

KEEN ON RETIREMENT



20 Minutes to Live

Welcome to Keen on Retirement
With Bill Keen and Steve Sanduski

Steve Sanduski: Hey everybody, welcome back to another episode of Keen On Retirement. I am your co-host Steve Sanduski, and I'm here as always with Bill Keen. Bill, we have a very interesting show here today. A very serious one in some respects as well.

Bill Keen: We do Steve. You know we are a financial program here. But we know that it's way more than the numbers when it comes to our thinking and our planning and going forward. We had a very unique incident in the Keen family and quite a few other families on January 13th. I thought it would be interesting to get some perspective from one of our prior podcast guests. It just so happens to be my son Devin. All the daughters are wondering why they haven't been on the podcast yet Steve, although actually they've ducked their opportunities. You know I try to bring family into this as much as possible, because it's real life. The daughters have ducked their opportunity, so now my son is having his second appearance on the program. Devin welcome to our podcast today, live from Rolla, Missouri.

Devin Keen: Hi there.

Steve Sanduski: Well Devin, we are excited to have you here, but it's under rather unusual circumstances. You happened to be in Hawaii on Saturday, January 13th. On a day that really reverberated not only around the United States, but also around the world. A very, very serious situation happened that day. Why don't you set the stage for us on what happened to you in Hawaii that day.

Devin Keen: Yeah, it was quite the crazy day. So it was about 8:00 a.m. when we got the alert. I had woken up at about 6:00. I had made a cup of coffee, watched the sun rise, it was a beautiful, peaceful morning. I had gone up to shower and after a while my buddy that I was in Hawaii with came slamming on the door, screaming to me to get out of the shower right away. He had just gotten the notification on his phone that there was a ballistic missile inbound to Hawaii,

that we need to seek cover and that it's not a drill. For me the feeling in my stomach is one I cannot really replicate with words. It's just a turning inside out in that moment.

Steve Sanduski: What was the first thing that you did when you heard him? Did you think he was pulling a prank on you, or did you know that he was totally serious?

Devin Keen: I could tell he was totally serious and to check, and make sure it wasn't a fault from somewhere. I scrambled out into my room, I checked my phone. I had the same message, then I checked online. I googled, got on Twitter, social media to see if there was any news on it and there was nothing online. Which to me made it a little more real, because typically in these events ... if they're false you look online and you'll see they've been debunked. That it just happened and it wasn't in the news yet. It made it more real for me.

Steve Sanduski: So then what did you do? So now you're thinking, okay this is real, we've got an intercontinental ballistic missile on its way to Hawaii. Then what did you do?

Devin Keen: Regardless of the outcome there was never any true danger realistically. Regardless of that for those twenty-five to thirty minutes before we knew, I fully believed that I was about to die. I don't remember exactly what I was doing, my friend told me I was stoic, I didn't say a word the entire time, but I went outside and his family came over and they suggested we get in a storm drain. So we did, all of us piled in and there were about ten of us. Ten, fifteen of us down there for the twenty-five minutes. It was interesting actually, there's a video of us getting down in there and it circulated on Twitter.

Steve Sanduski: So now you're in the sewer system, were people quiet? Were people crying? Were people praying? What was going on in the sewer there?

Devin Keen: It was quiet. No one was really saying much, I personally was saying my prayers, I wasn't really sure what was about to happen. I was just hoping for the best and when in twenty-five minutes later when we found out it was a false alarm it was the biggest sigh of relief I've had in my life.

Steve Sanduski: Were people calling their family on their phones when you guys were in the sewer for those twenty-five, thirty minutes?

Devin Keen: There wasn't any service inside the sewer, which I guess is a good thing, because that proves that it would have helped at least somewhat against radiation. Beforehand, before we got in everyone was on the phone calling their loved ones.

Steve Sanduski: I think you were probably in that same situation, so did you call mom and dad? Or who were you reaching out to?

