



**Four ways to overcome the  
silence surrounding domestic  
violence involving Wim Hof**

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# Why I disassociate myself from Wim Hof: physical and psychological domestic violences minimised and invisible despite their objectification on two occasions

I worked as an official instructor of the Wim Hof method for four years, from 2021 to 2024, and I trained hundreds of people in this practice, which consists of being warm in the cold thanks to the breath and the mind. Since January 2019, I've been practising this method every day. Today, however, I am announcing **that I am completely disassociating myself from Wim Hof and the brand that bears his name.**

It's a difficult decision, with heavy consequences, both financial and symbolic for me. **But serious events have caused too much cognitive dissonance with my values**, and I need to talk about them publicly. In 2012 and 2015, Wim Hof was convicted of domestic violence, both physical and psychological, facts that have been substantiated by the courts. However, in September 2024, when an article by *De Volkskrant* (a Dutch newspaper renowned for its seriousness) brought these facts to light and asked for his point of view, **Wim Hof chose to play down his violence and blame his victims.** Since then, in each of his official speeches on the subject, he has persisted in playing down the acts he himself committed and **presenting himself as a victim of what he calls "the murder of a public figure"**

## Everyone knows, but almost everyone stays silent

At the time, I tried to understand why he had chosen this defensive stance instead of assuming his responsibilities. I wanted to open a dialogue to find solutions. **I shared my questions** with Innerfire (Wim Hof's company) and several instructor friends. But almost every time I tried, **I came up against a wall of silence or avoidance.** I only found support from one of the ten or so instructors I contacted. **These attitudes of collective silence help to perpetuate a system of violence that is intolerable to me.**

## Speaking out: exposing the facts, understanding the mechanisms, taking action for a shared future with concrete solutions for everyone

That's why today **I'm speaking out in support of victims of domestic violence, highlighting the mechanisms of minimisation and silencing at work, and proposing concrete solutions to overcome them.** It's an ambitious but realistic and necessary step, if only to offer a more peaceful world to my son and our children. **This concerns you, whoever you are, because systemic violence is never isolated: it affects and involves the whole of society, collectively.**

In this text, I will :

1. Review the context of the events, with sourced facts.
2. Analyse Wim Hof's responses and those of his entourage.

3. Suggest concrete solutions for taking action, whether you're a practitioner, an instructor or simply an observer from outside this method.

## An invitation to act with full knowledge of the facts

This text is not an attack, nor is it a judgement. I write it with the friendship, respect and tenderness I have for the instructors, Innerfire, the trainees, the practitioners and even Wim Hof. But above all, I'm writing this out of solidarity with all victims of domestic violence, who are the only people to be pitied and supported here. **This text is an invitation to face up to the implications of our individual actions on a collective level, and to act with full knowledge of the facts. We all have room for manoeuvre to contribute to a world where domestic violence is recognised and actively combated.** It's not about being perfect, but about recognising a shared responsibility for a peaceful world. And that starts with naming things :

## The facts: physical and psychological violence recorded in 2012 and 2015

### Physical abuse of teenage stepson documented by experts in 2012

Wim Hof was on the verge of throwing a vase at his stepson Christiaan after having hit him when the police arrived. That was in 2010, and in 2012, the courts **ruled** that this **was** physical violence and charged him :

- a sentence of 3 weeks' community service
- a fine
- a two-week ban on approaching the family of his ex-girlfriend (Caroline), in particular because he had made death threats

### Psychological violence against his own child confirmed by experts in 2015

In 2015, a child protection institution in the Netherlands recognised that his own son Noah, whom he had with his ex-girlfriend Caroline, had suffered such severe psychological violence that Wim has been forbidden to see him ever since. Today, Noah is 23, no longer a child but an adult, and according to his testimony for the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant* (renowned for its seriousness), he still refuses to see his father.

## These events resurfaced in 2024 because Caroline, Wim Hof's former partner, and their son Noah refused to allow their story to be used in a film celebrating Wim Hof's fame

In August 2023, Caroline received a letter from a British producer, in which she was told that she was to play a major role in a film being made about the life of her ex-partner, in which Joseph Fiennes (the lead actor in *Shakespeare in Love*) would play Wim Hof. Since the film is supposed to retrace the life of Wim Hof and his relationship with Caroline lasted 10 years, the producer felt it was important to have the ex-companion's side of the story before going any further with production. According to an email that all Wim Hof instructors received on 30 September 2024, this producer lost his job on the film because he "insisted on including Caroline Hak in the script."

