

# How Personalization Can Optimize Health

**Marc Isaacson, CEO**  
**Village Green Apothecary**



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**Rebekah Kelley:** Welcome to the Humanized podcast, all about personalizing your health. I'm your host, Rebekah Kelley, and today our topic will be How Personalization Can Optimize Your Health, with Marc Isaacson. Before I introduce Marc, I want to remind everyone to subscribe and get all the other variety of casts in audio, video and transcription at [HumanizedHealth.com](https://HumanizedHealth.com). I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor, Village Green Apothecary, at [MyVillageGreen.com](https://MyVillageGreen.com).

So, a little bit about Marc Isaacson. He is the president and CEO of Village Green Apothecary, an industry leading integrative pharmacy, located next to the National Institutes of Health in the Washington, DC area. Village Green Apothecary offers a suite of personalized health products and services, including a custom compounding lab and one of the largest selections of health products found anywhere, with over 10,000 products and 500 brands, including the company's Pathway and Sinus Survival brands. With a highly skilled team that includes pharmacists, nutritionists, a clinical herbalist, and naturopathic doctors, Village Green Apothecary has been a trusted source of knowledge and tailored solutions for over 50 years. Mr. Isaacson is passionate about functional nutrition and wellness, and is on a mission to change the current symptom-based healthcare model and help individuals get to the root cause of their health conditions and achieve optimal health. By creating the Humanized podcast, he is helping to expand the reach of personalized nutrition through education, empowerment and individualized diet.

Thank you so much, Marc, for creating this and also for being here to talk about it today.

**Marc Isaacson:** Oh, great to be on this segment with you. Thanks Rebekah, for doing all the great work you're doing on the hosting side.

**Rebekah Kelley:** I love it. I love it. I meet so many great people with so much knowledge, and it's really completely a pleasure.

So let's just jump right in and start with Village Green Apothecary, this amazing hub of knowledge. I know, anytime I walk in, talk to anybody there, the knowledge base, the nutritional quality supplements, the customized solution, the expert guidance... I mean, can you share with me, and the listeners, how Village Green is paving the way to make this more personalized healthcare more accessible?

**Marc Isaacson:** Yeah, a hundred percent, a hundred percent. So look, I've been running Village Green for about 20 years now, and I had the great fortune of acquiring the business from two really innovative pharmacists, Mickey Weinstein, Irv Rosenberg. I always send my praise out to them. So those guys, so Village Green has been around since 1965, originally known as The Apothecary. And they did pave the way for so much of this stuff because they were, I always say, these crazy witch doctors in the late '60s and early '70s when they started to do nutrition. And that became a big part of their business as a pharmacy, which was really, back in the '70s, unheard of. And then they started, I think in the late '70s, doing this really cool stuff with

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custom compounding or formulation, which is really part of pharmacy. So I just had, I just got fortunate. Long story short, I got fortunate.

You know, I've been involved for 20 years running the business, and today we do three primary things. We actually, so we have close to 50 people, so we got a bunch of smart guys. We got a team of pharmacists. We got a team of technicians, but we got like 7, 8, 9, 10 clinical nutritionists, NDs [naturopaths] on our team, and a number of nutrition experts on our team. So, we really focus on... we sell about 10,000 different products, on the website too, at MyVillageGreen.com, but super competitive, and all the big practitioner products, and all those different things on our website. So that's maybe like 60% of what we do. But one of the coolest things we do is this part of pharmacy, which is very related to personalization, where we compound, and we make vitamins, minerals, amino acids, just for you. So in that case, it's us working with smart MDs, medical doctors, and it could be clinical nutritionists, it could be NDs, it could be DOs, who really understand this area of clinical nutrition and functional medicine. The fancy term is called systems biology, how to optimize your body and optimize your system together.

So we are now, so we've had, you know, we've got thousands and thousands of patients. And the cool stuff that I talked about in an earlier segment is this great opportunity, because there's all this convergence and all this knowledge base. So we as a team are moving forward absolutely to help people now look at their lab – everyone's one-of-a-kind – look at their lab work, you know, the lab work, their biochemistry is one-of-a-kind for them. Their genes, we can look at DNA now, one-of-a-kind to them, and all the data that we collect on them, the health history and lifestyle and foods and nutrients and toxins and prescription drugs – all of that makes stuff one-of-a-kind to them. So I actually have a word for that, which I created, which a lot of people say, oh, that sounds kind of familiar. There's something at work called epigenetics. I created a word called “EpiBioGenetics.” So “epi” is epigenetics, where it's all the external stuff that impacts you, that changes your biochemistry and genes, and that's the environmental stuff and foods and other toxins and prescription drugs and drinking and air pollution and passive smoke, or not passive smoke – all those things. That's epigenetics. “Bio” is biochemistry, so that's your lab work, everyone's got one-of-a-kind biochemistry, as I said. And then DNA. So it's “EpiBioGenetics.” Genetics is DNA.