Devin Keen: I did, it was afterwards, after I, right after we got out of the sewer I made all my phone calls, because we were so rushed getting in, for me. Then I left a voicemail for my dad and mom, just to let them know I was okay.

Bill Keen: Steve, I was walking through a grocery store with my mother, Devin's grandma taking her shopping with daughter Hailey, and I looked down and I saw a missed call from Devin and literally I could see now when I looked back and put it together I can see that it was two minutes after the all clear alert came out. He had left me about a 50 second message that was pretty calm sounding, but very matter of fact and that's the first I heard of it. I'll tell you what we should do, we should probably put Devin's voicemail message, I've got his permission earlier to put it out on the show notes page Steve, what would you think? Devin you're still good with that aren't you buddy?

Devin Keen: Yeah, absolutely.

Bill Keen: Okay, well I certainly appreciated that phone call and the gravity of what you'd gone through.

Steve Sanduski: I first heard about it Bill from you, so I was in New York. We were moving our daughter out there for the spring semester and I was looking at my phone and I had this text from you about this nuclear attack on Hawaii. I'm like, oh my gosh what is going on here? Then you indicated that it turned out to be a false alarm, so then I quickly went online and saw it all over the news online what was happening. I first heard of it from you as well.

Bill Keen: Yeah.

Steve Sanduski: Pretty wild situation. Now Devin it's been a few days, you've had some time to think about it, to reflect. You literally probably had your life flash before your eyes.

Devin Keen: Oh yeah.

Steve Sanduski: You've had a situation where ... that not a lot of people necessarily have what you have. Meaning you literally thought you were going to die. You literally thought you just had a few minutes of life left and then you get a walk out of it. No harm, no foul. So it's almost as if you get a do over here, so I got to believe that there's some thinking, there might be some insights, maybe some new ways that you're going to live life as a result of having this experience. So what's it meant to you?

Devin Keen: It absolutely is, I was telling my dad it kind of felt like a new lease on life, even though there was never anything that was going to happen. The mentality stays the same, the way I kind of thought of it is ... you know people always stir around the question if you had a day to live, or an hour to live, what would you do? Or would you be happy with how you've lived your life? It's always an

interesting question, but it's a lot more different like you said, when you actually believe ... when I looked down at my phone and I truly believed I had twenty minutes to live. Was I happy with how I lived my life? How everything I had done? For me truthfully the answer is no. That's one of the reasons I was so, I was really distraught, maybe my faith, or just my relationships with others, there were just so many things that felt incomplete.

Being able to then walk out of there, like you said no harm, no foul is almost a gift, a very positive take away. Being able to have an experience like that and receive that at any moment my life could end, whether it be a nuclear missile attack, or whether it be me getting hit by a car in the next hour. It could happen, it could happen to anyone. Having that sort of realization I think is very positive. It can add a lot to the way that I or anyone else lives their everyday life. It's also interesting to think about because we live in America where this sort of thing never happens. This is a huge deal for us and for me, but there are parts of the world where people are going through this every single day. Where they don't know whether they're going to live or die, every day and they have to make the most of it. Just being able to ... on the perspective like that I think has just made a very big difference for me and one that I hope that I'm able to hold onto for as long as I'm around.

Steve Sanduski:

Well there's a lot of great insights that you just shared there, Devin. A couple that I want to go a little deeper with here is this last thing that you were talking about is how this is not a real normal experience here in the United States. There are other people around the world in war torn countries who live with this kind of fear every day. I think the experience that you've just gone through probably enables you to feel more empathy for how other people around the world are living in the kind of conditions that they're living in. Most Americans don't really have an opportunity to necessarily see or feel. Do you feel like you maybe have more empathy now for the real benefits that you have, in the life that you have? The country that you get to live in? The fact that you're getting an engineering degree from a great school, and those opportunities. How do you think of it in those terms?

