a renowned French chef, Julia had a fascinating life that started with her career at the Office of Strategic Services, which later became the CIA. During her time there, she played a key role in developing shark repellant and was eventually appointed as the Chief of the OSS Registry, where she had top security clearances. After marrying Paul Child, Julia took cooking classes at Le Cordon Bleu but was initially deemed unqualified for the haute cuisine course. However, she persevered and eventually succeeded, leading to the publication of her famous cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Volume One, in 1961 at the age of 49. A TV show based on the cookbook called *The French Chef* was released two years later and introduced Julia's charismatic personality to the world.

Grandma Moses

Famous folk artist Grandma Moses, whose real name was Anna Mary Moses, started painting when she was 77 years old to keep herself occupied. Initially, she sold her original paintings for just $3 to $5, but the prices of her works increased exponentially over the years. When she passed away at the age of 101 in 1962, prices for her paintings had reached $10,000. One of her paintings, *Sugaring Off*, was sold for a grand total of $1.36 million at a Christie's auction in 2006.

Source: https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/11-wildly-successful-people-who-switched-careers- after-age-50

No matter what your retirement story will be, there's always some level of investment involved in taking on new challenges. Some people would rather slow down in retirement, but others like to find new activities, challenges, and pursuits to invest in. That's why it's crucial to give yourself the time you need to live life without worrying about whether you're making the right financial decisions. The right financial professional in your corner can provide you with the time and financial security you need to achieve your full potential.

4 What it Means to Appreciate the Little Things

If you don't want to jump headfirst into a whole new career after retiring, taking the time to appreciate the little things can go a long way.

Imagine if all you did was go on a walk and experience a normal summer day. There's so much to do with that simple activity!

> *You could simply walk, you could journal it, you could find somewhere to read, you could bring a friend or family member with you to chat or throw a frisbee, you could settle in a spot and do yoga... you could even find two trees to tie a line around and try your hand at slacklining!*

These are only a few ways you could turn a simple walk into a memorable day, it just takes a plan to schedule these activities.

Don't Be Afraid to Relax and Decompress

As important as it is to stay busy, when you retire, one of the first things you'll likely want to do is relax. That could mean finding good movies and books to enjoy, helping you decompress and transition into your new life. If you don't know where to start with movies and books, here are a few to consider:

Movies

Paris, Texas (1984)

Paris, Texas is a deeply moving story about the explosivity of familial love, the impact we have on each other, and what we do to and for the people we cherish most. This nearly 2-hour and 30-minute movie — written by the famed writer for the stage and screen, Sam Shepard — takes us on a journey through Texas, motivated by the mystery of a family's traumatic dispersion.

If you're looking for a captivating movie that takes you up and down the emotional hill, hitting all the spots of your heart touched by your own family experience, this movie should top your watchlist.

Source: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087884/

In Bruges (2008)

One of 2023 Oscar nominee Martin Macdonough's most famous films, *In Bruges* (2008), stars Colin Farrell as Ray and Brendon Gleeson as Ken, both lovable hitmen trying to lay low in Bruges after a botched job. While older, wiser Ken is enamored with the charm of the Medieval city, Ray, the younger, greener one, can't stand it. Bruges is an enchanting backdrop for a fast-paced comedy-drama after Ken receives a difficult assignment.

If you're looking for a movie that can make you laugh and cry with its thematically tight plot and witty dialogue, *In Bruges* is your next flick.

Source: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0780536/

Tar (2022)

One of the most captivating feature film releases of 2022, *Tar* is a spectacle of artistry and eerie mystery, keeping you on edge as its themes pose questions of fame, talent, political correctness, and what it means to be a professional artist. The inference of a previous tragic social severance and professional sabotage seeps into both Lydia's compositions and the narrative itself as she attempts to bury what haunts her on her path through stardom as a renowned orchestral composer.

If you're looking for an excellently crafted narrative woven into a cinematic work of art leaving you questioning its meaning and the moral code of our contemporary world, *Tar* should surely top your film queue.

