

# MINIMAX

Wildfire



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**Dearest reader,**

**Hanna Szinai**

If you have picked this magazine up, you might already know the topic of this paper, and do not need me to explain it to you. Still, let me offer a brief introduction. Within these covers, we explore the realms of passion, angst, powerful currents, trends, and epidemics – elements that, in essence, mirror wildfires, sweeping through nations, peoples, minds, and bodies. I encourage you to approach the articles with curiosity and an open mind.

The paper in your hand is the culmination of a lot of work and effort. I want to thank the journalists, designers, photographers here at Minimax as well as the talented Head of Design Alma Sgouridis, my wonderful Vice Editor in Chief Amalia Cardenas, and the rest of the team working on other parts of the project, making sure we are able to deliver our absolute best to you, dear reader.

If you like what you see, don't hesitate to reach out on our website where you can send us your own opinions, feedback, and suggestions.

# From Ember to Firestorm

Adam Falck, Photography by Yiling Zheng

Amidst an otherwise peaceful forest, a single spark can ignite the brightest of flames and the hottest of fires. This fierce, almost unstoppable force destroys everything in its path, but eventually, the forest will heal. New plants will grow, trees will spring up from the earth and perhaps tower even higher over the ground than before. Just as forests are changed by wildfires, so are we changed and molded by our passions. These passions are, just like wildfires, often ignited by a single spark – a lecture, an encounter, a challenge – and can often make us burn more brightly than anything else. Without a fire inside driving us forward and giving our actions a purpose, life becomes unbearably stale. But how do we even go about finding this fire?

While an arsonist can easily burn down a house with a can of gasoline and some matches, starting a fire within yourself is not so easy. Finding a passion is seldom instantaneous and is instead best characterized as a great trial and error process where you desperately throw things at the wall, hoping that something sticks. Sometimes, necessity is the mother of passion. Recognizing a challenge, a gap, or a need in society can give birth to a lifelong goal, and many entrepreneurs have found their purpose in life just by seeking solutions to a problem they have personally faced. As we walk through the great oak door and sit down in the aula every morning, each day becomes an opportunity to find that spark that we so desperately desire.

Even today, the grip of societal expectations remains disappointingly firm. While the dangers of submitting to societal pressures could easily be an article of its own, there is no doubt that many fires of passion have been smothered under the heavy blanket of expectation. Nowadays one might argue that we live in liberal times where individual choice is often praised, yet the undertow of what most people consider “normal” remains. Today’s pressure might not appear as directly as it once did, instead it lurks in the shadows as implied standards: the success stories highlighted by media, the measures of

academic achievement, and even the casual conversations that so often steer into talks about status and accomplishments, just to name a few examples. The impact of these societal expectations on individual passions can be profound. Many have traded their genuine interests for careers that promise stability, prestige, or societal approval. An artist might become a nurse, not out of love for medicine and healing but due to the allure of a “stable” profession. A dancer might put away their ballerina shoes, pressured by the looming question, “But is this a real career?”.





These choices, while practical or even necessary in some contexts, can lead to a life devoid of the fervor and joy that true passion brings.

It could most likely be said that all of humanity is united in at least one goal: the pursuit of meaning. In a world where we don't have to fight for our survival anymore, life can easily become a mere collection of chores, where hours are seen as checkpoints and activities as obligations. It is here where a passion makes all the difference. A relatable example of this could be music. Imagine cleaning your apartment. Boring, right? Now infuse this moment with some of your favorite music flowing gently through your ears. Instantly, the mundane has transformed. The morning commute becomes a private concert, the shower a stage, and even the sometimes-laborious task of cleaning your apartment has become bearable. In this example, a deep love of music, a passion if you will, has genuinely transformed some of life's most uneventful and meaningless moments into an enjoyable experience.

Meeting someone who is truly passionate about something is often quite contagious, and can easily spark a similar enthusiasm within us and help emphasize the journey of finding our own passions. There is something innately happy about seeing a dear friend's eyes light up as they start to talk about the thing that makes something deep within them





burn hot. One of the most striking things about passionate individuals is their ability to draw you into their own world, if just for a moment. For just a second, a minute, or a conversation, two people can share and bond over something that makes them truly happy. It can serve as a powerful reminder that among the ups and downs of everyday life, there are people who seem to have found their call, and it is hard not to be infected by their joy.

**As we navigate** all the complexities life has to offer, our passions, and the pursuit of them, becomes like a fire burning hot within us, guiding and driving us to a life of purpose and fulfillment. Remember, finding your passion is not a race or a competition, it is a highly personal journey that requires patience, dedication and the occasional leap of faith. As students at SSE, we have the privilege of having a myriad of opportunities at our fingertips. Each lecture, each seminar, each occasionally fascinating page in an otherwise dreadful course book, everything we do, read, or experience here is a potential spark that might just be the kickstart of a new passion. So, as we step out of the oak door and into the world, we should do that carrying with us the determination to discover and celebrate our passions, as we not only enrich our own lives, but the lives of those around us as well.