Devin Keen:

Yeah, Steve. It gives a whole other perspective on the matter. Life has a goal, especially how coming back from this, everyone made such a big deal about it and you know it made me feel special in some sort of way. Whereas in reality, I'm not really. I'm not ... I guess for a United States citizen you know I went through an experience, but for a lot of the world it's just everyday life. That thought will absolutely drive me to take every advantage that I have being able to live in a country like we do.

Steve Sanduski:

Then how are you changed going forward? Is it simply a new outlook on life? A new appreciation, more gratefulness for what you have? Or have you actually made physical changes in how you go about your daily life and the maybe reaching out to the people close to you and really trying to nurture those

relationships that maybe you hadn't in the past? Or how are you actually changing your life as a result of this experience?

Devin Keen: I think mostly what I've been thinking about a lot is whenever I make a choice, or decision, or do anything. I just think if I were to die in twenty minutes is it something I would still want to do? I think that alone can have a lot of power in driving near anyone to consistently work on bettering themselves. The more ... just doing the right thing and being of service to others.

Steve Sanduski: I had a podcast conversation with an old business colleague of mine. My first job coming out of college was with Caterpillar Tractor Company. One of my colleagues at the company who had joined the firm a few years before me was clearly on the fast track. Long story short he had a fabulous career at the company and was in line to become the next CEO and then a couple of years ago was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease and so I reached out to him, he's in his late fifties and I reached out to him and invited him to come on my podcast. So we spent an hour, most of it was talking about business, lessons learned, and his great career. Then we spent the last fifteen minutes talking about his disease and what that really had taught him and reinforced in him about life. The comment that you just made about how you will ask yourself, if I only had twenty minutes to live is this what I would want to be spending my time doing. He had a very similar response and that he said, that this disease I have a ticking time bomb essentially inside of me, from the standpoint that he might only have a few years left to live and not a long time with a decent quality of life.

He said he is very, very cognizant of his time and how he spends his time. They moved from Illinois out to the east coast to be near family. He was very cognizant of how he's spending his time in the remaining time that he has, short of there becoming a cure for Lou Gehrig's disease. I think that's just a very important insight that you shared there and I think for all of you listening, we don't have to go through an experience that Devin went through, or my friend went through. I'm sure many of the folks listening to this have people they know that have ... that are in situations that are pretty difficult as well. We can learn from those and we can keep things in perspective. We can really value and treasure each moment that we have, because like in your case Devin you just never know when your time is up.

Devin Keen: Absolutely, you do not.

Bill Keen: You know Devin, I appreciate you and your ... at nineteen years old you having this kind of perspective around this. You know Steve, if this had been anyone of my friends or anyone of my family, or anyone of our clients, or friends of the firm, or anyone that would have gone through this I probably would have asked them to have come on the podcast and just share the experience with us. To have it have been my son Devin here, who I think everybody knows I'm pretty fond of and proud of. To have him be that guy that went through that and then

to hear the humility in his words actually, and his tone. Acknowledging the people around the world that go through this every day, and they're in a lot of cases in these war torn countries, it's not just fear, it's real. There's really bombs dropping.

People go through heck all the time, there's our own military that go through things, our people that are out defending our country. There's people that get diagnosed with cancer and have to deal with that and that are told thirty days later that it was a false diagnosis. Then they have this experience in life where they thought, oh my goodness I thought for thirty days I was not in good shape. How about this, even somebody that gets diagnosed with cancer, that does have cancer? Then they pass away. I mean so, Devin did your humility around what you went through and how acknowledging other people go through very difficult things as well, but what you can take away from it. To me that's powerful ... and you mentioned being of service, this has inspired you to be thoughtful about each action, to be of service to others. Well how could you look back this quickly already and say what are the benefits of this? Devin, Steve have you seen anything come out yet on the news wire, about anyone having had a heart attack as a result of the fear, or ... there's been nothing, no ramifications that I know of. Have you guys heard anything yet, with what happened on this false alarm? Anything like permanently negative that happened from it?

Devin Keen: I haven't heard anything.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah, I haven't either, no.