### Mail sent by Innerfire on 30 September 2024 to all instructors Wim Hof: a producer thanked, it seems, for wanting to include Caroline's version in the film script

“ *There are also suggestions that the feature film about Wim Hof has been put on hold due to the recent allegations. However, **the film was already on hold because the previous screenwriter had insisted on including Caroline Hak in the script.** A new writer was hired last year, but has yet to deliver the script, and the preliminary contract needs to be extended. Genesis Pictures has simply confirmed that the film is currently on hiatus.*

**I would like to salute the behaviour of the anonymous producer**, who had the decency to inform Caroline and Noah of the existence of the film project, probably knowing that doing so would cost him his contract.

### The courage to break the silence: Caroline talks about her suffering despite Wim Hof's accusations, aware of the risks in front of millions of followers

**Caroline knew she would face an emotional and social storm if she dared to publicly challenge a much-loved figure**, but she chose to act to defend her story and that of her children. **She knew full well that her testimony would attract a barrage of criticism, doubts and accusations.** By telling her story and that of her son Noah, Caroline agreed to bring to light her own traumas, **to relieve the pain inflicted by her former partner, and to risk being accused of lying by a community attached to the image of Wim Hof.** She knew that **many would prefer to ignore or disqualify her words rather than question an admired role model.**

What prompted Caroline and her son Noah to speak out seems far removed from any greed or quest for personal gain (indeed, it's hard to see what advantage they could possibly gain, especially given the presumption of guilt with which they are sifted). Yet it's an argument I've

heard repeatedly when I've tried to broach the subject with my fellow instructors. **Caroline and Noah's clear motivation, then, is the desire not to see their image contribute to the glory of someone whose past behaviour still hurts them today, according to their testimony to *De Volkskrant* :**

” [Caroline] had just started therapy, trying to deal with the years of violence she suffered at the hands of her ex, and now this. Her three children - a son (Christiaan) and a daughter (Nathalie) from a previous marriage - also became unnerved when they heard about the movie *And Noah* especially so. The experiences in his youth left him with a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and he doesn't want to be confronted with his father any more. Let alone through a movie that will probably receive worldwide attention.

[...]

Even though they haven't seen or spoken to Hof for eleven years, **Caroline and her children are still struggling with profound feelings of unsafety and inferiority on a daily basis.** [...] **It is painful to them that the man responsible for this has so many followers today. The news of the movie, which may further promote Hof's heroic and loving image, is the last straw for them.** A few months after having been approached by the producer, Caroline, in consultation with her children, contacted *de Volkskrant* to tell their story.

I recently discovered this story, and beyond the testimonies, what struck me the most was the way Wim Hof chose to speak about it today. Instead of acknowledging the suffering of those he lived with and offering an apology, he minimized the facts, as I will explain further. This attitude deeply resonated with me and led me to question my place within this community.

I made a difficult decision: to leave an organization that accounted for half of my income in order to stay true to my values. I made this choice primarily for my seven-month-old son because I want to show him that it is possible to set boundaries when faced with the minimization of violence.

## Wim Hof denies all violence despite the fact that it is objectified by the courts: it's dystopian

Wim lodged a complaint against *De Volkskrant* following the publication of the article in which Caroline explained why she and her family refuse to see their characters associated with a film celebrating Wim Hof. Before the article appeared, *De Volkskrant* had sent forty questions to Wim Hof, which he had time to answer carefully, with a lawyer, according to the press release sent to all instructors by Innerfire on 1 October 2024 :

Extract from the press release sent to all instructors by innerfire on October 1, 2024: "Wim Hof thoroughly answered".

” Prior to publication, *De Volkskrant* contacted Wim Hof about the allegations. Wim Hof **thoroughly** answered all 40 questions posed by the newspaper.

He « thoroughly » replied, so he had time to think about what he was writing before sending it to the newspaper. And yet, despite the objectification in 2012 and 2015 of two acts of domestic violence, Wim Hof writes to *De Volkskrant* "there was no violence." Quote:

An extract in *De Volkskrant* which goes back over Wim Hof's denial of any violence in his "in-depth" answers, despite their objectification

” In his written answer to the 44 questions *de Volkskrant* put to him, **Wim Hof denies having ever been violent**. He views the accusations as manipulation by Caroline. 'It is obvious that she's on the warpath and now wants to make everything look different from how it was.'

It's dystopian because Wim Hof denies facts that have been objectivised by the courts, thereby invisibilising the victims and invalidating their suffering. This public denial, coming from an influential figure, perpetuates the minimisation of domestic violence and sends out a dangerous message: the truth of the facts can be rewritten to protect an image, to the detriment of victims and justice.

Wim Hof accuses Noah's mother of manipulation, while Noah, now an adult, claims that his refusal to see his father stems from the psychological violence he suffered - a fact confirmed in 2015 by the Dutch Child Protection Board, which withdrew Hof's visiting rights on the grounds of the same violence.

