

KEEN ON RETIREMENT



Comprehensive Financial Planning Can Help You Live Your Values in 2021

Welcome to Keen on Retirement
With Bill Keen and Steve Sanduski

Steve Sanduski: Hello everybody and welcome back to Keen on Retirement. I'm your cohost, Steve Sanduskii, and with me today as always is Bill Keen and Matt Wilson. Hey guys, happy new year.

Bill Keen: Well, happy new year to you, Steve. I didn't think it would ever come this year.

Steve Sanduski: I know, yeah. 2020. It's a cliché at this point, but it was a crazy year. Here we are. We're into the new year. We've got 2020 in the rear-view mirror and we're all optimistic and hopeful that 2021 is going to be a great year for all of us.

Bill Keen: Yes, we are. We do know when we look back at, call it maybe investment returns and we look year to year, December 31st to the next December 31st and we mark time by the calendar years. Really, I don't know that there's relevance to those specific timeframes, but this time I'm going to go with, there is relevance to it and that 2021 is a new beginning.

Steve Sanduski: Absolutely. Yeah. How about you, Matt? How are you feeling?

Matt Wilson: Yeah, feeling good about it. I always find it interesting to kind of look up what year it is when it comes to the Chinese calendar. This year, 2021, I guess it's not official in the Chinese calendar yet, but it's the year of the ox.

Steve Sanduski: Okay.

Matt Wilson: Which I think there's a good indication of that. I was reading online that ox's are known for their diligence, dependability, strength, and determination.

Steve Sanduski: Okay. Okay.

Matt Wilson: Maybe after 2020, those are some good traits to have in 2021.

Steve Sanduski: Definitely.

Bill Keen: Heck yes.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. I'll go with that for sure.

Matt Wilson: Yeah, Exactly. It didn't say anything worse than that on the article I was reading. That was good information.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. All right. Well, I know we've got a number of things that we're going to be talking about here today, but I thought the first thing that we'd jump into and Matt, this is something that you brought to our attention in that is a survey of our values. I thought there were some interesting information. What'd you find there?

Matt Wilson: Yeah. I found this survey and it was done by Value Graphics and it was a half a million surveys in 152 languages, very thorough. We're talking worldwide and they identified 56 values that influence human behavior, and then they rank them. The top 10 values that we share across cultures and I won't share all 10, but the top three number one is family. Number two is relationships, and number three, any guesses?

Bill Keen: Something having to do with our topic of discussion.

Steve Sanduski: We're kind of cheating.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. Financial security. Okay. I've seen other surveys and other data points that point to, that is a big, stressful part of people's lives, their financial situation. I think this, again, supports that, but also shows this is not unique to the United States. This is something across cultures across the world. Financial security is very important.

Bill Keen: Yes it is. We always talk about that money does not buy happiness. It's kind of an old saying that you hear, but we know that it's very difficult to have some semblance of peace of mind and a lack of anxiety and to live a life, if you're riddled with financial insecurity and you're stressed about your financial life, because we do live in a material world where bills do have to be paid and it requires resources and dollars to pay those bills. If that's not in order, then it definitely detracts from what we might call traditional happiness.

Matt Wilson: That's right. Rounding out the top 10, number nine was employment security, which I believe is tied to the financial side of things. Then number 10, I thought was actually pretty interesting, personal responsibility.

Bill Keen: Yeah. We talk about that a lot too here because financial security and these types of things don't happen on accident.

Matt Wilson: That's right.

Bill Keen: We have to have some part ourselves in being responsible for making decisions that will put ourselves in a better position in the future. We talk a lot about that because there are many things we can do to affect that future and that destiny. Even when we're still on the journey, we can feel some competence. In fact, one of the key phrases of our firm, keen wealth, is that we want to inspire competence today and in the future for the clients that we have the privilege of serving. Even just being on a path, having a plan, provides some of that confidence that gets us to our destination. The journey is able to be enjoyed as well. It's not just the destination out there, somewhere in the future. It's kind of good to talk about these things here as we go into the first of a new year, and we think about what we want this year to look like.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. Especially coming out of 2020, where there was a significant upheaval in the financial markets, in the job market too. A lot of these values that are financial and/or employment related, they were violated in 2020. As we kick off 2021, I think it's important to bring that focus back on, well, let's get these things back on track if they're off track or two, if you haven't even started, there's no time like the present to get started on figuring out where you are and where are you headed when it comes to these things?