Bill Keen: So maybe we look back, or we look at it now and we say, alright one we found out that I think Hawaii was pretty ill prepared. A lot of the citizens weren't prepared, so maybe that helps get people to get on the ball. Two, people are looking at their lives like Devin. Hopefully others can take lessons away from this. We all ... I'll tell you there's a lot of ways we can go with this, but the reality that if you think about that text that was prepared, I guess there was a reason that, that text was prepared and that there's a button that you can push to send that message. I think that alerts us all to the very real situations that we're in geopolitically around the world. I think there's a lot of angles we can come to from this. I always like to say, let's look at the situation and attempt to find something positive in everything. In most cases we can. Hey Steve, you care if I ask Devin a couple of questions? I'll tell you I let you guys just talk there for a while, because there's sometimes Mr. Keen can just ... needs to be quiet. There was some good interaction there and I'm all good with that.

Devin, I know you and your friend, you guys are engineering students. You know the deal, you understand. I think you told me that you knew how fast ballistic missiles travel, you knew about how far North Korea was, there was a lot of things in your mind. Sometimes being smart might not always behoove you, you know? Because you were contemplating the reality of what was happening.

Devin Keen: My mind was racing. A ballistic missile travels twelve to fifteen thousand miles per hour. Something insane like that. From North Korea, which is where we assumed it would have been ... to have twenty minutes max.

We all figured that the storm drain would be the safest place. There'd be at least a little bit of concrete in the way of us and all the radioactive fallout that would have been there. The situation in Hawaii, or at least in the neighborhood that we were in was not very chaotic in all honesty. The neighborhood was pretty quiet, no one was too frantic and it was ... I'm still trying to figure it out myself if it was ... it was probably a combination of people not understanding the reality of what would have happened and also people very well understanding the reality and just accepting it. So I think it was somewhere in the middle around there. Like you said, being aware of the potential, imminent death and lack of hope definitely didn't increase my positive outlook on the situation while I was there.

Bill Keen: Steve maybe on Devin's portion here we can end on a couple of fun notes. Devin you told me that there was just very shortly thereafter there was a couple things that you saw people doing and saying.

Devin Keen: Oh yes. It was ... I feel like it's a way of coping, about forty-five minutes after it happened, the entire place was normal, everything was back to normal. Like nothing had happened, everyone was just going back to their jobs as usual. Yeah there was some posts I saw online, there was a picture of Kim Jong Un with a caption that said, launch? I said lunch.

Steve Sanduski: Oh jeez.

Devin Keen: Other silly things like that. People find a way to make fun of anything. That's ... it's a good thing, it can be a good thing.

Bill Keen: Didn't you tell me they were playing rocket man or something?

Devin Keen: Oh yeah, the old rocket man song, everyone had glasses, was singing and dancing to it.

Bill Keen: So here's a serious question Devin and it's so serious that I'm not going to ask you to answer it.

Devin Keen: Okay.

Bill Keen: The question is, who did you make your first phone call to? Mom or dad? Steve, I just ... I don't need to know the answer, but I hope it was his mom, cause I'm okay ... I'm one hundred percent okay with that. Just as long as I was in there somewhere toward the top.

Steve Sanduski: I'm not going to have you answer that.

Bill Keen: That's alright.

Devin Keen: In the hope that my mom ever listens to this podcast and she worries, it was my mom.

Steve Sanduski: Alright, I know we've got some takeaways from this as well, in terms of the situation that Devin just went through and just the importance of making sure that we've got our financial situation in order, in case something happens. Whether it's a real ... an attack that Devin went through that turned out not to be a real one, or we get an illness, or die unexpectedly there are some financial ramifications to all this as well. I think this is a good time just to really, some quick reminders of things that we want to make sure we got in order.

Bill Keen: We do and some of this might just sound common sense, but yet the question is what happens if you don't wake up the next day? Are your affairs in order? Really it's all about your loved ones, it's who's still left behind ... that they're dealing with. So it starts out with having an estate plan in place, we always say you have an estate plan whether you have a will or a trust, or not. You'll either have the state's estate plan, or you'll have your own estate plan.

