**School**: Harvard University

**Prompt**: Briefly discuss one book that has strongly influenced you.

**Word limit**: Unknown

# Outline

* Basic answer: How to Avoid a Climate Disaster, by Bill Gates.
  + Tie it back to the rice new energy fund
* Or could be the lean startup, and I talk about the startups I’m interested in here.

# Version 1

A book that has strongly influenced me has been *How to Avoid Climate Disaster*, by Bill Gates. Before having read it, I had always thought about climate change as something serious, but a problem that other people were working on and would definitely solve in time. The book made me realize how far behind we are and how close we are to missing our own emission and waste reduction targets, which could result in the collapse of society as we know it.

Something started growing in me after reading that book: a sense of urgency, a wish to join the discussion and to become involved in helping build a greener future. I reached out to Arlei Silva, a professor at Rice specializing in machine learning on graphs, to learn how computer science could be applied to tackle climate change. I found out about energy grid simulation and optimization software but realized I did not yet possess the mathematical background required to understand how they worked. That same day I registered for all the math classes I needed for the fall 2022 semester, but I was still impatient.

I wanted to do more. That is when I started thinking about ways of getting other people involved at Rice. I thought of starting an organization, but most clubs suffer the same problem: people join but then don’t attend most meetings, and little progress is actually made. My friend and I, therefore, decided to start a hedge fund focused on energy transition companies. We thought students would be initially attracted to the possibility of researching and managing investments in public stocks, and throughout the process, they would learn about different subindustries within energy transition and possible career paths.

Half of the annual profits would be reinvested into the fund and half would go towards scholarships for students who want to pursue unpaid internships in the energy transition sector.

Our initial idea panned out. We raised $150k from City bankers during the fall semester, and 18 students from all years and majors joined as analysts for the fund. Some of the upper-class students will be joining energy transition investment bank groups, renewables companies, and GreenTech firms this summer.