Photography by  
Mikko Haapaniemi

# Addressing Climate Injustice:

## Unveiling Western Emissions' Impact and Advocating Interconnected Global Solutions

Theodor Westerlund, Design by Hana Norder

**C**limate change impacts the world unevenly, with third-world countries bearing a disproportionate burden of emissions from industrialized nations. Exploring the root causes of this injustice, we note a growing ignorance in advocating for a singular focus on climate change. However, is it not crucial to recognize that addressing global challenges requires attention to interconnected problems? This argument's logic will be presented in our journey ahead.



## How Emissions from the West Are Harming Third-World Countries

The disproportionate impact of climate change on third-world countries can be traced to historical emissions, rooted in the industrial revolution's reliance on fossil fuels and subsequent carbon emissions. Western countries, notably the United States and Europe, were major contributors to the accumulation of greenhouse gases during this period. Third-world countries, in contrast to many Western countries, grapple with economic disparities, high poverty rates, and limited access to clean energy technologies. Consequently, third-world nations, though playing a minor role in causing the crisis, lack the resources to adapt to and combat the consequences of climate change. Moreover, these countries face heightened vulnerability to the escalating frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, droughts, floods and heatwaves, resulting in loss of life and property, displacement and food insecurity (Environmental Justice Foundation, 2022).

However, addressing this issue requires not only a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Western countries but

also increased support for mitigation and adaptation efforts in third-world nations. Ultimately, tackling climate change is a shared global responsibility, and addressing this injustice is a vital part of the solution. Failure to do so perpetuates a cycle of inequality and exacerbates the impacts of climate change on those who are least equipped to deal with them. Western countries can play a significant



role in helping to minimize the climate effects on third-world countries through a combination of financial, technological, and policy support. This could be done through combining building resilience to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and rising sea levels, with tree planting and reforestation efforts to sequester carbon and prevent deforestation (Climate Justice Alliance, 2022).

## Ignorance: Problematizing Today's Climate Debate

I think most people understand that Western nations should be held responsible for reducing emission. However, the continuous question is: how much should the West focus on the matter? If you ask Greta Thunberg & Co, they would say that the sole focus in society must lay on climate change. This argument is not only ignorant, but also

detrimental to society as a whole. Every country has an obligation to look to all societal problems and not just one. The problems with the single-focus approach are plenty: Neglecting societal issues leads to social unrest and political instability; focusing only on climate change can alienate people who are concerned about other pressing issues; the moral responsibility to address other societal problems (basic human needs) are undermined etc (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2022).

So, what are the arguments posed for focusing solely on climate change? An often-mentioned argument is the urgency of the matter. Those who advocate it see it as a pressing concern that requires immediate attention to ensure a sustainable future and that it is not prioritized enough. They also strongly believe that humanity has a moral duty to protect the environment and mitigate the negative impacts of human activities on the planet before it is too late. Adding to this is the argument that without addressing climate change, the ability of future generations to thrive and enjoy a high quality of life could be severely compromised (Climate Justice Alliance, 2022).

It is important to note that the above arguments necessarily are not wrong. I do not write this text to dismiss the importance of addressing climate change. However, isolating the question of climate change will not lead to a more sustained future. It is important to find a balanced approach that considers both global and local issues. Additionally, the moral responsibility in addressing climate

change may overshadow other ethical concerns, such as economic well-being and job security. It is crucial to find a balance between environmental responsibility and economic stability. Focusing on a variety of societal problems simultaneously, rather than solely on climate change, is essential because our world's challenges are interconnected, and addressing one problem often has implications for others. If climate change is addressed in isolation, the undermining of economic and political stability is inevitable.

**Why should you care then?** Well, because you, as a student at one of Europe's most prestigious economic schools, function as a torchbearer of the future. You should care, for your concerns reach far beyond the immediacy of the classroom. As a student, you carry the burden of safeguarding the fragile balance of our ecosystems and preserving the beauty of this Earth. You should have concern not just for yourself but for the magnificent diversity of life on Earth. It is a choice to foster resilience, to nurture empathy, and to uphold the unwavering spirit of hope found in our ancient forests and boundless seas. Will you continue to be dormant or take action?

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# In English, please!

Lydia Löthman, Design by Wilma Geust

America's rise as a global superpower in the 1950's brought on a rapid anglicization of Swedish society. Just a few decades later the English language had successfully outcompeted French and German as the dominating second language and American culture revolutionized cinema, fashion and music. An accelerating world wide globalization made the new world language increasingly important in all sectors.

