

This Will Be Hard (But We Can Do This)

Imagine a world where floods sweep across regions and destroy all land, so they need to be rebuilt, or heat waves occur so often that thousands of people die from them annually. Imagine a developing country such as India, and a four-person family of farmers living there. If floods and heatwaves are practically a daily occurrence, *how will they survive?*

They can't. They can start with a blank slate over again, but how will they make money to support their families? If they can't make money, their kids won't be able to get a good education and won't have food.

There's also an unexpected but problematic side effect of the world you are imagining- mosquitos. India generally has many mosquitos, but in this world clouds of them would drift over this family's land. They'd contaminate all the crops, making the food poisonous. The creatures would go from annoying to deadly.

This is the grim picture painted by the possible effects of climate change.

How do we save this family? It seems hopeless to stop a problem as big as climate change, doesn't it? Well, it's not impossible, but in the words of Bill Gates, *it will be hard* (How to Avoid a Climate Disaster). To stop the worst effects of climate change, money will have to be raised, more solutions will have to be deployed efficiently, and the world will have to cooperate. But it will be worth it, because we will save that family in India and many others like them.

To solve the problem of climate change, we need to start changing our habits. Nearly everything we do emits greenhouse gasses. Remember that Amazon box that arrived at your

house the other day? You probably didn't think about it, but making the box, making whatever was inside the box, driving the box to your house, and making the parts that for the delivery vehicle all emitted greenhouse gases.

As you can see, emitting greenhouse gases is ingrained into our life, and no one will want to stop buying things from Amazon. What we really need to do is change the way the box, its contents, and the delivery vehicle were made, and how it was delivered.

I could go through every action that involves emitting greenhouse gases and how to change that action to be more climate-friendly, but that would take too long. So, I've divided the things we need to change into three major groups:

- 1. Transportation: 16% of annual emissions** (How to Avoid a Climate Disaster)
- 2. Electricity: 27% of annual emissions** (How to Avoid a Climate Disaster)
- 3. Making things: 31% of annual emissions** (How to Avoid a Climate Disaster)

Let's start with the changes I would make to transportation.

We use transportation every single day. My school is about forty miles from my house- and they cancelled the bus program because of Covid-19. I have no option but to ride in a car to my school. So how would I reduce my emissions? I would get up earlier in the mornings so there would be less traffic on the way to school, thereby reducing my time on the road.

I would also convince others who live as far away from their school/work as I do to also reduce their time on the road by waking up a bit earlier. To do this, I would educate them about climate change and how spending a lot of time driving can perpetuate it. And for the people who live close enough to walk to their school/office, but drive there, I would convince them to walk/bike instead. I would also write to corporations that use many vehicles and explain why they should make them more fuel efficient.

You might say, *there are plenty of electric cars and more will be created in the coming years- you don't have to bother*. But where do you get that electricity? Someone has to make that electricity, thereby emitting greenhouse gases, then get that electricity to you, also by emitting greenhouse gases, right?

This leads us right into our next topic: Electricity.

Electricity is a huge part of our lives. From turning on the lights to defrosting a pop tart, you use electricity. The device I'm typing this on right now uses electricity! You can't tell people to stop using electricity- but you can tell people to make electricity in renewable ways.

There are lots of people *trying* to do this but trying isn't enough. We need to implement these solutions quickly, and then increase the demand for them.

If I were the CEO of one of these companies trying to make more renewable sources for electricity, I would first hire more talent to make the product get finished faster. Then I'd market it by placing ads. I'd also reach out to any contacts I had and ask them to use my kind of renewable energy. If the contacts liked it, they'd spread the word and get us more business.

Once other companies saw how lucrative the business of making renewable sources of electricity was, they'd jump in and increase competition. Prices for these renewable sources would go down. Then, people/companies could just electrify their cars/other vehicles.

There's one more topic we have to cover: making things.

Unfortunately, there aren't a whole lot of ways to make essential materials without releasing carbon. There is, however, a possible solution to this problem. It's called carbon capture. Carbon capture is where you suck carbon out of the air. It will take time and work, but eventually carbon capture could just suck up all the carbon-dioxide emitted by these factories.

So, in the end, Bill Gates is right. This will be hard. There's so much we need to do, and so little time. But if the world rallies together, and the youth of today can come up with the solutions of tomorrow, we can save that family in India and the whole world.

Bibliography:

- Gates, Bill *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*
Knopf, 2021