

71. Bill Gates

In early 2022, during a coincidental meeting, Bill Gates expressed his desire to visit Elon Musk to discuss philanthropy and climate issues, sparked by Musk's significant charitable contribution of \$5.7 billion to a fund. Their previous interactions had been friendly, notably when Gates visited SpaceX with his son, Rory. Despite their affinity for technology and innovation, Musk's self-managed schedule led to a direct arrangement for their meeting in Austin on March 9, 2022.

Upon Gates's arrival, the dialogue between the two billionaires, both known for their intense focus and confidence, quickly moved toward their differences in perspective on technology's role in environmental solutions. Gates challenged the viability of batteries in semitrucks and solar energy's potential to significantly impact climate change, leveraging his own research and knowledge to critique Musk's ambitions for Mars colonization as overly optimistic, if not "bizarre."

The tour of Musk's Gigafactory, nevertheless, left Gates impressed by Musk's meticulous understanding of the operation and his achievements with SpaceX, particularly the Starlink satellite constellation, which aligned with Gates's past ventures.

Their conversation shifted to philanthropy, where Musk skeptically questioned the efficiency of charitable efforts, contrasting sharply with Gates's detailed proposals for impactful projects in various global challenges. However, the mood soured upon addressing Gates's financial bet against Tesla, which Musk found antithetical to shared environmental goals, viewing it as hypocrisy given the mission of accelerating the transition to sustainable energy.

Despite the tension, Gates pursued the discussion on philanthropy in subsequent communications, though Musk's focus remained on Gates's financial position against Tesla. Gates, found in a moment of levity with his son Rory, attempted to steer back to philanthropic dialogue, highlighting the complex interplay of personal beliefs, investments, and ambitions between two of the world's most influential figures.