

Intro: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that, do you know you have brown and white fat and that cold showers can actually help you lose weight? White fat is the fat you get when you don't have mitochondria that work very well or you eat a lot of inflammatory foods, a lot of sugar and things like that. Brown fat is good fat that keeps you warm and protects you from cold. What makes it brown is that it has more mitochondria. A study recently showed that exposure to really cold showers ramps up your brown fat activity by only 15 times, and that could translate to about nine pounds a year. As you know, I like to foreshadow the guest. I just talked about cold. You probably could figure out who the guest is. But while we're doing that, we're talking about mitochondrial function. Somewhere around here I have my stuff.

For today's product mention, which you can expect. Hey, after all, I make good stuff. I just came out with a couple different methylated B vitamins. It turns out that just about everyone can use methylated B vitamins, but a lot of us, about a third of us, don't handle B vitamins that are not activated this way. Methylfolate for your heart and neurons and methyl B12, which is really important for all sorts of neurological function. These are things you can take and things that I take every day that improve the ability of your body to do what it's supposed to do. If you're going to do the stuff we talk about in today's show, which has a lot to do with cold and with having more control of your breathing, then you're definitely going to want to make sure that you give yourselves the building blocks to have healthy neurons. Methyl B12, methylfolate, these are things that I take every single day, have for years, on the Bulletproof Top 10 Supplement List, they're now available from Bulletproof.com. On to the show.

Today's guest, if I didn't already give it away, is none other than Wim Hof, also known as "The Iceman." He's one of the world's most famed multicellular extremophiles. An extremophile is a single-celled organism that lives near a volcanic vent or at the bottom of a frozen ocean, and they tend to be ugly bacteria. Wim Hof is not an ugly bacteria at all. He's a very attractive man, but one who's climbed Everest I think was it naked carrying ice bags? Not quite. But in shorts? He's developed a breathing meditation technique that's awesome. It's one of those things. He's pretty famous for it. If you've ever seen the ads of a guy diving into cold water and swimming with seals and things like that. Wim has control of his biology in a way that makes the rest of us blush. But on top of that, he works with scientists and doctors and he's on a mission to just unlock our evolutionary potential.

I met Wim for the first time in person when our mutual friend, Rick Rubin, brought him to the Bulletproof Conference two years ago. It was a guest appearance. I hadn't planned it. Wim came up on stage and said, "Dave, are you going to do this? My breathing technique." He has me hyperventilating and holding my breath empty and doing pushups right before my keynote presentation to the point that I'm starting to hallucinate a little bit, which happens. I gave my talk after Wim basically put me through

the wringer, but it was awesome. Wim, welcome to the show. I'm so happy to have you on.

Wim: Thank you. Thank you, Dave. Thank you for welcoming me on your show.

Dave: You're welcome. Wim, for people listening, and probably a couple hundred thousand people hear the interview the first few weeks of this, some of them don't know who you are. How did you get to be The Iceman? You do stuff that's weird even by my standards, and that's a compliment by the way. But how did you get to be this way?

Wim: There is more than meets the eye, only I felt it but I did not know what. If that feeling is nagging you from the inside, you become a soul searcher. It brought me into all kinds of disciplines, esotericism, religions, traditions, cultures, many countries and travelings. But I couldn't really match up with that feeling until I met the ice cold water just in my backyard in wintertime. That's in Amsterdam when I was 17, which is 40 years ago. I went in, and then I knew. The soul search was really on track there. I felt a connection, deep connection. From there, because it made me feel so good inside, mind-body, I came back and did it again and again and it became a regular practice.

Soon I found out that the ice cold water makes you breathe different. To become effectively against the exposure of the ice cold, you have to breathe deeper into the tissue, bring oxygen, change the chemistry, become alkaline. Then suddenly the mind is able to influence into the body and resist the ice cold, which is an impact. From there, it made me feel so good, and that all on my command. I began to challenge my body even more, see where's the limit. But the limit really is far, far ahead. We lost that. We lost the ability to connect within, to change our chemistry in the depth of the tissue. Therefore, there is a slight acidity going on in our tissue, past the blood in the tissue.

If that stays day in, day out, for 10 years or 20 years, then of course we will get these autoimmune diseases, inflammation, deregulated DNA. That's logical, because the garbage has never been cleansed. This is what breathing does. Deep, right breathing the way I learned it has shown its effectivity in the ice cold. There I did 26 world records.

