Introduction to John McDonald

Hello again everyone. Welcome back to the DNA Companies Online Health Summit. Today we're reviewing yet another success story. I've got a wonderful friend, partner, mentor, and all around incredible individual here with me.

Today I'd like to introduce you to John McDonald. John, it is a pleasure to have you here today and talk to you about DNA and genetics. I'm delighted to be here. Thanks.

Wonderful. So, John, we've been doing this series and we've been interviewing people sort of from all walks of life. You know, our, our listeners have had a chance to listen to top doctors, health experts, but also consumers, people, regular people like you and I, but also people who are sort of involved in the future of health care.

So tell us a little bit about yourself, what you do on a daily basis, and why you, you know, you decided to explore sort of the world of genetics when you did.

Yeah, we probably up to split me in two pieces because, yeah, I'm a massive fan of DNA code, very loyal user, have had huge impact. And that's me, the person, professionally.

I'm an entrepreneur, but I'm a strategist and stopped building companies a decade or so ago and, and work with, transformative innovators in many sectors.

But most of my practice is in the digital health innovation space. And so I come at this as a person and my own personal bias and results.

How Genetics and DNA Code Entered the Conversation

And as a professional who works with, innovators across the spectrum, inside health and wellness. Fantastic. And so tell us, you know, what was it about genetics maybe initially and sort of then the DNA code that kind of, you know, that brought you close and made you want to kind of take the dive and, and do your test.

Yeah, that's probably the right place to start because, I didn't start like a normal person who went, oh, look at this DNA code thing. Let's do this. For a number of years, I have a way of working.

One of the things I do is work with emerging startups that are moving really fast. And. And part of my practice is helping leadership teams get really, really clear of how how they see disruptive and, forces unfolding and how to use the forces of disruption to help maximize their impact and their value.

So that's kind of a piece of my strategy. And I do a lot of work in the digital health space, and for a number of years had the pleasure of working with a guy named Doctor Brendan Byrne.

And Brendan's a long time friend, but quickly became colleagues and and ended up doing a thing we called First step. And first step was a neat program.

We, at the time he was, I think chief strategist in Telus Health, a very, very savvy guy, one of the smartest guys I know, very passionate about health.

He's a he says he's a physician by, How's it go? Physician location. I think it's a physician by trade. An entrepreneur by. Yeah, because he is a very successful, very savvy entrepreneur.

But he's a passionate physician and he and his role in Telus health, he looked at what I was doing with teams to

kind of really get under the covers of how they think.

And he said, well, let's do that one topic at a time and on a topic level, bring people in from all over the place and spend a whole day with them one by one by one and see what we learned.

It was a little skeptical, but it was like, let's do it. So the first one we did was pharmacogenomics, and he picked it because he had a very hardened thesis.

He knew exactly how it was going to unfold, and we met with maybe a dozen different companies. And he completely changed his position. The thinking, the like entrepreneurs see the world in a different way.

So so it was a really amazing program. We did six separate topics, and two that are really meaningful to this conversation are pharmacogenomics. That was a topic.

And then we learned with like conclusions and stuff. And the other one was precision health precision medicine. And in both of those, me, for him this is like business as usual for me.

I'm now in the room with all sorts of people I would not normally be in the room. Right. So we're really unpacking the thinking of genomics and things and microbiome and, how data is getting used and how I was getting used and how we're so blah, blah, blah, blah.

And I don't want to bore you with all the stuff, but I was like, so. So I wasn't loyal at all with DNA. I had my genome tested five, six times because, you know, we're meeting these companies, I'll do their test, I'll see their output.

But, I didn't continue anything with anybody else. I but I fell in love with, DNA code at a really fundamental level, which was really goes back to Mansoor and the and the and the DNA of the company itself.

Because what's the point of knowing a bunch of genomics if you can't do anything about it? So let's focus on those elements of genome that are actually actionable.

Naps, Detoxification, and Supplement Response

And there's evidence to show that if you do something about that one, you know, and I'm like, well, that's okay. That makes sense to me. So, I did the whole program, went through the assessment, took the supplements again, in this funny world, right.

Like, like I'm in this world of trying to learn and trying to be open minded, trying to understand how the world is unfolding. I didn't actually have a health concern that I knew of, but man, oh man.

Then the learnings when, when and who was explaining things to me out of my prof. I'm like, wait, well, I got that. No, I got that. And then I went through a whole round of, of, supplements.

And I remember the very first time we met, after I gone, whatever, six months, three months, six my camera. And he, he goes, so you've been on the supplement program.

You know, we know your genomics and we targeted. So what kind of impact do you get. And I'm like I don't think anything. You know I you know I don't I don't think I notice hey or one thing, you know, for the last 30 years I'm I love naps I nap all the time.