Steve Sanduski: Speaking of 2020, yet once again, I want to remind folks that we just lived through a time where many lessons can be learned about the wisdom of traveling difficult paths, dealing in the financial markets, the economy, how things work, how things drew down there in March and April and how for folks who didn't make knee jerk, fearful, emotional reactions with their investments, how they were able to come through that year. There's a lot of wisdom that can be learned. I know a lot of us, we talked about and joked about forgetting 2020, but I really don't want the lessons of 2020 to be missed by all of you listening to us and by myself, take lots of notes and remember some of the things we went through because the next thing that comes, it won't be a pandemic. It'll be something else that creates confusion and turmoil and anxiety, and some volatility in the financial markets. We'll be able to use the wisdom that we just gained in 2020 to get through that more wise, making better decisions for ourselves.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. The first kind of step to getting your financial plan put to place is just getting conscious of where you are. There's studies coming out all the time, data being released around the average retirement savings that individuals have and fidelity just published one in Q4 of 2020, where they looked at the retirement accounts that they have under their stewardship and they broke it out into different cohorts. That some of the interesting findings on the average 401k

balances and what percent of income are people saving because they have access to all of these through their 401k participants.

- Bill Keen: They've broken this down more specifically. We've seen these in the past that just says your average American has X number of dollars in their 401k or savings, but it sounds like they've broken it down even more specifically. This would be interesting.
- Matt Wilson: They have. Yeah. They looked at 10 year increments. Starting for individuals in their 20s all the way up to individuals in their 70s. From age 20 to 29, average 401k balance, 10,500, contribution rates, 7%. Now, right there, I think that's actually pretty good.
- Steve Sanduski: Yeah. Just getting started saving something for sure. We like to see people saving more than 7% we've said in the past, but just anything at that point, gets the ball rolling. It gets that seed planted.
- Bill Keen: Yeah. You start to see your balance build up. Then all of a sudden it's like, "Hey, I paid myself first and I'm actually reaping the benefits of it." The 30-year olds average 401k balance, 38,400, contribution rate, 8%, so continued in the right direction.
- Matt Wilson: They're starting to realize they're getting older or they need to add a little bit more. Yeah. Okay. We were up 1% on average. Okay.
- Bill Keen: Went up a little bit. The 40-year old's, average 401k balance, 93,400, contribution rate, the same as the 30-year olds at 8%. Maybe at that point, there's also children going off to school and some additional expenses. We're not saying savings rates go down on average.
- Matt Wilson: But they definitely didn't increase for the 40-year olds. The 50-year olds, I find this interesting. Average 401k balance, now this is 50 to 59, so there's a 10-year gap here. 160,000 is the average balance and contribution rate 10%.
- Bill Keen: Okay. Really starting to realize they need to get going. Part of this could be the catch-up provisions that are allowed once we hit age 50, which I did have several years ago myself, and maybe that has something to do with it.
- Matt Wilson: I think it does help. Also, as you mentioned, in your 50s, I believe you start to see, "Okay, there's an end date here. Whether it's my choice or not, I need to start really getting focused on saving for retirement." They upped that contribution.
- Bill Keen: Well, an end date. Are you talking about end, end? Are you talking about end of work done? How about you, Steve?
- Matt Wilson: It was probably both.

Steve Sanduski: Well, I'm a little older than you Bill. I think I'm closer to that end date perhaps than you are.

Matt Wilson: Well, we just live one day at a time.

Steve Sanduski: That's exactly right. I'm not anticipating that date. I'm just enjoying each day as they come.

Matt Wilson: Sure. Now the 60-year olds, the average 401k balance is 182,000, and contribution rate 11%. Again, we're seeing an increase in average balance, not that much more over the 50-year olds now. I think maybe there's also some maybe generational differences with that. 50-year-old individuals probably realize they knew retirement is on them. Whereas maybe the 60-year olds and 70-year olds still kind of had some pension and defined benefit plans that they had access to. Then the 70-year olds average 401k balance, 171,000 in contribution rate, 12%.