Dave: Wow.

Wim: It only showed, if you have more control inside over your chemistry through the right way of breathing, then, yes, you are suddenly able to survive in situations or to endure extreme impact not only of cold, but also of oxygen deprivation, like Mount Everest in shorts, or the heat, like not drinking a full marathon without a meter of training or a yard of training. I'm not a runner. But if I want it, I can run. I can do anything because I command in my body. That's my little intro story.

Dave: It resonates really deeply with me. My new book, "Head Strong," is about the mitochondria in our body. I've come to believe that these little tiny bacteria that became basically the batteries in our cells, that they're calling the shots a lot more than we like to think they are. They're the ones who say, "Stop! You'll die!" Because they have this bacterial level of consciousness that's like, "If you push too hard, you'll die!" A

lot of our inner conversation about controlling our own biology is actually getting them to make more energy or getting them to vibrate the right way or to do what they're supposed to do.

First question for you there is, do you believe that we're communicating with our body down at that level, or is this more of a mental game that we're playing with ourselves?

Wim: Yes, exactly. Very good question. Very deep. We are able to program by the neurology of the brain as long as the body is alkaline into the DNA, into the genomes, into the mitochondria, influence in the mitochondrial processes by aerobic dissimilation, creating much more ATP. You know the ATP. The molecules with the energy. That's your work too. I do it through breathing and food, of course. It's also chemistry. Food must be food and breath must be deep. If they go together, then suddenly the mind, the neural activity of the mind, is able to reach by neural activity directly into mitochondrial activity, into DNA expression. It's all there.

You know what? I just three weeks ago was in Michigan in their Wayne State University to do neuroscience. They had me hooked within a fMRI to see what's happening in the brain while I'm exposed to cold.

Dave: Cool.

Wim: Yes. It was cool. You got to listen to this. Day two. Day two, they had me fMRI and exposed by wetsuit with all kinds of tubes wherein ice water was being poured and flowing back and forth. It really had to go many times, because I was warming up the water. Really. Yeah man. The power within us is big, is great. But something very new, groundbreaking happened. The second day I was there, I was not allowed to do anything, not with my mind, and I was only able to do something with my mind but I did do nothing. They had me hooked with a temperature sensor on the skin to see if my skin temperature was going down when exposed to ice water. Yes, it went down drastically, like two times. Two times seven and a half minutes. Then it went up because then they stopped with the ice water.

But then, day three, I went in and I told myself, "Today, I'm going to show the difference of what a thought, what a neural active flow, commanded by me, is doing within my body related to the skin temperature when exposed to ice water." It has been shown four times seven and a half minutes that the skin temperature was not going down because I programmed it to do so, and that only by a thought. What I did before was breathing to make my body alkaline. Then the neural activity of the mind is suddenly able to go at light speed through the body into the genomes, into the mitochondria activity, into the adrenal axis, and do it. Very straight.

This shows that the sending neural activity flow after the intervention of the mind and receiving an ascending neural activity, like cold, comes in, then I decide, "No. I don't want you to interfere with my bodily processes." Then, suddenly, this intervention of my mind is able to command the descending neural activity flow to the body to ignite the right amount of epinephrine, adrenaline to influence into the hypothalamus, the

thermoregulation, and thus the skin temperature is not going to go down. This is a huge potential. I'm waiting now for the results, but they already saw these outcomes, the professors over there. This will show new light on what the mind is capable of. That means, placebo no longer. Nocebo no longer. Just positive thinking, your own, which is very powerful and able to go into any process of the body. That's the way nature meant it to be. What do you say related to say mitochondria are we able to go inward by neural activity? Absolutely yes. A whole lot more will come from there.

Dave: You talk about alkaline in breathing, which is relaxing to me, because so many people talk about, "Oh, if you eat meat, you won't be alkaline, or if you don't drink alkaline water," or some other kind of BS. In about 1999, I got a feedback machine that taught you how to control how much CO<sub>2</sub> or oxygen you were breathing out. It was a feedback loop for your breath gas. The biggest driver of alkalinity is breath, because you can hold onto carbon dioxide, which increases acidity, or you can breathe it out, which increases alkalinity. But this isn't talked about in the world of health, where we're drinking these fancy water machine things. What's your take on alkalinity from food and water versus air?