Subsequently, Wim Hof gave an interview to the *Daily Mail* because he considered *De Volkskrant* to be biased (I'll come back to this). In an e-mail sent to instructors on 10 October 2024, this *Daily Mail* article is presented as the one that should be shown to trainees who have questions about the case. However, even in this article, Wim Hof continues to distort the facts completely.

Quote from the Daily Mail article recommended by Wim Hof as a response or alternative to the article in *De Volkskrant*: Wim Hof presents himself as a victim and questions the competence of child protection experts, whom he accuses of having been influenced by Caroline.

” Wim says: “[Noah] was manipulated by his mother in a way that meant I couldn't see him any more.” [...]

And yet, in 2015, the Dutch Child Welfare Council concluded that Hof had forfeited his right to parental access. According to the dossier in the Dutch newspaper, this was because he had committed 'psychological violence against his son', now 21 and a rising ballet star with the Bayerisches Staatsballett in Munich.

## Noah's Voice Is Systematically Dismissed

It is deeply troubling to see how Noah's voice is consistently dismissed, despite being validated by child protection professionals in 2015. These institutions are made up of experts specifically trained to recognize trauma and distinguish between a child in genuine distress and a case of parental manipulation. And yet, in 2024, as an adult who continues to refuse any contact with his father, his words are still denied, as if they hold no value.

## And even if parental alienation was at play?

I do not deny the existence of the concept of parental alienation, nor do I claim that it is impossible that Caroline influenced Noah.

However, this argument should not be used to deflect the discussion and avoid addressing Wim Hof's acts of violence. Both issues can exist simultaneously, even though the concept of parental alienation remains highly controversial within the scientific community—precisely because it is often used to obscure the responsibility of an abusive parent.

Wim Hof, for his part, never questions himself. He denies any responsibility for the violence he inflicted and portrays himself as the victim of a conspiracy orchestrated by his ex-wife. He never speaks about Noah as an individual with his own feelings, his own independent thoughts. And yet, according to Noah himself, it was his father's behavior that led him to cut ties.

The fact remains that Wim Hof has never publicly questioned his own responsibility in this rupture. Instead, he places all the blame on Caroline.

### **Why has he never said:**

***"I regret that Noah suffered. Even if I believe his mother influenced him, I understand that he might have felt hurt and I hope that one day we can talk."***

### Why is his narrative limited to:

*"Caroline turned him against me; he doesn't know what he's doing."*

A real dialogue starts with acknowledging the other person's suffering. When someone cuts ties with us, there are two questions we should ask:

1. What did the other person do to reach this point?
2. What might **I** have done that led them to this decision?

Wim Hof only asks the first question, which totally dismisses Noah's voice, whether he has been manipulated by his mother or not.

### When the aggressor becomes the victim: a chilling reversal of roles

This constant denial, combined with a rewriting of the facts to position himself as the victim, is chilling. Wim Hof diverts attention from his own responsibilities by making invisible not only Noah's suffering but also his choice as an adult to cut off all contact. **This is not simply a manipulation of the facts; it is an attempt to reverse the roles of perpetrator and victim, in defiance of the decisions of the competent institutions and the words of a young man trying to rebuild his life.** This public stance merely reinforces a system in which domestic violence can be minimised, denied and transformed into a communication strategy, to the detriment of objective truths and the victims who continue to suffer the consequences.

As well as denying the psychological violence, Wim Hof trivialises the physical violence and erases the relationship of domination between a 51-year-old man and an 18-year-old teenager.

Wim Hof reduces the physical violence with his stepson Christiaan to a simple "fight between two adult men", thereby erasing the obvious relationship of domination between a 51-year-old adult and an 18-year-old teenager and trivialising the use of physical violence to settle a conflict "between men".

### What We Know:

In 2010, Wim Hof refused to leave Caroline's home, despite her repeatedly asking him to do so. When *De Volkskrant* asked him in 2024 why he had refused to leave, he answered: *"I loved her, I didn't want to go."*

- Caroline later called her son because she was afraid of Wim's behavior. Then, Christiaan arrived, and Wim Hof struck him.
- A judge confirmed that this incident happened and issued a legal sanction.
- In 2024, Wim Hof downplays the event as *"a simple altercation between two men."*



No matter what one thinks of Caroline, nothing justifies a public figure continuing to rewrite history to cast himself as a victim or “manly figure” making his victim’s pain invisible.