Bill Keen: Does this indicate that the 70- to 79-year-old group that they interviewed were actually still working?

Matt Wilson: Yes. That's how I interpret it. Now, the data, I don't have access to the specific questions they asked, I just see the information here that's being reported. If the 401k, if the money is still in the 401k and they're contributing to it, you'd have to have some income to be able to contribute to it. I've been interpreted as currently employed.

Bill Keen: Oh, for sure.

Steve Sanduski: This makes me wonder, the numbers that you're talking about here are averages. Do you happen to know, Matt? Is it in the data or the report that you're looking at, what the median balances are so half above, half below, because I'm wondering if by the average, if people that maybe have a very high balance, if that's pulling up the average and maybe the median might be below this, do you have any sense for that?

Matt Wilson: I had a different article that I found, and this was based on a study. Fidelity looked at their actual accounts and came up with the data. This study that I found did break out the differences between the average and the median and the median was significantly lower in every case.

Bill Keen: Okay. Not all of our listeners are engineers or math majors. Explain the difference between average and median just quickly please.

Matt Wilson: Yes. The average can be skewed by large numbers, the outliers. The median just looks at the middle point. How many half are above and half are below? The median is a better sense of what most people have.

Bill Keen: Perfect.

Matt Wilson: The example I like to use of this was back in 2012, when Mitt Romney was running for president.

Bill Keen: I was just thinking of that.

Matt Wilson: He had to disclose that he had an IRA balance. He didn't have to give the official number, but he had to give a range. Between 20 and a hundred million dollars in an IRA. His balance would definitely skew the average, but the median, not as much. It wouldn't necessarily skew it that much. That's how those large numbers can definitely impact these things.

Bill Keen: The theme here is that even some of the 60 to 69 year olds that have the average of 182, the first thing I'm thinking is, "Well, it's better than what we've heard in the past where the American has \$42,000 or actually the average American can't even really afford to pay the bills monthly. You hear these different studies, but, okay. These are numbers that are at least six figure numbers, but the reality is if you're out to retirement and we commonly tell folks, they can spend the very back of the napkin, a lot more detail goes into how much money you can spend based on your situation, but call it four to 5% of your total every year.

If you had \$200,000 in an account, and you took out 5% of that total a year, that would be \$10,000 a year to spend off your 200,000. Ideally in that scenario, you're not eating into the principal. You're allowing that to basically maintain your principal is the idea with those back of the napkin calculations. I don't know too many people that could live on 10,000 a year.

Matt Wilson: That's right. Supplemented with social security, that that helps and potentially pensions depending on the type of employment someone had. One thing I noticed though with this study is these are 401k balances. It doesn't account for the people who aren't participating in the 401k plan. That's, I think to maybe some of the other data that we're seeing, where it just looks at all Americans, because not everyone participates in 401k plans. That actually leads us a little bit about some of the legislation that is currently being discussed in Congress about a Secure Act 2.0.

Bill Keen: Matt, it would be good if we could talk briefly about Secure Act 1.0, If you don't mind. As were starting the new year, we're starting to go, what are the rules we're playing with as we sit today and then what might be coming down the path with this Secure Act 2.0? Actually, I think it's called the Securing a Strong Retirement Act. Of course, it's not really an act yet because it needs to pass a few things here first, but it's actually more substantial than I think a lot of folks... It might not even be on many people's radar at this point with a lot of other things being bantered around in the news at this point.

Matt Wilson: The Secure Act, which was passed in December of 2019, it was tacked onto the budget bill at the end of 2019. I don't think a 2.0 is going to pass on its own. It'll be tacked onto something else that Congress passes. I think it's helpful to first understand that the Secure Act, the original Secure Act stood for setting every community up for retirement enhancement. The big changes that impact our listeners are it repealed the age limitation for traditional IRA contributions. People over 70 and a half were able to make IRA contributions. Now, if they were working, they could make contributions to a 401k, but just not specifically to IRAs with earned income. They got rid of that. No reason to prevent people from saving. Also, they increased the required minimum distribution age from 70 and a half to 72. Then of course in 2020, that was waived. Now, we're starting those backup for 2021. Those are back in effect.

