

# The 52 Talks™

*Founder & CEO David Willard Chats Entrepreneurship and Consumer Health with Ella Mihov, Founder & CEO of Lune*



**David P. Willard**  
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2019 promises exciting new opportunities in the world of consumer health products and services. I caught up recently with Ella Mihov, the Founder & CEO of Lune, a California-based wellness company pioneering the future of nutrition today. Previously, Ella was Product Manager at

Google and the Director of Health Vertical at Ayasdi. Ella began her career at Goldman, Sachs & Co. as an investment banking analyst. She later worked as Senior Analyst at Leerink Partners LLC and thereafter as the Chief of Staff to the CFO at Pro Mujer. Ella received an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business and B.A. in Biochemistry from Duke University. Ella's perspectives on entrepreneurship and the market for wellness products carry wisdom for innovators and aspiring founders alike.

**David Willard:** *What do you most enjoy about being the Founder & CEO of Lune?*

**Ella Mihov:** I love translating a vision into reality. It's so rewarding, exciting, and each day challenging in a new way. I'm a creator and love building things that people need, even if everyone tells you they're hard to build or require new ways of thinking and the answers are not immediately clear.

**Willard:** *How do you see the consumer health industry evolving over the next five years?*

**Mihov:** I boil it down to three key trends: (1) "Doctor is out"; (2)

Innovation in functional consumables; and (3) Diagnostics meets real life. First trend is greater access to telemedicine, consumer testing and medical-grade prescriptions. At



**Ella Mihov**  
Lune

Lune, we're democratizing access to high-end urine testing otherwise for concierge doctors, while companies like Hims are taking allowing consumers to buy medications online, without seeing a doctor eye-to-eye for medications for hair loss and ED that are otherwise shameful to get. This "doctor is out" theme will apply to everything, as telemedicine technology and operations get commoditized and the quality and reputations of the practitioners will be most differentiating.

I also expect a lot of innovation in functional foods and supplements. I'm referring to consumables like supplements in new form factors to address pill fatigue, everyday foods turned functional foods (like high fiber pastas), and actually, I expect a lot of innovation in fiber. We all desperately need to eat more fibrous prebiotics to improve our gut health, and ultimately solve the epidemic of poor metabolic health in America. I expect more clinical trials and clinical proof of efficacy in consumer health - to address the trial-and-error fatigue people have in the \$60 billion supplement industry. We're already seeing how new probiotic strains are in testing against health outcomes like improvements in cholesterol and improved digestion.

Finally, I see there will be a healthy yet polarizing tension between technology and no technology. On one hand, we have tremendous sensors innovation, with continuous monitoring of many things from sleep quality, to stress levels, and blood sugar levels. Yet, many people will want to plug away from sensors and technology and discover their own true north of how they feel based on their gut, not data. Another example is that precision medicine/nutrition will polarize against our community values. Yes, on one hand, food is medicine and one-size doesn't fit all, and personalized diets are powerful. Yet on the other hand, eating with others is medicine too. So there will be advances in how consumers personalize to get

resilient, yet seek to enjoy community meals without restriction.

**Willard:** *What three pieces of advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?*

**Mihov:** First, I'd recommend to see entrepreneurship as both a mindset, and a bias toward action. I see it as an act born out of being both connected to reality, yet paradoxically extremely unhappy and wanting to change reality. Really, the only way forward is to act and be extremely connected to a positive future vision.

Second, I advise other entrepreneurs to see failure as "the way." There is a key lever of control between failure and success: it the continued attempts to move forward through deliberate actions. It's that perseverance to try again if you fail that ultimately creates value and leads to success. Expect to have many pivots.

Thirdly, I recommend other entrepreneurs to see startups as the ultimate opportunity to learn and grow as a leader. I have learned so much. The biggest learnings were about building a culture, transparent communications, acquiring customers, agile product development, investor relations - and many more. It's been an exciting rollercoaster, and I wish for many others to create such an opportunity for themselves.

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