## Daily Mail article in which Wim Hof reduces violence to a "wrestling incident" between two men

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*As to the allegation that in 2010 he attacked Caroline's then 18-year-old son Christiaan, Wim insists it was nothing more than 'a wrestling incident' between 'two grown men'.*

*He says he cannot recall Christiaan suffering a bloody nose or a black eye, as Caroline claims, but adds: 'You know, when you are wrestling, a thing like that can happen. They made a whole lot out of it. **It was very one-sided.**'*

*However, the offence was serious enough to involve the authorities and he admits he paid a €350 fine, did 40 hours' community service and received a two-week restraining order in 2012. Wim says he also immediately apologised to Christiaan who later asked for and received €2,000 towards a laptop for his college studies. Over the following year, Wim says, he and Caroline continued to see each other: 'I never heard anything more about it until this one-sided story came out this week.'*

By reducing the assault to an 'incident' and denying the physical injuries Christiaan described, Wim Hof invalidates his victim's experiences and minimises the emotional and psychological impact this event may have had. This reinforces the systemic dynamics that silence victims of domestic violence.

**"It was very one-sided": Wim Hof denies the facts as established by the courts and transforms the facts into a question of a "biased" point of view.**

This stance is problematic on several levels. Firstly, it trivialises acts of physical violence by transforming them into a simple difference of opinion. Secondly, it sends out a dangerous message: that the truth of the matter can be relativised, even when it is recognised and sanctioned by legal institutions. Finally, it makes the victims' suffering invisible by denying them the legitimacy of their words and transforming the aggressor into a pseudo-victim of an allegedly biased story.

Such an attitude reinforces a system in which violence, particularly in a family or domestic context, is minimised or denied. It helps to perpetuate a climate in which aggressors can absolve themselves of responsibility, while leaving victims to bear the brunt of their trauma in a climate of collective indifference.

## Press release from Innerfire (Wim Hof's company): Wim Hof accuses *De Volkskrant* of defamation (but this does not change the objective facts)

Press release of 1 October 2024 to the instructors: a problematic message that minimises the facts, invisibilises the victims and diverts the problem of domestic violence towards the media victimisation of Wim Hof.

### ” *Wim Hof Files Charges for Defamation and Slander*

*Last Saturday, De Volkskrant published an article about Wim Hof, containing serious allegations of domestic violence in a past relationship. Wim Hof does not recognize himself in these accusations.*

*Prior to publication, De Volkskrant contacted Wim Hof about the allegations. Wim Hof answered all 40 questions posed by the newspaper in detail.*

*In his responses, Wim Hof and others repeatedly indicated that at least one of De Volkskrant's sources was unreliable and had already spread false information about him. Through his lawyer, Wim Hof warned De Volkskrant in advance that the newspaper should not publish accusations without conducting its own thorough investigation. The newspaper should not offer a platform to a source making serious accusations if that source is unreliable and the accusations are not further substantiated. Nevertheless, De Volkskrant published these false accusations without conducting its own investigation. The detailed answers provided by Wim Hof were either excluded or mentioned very briefly in the article. Other sources who spoke positively about Wim Hof were also omitted or mentioned only briefly. As a result, a partial and incorrect picture has been presented.*

**Innerfire's press release, while seeking to discredit the article in *De Volkskrant*, highlighted the newspaper's alleged bias and the dubious reliability of certain sources.** In a communication addressed to instructors, Innerfire detailed the measures taken in response to the article in a PDF sent to all instructors as an attachment to an email dated 10 October 2024 :

” *What steps will the organisation take in response to this article? A one-sided story was recently published, allowing serious accusations against Wim to take the center of the stage. We gave the Daily Mail an exclusive interview to share our family's experiences and present a more balanced account of events. You can read the interview [[here](#)]. As we have communicated, we are currently pursuing legal action.*

However, the choice to turn to the *Daily Mail*, a British tabloid known for its sensationalism and controversial reliability, raises questions. For example, in 2017, the English-language version of Wikipedia decided to no longer consider Daily Mail articles as reliable sources, due to concerns about its reliability and journalistic approach: [link](#). **Why use this medium to defend Wim Hof's image, even though the article in *De Volkskrant* comes from a publication known for its seriousness and rigorous approach?** This strategy raises questions about Innerfire's real desire for transparency and the balance of the story they claim to want to tell.

However, *De Volkskrant* does not limit itself to reporting accusations: it contextualises and includes various points of view, including those defending Wim Hof. A striking example is the issue of the accusations of violence concerning his first wife, Olaya. These accusations, made by his brother Rob, are accompanied by other testimonies and an examination of Wim Hof's past statements, which reveal troubling inconsistencies about the circumstances of Olaya's death. These elements merit careful analysis.

## Inconsistencies surrounding the death of Olaya, Wim Hof's first wife: Wim Hof denies accusations of violence while changing his version of events

Wim Hof criticises *De Volkskrant* for reporting the accusations of his brother Rob, who claims that Wim was already violent with his first wife, Olaya. Now deceased, **the circumstances of her death raise questions**, especially as Wim Hof's versions over the years have diverged. **In 1998, he told *De Volkskrant* that his wife had died in a "run-of-the-mill car crash". Then, in 2022, he claimed in an interview that she had thrown herself off a building "eight storeys down".**

Innerfire claims that Rob Hof has made false accusations against Wim Hof in the past. However, **in the context of Wim Hof's double talk about Olaya's death, it seems intellectually honest to mention Rob's claims, while pointing out in the article that Wim Hof formally denies them and that his twin brother, André, refers to negligence rather than violence.**

Despite the fact that Wim Hof repeats that *De Volkskrant* is 'one-sided', *De Volkskrant* quotes, among others, André Hof's point of view, which qualifies that of Rob .