Bill Keen: It was waived because of the Cares Act, but we don't want to go off too far.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. It was waived because of COVID and the Cares Act related to that. Correct. Then the biggest change, I believe the RMD age was a significant change, something different for everybody. Then two, the bigger change was the loss of the stretch IRA. Individuals that inherited IRAs in 2020 or beyond, have 10 years to take the distributions out. There's no required distribution until the 10th year that follows the year the account owner dies. That was a significant change versus the previous rule that allowed beneficiaries to stretch the IRA over their life expectancy.

Bill Keen: The reason that's significant, folks might say, "Well, what's so significant about that?" Well, the reason it's significant is because remember taxes have got to be paid on those dollars as they come out of those plans. The idea that you could leave those in for the remainder of your own life expectancy, once you inherited those, you would postpone a good portion of the tax of those dollars. Under these new rules, Matt mentions, that money has to be brought out and taxed within 10 years. That's the relevance of it. That's the magnitude of it from a tax standpoint.

Matt Wilson: That's right. These aren't easy to understand. We get a lot of questions about these because it doesn't apply to spouses. Spouses still inherit the IRA as if it was their own and have their own schedule, but non-spouse beneficiaries. In most cases, there are always exceptions to all these rules, but most beneficiaries, your children, are going to be subject to this 10 year rule, once they inherit the funds.

Bill Keen: Way back, they had the five-year rule. It was the same exact rule. You had to have all the money out within five years. Now, they kind of met in the middle, I guess.

Matt Wilson: They have. I do believe Congress is very aware of the trillions of dollars that are going to be transitioning from the baby boomer generation over to the next

generation over the next, I'd say, 20 to 30 years. They're looking at IRAs, as a source of revenue for the government over that transitional period.

Bill Keen: For sure.

Matt Wilson: This does apply to Roth IRAs as well. An inherited Roth IRA also has the ten-year distribution rule, but it is not taxable to those beneficiaries. They do force the money out of the Roth IRA, but there's a lot of planning that we do around Roth conversions when folks are retired really kind of discussing, "Hey, where are taxes going over the next 20 years? What are the tax rates for our beneficiaries going to be?" Some definite planning opportunities related to the original Secure Act. Now, we're to Secure Act 2.0, and this isn't entirely clear where this is going to end up, but the bones of this bill right now are one requiring new defined contribution plans to enroll participants automatically with at least a 3% contribution rate and increase the rate through an auto escalation by 1% per year until it reaches 10%.

Bill Keen: Okay. First off, define defined contribution, because we hear that. People hear, we talk about defined contribution, this and that, but our listeners might know, what does that actually mean?

Matt Wilson: Essentially, it's a 401K plan, 403B plan, a plan that you're able to save money in. Pretax are also utilizing the Roth provisions. This is designed to address what we talked about earlier, that there are many Americans that don't have enough money saved for retirement. As we've seen these pension plans, which are called defined benefit plans, go away, less and less of those around. Defined contribution plans have taken the place of those where it's on you to save for retirement. There's been a lot of studies done that people generally just don't opt in. You will ask them, "Do you want to save for retirement?" The answer will be, "Yes," but they don't go through the motions of actually signing up for the 401k plan. Studies have been done that auto enrolled people and those same people didn't take the steps to un-enroll either.

Bill Keen: You start a new job. You're not really paying much attention to your benefits. You get enrolled automatically. Your first check is already minus this, what it says 3% your first year at the minimum they can sign you up for, and you don't even notice it, I guess. You don't want to go through the effort of un-enrolling literally.

Matt Wilson: That's correct.

Bill Keen: That's the phenomena that they're looking at to help people be more, whatever that was, number nine or 10 on your list, be more personally responsible.

Matt Wilson: Personal responsibility, yeah. Is to take that decision off their hands and just do it automatically. Then the ones who don't want to save in the 401k have to then proactively take the steps to un-enroll from the plan. I think this is a great thing.

I think people do want to save and they don't necessarily even know how. It's confusing for people. They don't know how it works. Exactly. This just as an automatic thing, and then it's an auto-escalation too. It'll increase 1% a year until it reaches 10%. It will force additional money into the plan while you continue to work at that employer. Now, if you leave that employer and go to a new employer, it would reset to the 3%. That is how that would work as part of this new Secure Act.