You've ruined it for me. I take this, I'm no longer want to nap. And then you start to explain to me what happened. And after that, I've noticed many more things.

Like, turns out that's a pretty massive thing in shaping my body. And at that point I'm like, okay, there's something really profound here. And then it goes on and on and on such huge implications for me.

That's fantastic. Fantastic. So let's start there. I'd love to unpack, sort of, you know, that that nap question, because tons of people out there think naps are good.

And they can be good. Yeah. Everyone loves naps. Who doesn't want to take a nap in the middle of the day? But, you know, we were able to uncover certain things about sort of your detoxification profile, your, you know, any of these core processes that are involved in dealing with the toxins you're exposed to that was there were forcing you to take a nap so they had time to do it.

And then with some intelligence supplementation, you were actually able to support some of those processes. So reducing the necessity or the sort of reliance on these naps for that recovery profile.

Talk to sort of give us sort of an insight of, you know, when you were taking the naps were, you know, where they really frequent, what was the goal, what's going on there?

So when when you use those words that the words make sense, but it doesn't. They're just words. Yeah. What what what's been fascinating for my little journey is that the words start to actually go, well, that's quite a thing.

Like the way my metabolism is. And, and I'm like, as bad as it gets for methylation and a couple of them. But you know, that's strengths and weaknesses. We all do.

And so so your body needs time blah blah blah blah. Okay, cool, I get it. But when you really live this and you, I just wasn't tired. But I did have the sense and then I've come to understand.

It's like there's things happening in my body and my organs actually can't deal with it at all. And when when my body shuts down, then my organs have the chance to deal with it at all.

And at the same time, I measure resting heart rate and all of a sudden I start to realize that starts to drop. And. And then the really weird thing is, because of Covid, there was supply disruptions.

So I got on this program. I've been on it for a few years. Everything becomes normal. I'm I don't that part of it. So then Covid, I can't get any of my supplements 3 or 4 months in.

I need it now in the worst way. Just very real to me. It's like it's not just a bunch of words. This is literally changing my body's ability to function, right.

And that's non-trivial as far as I'm getting. Yeah. And it goes back to like people are always going to debate, hey, do supplements work or they don't work?

The reality is it's actually depends on the person. If what works for you isn't necessarily going to work for someone else. In fact, if I took the version of the supplements you were taking, I have the opposite reaction.

I would actually feel like I need to take more naps because my genes are predisposed to work with the supplements you're taking, and it comes back down to precision health, right?

Precision medicine. That's what I was going to say. It's about average based care versus precision care. Right. So I always supplement it before. Matter of fact, one of the things I was doing, everybody knew I was taking my BS.

Like, I don't mentor very early in the program goes, that will kill you because, my genomic makeup is such that I am basically allergic to methylated B, almost all of these are methylated and they make me sick.

Precision Health, Diet, and Personal Genetics

I feel sick when I take them straight power and through because I kind of take these. Right. So like for most people, it's the right thing to do, average based.

It makes sense. But one person at a time, it doesn't make sense. Yeah, yeah. And that's I mean, it's, it's it's it's profound that, you know, one of the things we've been able to do here, when we provide sort of people with those insights, like we tell people as much as we're called the DNA company, it's really not about the gene as much as it is about the problem you're trying to solve.

But you've got a a health concern and no Bible of genes that I and their information that I gave you is going to solve your problem. But if I tell you, hey, this is who you are as a person, this is what's going on.

And when you do this, take this, avoid this, act like this. You're going to be at 2.0 of yourself. And they do it. They're like, oh like, okay, this is this is serious, right?

So, it's true. But in fairness, you you DNA also have very strong science. And you work, you bring naturopathic medicine professionals into this, it's not like going to the store and buying a jar, right.

And it's really meaningful because the advice that I've gotten along the way, with DNA co naturopaths and then I have my own naturopath and, and because of my world, we run full blood tests.

We run like crazy tests. And so I got all kinds of markers along the way. That's precision medicine, right? Like, oh, you're, you know, all cars should have four liters of oil, but your cars gallon a liter.

Ski better at some. It's not your car. It's not about all cars. Exactly, exactly like I think this is not as it comes across like supplementing. It's not really supplementing so much as here's here's what your body needs.

Here's where you're up, here's where you're down. Let's like I, I just don't think the word supplement covers what's really happening. Yeah. Yeah. Because when people think supplements, they just immediately go to multivitamins or they go to whatever, like, you know, weight loss products or muscle building products, but really it's about being very, very specific, very precise with where you need physiological support in your body.

And one of the methodologies we use the modalities use is concentrated versions of these nutrients that yes, you can find in whole foods. But, you know, sometimes you can eat two bowls of broccoli to get the amount of that nutrient you need to impact you at a physiological level, which also goes back to the important point you made that it's, you know, we're not just a genetic company providing gene data to you as a consumer.