We've done podcasts and blogs in the past on wills and trust, and some of those general topics. Really thinking through and making sure things are titled appropriately and that there are directives that say who will handle what and what goes where. Not only for the big items, but even some of these smaller items, like heirlooms and things like that. There's also something that's become popular, and I've started to engage in this as well, and that's not just passing along your hard assets and your money. I know that's all important, and we want to avoid the heirs fighting and gosh forbid that were to occur. There's so much value that we all have in our life's learnings. In the things that we have learned over the course of a lifetime. Not only that, but on the experiences that we've had, and the values that we have. So this is way different than leaving behind a car, a house, or an IRA to somebody.

It's the things, I would say more valuable, than the hard assets, is what are our values, what are our experiences, what are our learnings. With the advent of these iPhones and other phones that can do video recordings you can video tape, literally can video tape yourself getting introspective and leaving that valuable information to the people that you love in a video format. I know that sounds weird maybe and different, but it's a talk about passing value down to the next generation. One of the reasons that clients work with our firm, there's many reasons. They one, want to delegate the authority, they don't want to take the time, they don't want to make a negative emotional decision. On their investments, they can compromise themselves and their families, they know they're prone to making emotional decisions, cause we're all wired back to front when it comes to investing in these markets and the economy.

A big reason people deal with us is because they know that at some point it's highly likely that it will be one of the two spouses sitting there with us, because one has passed away. Having the right advisors in place, that they can trust, and they will not be taken advantage of is amazingly powerful. These are things that you can do up front to make sure that the affairs are in order Steve. We can probably do many different podcasts on the different pieces of those things, but I think as Devin was kind enough to be on the podcast with us, it's very timely. I think it all just fits together really well, don't you sir?

Steve Sanduski: I do and just a couple more things I would add to that list, maybe not necessarily on the financial side, but on the personal side. That is there are so many people out there who are estranged from one of their family members, maybe there was an argument years ago that somehow never got resolved and close family members don't speak to each other and so this is I think another example of how we don't want to go to our grave like that. If you do have someone out there that you are not on speaking terms with and you should be on speaking terms then think long and hard about maybe reaching out and trying to resolve that situation so both of you don't go to your grave not speaking to each other. Then also I think maybe we touched on this a little bit earlier.

The importance of really being grateful for being, for each day that we have, and appreciative for every day. Just the little things in life that we just take so for granted. You know as kids, everything is so new, exciting and fun, and interesting to us. Yet as we get older we lose some of that sense of joyfulness and freeness. I think a situation Devin that you went through is a situation that tends to remind us of the fragility of life and also of the importance of just really appreciating everything. Recognizing the little things in life that we so often take for granted.

Bill Keen: Thank you Steve for tying in those personal relationships. I know we are a financial program here, but from time to time we break off when the situations arise and we bring it back to life issues, and real life situations. I would just ask our listeners, I thank you for your attention and I thank you for allowing us to deviate a little bit today from just the typical financial topics. Last episode we dug into the tax law, so this was kind of a one hundred and eighty degree pivot from some of the detail we talked about last episode. Thank you for letting us pivot here, and cover a topic that we believed was very timely and very impactful.

Steve Sanduski: Okay, well thanks guys. Bill, thank you. Devin, thank you and for sharing an important message today. Alright, we'll talk to you all soon.

Devin Keen: Thank you.

Bill Keen: Devin, thanks for joining us buddy.

Keen Wealth Advisors is a Registered Investment Adviser. Nothing within this commentary constitutes investment advice, performance data or any recommendation that any particular security, portfolio of securities, transaction or investment strategy is suitable for any specific person. Any mention of a particular security and related performance data is not a recommendation to buy or sell that security. Keen Wealth Advisors manages its clients' accounts using a variety of investment techniques and strategies, which are not necessarily discussed here. Investments in securities involve the risk of loss. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.