Bill Keen: I haven't seen detail on whether or not they would automatically choose an age based type portfolio based on where you are age-wise and so forth. I would assume that would be part of this, I would think.

Matt Wilson: I would hope so.

Bill Keen: Not just stick it in the money market account. You know what I mean?

Matt Wilson: I know because while it is great to save, you want to have then those savings invested appropriately for your risk tolerance and your situation and cash or money market, generally, isn't a very good option, especially nowadays when interest rates are zero.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. Another key component to this. I know this is one that a lot of our clients are interested in is that the required distribution age would now increase from 72 to 75. We just bumped it from 70 and a half to 72 in 2019. Now, we're talking about, Congress is talking about bumping at age 75.

Bill Keen: I like this. It doesn't keep anyone from getting money that they need. It just doesn't force folks to take money out that they don't need. It allows for quite a bit of planning, especially when it comes to these Roth conversions. I like this a lot.

Matt Wilson: In this one, I can see this happening. This has been discussed over different types of bills that I've seen in the past. It's because 80% of IRA distributions, they come out, whether the required minimum distribution is forcing them that out or not. It's very common for individuals to be meeting the required minimum distribution at these ages anyway. They give a little bit by bumping that up, but not forcing it if you don't need it. Then related to that, they would exempt individuals with retirement account balances of a hundred thousand dollars or less from required minimum distributions. If you don't need the money, you can leave it in there and let it transfer to the next generation.

Bill Keen: I see no real downside to that either.

Matt Wilson: No. When you think of the percentages, yes, they start to get bigger as you get older. If someone wants to maintain that retirement for emergencies only, then they sure can or definitely leave it to the next generation. Then another, these are the big kind of pieces that impact our listeners. They would increase the

catch-up contribution limits to \$10,000 for 401K and 403B plan participants and then \$5,000 for simple IRA plan participants. Those would be for individuals 60 and over.

Bill Keen: The 50 and over, I wouldn't qualify for this for a while. Okay.

Matt Wilson: I believe they would still... Again, this is all in the works still. There is nothing definitive about this. I would believe the age 50 would probably stay the way it is right now. Then at 60, they would allow additional funds to be deposited into those retirement plans for those that want to save more.

Bill Keen: I always thought these catch-up provisions were pretty small, based on what folks need to be saving. We saw those numbers earlier, and now you're in your 50s and 60s, and you can be, "I'll put an extra five or 10,000 in. Hey, it's better than nothing more."

Matt Wilson: Yeah, that's right.

Bill Keen: Really move the needle. In some of these cases, folks are going to have to be saving money outside of their IRA accounts as well. With, yes, you match your 401K, if you can. You're fortunate enough to be able to do that, these catch up provisions, but then also saving money in after tax accounts is something that's going to be pretty important.

Steve Sanduski: Along those lines, guys, do you have any recommendations, rules of thumb, or maybe this varies by individual, but do you have some thoughts on the percentage of your retirement savings that you should have in qualified vehicles where you can't get to them until you're 59 and a half without the penalty versus in non-qualified accounts where you could get to them before 59 and a half, if you needed them. How do you guys think about that?

Matt Wilson: It's a great question. It is very individualized as to what makes sense for the person and what's their tax situation look like, and what's their spending needs in retirement? If someone's majority of their assets are in the retirement plan, but they do have an emergency reserve set aside of at least six months, then I'm comfortable with them having a larger portion of their net worth in a retirement account that they couldn't access until 59 and a half. There are ways to access it sooner. It's not like, "Okay, you can't do anything with it until 59 and a half." If you do have those safe deposits set aside to where, "Okay, there's an emergency. I don't have to tap my 401k account prematurely."

Realize a penalty in addition to tax ramifications, there's a lot of benefit to just putting it on autopilot like this, essentially what retirement accounts doing 401K accounts. I believe that's part of the reason why there's so much focus on these retirement plans. One, it gives people some tax, but two, it is so easy to put it on autopilot. You don't even have to think about it.