Wim: Food, water, air shouldn't be polluted, but it is. It is processed. We actively and consciously need to intervene. If we breathe better, the way we do it, yeah. I do everything through science. It has been shown in a recent study that's completed with 48 people. It showed the average alkalinity was raising to a peak level of 7.8, which the normal natural standard should be 7.3, 7.4, where most of us are lower because of processed food and the chemistry and the fine dust in the air and all what we are doing as a society. We have to learn to deal with that. It showed that we, in this study, with the right way of breathing, are suddenly very capable to bring back the natural standards for alkalinity.

Dave: Just with air, you're saying? Without any of the other stuff?

Wim: Yes. Just with air.

Dave: Yes.

Wim: Of course, if you drink polluted water or if you drink or eat processed food, then the body is not built to take that on. It needs to break it down, bring molecules, supplement it. It's a whole way, and that takes a lot of energy. It takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of stress, because there's all sympathetic nervous system activity. Thus, stress comes into the body, begins to oxidate, and it is no good. Breath is one way. Food should be food, and water should be water. The rest is positive thinking. You are able within your body by not only positive thinking, it's your neural activity. You know how to maintain balance. You can feel it. Your mind is a big player there. We will show this together with neuroscientific new studies together with, say, Stanford, Michigan, Germany, Hanover Universities. They all go into these matters like emotion and things. Yeah man. We are doing it. Yes.

Dave: I run 40 Years of Zen, which is the highest in private applied neuroscience brain training facility for executives in Seattle. If you're ever in Seattle and I can get you for a day, we can put clinical-grade EEG on your head and quantify these states and actually even make them more trainable. If I can ever lure you there for a day, I'll give you some feedback using custom hardware and software available nowhere else.

Wim: Very soon. That is in LA, isn't it?

Dave: This is in Seattle.

Wim: Oh, Seattle. Seattle, I don't know. I'm doing an American tour very soon. Thing is, they already measured with another equipment these breathing techniques, that they are well exercised. They bring about theta, delta, and gamma.

Dave: We actually train those exact states. There's some nuances. Because of the custom-developed hardware we've got, where we can quantify them, but also then make them more teachable so that we can take someone and say, "Well, this is the type of delta that you are targeting, so when you do something that's closer to what Wim has done we'll give you a reward for it." When someone wants to tighten their Wim Hof Method, we could actually show them the brain stage, give them a beep when they do it right, which can speed training.

Wim: I would love it. I would love it. I think we are able to make it.

Dave: We can coordinate that.

Wim: We are able within seven, eight minutes to get in a deep state of meditative state, normally.

Dave: We'll measure that. Here's another question. One of my buddies, Dr. Barry Morguelan, a UCLA surgeon, studied for 20 years with a Chinese lineage that was the root of the Shaolin practice. He actually trained it with cover yourself in wet sheets and melt a hole in a glacier by meditating, and wrote the mitochondrial meditation that's in "Head Strong." There's 12 living grandmasters of that tradition right now. I'm wondering, did you look at ancient Chinese or Tibetan or Hindu or Shamanic, these various states, when you were learning this? Or is this entirely just self-taught because you were paying attention?

Wim: In New York they call me a [pretalk 00:19:56] Buddha. A [pretalk 00:19:58] Buddha. Somebody who has become enlightened but out of the tradition of Buddhism. I say boo! The Buddha is in you. The Buddha is in everybody of us. It doesn't matter. I never had the money to go to Tibet or to China in those days, when I began to do the cold practice. I just began to do it by myself. I found out that the cold is my teacher, my guru. Then, five years ago, I met [Areen Pochev 00:20:37], who is an expert in tummo. I told him about my practices I teach. I think it's very nice. There are 12 masters.

But what I bring to the world is actually the essence of Buddhism, and that is compassion. Compassion is love. Love is composed now and scientifically endorsed as being happiness, strength, and health. Those are related to the endocrine system and the immune system. Now that I have translated into data and without speculation, everybody is very able and it is very accessible and very effective in just a couple of days to get into the autonomic nervous system level, which makes it where normally those practices take years. That's what we needed, because we have a different lifestyle, a different way of our mind works different in the West, yet it is very dominant. It takes over all the world but has no peace within itself.