So we look at all that stuff and we're now, so we're doing it in an old form manual process where we have our clinical nutritionists and MDs that we work with that look at all this data, and we figure it out. So that's kind of one methodology.

So here's the critical thing. We're now working to scale this kind of stuff. So through this process of working to scale, it, we are working on this fancy word, AI, artificial intelligence, but it's artificial intelligence, big data, just collecting data on people. So we literally have some tools, they're early on, but we can ask you a bunch of questions and we can bring that in. So we can ask you these, quote unquote, I'll say "epigenetic questions." We can look at your lab work, and this is usually lab work that people have. It's conventional Labcorp lab work that they're

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getting done in primary care, so not a lot of cost to that. People have it or they can easily get it. And we look at DNA. So we could look at... a lot of people, millions of people have taken a 23andMe test, we have our own DNA [test], but we could take 23andMe data, which is less than a hundred bucks, or we can take our data set in DNA – it may be a little bit more [cost] – so we have the combination available now. We have lab testing available. We have DNA testing available. We have clinical nutritionists available. We have external, smart MDs and people all over the country that we're working with to do this. So that's a piece of where we're going so we can make it easier and we can scale it and we can do it quicker with more precision and help a ton of people. So, I mean, that's kind of our, a huge part of how we're trying to really transform the healthcare system. So that's one piece.

**Rebekah Kelley:** So you're taking all this information, right? You're personalizing it based upon what you've identified. And how can this then be used? How can this approach then be used to motivate and empower individuals to invest in their health, to follow through on this?

**Marc Isaacson:** So here's... I think it would help maybe at this point to give the example of my daughter, Tess.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Love examples!

**Marc Isaacson:** Question of how personalized you can go and how powerful that is and how I would say transformational it is, because here's the total, here's the usual story at Village Green, not the only story, but there's thousands and thousands of people, practitioners that have this kind of story. They have one condition. It could be a neurological condition, cardiovascular, it could be digestive stuff, autoimmune, immune system, diabetes, typical kinds of things. And they've had these issues and conditions for like sometimes it's months, sometimes it's years, unfortunately it could be decades. And our traditional healthcare system, really has the primary model, I won't say the only model, but the primary model that traditional healthcare system is to do two things: diagnose, and give you a prescription drug. And it doesn't look at the whole person. Doesn't look at this thing we call systems biology and getting to the root cause. So when you get that prescription drug, not all the time, but 80, 90% of the time that prescription drug based on the data is only managing your symptom. So you've got people that have these symptoms and stuff, and they've had symptoms, as I said, for months, years, decades, and no one's worked to get to the root cause. And 80% of it, like I said, in this earlier segment, 80% of it is fixable.

So I'll give you the example of my daughter, Tess. Super important, because this is what happens with everyone. They have all these different conditions, but the approach is very similar to how you fix them. My daughter, Tess, who thank God is doing great now. She's 17 years old. When she was 8 years old, healthy, athletic, great in school, good with personal relationships, out of the blue, she had a grand mal seizure. Craziest, scariest thing I've ever seen as a parent. I mean, so my daughter was uncontrollably shaking for like 7, 8, 9, 10 minutes, and we had to call 911. So I'll fast forward. We call 911, seizure stops. For 6, 7, 8 weeks, we go

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through all this different lab work. We're outside of Washington, DC. Village Green Apothecary is located in Bethesda, Maryland. And we have these experts do all the labs and everything, and they come back to us 6, 7, 8 weeks later and they say, hey, your daughter's got epilepsy. I think it's considered benign pediatric epilepsy. And what do we have to do? The only choice was put her on drugs or... put her on drugs, we manage her, they didn't know what to do. So I tried to get to the end of the story quickly and say, hey, I was in a very unique place. Eight years ago – I've been doing this for 20 years - 8 years ago, I knew people all over the country that had incredible expertise of functional medicine, systems biology, getting to the root cause. And I kept saying to these docs, I said, what can we do? Is there a why? The whole question is, what is the root cause, and is there a why? And in this area of seizure activity and epilepsy, there's really no known way to fix it. These doctors said, if you get lucky, when she's a young adult, when she's 21, 22, 23, that the seizures will stop. Three years, it took us, and we were in the right place at the right time with all this convergence of data. And it turns out that we learned that, we started to understand genes better 3 years in, and we could look at her detoxification genes and pathways. And sure enough, which happens with so many people, she had really poor detoxification pathways. And then we took her to another nutritionist and a really smart MD and we were able to identify that she had a big problem with sulfur. So this is where it gets really interesting, where sulfur is in a ton of superfoods. All the cruciferous vegetables – people may or may not know that, tons of people have no idea. I didn't know about that. So broccoli, cauliflower, garlic, turmeric/cumin, these superfoods, eggs. Eggs have a ton of sulfur, so if you have a compromised sulfur pathway, that's the fancy stuff, but basically I'll say if you've got screwed-up genes that don't allow you to detox sulfur... But that's just one example because there's all kinds of different toxins. There's all kinds of potential different foods. There are... fats could be problematic for people. Fats, protein can be problematic for people. Things like oxalates that come from nuts and spinach and other things can be really problematic for people.