“ Others who were familiar with the couple in those days paint a less clear image. ‘They were financially struggling and the children would not get their gym shoes in time,’ says Wim’s twin brother André. ‘Olaya would probably have been better off with someone who is not exclusively focused on his own goals. **One could call that neglect. I have never seen Wim commit physical violence**’[...] [Wim] Hof calls the allegations ‘absurd’ and informs us that they ‘are absolutely baseless.

*De Volkskrant* is a respected media outlet in the Netherlands, known for its rigorous investigative journalism. By mentioning the disputed facts, while incorporating the denials and nuances provided by other sources, *De Volkskrant* adopts a journalistic approach that strengthens the credibility of the article as a whole. They did not simply relay the accusations, but also contextualised them and confronted them with other points of view.

Laura Hof states that she was a victim of domestic violence at the hands of Caroline and Noah was manipulated by her: this is a serious matter and it's important to raise it, but it doesn't change anything about the facts as objectified by the courts, or the way Wim Hof plays them down.

In tears, Laura Hof declared on the official website of the Wim Hof method ([link to her video](#)) that she had been the victim of serious physical and psychological violence at the hands of Caroline. Laura is someone I really like. During a mountain climb on a course in Poland where I was assisting Wim Hof, I shared moments of deep and beautiful exchange with her. I have great respect for Laura and her family.

**If the violence she describes is true, it is serious, and Caroline should acknowledge it and apologise sincerely.** But I won't dwell on her testimony, not because of any lack of consideration or empathy, but because it does nothing to change the facts that have been objectively established by the courts against Wim Hof, or the way they have been played down.

I understand that Laura's testimony can move people and provoke an instinctive reaction of defence towards Wim Hof. Her story is deeply moving and deserves to be heard in the right context. However, when she claims that *De Volkskrant* 'cancelled' her testimony and that the article was pure defamation, it is important to make it clear that **her accusations are unfounded.**

Why didn't *De Volkskrant* include more of Laura's point of view (although it could have)?

In all intellectual honesty, the answer lies in the asymmetry of power relations between the two parties. **Wim Hof, Laura Hof and their family enjoy worldwide fame and immense support from millions of people across the globe.** They benefit from a massive media platform and a community ready to defend their image, even in the face of serious events.

In contrast, **Caroline and Noah have no comparable community, visibility or network.** Their voices receive no media coverage or similar support. **Including Laura's testimony in this article would have contributed to reinforcing this asymmetry of power, by diverting attention from the objectivised facts and adding a bias in favour of the version defended by Wim Hof.**

**This argument is also valid for my own text:** if I do not elaborate on Laura's account, it is not to discredit or minimise it, but because **it is essential to maintain the focus on the objectified domestic violence committed by Wim Hof and its systematic minimisation.**

There's no question here of 'cancelling' anyone. Laura's suffering is real, she has the right to be heard and treated with respect and *De Volksrant* could have taken this into account. But it is crucial to remember that **this suffering must not be used to distract attention from the main facts:** the violence recognised by the courts, the minimisation of these facts by Wim Hof, and the silencing mechanisms that ensue.

**In conclusion, while Laura's testimony obviously has a right to exist, it must not be used to distract attention from the objectively documented domestic violence committed by Wim Hof.** On the contrary, it should be understood as an additional dimension in a complex family dynamic, without obscuring Wim Hof's responsibility for the acts of which he is accused, and which remain indisputable.

### Caroline's accusations of very serious violence, which were not substantiated by the courts but which are important to put into context

As with Laura's testimony, it is important to mention the accusations made by Caroline against Wim Hof, even if they have not been substantiated by the courts. Caroline filed a complaint for physical and psychological violence in 2010 ( NB : Wim Hof was not well known at the time), citing serious incidents such as :

- She was hit in the stomach when she was pregnant with Noah,
- A slap in the face,
- An episode involving a blow with a hot pan.