We have shown now how to effectively in the rhythm of our Western mind how to control the parasympathetic nervous system, the peace-bringer within, and the sympathetic nervous system, which is more related to our daily actions, the neocortex. The deeper limbic system and brainstem is within our control. Parasympathetic nervous system, the peace in all, it is being controlled, entered, as well as the sympathetic nervous system. When those two systems are able to be tapped into, then you have more sense of control, absolute more sense of control, over your life, over your energy management, over health, happiness, and strength. I know those people. I've been doing kung fu, karate, zen, [foreign language 00:22:59], Pencak silat. All those disciplines I went into wholeheartedly.

Dave: Yes.

Wim: But the cold ... Yes. As you say, nice. I say ice. Ice is nice. That's where I got it. I have to say, respect and chapeau for what you have done.

Dave: Thank you, Wim.

Wim: But we have to, in linking up together, together we are stronger. I love it.

Dave: The definition of enlightenment is something that I've been interested in for a long time. I have been to Tibet. I was fortunate to get three months to travel around to learn meditation from the masters and to freeze my ass off at 18,000 feet on Mount Kailash and to push my limits. We'll put it that way. The definition of enlightenment that I ended up with is that it's when you have full awareness of and control over every single cell in your body, because the cells themselves sense the world around you and they're connected to the world, they're connected to the earth, they're connected to other people. It's getting rid of the lies you tell yourself and the beliefs you have, the self-limiting beliefs, that sit between you and this level of awareness and control.

I'm nowhere near where I think I can go and would in no way call myself enlightened, but I can see that there's a possibility of having that and I can see what cold does. Thanks to your work, I have a digitally-controlled cold tub downstairs so I can dial in the temperature and it'll hold it there. I have a cryotherapy machine. I've got oxygen restriction things and atmosphere pressure changing chambers and all this crazy stuff, because pushing your cells seems to do something to your brain. But I don't know that I really know all the things it does. It sounds like you may have more data on that than

the average person by a long shot. What do you think of that definition of enlightenment? Is that in alignment with what you've seen, or do you even have a definition of it?

Wim: The natural tendency of the mind is to gather and to attract matter. If we learn how to disassociate with matter consciously, then everybody becomes not burdened with the heaviness of matter and becomes enlightened while being. It's just physiology. Now I've shown in Michigan in the fMRI how to disassociate from ice cold on your body, and thus have control over the ice cold. Everything we come across in our lives is impact. Impact could be heat, cold, oxygen deprivation. It could be grief. It could be Bacillus, bacteria, virus. It could be stress. It's all translated into matter. Matter and impact on our body by a resonance non-seen and seen. It is all impact on our body, on our nervous system, on our neurology. There in the neurology we have the capability to disassociate from the impact on our physiology. I just proved it. It's going to be a new dimension where people learn the ability, the natural ability, to disassociate or to become enlightened as a physiological entity within our power.

Dave: This will happen in our lifetime, just for people listening. Wim, I fully endorse what you're saying. It's doable. Your body will tell you 10,000 times a day, "You're going to die if you do that," and it's always lying, unless you actually die. You have so much capacity before you get to that point that it's the fear that's holding you back. You've done something weird, where everyone I know who knows you, including me, says the same thing, "He's crazy." We always say that as a compliment.

Wim: I am. I am.

Dave: And that you're fearless.

Wim: Yes.

Dave: That's what we mean, is that you're fearless. Not crazy. But we always say crazy, because it makes the things you do appear crazy. But you're not at all crazy. You're smart. You're just unafraid in a way that I don't know anyone else is. How do the rest of us get to that level of unafraidness? If that's a word.

Wim: Unafraidness, fearless, or crazy about life.

Dave: There you go.

Wim: Remember the mother lifting up a car because her son is underneath. Their love, real love, is stronger than the universe. Real love, you will find if you go into yourself, into the real essence not learned in the schools, but learned within ourselves. It's there. As it is not in the schools, we are changing the books in the university and we already did on biology and physics. We showed that the autonomic nervous system can be influenced together with the endocrine system and the innate immune system, all considered to be not influence-able by human will. Now it is. Now we are showing by scientific research that we are able to get into the brain and go into a direct essence, the soul, experience

it, be it, pure awareness. Disassociation from meta, as I explained before, then become awareness.

That awareness is so beyond fear, is so beating and feeling, you to be in the essence, being at home, nobody can damage you. If you just hold a little of that within you, you know it's love. You know it's stronger than the universe, and you can challenge yourself in a number ... I've been in thousands of situations, challenges, and I always have this connection with my essence, with my soul.