We're actually pairing it with years, decades of clinical insights, like doctors sitting down, reviewing results. It's non-trivial. Yeah, exactly. It's this is you know, this is this is different than I'm launching a supplement company.

So I'll go look at online demand and the things that people search for more are the ones I'm going to offer. I'm like, that's not what this exactly. They said. It's their modality.

And we'll we'll see so much of, you know, for you, you know, like you said, hey methyl B12 not good for you. You need to take a general B12 because of the impact that that version of the supplement has or that version of the nutraceutical has on your body because of a disparity in your genetic profile.

So that's wonderful. Now, I also have like a little quirk that I use when I explain to people like, I don't know for everybody, but like I'm a rare I have a rare genetic thing where I cannot take statins.

Right. Doctors prescribe statins like their checklist. Yeah. So one of the things that that again from DNA, I was told very early, is somewhere along the line, some doctors are going to tell you to go on statins.

You need to tell them no, they won't know that genetically that's poison for you, right? Right. They won't know. You know, their average face. They won't run the tests. They won't know this about you.

You need to tell them this. And that's kind of a scary thought. Now tell us about your diet and sort of what are the some of the things that you notice in your genetics that sort of influence your diet, that were sort of moments and maybe some things you change when you learned about it.

Again, I don't know that I changed anything at the beginning. I came to understand things about my diet. Right, right. So many green vegetables turns out to be directly linked back to something in my genome.

Like what? Like I crave them. Yeah. And. And like, there was a reason for that. Which. And the craving part is so important.

The Future of Healthcare and Closing Thoughts

And we always told these people, most of the time when we meet people, we do the genetics, you know, we'll be going through the genetics to explain, hey, this is how you were.

And he's like, yeah, like I always do like my body. Like I hated running, you know, like I every time I tried to run, I did not like running. I like lifting weights.

And everyone kept telling me to run. Turns out their genetics suggests that if they ran, they could probably run into a heart attack. Like, that's literally the genetics, right?

Everybody in the body intuitively knows, right? So you're craving for green meat. It's like dude, like that's the nutrients in those green. I literally need to function optimally.

So yes, you're going to have a craving for them because I need them. I then, you know, you look at your genome, it's like, oh, well, that makes a lot of sense, right?

Yeah. It's, that can be pretty, pretty powerful. That's how the conversation went. Yeah. That's funny, I, I don't know that because of the program, I've made a lot of changes.

We have, over the years shifted to, more and more plant based. But again, that's because in my world, I see so much evidence of that. And then along the way, I ended up with a histamine intolerance while I probably had it all.

But I know, so I've gone through a lot of adjustments and DNA calls helped me a lot and measure, which is part of why I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm clearly a fanboy, but I have little evidence points, like, they helped me so much, they just went out of their way to help me.

And like recently in Covid, you had supply shortages. You couldn't send things. And yet I need a couple specialized things. And your people just went out of the way to help me find them and not only, I would we would go back and forth and I would find one or whatever, and they would go, no, you don't want that one, because they use this kind of an ingredient.

And it's, it's it's like that's a synthetic ingredient. Let's get a like they just so much knowledge about quality and so much care about quality. Right. And I don't you can't really you can get that out of marketing.

But you don't believe it like I've lived how you guys see the world. So. Right right right. Amazing. So John, with your skills, expertise, years of experience, tell us about the future of health care and sort of where you see all these modalities playing out.

And what does the consumer look forward to when they say, okay, I want to address my health. I want to take care of my health. So I know it's a loaded question.

I know, but, well, in my world, the future of health care, I, I live in the middle of that. But if you want to really simplify it, it's clearly a shift away from episodic care to proactive care.

So what I mean by that is let's not wait till you have a heart attack and then solve the heart attack. Let's see it earlier and do some things about it.

So that's step one. And you know, just simply because well, first of all, it's stupid to just wait till you fall off a cliff.

But also, the health systems will collapse under the financial pressure the way it is right now.

So, so the future of health care, it's going to move more and more to proactive. And when you move to proactive, it's critical to, use data about the individual.

So we'll move more and more away from average based care and more and more towards, doing, you know, we talk precision or personal or whatever. Not that complicated.

Use of science to understand that individual and then adjust the treatment to work best for that individual. And there's a million things pushing us in that direction.

But that's, that's where all this goes. You guys are already way out in front of it. Thank you, thank you. Well, John, thank you so much for your time and your busy.

I appreciate you kind of taking out the time and and sharing your thoughts with us and being a real believer in what we do. Any parting words to the listeners today?

Yeah. Do this. Yeah. Oh, that's pretty effective and concise. Yeah, yeah. That's awesome. Thanks, everyone. Thanks for listening. And until next time we talk to even more health experts, from around the world.

Take care. Bye.