So coming back to the Tess story, we realized these things, and once we did a workaround with having her take baths and the right nutrition... and so here was her heavyweight stuff. We had her taking too much garlic. We had her taking, she was eating eggs every morning. So she was really, what you think are great foods and things like that, she was literally poisoning herself, and those couple of things threw her whole body out of whack and drove the seizures. So when we sorted all that stuff out, boom! We were, she was good to... it was crazy. After 3 years, it was like, we just snapped our fingers and she was incredibly, that's it. Seizures went away. They stopped.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Wow.

**Marc Isaacson:** And she's been good for like 5 or 6 years now. And she was on meds that whole time. We weaned her off, and it's all good. But I just wanted to share that one example, because that's the paradigm-changing deal with, it doesn't matter. Like in my daughter's case it was seizures, but in other people's cases, it's mental health, it's ADD, it's autism, it's digestive issues, it's immune issues, autoimmune.

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And I want to give one final thing to give people a feel for where we're going here. Well, two things, really. One is, in our compounding pharmacy, we focus unbelievably on ADD, autism, anxiety, depression. We work with top doctors all over the country. They are doing the same type of work. Maybe looking at genes a little bit, but deeply looking at biochemistry and epigenetic data. And when we in our compounding lab take all this data and we take a vitamin, mineral, amino acid, and we make a unique A.M. formula just for that person. And we do the same thing for P.M., just for that person. And this is way more effective – thousands and thousands of people have done that – way more effective than prescription drug use. We're customizing foods, nutrients lifestyle, just for their body. And in terms of helping them with ADD, autism, anxiety, depression – transformative.

So that's like another bucket of examples of what's going on in the world that I just want to make sure people know about. And I think, to tie it all together, I just have to say, we are very close now. We use this word "Humanized Health" for our podcast, videocast, transcriptions, infographics. Whether you go to MyVillageGreen, you can find it. You go to HumanizedHealth, you can find it. But the coolest thing is, everything, all of this that I just explained that we've been working on, we're now very close to launching a membership site that we're calling Humanized Plus, and that Humanized Plus membership site has, so we sell 10,000 supplements at Village Green. They're all accessible in this membership site. We have clinical nutritionists working for us. If you are a member of this new membership site, we're close to launching now over the next couple weeks. And when someone sees this [podcast], it'll probably be launched already. You can talk to a clinical nutritionist 6 to 7 days a week, always have access to that person. We are collecting data on you, a health score, metabolic risk score, toxic risk score, based on this AI. So we constantly can update [health] questions, and you put your lab work in there, and you put your DNA in there, and we're using that so we understand the foods for you and the nutrients for you. So this whole membership site is our operation and process, very economically, to make personalization super affordable, super accessible for everybody. And we think this type of platform should be incorporated down the road, whether it's corporate wellness stuff related, but specifically into primary care activities.

So that's really where we're going. And as I always say, we are on the absolute cusp now of this convergence and opportunity to transform healthcare and understand that people can personalize just for them, one-of-a-kind personalization. You know, there's 8 or 9 billion people in the world. And literally, there's only one blueprint to optimize your health, to reduce your health risks, to get to the root cause quicker, faster, more economically. And that's kind of, that's kind of our big, crazy goal here is to do this and make it available for everyone. And it should become, it should become primary care. Because I said in the other segment that I did, not only can we do that for people that have chronic conditions, and unfortunately, those are the people that typically come to us, you know, they can never get help anywhere and they find us. But the coolest thing is, whether you're a young child, whether you're a teen, you're someone in your early 20s, 30s, the sooner that you understand your one-of-a-kind blueprint, is the faster that you can feel great on an everyday level and feel productive and feel at your best. But the most relevant thing is, you can greatly reduce risks for the majority of your life if you

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understand how you can personalize and where medicine and healthcare is heading today, and how cool it is and how super powerful it is.

**Rebekah Kelley:** That's amazing, Marc. Thank you so much for sharing those valuable insights. And thank you for sharing the story about your daughter. It's very moving and it really explains where this fire can come from, to create health and wellness for others like you, other parents like you, who might have the same situation, as well as the people that walk into your store. All the tools you need to personalize health can be found at my [MyVillageGreen.com](http://MyVillageGreen.com).

Let me remind you to subscribe and get access to all Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders on personalized health at [HumanizedHealth.com](http://HumanizedHealth.com). Thanks so much Marc for being here and talking to us about this, and creating the podcast.

**Marc Isaacson:** Thank you. Great to be on.