Dave: You're using love to turn off your fear.

Wim: Yes sir.

Dave: In the work that I've done, and the work especially with the neurofeedback, I focus on gratitude first as a gateway to enable you to forgive harms so that you're more capable of love. In your view of the world, how important is the sense of gratitude versus the sense of love, and where does forgiveness come into play for you, or does it?

Wim: Gratitude I have every day for when I rise. It's what a yoga, the surya namaskar, it all begins with that. I just have a natural, the sun is so beautiful, the surya they call it in Sanskrit. It doesn't matter. The energy is there. We can link up. We can fulfill our purpose. You know what? Forgiveness, there is no good to get if you hate people. Because then you become negative in your thoughts. They will go back into your mitochondria, your DNA, your genomes, and they are destructive. You better be positive and in line with love. Then the soul will express itself.

Dave: How much time do you spend worrying about politics?

Wim: To me, I don't see politicians. I see people who are eager to deal with their own insecurity going into power. If I get the chance to get into healthcare, and we will, we are into regular healthcare, getting into it, then that's power beyond politics. Politics was about debating who is the best and what is the best. I do it by science. Actually I'm a politician. I'm a cold-hearted politician showing with facts and data nonspeculatively the best way. We are into it.

Dave: I like that. The reason I was asking about that was more from a personal perspective, because you talk about how hating other people costs your mitochondria, causes genetic changes. We know this. It's called epigenetics. That science is done. We don't know all the mechanisms. In fact, I think mitochondria are the gateway to epigenetics. But we know flat out, you hate, it costs you biologically. The reason I'm saying that is there's a lot of people listening on both sides of the political divide in whatever country they're in who are spending a lot of time worrying and hating about politics, which is affecting them genetically. I'm guessing that you spend almost none of your cycles even paying attention to that stuff, much less worrying or thinking or hating. Just looking for a little, what do you personally do?

Wim: Politics, bollocks, almost the same.

Dave: There you go. They're bad for your mitochondria, right?

Wim: Yes. We need to unify the world and not be different political parties. Controversial thinking is creating tensions, and one wants to be better than the other. It's like the Islam wants to be better than the Christianity, Christianity, and the religions. Now it's politics. It's the same thing. They go past the real essence, the soul. You know what I think? We should be able to guarantee for every mother in the world that to be able to guarantee happiness, strength, and health for her kid, regardless of nationality, culture, background whatsoever. That the most essential of our planet is getting back from happiness, strength, and health, harmony with nature is a logical step. Then we have the problems solved.

Another thing about food. When food is food and we don't eat too much, we breathe more. I want to do scientific studies on how much more ATP is being produced because are caused by the right way of breathing and then the food, the intermittent fasting, things like that. I do it already 40 years. To me, it was a natural thing. It brings about the right way of energy. It makes the body go into the digestive processes then get into a fast. Then the mitochondrial activity is being optimized. Your serotonin in the body, which is cycled in the brain. They get the ketones. It's all there. We have to go back to simplicity. That's what we do right here, right now. Thank you.

Dave: I'm going to ask you a question I've never asked on Bulletproof Radio in 360 or so episodes. Do you believe in reincarnation?

Wim: Yes.

Dave: You do.

Wim: It doesn't end. Absolutely. It didn't begin with our birth and it doesn't end with our death. It's just coming into a body which needs a preceding power and then being able to get into a body, and when the body is not functioning anymore, then it really is not stopping. It's just soulless. Then the body is not necessary anymore. Yes. There is afterlife and beforelife. It all has purpose. It is also Buddha or Rumi who is saying, but I can tell you the same thing, "All good deeds will stay and all bad deeds will be no good on your record." Whatever the way we understand it, the good is the good and will always remain good. You better be good.

Dave: I like that. The reason I'm asking is that I'm trying to figure out a rational explanation for why you, even at a young age, you're 17, you're doing all these things, and for 40 years you've practiced intermittent fasting even though no one taught you that. Either you magically just figured all this stuff out or you came in with it. I'm not going to say that I know the exact answer there, but it sounds to me like you had a good start at least, just from an external perspective. Thanks for going there and answering that question. That's always controversial, at least for some people.

Wim: I can imagine.

Dave: I want to make sure that listeners who aren't familiar with your work get at least a quick understanding of the three pillars. By the way, everyone listening, you need to read Wim Hof's book, "Becoming The Iceman," that will tell you all the stuff you need to know about this. But can you walk us through the three pillars of your method?