The trend towards greater internationalization and use of the English language has been especially significant within the education system and academia. According to a report from the Swedish language council, that made headlines in early 2022, 93 percent of all theses and articles published by Swedish universities were written in English. Likewise, around 30 percent of all courses were English speaking and an even larger percentage used English course literature. (Malmström, 2022)

## English critical for competitiveness

At Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), further steps have been taken towards internationalization. Since 2020, all offered programs are held in English, on the bachelor's as well as master's levels.

Pär Åhlström, Vice President of Degree Programs at SSE, explains the switch to a course program entirely taught in English:

"Our goal has always been to be an internationally recognized business school, and this was

a natural step in that direction".

A high degree of internationalization is also valued by several accreditation agencies and ranking institutes. This played a pivotal role in influencing the decision.

"Internationalization is an especially important criterion for the EQUIS accreditation", Åhlström explains.

Every year since 2020, the number of international students at SSE has increased. In the fall of 2023, almost a third of the newly admitted bachelor students in Business and Economics held a non-Swedish passport. In the long-term perspective, the objective is to achieve a student body composition in which international students constitute 50 percent.



Åhlström is happy with the change and believes that the international admission attracts better students to the university:

”When we compare the grade statistics of international and Swedish master students, we actually see that the international students often perform better.”

Åhlström also believes that a high degree of internationalization appeals to the very best Swedish students:

”We know that many Swedish students want to study in an international environment, so the transition was necessary to maintain competitiveness.”

### **A delicate balance**

The spread of the English language within and beyond academia has largely been cheered on by the Swedish state who continues to promote internationalization in schools and industry. However, not everyone shares the enthusiasm.

In December 2022, a large number of Swedish academics and authors co-signed an open letter in which they encouraged the government to safeguard the Swedish language and its status within the school system. The letter references the Swedish language law (2009:600 §6), stating that the public sector has a responsibility to promote and develop the usage of Swedish.

Åhlström however, does not recognize that SSE has such a responsibility.

”Our mission is to supply Sweden with

an international education in English.”

In addition, SSE is a privately owned business school and is hence generally exempt from demands placed on the public sector.

But even within the faculty at SSE, there are critical voices.

Anders Liljenberg is an associate professor in marketing and strategy, and he is one of the few teachers at SSE who still conduct lessons in Swedish.

“I think it is excellent that we accept international students into our programs, but if I only have Swedish speaking students in my classroom I think it is ridiculous that we still have to speak English”, he says.

Liljenberg explains that he lets the students choose the language they would like to speak at the start of every new course, which is usually highly appreciated.

“The students really appreciate the opportunity to speak their mother tongue”, he says and continues:

“I think that all Swedes need to practice their first language more. It has an important culture-bearing feature which is at risk of disappearing”.

Studies have also shown that Swedish students generally struggle with courses taught in English. A study published in January 2023 from Örebro university, showed that over a third of the interviewed students have a hard time



with the course literature, and a majority asserts that they read slower in English than in Swedish. (Eriksson, 2022)

To Åhlströms knowledge, this has not been a big issue at SSE.

”I understand that course literature in English could be a difficulty for some students, but it is not something that we have noticed in general.”

Despite some critical voices, the process of internationalization is set to be continued at SSE, as the school continues striving towards its goal of fifty percent international students. The debate surrounding language choice in academia highlights the delicate balance between promoting internationalization and safeguarding linguistic heritage, a challenge many nations and universities are grappling with in today’s increasingly globalized society.



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# Busts & booms of sustainable fashion

Fatma Qureshi, Design by Srilakshmi Varma

Many influencers glamorize and attempt to persuade the public to purchase excessive amounts of fast fashion on social media. Despite their efforts, a shift in consumer attitudes has emerged. Over the past few years, there has been a growing trend of people buying pre-owned clothing, manifesting the rapid growth of the secondhand clothing industry (Enström, 2023). Moreover, since the Covid-19 epidemic broke out, the economic situation in the vast majority of countries has changed, mostly for the worse. This begs the question: Has inflation and the economic situation in Sweden affected the boom of the secondhand industry?

It's no secret that pre-owned clothing has been on the rise. In 2021, the secondhand market increased globally by 28%, and it's predicted that the sales of secondhand clothing will double by 2027 (Hirji, 2023). Several popular Swedish second-hand chains have reported an impressive increase in sales, such as Erikshjälpen increasing sales by 16% and Röda Korset by 20% in 2022 (Enström, 2023). Furthermore, the popular secondhand store Myrorna has seen that new types of customers have appeared in their shops due to having less money. This increase has not only happened in big cities but also in smaller cities, countryside areas, and cities with a large population of students, such as Uppsala and Lund (Enström, 2023).

