
BOOK REVIEW



Bill Gates, How To Avoid A Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have And The Breakthroughs We Need, 2021, Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, 257 pages.

Bill Gates is one of the most well-known personalities of this age. He is the co-founder of Microsoft, a platform that is now more famous than its founders. Millions use it around the globe.

This present publication is Gates' proposal to fight climate change. It comprises of 12 chapters.

In the introduction, the author asks his readers to remember two numbers to get to the heart of the matter. These numbers are "51 billion ton" and "0". The former is amount of greenhouse gases the world generates every year, whereas the latter is the target human should aim for if it intends to avert the disaster.

The first chapter, "Why Zero?", describes why it is necessary to target significant reduction of greenhouse gases. Of course, reaching zero is not possible. Some amount of greenhouse gases will remain in the atmosphere. Still, we should strive for as much elimination as humanly possible.

The next chapter, "This Will be Hard", sheds light on the impediments that lie in our path. Getting global consensus as well as scientific and engineering breakthroughs augur a tough road ahead. States fiercely guard their sovereignties in multilateral arrangements. It will be tough to convince them to commit themselves to a regulatory regime.

The succeeding chapter, "Five Questions to Ask in Every Climate Conversation", helps the layman in comprehending the context of the debate without getting into any detail scientific or statistical jargon. The questions are: "How much of the 51 billion tons are we talking about?",

“What’s your plan for cement?”, “How much power are we talking about?”, “How much space do you need?”, and “How much is this going to cost?”.

The next four chapters (chapter 4 to 7) begins with “how”. In chapter 4, “How We Plug In”, the author proposes ways to generate carbon free electricity. The methods include, nuclear fission, nuclear fusion, offshore wind, and geothermal. Chapter 5, “How We Make”, suggests that we should strive for zero emission in manufacturing. It is followed by the section, “How We Grow Things”, that highlights the impact cattle farming has had on forests; and that how our meat consumption adds considerably to the greenhouse gases. The next chapter, “How We Get Around”, recommends greater use of electric cars and alternative fuels.

Chapter 8 titled, “How We Keep Cool and Stay Warm”, describes the contribution air-conditioning and heating make to greenhouse emissions. We need efficient air-conditioning units and the abandonment of gas-powered furnaces and water heaters. Governments should encourage electric heat pumps.

The subsequent chapter, “Adapting to a Warmer World”, describes ways to prepare for incoming natural disasters that may result due to climate change. Our urban centres will require barriers and defensive mechanisms. Water shortages is a serious possibility now. There are technological innovations like extracting water from air with the help of a filtering system. It is an interesting idea, but it is quite expensive at the moment. Anyhow, until we make it affordable, we will have to control wastage of water. Finally, financial backing is crucial. Money will have to be allocated for this endeavour.

The next two chapters recommend policy proposals for governments. They range from greater investment into R&D to playing a constructive role in tilting the balance in favour of carbon free mechanisms.

The final chapter addresses us in three capacities; as citizens, consumers, and employers/employees. We don all three robes simultaneously. These are three massive roles that can leave a positive effect on our dwellings if we bring them in alignment with climate friendly measures. As a citizen, get

more involve on the local level. As a consumer, you control the demand side of things. Make use of this advantage. Prefer carbon free and smart products to support the climate friendly market. As an employer/employee, you can direct your investments towards smart alternatives. You can get connect with the government to raise resources for R&D. It is risky and may not yield immediate results but we have reached a stage where it has become incumbent upon us to make hard choices.

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