Wim: Yes, of course, Dave. That is breathing. Breathing is caused by the cold. The cold as well. Breathing into the tissue is number one. Number two, the cold is training the vascular system to optimize the vascular system to its natural beautiful standards. Then, the last one is the mind. Mindset. We are doing scientific research on all of those limbs. They appear to be very effective and very accessible for everybody in just a very short period of time. That means a couple of days to learn to tap into the autonomic nervous system, relate it to the innate immune system and endocrine system. That means happiness, health, and strength is guaranteed. It's up to you to do it. People are able to get into the science, read up, and see, "Oh yeah." In those populations, it's just a matter, are you going to do it? Then this happens. If you don't do it, you're all free, it's no dogma behind.

The three pillars, breath, cold exposure, gradual cold exposure, and mindset, those are the three pillars of this method. They have been exercised 40 years of fieldwork in all kinds of extreme conditions like the North Pole, Polar Circle, on the highest mountains of the world, and all in shorts. That's exposing myself like a guinea pig. Then I passed it on to laboratory settings and they found out that we are the first ones to get into the autonomic nervous system and all the other systems going so deep more than ever before or scientifically in the scientific history written. Three pillars: breath, cold, mindset.

Dave: To do the cold therapy, for someone who's listening, they've got 20 extra pounds of fat, they probably aren't in very good shape, what's the first step to getting used to cold?

Wim: The first step is your mindset. You have to know that by now, or otherwise you get into the scientific studies, we are able just in a couple of days. The first test group I took, the first 18 people I took of a scientific study without prior experience in the cold, four days later they were able to endure for five hours in their shorts outside in wintertime in a Polish mountain from minus 10 Centigrade, which is really cold. Four below Fahrenheit is like minus 20 or something, and go into minus 28 in a period of five hours. They all were very able to do that, that only for four days. Actually nobody, if he has a gut, a real serious condition, then all people will only benefit from gradually go into the cold.

How it is done? By taking, after your hot warm shower, you take a cold one for 30 seconds for one week. Then the vascular system, which is 80,000 miles in each and every one of us, is being optimized in its condition. All the little primitive muscles plus the reflexes of the capillaries, they're all optimized. Then suddenly you are able in day eight, you can feel it, you are able to go directly into the cold for, say, one minute, no problem. You know what happens? A whole lot more activity because all of those little muscles, all those reflexes of the vascular system related to the autonomic nervous system, it's all working the way nature meant it to be. They are bringing the oxygen a whole lot better to the immune cells. Heartbeat is going to go down with 30 beats a

minute, 24 hours a day, a lot less stress thus. It's all logical. A cold shower a day keeps the doctor away.

Dave: I love it. I definitely echo that advice in "Head Strong," in my book, saying, "Look, this is free. It's not that hard to do." You have a beard, so I don't know the answer to this, but if I put cold water on my face and chest it makes shaving really difficult. I haven't figured out that.

Wim: It's because the capillaries close.

Dave: This is just a random maybe guy-only question. If I do my 30 seconds to one minute of cold water that I do in the morning, if I put the warm water on again just enough to soften my beard so I can shave, am I losing the good effect? Because I don't know the answer to this.

Wim: No. Absolutely not. The skin is the biggest organ. You know Paul Newman?

Dave: Yeah.

Wim: Every time before he got into a performance, he held his head, his face, for 30 seconds into ice water. Made him feel good.

Dave: For the dive reflex.

Wim: Yes.

Dave: I actually for a long time when I was first writing "The Bulletproof Diet," every night I had a pan in the freezer that was half full of water. I would just add tap water on top to what was frozen and I'd use a snorkel and I had two minutes of freezing face.

Wim: I want to see that picture.

Dave: It totally works. It's so ridiculous. Just cold face is ... It changes your whole brain. People don't believe it till they try it. It's real. I got out of that habit just because I have bigger gear. Have you ever played with a Vasper System? This is where you exercise doing cardio sitting on running ice water with ice water compression around your arms and legs and even on your head. I have one of those downstairs. I've been doing it, and it's interesting. Is this the type of thing you've ever played with?

Wim: I've never played with any device, but I always washed my face with ice water. I loved it. I know the refreshing experience of that. Good. Good.