These accusations were examined by the relevant authorities, in particular by the public prosecutor, who studied police reports, medical evidence and therapists' testimonies supporting Caroline's statements. However, unlike the 2010 incident involving Wim Hof's son-in-law, **these charges were dropped for lack of sufficient evidence to bring a prosecution: this is common in this type of case, and it 't mean that it didn't happen.**

If these facts were proven, they would be extremely serious. **But as they have not been recognised by the courts, I have chosen, for the sake of rigour and balance, not to include them in my main analysis. My text is based solely on the facts objectivised by the courts in 2012 and 2015, because they are indisputable and suffice to reveal systemic problems in the posture of Wim Hof and those who choose to minimise or pass over in silence these acts of violence.**

It is essential to remember, however, that if these accusations prove to be true, it would make the already disturbing picture even worse. But we don't need to be reminded of the urgent need to break the silence around the facts that have already been established.

**I have chosen not to dwell any further on these accusations, which have not been recognised by the courts, because this would run the risk of distracting attention from the proven facts. My aim is to focus the debate on this objectivised violence and Wim Hof's minimisation of it, because it is at the heart of this issue.**

It is important to understand that denouncing proven facts does not mean denying or minimising other suffering. But it does mean remaining rigorous and focused on what is indisputable and serious enough to demand individual and collective responsibility.

## Recognising the power of the method without excusing Wim Hof: the challenge of discernment

To say that Wim Hof committed domestic violence that has been brought to justice does not mean that the Wim Hof method is bad in itself. Having said that, it is highly problematic that this method bears his name, as contributing to its dissemination indirectly reinforces the man's celebrity and, by extension, makes his violence invisible. That's why, personally, I've completely disassociated myself from the brand. However, I understand that this is not possible for all instructors, particularly for financial reasons.

However, it is important to stress that the silence of the majority of instructors does not seem to be motivated by economic constraints. In fact, most of the world's instructors pursue this activity for pleasure or passion, and not out of financial necessity.

Saying that Abbé Pierre was accused of sexual violence does not call into question the remarkable work of Emmaus. In the same way, acknowledging the violence of Wim Hof should not erase the benefits that the method brings to some people. But refusing to talk about this violence, or worse, seeking to minimise it on the pretext of the "benefits" embodied by its perpetrator, amounts to perpetuating a pattern where unacceptable acts are excused in the name of other achievements. It is precisely this mechanism that normalises and invisibilises systemic violence, and it is against this that I am speaking out. That's why Emmaus disassociated itself from Abbé Pierre.

**The problem is not saying "the Wim Hof method has beneficial effects" or "Emmaus does remarkable work". The problem is saying "*since these things are good, violence should be silenced or put into perspective*".**

**But the two realities can be held together: the Wim Hof method has enabled thousands of people to better manage their stress and explore their relationship with the cold. But its founder has also committed domestic violence, which he denies and continues to play down. It is precisely because these figures have considerable influence that it is crucial not to grant them moral impunity on the pretext of their positive impact.**

Refusing to choose between the recognition of a job and the demands of responsibility means refusing to perpetuate this system of silencing. It is the only way to move towards a world where talent, charisma and achievement do not justify the invisibility of violence.

# Conclusion: facts are facts, not "a matter of opinion".

Even if you don't believe in the sincerity of my approach,

Even if **Wim Hof** has brought a method to the world that helps thousands of people manage their stress,

Even if **De Volkskrant** was biased,

Even if **Rob Hof** was lying about everything,

Even if **Laura Hof and her family** had really suffered violence at the hands of Caroline,

Even if **Caroline** was a difficult person to live with and had manipulated Noah,

Even if Wim Hof hadn't punched her in the stomach while she was pregnant with his child, or slapped her, or attacked her with a hot pan,

**EVEN IF ALL THIS WERE TRUE, it doesn't change the indisputable facts:**

1. **Domestic violence committed by Wim Hof in 2010 and brought to justice in 2012.**
2. **The psychological violence recognised by a child protection institution in 2015, which led his son Noah to cut off all contact with him, a decision he maintains today as an adult.**

What Wim Hof and his defence are doing is implementing a well-known strategy: "**whataboutism**". This mechanism consists of diverting attention from the proven facts by pointing to other peripheral issues: "And by the way, whatabout Rob Hof ? He wasn't very reliable was he? And by the way, whatabout Caroline ? She may have been toxic, right ? And why not, after my text was published, "And by the way, what about H  l  ne Youssefi? Even if this seems to be the logical continuation of the current behaviour of Innerfire's lawyer, as well as most of the community, it doesn't matter because it doesn't change the facts.

**But the strategy of Wim Hof's lawyer and the community can change. The lawyer (and everyone else) can see that Wim Hof can win with the outline of solutions that I am proposing.** This would be a victory for him, Wim Hof, the Hof family, Caroline, Noah, their families, the community and victims of domestic violence in general.