Bill Keen: That's right. That's right. We work with a lot of folks that have worked inside of corporations and the majority of their net worth is in their retirement accounts to your point, Steve. It's in the value or the equity in their homes, the ones that have really done what I said earlier, and that's save money on the outside of the retirement plans. After tax accounts, whether it's an individual account or a joint account or a trust account, and they build those resources up investing very similarly to how you would in a retirement account and diversified portfolios of stocks and bonds. When someone has done that and they have both, it really gives us a flexibility on how we spend that money down, it allows us to help folks stay in lower tax brackets in retirement, and several other benefits to that.

Now, if we work with someone who hasn't worked inside of a corporation that, let's say owned a small business, and they invested most of their money back into their small business and then have a liquidity event, they might look up and have the majority of their net worth in after tax bonds and not near as much in retirement accounts. There's two kind of very different scenarios there that we have to deal with. I don't know that there's any set rule, is there, Matt, on what percentage should? Ideally, hey, look at this and I didn't let you answer, but look, if I had a choice, if I had let's say \$1 million, would I rather have it in a retirement account or would I rather have it in an after-tax account? Every single time, I would say I would rather have it in an after-tax account as opposed to a retirement account and even better. I would rather have it in a Roth IRA.

Matt Wilson: Well, I was going to say, that's the retirement account I'd want it in.

Bill Keen: Yes. If we're just dreaming what would be best, but we have all sources. The reality is we would have all sources. We have some in Roth, some in regular IRAs and some in after tax money as well.

Matt Wilson: Yeah. There's talk about optionality. If you really thought, "Okay, this is not a long-term career for me, and I want to go start my own business or do something else outside of the corporate world." Yes. Then we would advise someone. You probably should build up some after tax savings so it's not just all in your retirement plan, because you might need access to those funds, but you want to plan around that too, because you'd prefer to put a plan in place that didn't require you to touch... If it's earmarked for retirement, no matter what account it's in, you shouldn't be touching any of it. There's situations that arise where, "Okay, let's figure out a way to access this in the most tax efficient way possible."

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. What I hear you guys saying is that if you do have some in after tax vehicles, you have some in tax beneficial vehicles, that there might be some additional planning opportunities that you have. Also, you have to take into consideration each person's individual circumstances. If their job is really secure, they might want to be in this career for many, many years. They've got good visibility on that. Maybe more goes in the qualified plans because it's a

little more secure, their normal income and vice versa. If maybe they want to start a business, like you said, maybe you want to have a little more cash available that's not going to be charged a penalty if you take it out early in a retirement plan. I guess the bottom line is that every situation is individual and unique. You need a planner that can work with you to ask you the right questions, to really determine what is the best structure for you. All right, guys, I think we're bumping up here with about a half an hour into the show. Any final words that you'd like to wrap up with here?

Bill Keen: I just wanted to wish everybody yet, again, a happy new year. Matt started the program talking about values and we shared the family is number one from the study that we reviewed and that relationships was number two, financial security, number three. I thought I might read the rest to you as we close. Number four is belonging. Number five is community. Number six is personal growth. Number seven is loyalty. Number eight was religion and spirituality. Number nine was employment security. Number 10 was personal responsibility. I think about all of those things collectively as they speak to me personally, and I just know that me taking care of the issues that I can control. We always talk about controlling the controllable and our program, our show specifically focuses on the things we can do in our financial lives to better these other areas that I just read to you.

I do believe that when you have a plan in place and that when you think it through, you're intentional, you're thoughtful and you're working with the right advisor that's thinking out ahead for you around corners that you can't necessarily see around because you're not an expert in the field, that you can have that competence to focus on these other issues that financial security will afford you the opportunity to focus on. Collectively as a whole, we can enter this year of 2021 and we can take it by storm. I'm putting my money on that this year, guys.

Steve Sanduski: All right. It's a great way to wrap up here, Bill. I just want to thank you, Bill. I want to thank you, Matt, for a great year with Keen on Retirement in 2020. I look forward to another great year here in 2021. Thank you to all the listeners. You can find out all the details here for the program, by going to keennonretirement.com. We'll have all the past episodes. We'll have the show notes and we appreciate you all being a listener here. Again, happy new year. Let's look forward to a great 2021.

Bill Keen: Thanks, Steve.

Matt Wilson: Thank you.

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