Dave: What you're saying about this five hours in cold reminds me. When I was in Tibet, on Mount Kailash, I had a porter. I was traveling with this attractive young woman. This young Tibetan guy, who was maybe 100 pounds, he was walking around. It's 10 degrees below zero. He's walking around in thin blue jeans and fake Nike tennis shoes and a little leather jacket. I'm wearing a parka. I'm trained in high-altitude mountaineering and

hypothermia and all that. This guy is showing off for the girl, so he jumps on a frozen river and falls in up to his crotch. Now I'm thinking, "It's a 30-mile-an-hour wind, it's 10 degrees below zero." I look at the guy. I'm like, "God, this guy's going to die. He's going to get hypothermia."

I had an extra parka. I take it out of my bag and I hand him the parka. He just looks at me, thinks I want him to carry it, takes my jacket, and puts it in his backpack and keeps walking. I was like, "I am so shamed by this guy." He's 10 times tougher than I am. He can carry twice what I can carry. He weighs half what I weigh. He's impervious to the elements. He's just this little Tibetan guy, maybe 22, 24 years old. I was humbled by seeing that. But that's an example of what we're capable of just when that's what you do. Just a proof point to what you said.

Wim: Yes. It is. I got also the first time I went to India with the soul search, I thought India was going to be great and very excited. But the man who impressed me most was a little guy sitting in New Delhi somewhere in the traffic all day long cross-legged. He made me a little, I don't know, looking like a cigarette but it's not cigarette. It's just some herbs. He gives it to smell. It took him a quarter of an hour and he asked me a fragment of a rupee. Such a dedication. Such a peace. Such a serenity. We, with our Western minds, we never expose our bodies to, say, the ice cold or the heat or sit down all day long and have such a patience, such a resilience, while we all have it. That's a piece of physiology. We better get equated a little bit with that again and become aware that we are able to tap into those systems, because we suffer too much of autoimmune diseases, cancer, depression, and all that. That's because of our way of thinking.

This beautiful example you just gave of the parka and he puts it in. He's got a different mindset altogether. Like this little man in the middle of the traffic. Those were the people who impressed me most, not the gurus, not the sadus, and all those people who are exhibiting what they are capable of. No. I want to go into the depth, which is simply there. Those people have it still paired with humbleness. That's beautiful.

Dave: It is. It is beautiful when you are lucky enough to experience that. I think a lot of times when you're in the West you don't see it, or if it happens around you you're not paying attention to it. Even if you could have seen it, you weren't practicing awareness so it wasn't present for you.

I have another question for you. I spend a lot of my time, and I realize my brain wasn't working as well as I wanted it to in my mid 20s. I used to weigh 300 pounds. I've lost about 100 pounds of fat. I've really changed my brain and my awareness levels. But I started really pushing on the personal development and meditation and spirituality and just learning those parts of myself. But I was fat and tired all the time. I've come to the conclusion, and I don't know if you're going to agree with this. That's why I'm asking you. I concluded that it's easier to become more aware and to have that personal growth when your cells work better, that fixing your hardware is something you should do before you work on your software. Because it's easier to work on your software there. But what you're saying is, if you get your software right, your hardware will just fix itself. Which is it?

Wim: I say just go back to the way naturally we are meant to be. Our happiness, strength, and health, that should be the guide. Whatever it takes. Not everybody needs to go into weight loss to be happy, strong, and healthy.

Dave: Correct. The Buddha was kind of thin.

Wim: Yes. Laugh your belly off. Being slim or being fat, it doesn't matter. Being strong, happy, and healthy, that's the thing. That's the guide. If you are happy, strong, and healthy, you radiate the right energy. That's love. Because you resonate, you have people resonate with your energy, which is a good one. Just become happy, strong, and healthy. Very simple. Then the soul is expressing through you. You're radiating energy like the sun. We keep it simple. Then, if you're not happy because you've got too much weight or if it is only a concept, no. Just, once again, keep it simple. Happy, strong, and healthy. That it is. We are built to be able to do that. That's it.

Dave: You've reversed autoimmune conditions like lupus, asthma, Parkinson's, arthritis, Hashimoto's I'm guessing, using cold and mindfulness, which is pretty profound. What's the most profound reversal you've seen using the Wim Hof Method?