**Unfortunately, for the time being, the strategy adopted by Wim Hof diverts attention away from objectivised violence, minimises the seriousness of the facts and shifts the responsibility from the aggressor to the victims. It sends a particularly toxic message to his millions of followers:**

- **Beating up an 18-year-old teenager, whether muscular or not, is excusable if your partner is a "pain";**
- **That refusing to listen to the suffering of your own child, who hasn't wanted to see you for ten years, is acceptable if you can blame the mother.**

But this responsibility does not rest solely with Wim Hof. **Innerfire, the instructors, the trainees and all those in the know who choose to look the other way or remain silent are also, by their inaction, contributing to this cycle of violence and collective silence.**

**And yet there are solutions.**

Individual and collective solutions, accessible to everyone. It's possible for everyone to move from indifference to courage, from minimisation to concrete action. **It requires a certain willingness to face up to the discomfort... that should be pretty accessible for people who say they like taking ice-cold baths, shouldn't it?**

Innerfire, Wim Hof himself, the instructors, the trainees, but also every follower or practitioner of the method, **all have a role to play to stop feeding this system that makes victims invisible. This is where change can begin.**

## FOUR SOLUTIONS

### I) Wim could (still can) have taken individual responsibility for the system of domestic violence

In 2024, Wim Hof could have said:



***It's true, it happened.** I'm not going to try to play it down or divert the discussion to other subjects. What I did was unacceptable, and I want to acknowledge that sincerely. I committed acts of physical violence that have had serious consequences for the people who count or have counted enormously in my life, including my own son Noah, and for that I am deeply sorry. I understand that my son has distanced himself and that he has experienced pain that led him to cut all contact with me. Even though I believe certain factors may have influenced this rupture, I cannot ignore that, regardless of the causes, the pain he has gone through is real. Rather than denying his experience, I would like him to know that I am ready to listen, to understand, and to take responsibility, whatever that may entail. My intention was never to harm him, but I recognize that my role in our relationship, past or present, deserves to be examined. If he ever chooses to speak, I will be here to listen without trying to justify myself.*

*I now understand that my actions reflected an inability to manage my emotions and a lack of awareness of the power dynamics that existed in my family. This is not an excuse, but I want to show my children, my community and myself that we are capable of changing, of growing and, if my son Noah, his mother and his brother and sister accept it, of making amends, even when the damage has been done.*



*I want to use my platform to open up an honest dialogue about managing emotions and male violence. Teaching breathing techniques or exposure to the cold is not enough to guide humanity towards a more breathable existence. We also need to learn to take responsibility for ourselves, to recognise our mistakes and to find non-violent, peaceful ways of resolving our conflicts. If I can encourage other people to take a hard look at their own behaviour and do the same, then perhaps these mistakes, painful as they are, will have served some purpose.*

*I also want to apologise to my family, **not with words, but with concrete actions**. I know that this will take time, and I'm committed to doing the work necessary to show them that I'm serious about what I'm doing.*

*To the people who follow me, I invite you not to take me as a perfect model, but to see me as an imperfect person who is trying to become better. Our responsibility as human beings is to learn from our mistakes and build a world where such violence does not happen again. That starts with acknowledging our wrongs, and that's what I'm doing today.*

This reaction would have had a very peaceful influence on the millions of people who follow him. It would have opened the way for a crucial discussion on systemic violence and individual responsibility.

## II) Innerfire could have (still can) introduced protocols to protect the vulnerability of trainees and prevent sexist and sexual violence

InnerFire could introduce protocols to raise awareness of the power relationships between instructors and trainees, particularly in terms of gender-based and sexual violence, which is unfortunately common in similar environments. I myself have been a victim of such violence, both as an instructor and as a trainee. The idea would be to provide information on what gender-based and sexual violence is, as is done in NGOs that work with vulnerable populations and recognise the importance of these power relations.

These protocols would be all the more essential in a setting where trainees are often in swimming costumes, practising extremely powerful breathing exercises that put them in a state of psychological vulnerability, and exposing themselves to intense cold environments, further reinforcing this vulnerability. Recognising and framing these power dynamics could not only protect participants, but also strengthen InnerFire's credibility and accountability as an international community.

III) Instructors could have (still can) written on their social networks and websites to acknowledge the existence of what happened and read it before each course they give to give voice to the victims silenced by Wim Hof, often considered a demigod by the practitioners of his .

Instructors could copy and paste this text onto their communication pages and read it before each course:



***Wim Hof was convicted in 2012 and 2015 of domestic violence.***

*In 2012, he hit his ex-girlfriend's son, an 18-year-old teenager, even though he was 51. He described the incident as a simple "fight between men", totally downplaying the obvious relationship of domination between him and his stepson. However, the court sentenced him to a fine, community service and a two-week ban on approaching the family, in particular because of death threats.*

*In 2015, a Dutch child protection institution banned Wim Hof from seeing his own son Noah. Why was this? Because Noah had suffered such severe psychological violence that he no longer wanted to have any contact with his father. Today, as an adult, Noah maintains this refusal.*

