



Life as a Wim Hof Method instructor has taken me abroad lately, this time to the mountains outside of Prague. I teamed up with the Czech Republic's most famous chef, the beautiful Kamu, to pass on tools for optimal health, breath work, meditation, cold exposure, movement and holistic nutrition.

Six workshops over nine days with 180 beautiful humans passing through the doors. We had parents, educators, athletes, doctors, musicians, influencers, people with auto-immune diseases, mental health advocates and sufferers, the curious and those looking to improve their health.

The common denominator: a fear of the cold.

I cover many different themes in my workshops, but it was clear that mental health was at the top of the issues people suffered. Despite living in an era with the highest living standards, wealth and education, we seem to have an avoidance toward discomfort and an inability to deal with negative emotions. We are a society who is burnt out, depressed, anxious and fearful.

Emotional intelligence education is lacking big time in our

school systems and we are now experiencing the results. We are only as mentally tough as life demands us to be.

In society today most people don't have a single tool to manage how they feel that isn't purchased from a coffee shop, supermarket, pharmacy or drug dealer. Solely relying on these external tools is detrimental to our baseline, sleep, nutrition and social connections.

I give science-based talks and pass on evidence-based ways to feel happier, healthier and stronger. Ways to embrace suffering, to overcome the fear of the cold, to quieten an overactive mind and create pleasantness within. Natural, internal ways to take back the control, that train and strengthen our entire physiology including our nervous, cardiovascular and immune systems.

The breathing sessions are often life-changing experiences, with lights, colours, intense emotions, tingling throughout the body and visions a common occurrence. This calms their nervous system and generates heat within the body to help prepare them for the cold. Ice water really scares people. Although I'm very attuned to how I respond in the cold, when I teach, I'm mindful of people's suffering in those situations.

Experience has taught me to pass the techniques on as a peaceful process, to create distance from and just observe the thoughts, emotions and sensations in the mind and body, to not accept them as truth. Doing this creates consciousness, awareness. This is how the mind and body respond to discomfort, to suffering and fear. Change it in one place, make it familiar, build the resilience and you change it elsewhere. Pay attention to the stress response and understand that it is the key to our growth. While you established a neural process in the ice water, you also teach yourself a process that can be applied to difficulties in life.

This practice cultivates high levels of concentration. I feel extremely focused, clear, without fear and can respond to people in a remarkably effective way – I want to bottle this state and give it to the world.

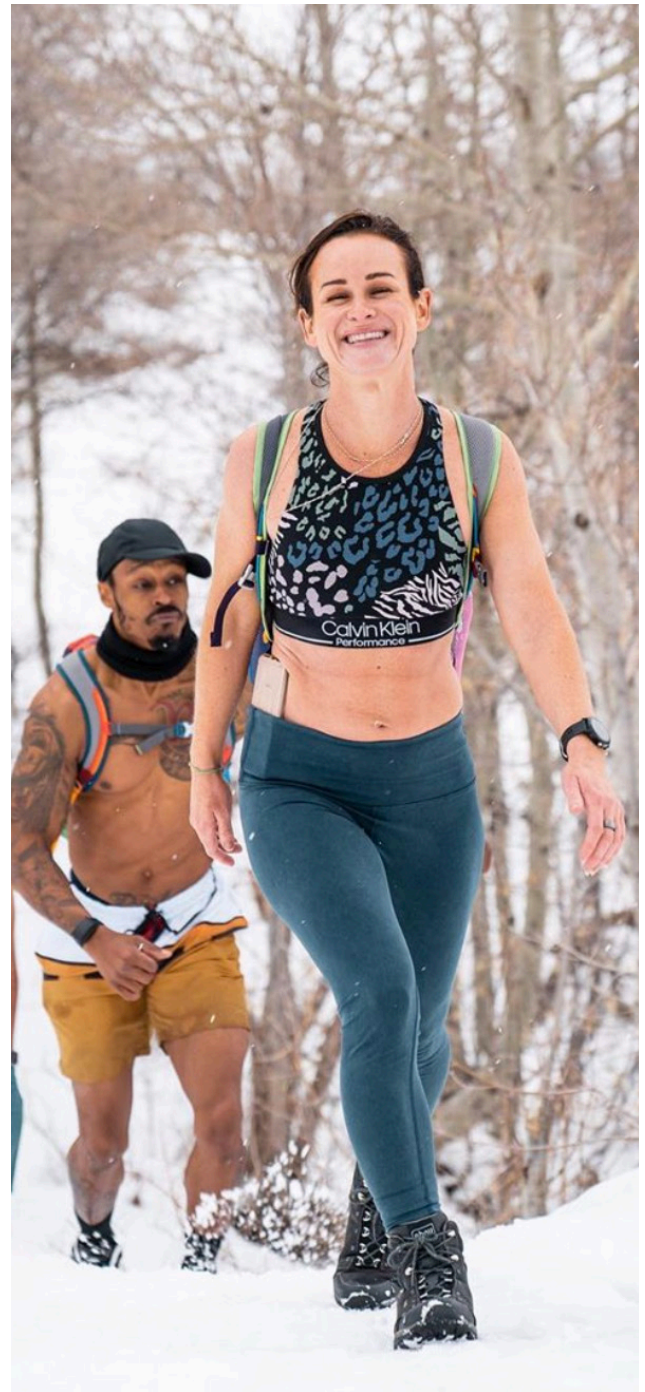
At the end of the workshop, my participants leave with the undeniable glow of someone who is no longer afraid to grow, be free and thrive. Strangers become aware of how connected they are to the like-minded people they meet, the other seekers. They are not scared of rejection. Experiencing survival mode has unleashed feel good chemicals. They are now planning Saturday night breathing sessions and Sunday morning ice parties. This is team bonding at it's most powerful.

My vision for the future lies in our youth. To pass on tools that give our kids the ability to take control of their bodies and brains, to prepare them for the act of learning while managing their response to internal and external stimulation. As I sit in the plane, flying to Utah for more work, I stop to reflect on where this all started for me – three years ago, climbing into a plastic tub, frozen over with ice, first thing every morning, during a Jindabyne winter, smiling at my boys who would be cheering me on through the glass door, my hero's, my biggest inspirations.

Leah Scott,
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