Wim: Depression is also a big one. I want to tackle all these things. The anxiety together with the Stanford University, or the soul, the mind power, together with the Michigan and emotional reactivity in Hanover. But I see it every day. We've got a community of 35 or 40,000 people who are actively doing this with all kinds of conditions, yes or no. I see miracles happening just because people get back again into the simplicity. Breath work. Cold exposure is exposing yourself to the natural elements. We've got a body that is able to balance out with that and then become optimized. That's logic. The mindset should be positive. Then incredible cures come about.

If the body is able to get into its own balance, into its own plasticity, into its own mitochondrial surplus, then it directly heals itself. But we all go so fast that we consume all the energy and we keep on the sympathetic nervous system activity, thus the body hasn't got a moment of relief. But if we learn consciously to bring the body from anxiety into relief modes, it works on the cell level, the mitochondrial level. ATP comes free. Plasticity in the body and neuroplasticity in the mind is a fact. All these diseases you just mentioned, they are cured. The body has the power to cure itself. We need to make the body able to cure itself.

Now we got this method and together with food then it's very able to find miraculous, almost seemingly miraculous cures. Mother Nature knows. We have to just go back to Mother Nature. Because it sometimes looks like, "Yeah, we can cure everything and cancer and this and that." No. I go through science. But I see miracles happen every day. I got people to thank me, mothers who have a depressed son and they lose their depression. You make people happy. You become enlightened only because of that. Or people with arthritis for 20 years and having 15 medicines, no medicines anymore. No pain. Fully back in control. Being able to do anything with their body. It's a miracle. That's life. We bring people back to the life, and that's a miracle. From there, a new journey starts. That's what we do.

Dave: You do it really, really well and in a way that is fantastic. You have the Wim Hof Academy. How many people a year are you teaching now?

Wim: We select the people on their schooling, educational and schooling abilities, because we want equality. It's all at the beginning. But anybody who's motivated can join this academy. There are doctors, psychiatrists, but also carpenters. It doesn't matter. As long as you are into humanity, into freedom, into belief, and you're able to digest all the physiology. Being a doctor or a carpenter, it doesn't matter. You have the healing capacity and ability if you're just righteously in the essence of yourself. We hand over a couple of tools backed up with physiology and educational skills.

I just last weekend had 40 new Dutch teachers, upcoming teachers, instructors. In America, we do it here too, and in Australia. Next week I go to Australia. There we will do a training school as well. It's really spreading. Actually, we are too little to take it on all and selecting. This is going to be, through this science, it needs to be spread throughout the world. It's something so accessible and so simple. I want to join up with the right people, like yourself, to bring back nature, the essence, the soul, the noncomprehensible, bring it back to simplicity, cold water.

Dave: Wim, you're connected with some of the most influential and good people that I know already. Certainly I'll help you. I definitely give you credit in "Head Strong" and talk about your method just at a high level and recommend it. For people listening, if this conversation inspired you, and I hope it did, then you should check out the Wim Hof Academy and at a minimum read Wim's book, because there's some great knowledge here. This isn't something that takes you 20 years to do. That whole idea of taking decades to do something, it doesn't make sense in the world we live in right now when you can do it in weeks, months, or a year and radically transform what your brain could do. That's certainly my path. That's Wim's path. There are many others working on solving this problem. It's an honor to have you on the show, Wim.

I have a question for you that I've asked every guest, and I have no idea what you're going to say. If someone came to you tomorrow and they said, "Wim, I want to perform better at everything I do in my life. What are the three most important things I need to learn?" What would you tell them? How do you summarize all of this in just three points?

Wim: Cold shower, deeper breathing, belief.

Dave: That was predictable.

Wim: Sorry. It is. I said, but it is.

Dave: Great. Great answer. I appreciate you being on Bulletproof Radio. Is there anything else you'd like to share, URLs you'd like to send people to, or any other thing like that?

Wim: I just love everybody. That's one. Two, a lot of greetings to Rick and his wife.

Dave: In fact, he was teaching me your breathing methods, because I've done [inaudible 00:58:38]. I've done a bunch of different breathing methods. I actually was doing your perfectly done method with Rick in Hawaii not that long ago. We were talking about you. It's kind of funny to bring it full circle.

Wim: Full circle.

Dave: It is indeed. Wim, thanks for your time and thanks for your energy and for your love and passion and for sharing all the good stuff you do. I am definitely a fan and an admirer, and I will help you spread the good word.

Wim: Dave, thank you very much. Made me smile.

Dave: All right. Enjoy your day.

Wim: Thanks. Thanks, man.