*Despite this, Wim Hof accuses his ex-girlfriend Caroline of manipulating their son against him, dismissing out of hand the conclusions of the experts, who are trained to distinguish between parental manipulation and genuine distress. Even if parental alienation were real, it does not erase the fact that he has never shown the slightest willingness to acknowledge that he might bear some responsibility for Noah's refusal to see him.*

***Why are these events resurfacing in 2024?***

*A film about Wim Hof has been in the pipeline for years. When Caroline was approached by a producer who wanted to include her version of events in the script, he was dropped from the project. Unwilling to let their image be used to glorify someone whose past behaviour continues to cause them pain, Caroline and Noah decided to speak out.*

*These revelations, published in an article in De Volkskrant newspaper, were followed by a response from Wim Hof, who denies the violence and positions himself as the victim of an alleged attack. This discourse makes the real suffering of his victims invisible and perpetuates the well-known mechanism whereby aggressors present themselves as the real victims in order to escape responsibility.*

*I'm taking the floor today to demystify the figure of Wim Hof and support the victims of domestic violence, particularly in a context where the asymmetry of power is total: Wim Hof has millions of followers who adore him and turn a blind eye to these serious incidents. Talking about it is already a start towards defending the victims and combating this systemic violence for a more peaceful world.*

## IV) Breaking the silence: taking collective action against the minimisation of violence and assuming your individual responsibility

Trainees and practitioners of the method can play an essential role in combating the silence that surrounds such violence.

They can copy and paste this message and send it to [support@wimhofmethod.com](mailto:support@wimhofmethod.com) :



**Subject:** *Accountability Regarding the minimization of domestic victims' suffering*

*Dear Innerfire Team,*

*I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent handling of serious allegations of domestic violence against Wim Hof, as well as the subsequent responses from both Wim Hof and Innerfire. I just read H  l  ne Youssefi's article, which referred to your interview in the Daily Mail, your press release, and Laura's response on your website. I still don't understand why you chose this narrative.*

*As a practitioner of the Wim Hof Method, I believe it is essential for any organization to demonstrate accountability, transparency, and a commitment to ethical principles-especially when such serious issues are brought to light. The accusations against Wim Hof, which include two cases of violence recognised and sanctioned by the justice system in 2012 and 2015, raise profound concerns.*

*What troubles me even more, however, is the public minimization of these facts by Wim Hof and the apparent shift in focus from the suffering of the victims to his own victimization in the narrative presented. **The real problem is this that your behavior suggests to millions of followers :***

***- That hitting an 18-year-old adolescent, muscular or not, is excusable if your partner is "difficult";***

***- That refusing to hear the suffering of your own child, who has not wanted to see you for ten years, is acceptable if you can blame the mother.***

*As an organization that promotes well-being and resilience, Innerfire has a responsibility to address these issues openly and take action to ensure that such behaviors are neither normalized nor ignored. Specifically, I would like to understand:*

*Why has Innerfire not publicly acknowledged the suffering of the victims, including Noah, whose distress has been recognized by child protection experts?*

*Why has the focus of the organization's communication shifted to defending Wim Hof without adequately addressing the gravity of the allegations?*

*Why is Innerfire not implementing the clear and concrete solutions proposed by H  l  ne Youssefi?*

*I am asking these questions not as an attack but as a call for integrity. The Wim Hof Method has had a profound impact on my life, as I'm sure it has on many others. However, to truly stand for resilience and strength, it is imperative to confront uncomfortable truths, acknowledge harm, and work toward justice and healing for all parties involved.*

*I urge you to take these concerns seriously and provide a detailed response addressing how Innerfire plans to navigate this situation moving forward. Silence, minimization, or deflection are not acceptable responses to issues of this magnitude*

*Sincerely,*

**You have the power to act:** relay the information in this text, ask questions of the instructors who trained you, or send emails to Innerfire to question their silence and their minimisation of the facts. These actions, even if they are individual, create a collective dynamic of accountability and can push Innerfire to acknowledge the facts and act accordingly.

Stop thinking that it's up to others to speak out or denounce in your place, as if it didn't concern you. You matter: your words and your silence tilt our collective future in one direction rather than another. This collective silence feeds the cycle of minimising violence. When someone confides in you that they have been a victim of systemic, sexist or sexual violence, make a conscious effort to go beyond the immediate reflex of doubting their word. Adopt a listening posture and acknowledge the suffering expressed. Question the presumption of guilt that still too often weighs on victims, particularly when the facts have been objectified by specialised institutions.

Take the time to consider the collective impact of your individual choices: do you choose comfortable indifference or commitment, however uncomfortable? Every action counts. By taking responsibility at your own level, you can help to break the cycle of violence that is minimised and invisible. Because systemic violence affects everyone, and because a fairer, more respectful world can only be built together.

## SOURCES

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