Source: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14444726/

Books

Midnight's Children, by Salman Rushdie

Many are familiar with the author Salman Rushdie due to his history as an Indian fugitive living in refuge in the US because of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa—a religious command to kill him on sight—for his misinterpretation of Rushdie's book, *Satanic Verses*. However, *Midnight's Children*, his more critically acclaimed novel, "is a historical chronicle of modern India, centering on the inextricably linked fates of two children who were born within the first hour of independence from Great Britain."

If you enjoy thematically rich, yet magically whimsical prose, *Midnight's Children* should be next on your reading list!

Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Midnights-Children

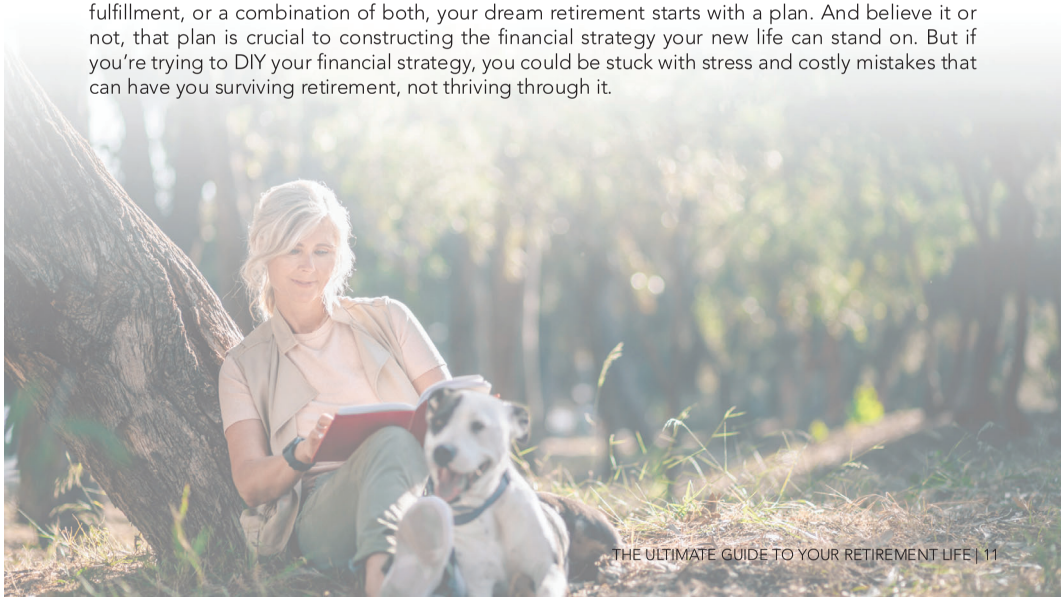
After Dark, by Haruki Murakami

Reading this short, creatively written novel almost feels like dreaming itself. Taking place during the sleeping hours in Tokyo, we follow Mari Asai in her seemingly directionless adventure of chance encounters. Through a 24/7 diner, a shady motel, and many other seedy places, she discovers her aimlessness takes root in her relationship with her long-asleep sister and their shared memories.

If you're looking for a simply written story with vivid imagery and creative narrative devices, *After Dark* is the book for you!

Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/After-Dark-Murakami-novel

Whether you're excited to start a new endeavor in retirement, look inward to achieve personal fulfillment, or a combination of both, your dream retirement starts with a plan. And believe it or not, that plan is crucial to constructing the financial strategy your new life can stand on. But if you're trying to DIY your financial strategy, you could be stuck with stress and costly mistakes that can have you surviving retirement, not thriving through it.



5 Constructing Your Lifestyle on Solid Ground

The key to a flourishing retirement comes down to your ability to explore your passions and hobbies. Do you think you can explore your passions to their full extent if you constantly have to worry about your financial plan? Will you be able to invest both the time and the money into the incredible new life you have ahead of you if you don't have a solid financial plan tailored not only to changing financial conditions but to your unique needs?

At USA Financial and Tax Services, LLC we understand what retirement is truly about. It's about living your life to its fullest. We have experience ushering people just like you into their new lives with success, so they have the solid financial footing to achieve the retirement of their dreams.

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