This necessitates a deeper look at this phenomenon; is the emergence of slow fashion and secondhand clothing due to trendiness and climate awareness or a sign of financial distress?

Due to a lack of verifiable studies examining causal links between inflation, environmental concern and the rise in popularity of used clothes, it is not possible to say which phenomena has the larger impact. However, the importance of both is undeniable, and it becomes crucial to consider what measures would solidify second hand stores as a staple of the fashion industry, escaping the fate of a short-lived trend.



If you want to shop cheaper and more sustainably, give these shops a chance:



Even though the secondhand market is a rising star in the fashion industry, this has not always been the case. Previously, secondhand clothing was taboo and mostly bought by people on a budget, such as students, larger families, and seniors (Weibull, 2019). This stigmatized buying used clothes, associating secondhand stores with poverty and a lack of social class. The previously discussed and well-documented boom in second hand sales goes hand in hand with the disappearance of these preconceived notions, to the extent that shoppers wanting to appear unique and socially conscious will choose to spend their money in secondhand stores regardless of their economic status.

Charities and other religious organizations had already begun the collection and reselling of used clothes as a way of raising funds for their causes in the early 20th century, but thrift stores first reached real popularity after the Great depression in the 1930s, as a response to a lower income status of the American

population (Goodfair, 2023). We see this trend being repeated now, a century later. Thrifting has been on the rise for the last decades, but the industry has not seen a boom like the current one, in which personal finances may play a big role. The economic situation of surging inflation, increased interest, and rising food and electricity prices has affected people's lives in many countries, including Sweden. Consumers become more price-sensitive and are likely to cut back on spending, budgeting wherever necessary (Westberg, 2022). Finding cheaper alternatives to necessities becomes a holy grail, and the secondhand market emerges as their best option for goods like clothes. But is the current economic situation really the major driver of this change? How could it be, if previous financial crises did not have similar effects on the industry, even though people were suffering as much then as they do now. Maybe secondhand clothing has become more available than ever by entering the online market. Besides being found exclusively in physical stores, pre-owned



clothes can now be bought through websites, social media, and mobile apps, making the process convenient and simple. By utilizing the same algorithms fast fashion stores use, secondhand companies have now become serious competitors of already existing clothing companies—forcing many of them to implement secondhand principles in their own stores as well, such as secondhand sections and repair centers. The secondhand market is now not only ethical but profitable as well.

The rise in popularity of pre-owned apparel seems to be more than just a passing fad; it indicates a significant shift in consumer behavior and societal norms (Ecster, n.d.). The expansion of the secondhand market, especially within the younger generations such as gen Z, hints at secondhand clothing becoming part of a lifestyle rather than a trend (Mårtensson, 2023). As economical and ecological challenges remain, cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternatives will always be attractive



to diverse customer groups. The shift from fast to slow fashion has had a broad impact, reaching people all around the globe, including Sweden. This transition is not only a response to economic uncertainty but signals a broader cultural shift towards consciousness and uniqueness, challenging not merely ancient ways of consuming but of being as well.

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Photography by Emilia Essinger







# Being Overwhelmed

**Martin Sandberg, Design by Anna Gao**

During the last decades a multitude of successful Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, such as Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, have preached the value of failing in almost every single interview or lecture they give. They claim that they would not be where they are had they not failed multiple times along the road. Zuckerberg and Musk are just two examples of a very common cliché – the concept of failing fast and failing forward. In essence, failing fast and failing forward can be summarised as the idea that failure is not necessarily something bad or something we should try to avoid at all costs, but rather a stepping stone towards success, and thus something we should embrace and find valuable.

The entertainment industry appears to like the cliché of failing almost as much as entrepreneurs do. You have most likely heard the story of J. K. Rowling – the creator of Hogwarts, one of the few academic institutions students of our generation would have preferred to attend over Stockholm School of Economics – and how she was rejected by 12 publishing houses before finally receiving a contract with a publisher. Similar inspirational stories exist about almost every single successful artist, band, comedian, or author. The keyword here is successful. The idea of failure being something valuable and something we do not necessarily have to avoid is almost exclusively endorsed by successful people.

The question is then how true this cliché



holds for ordinary people in everyday life, and more specifically for SSE students during our studies. Should we view failure as something positive, or should we try to avoid it at all costs? One very common feeling during your studies is the feeling of being overwhelmed. This can be seen as a failure to maintain full control over your life, as you suddenly feel as if life is spiralling out of control. In such moments, your focus shifts from making deliberate choices to doing your best given the circumstances. You may struggle to allocate sufficient time for studying, ultimately affecting your grades, fail to maintain social relationships due to conflicting priorities, or fail to workout as much as you would like to, affecting your personal health. Thus, being overwhelmed can be seen both as a failure in itself, but also as a major source of additional failures.

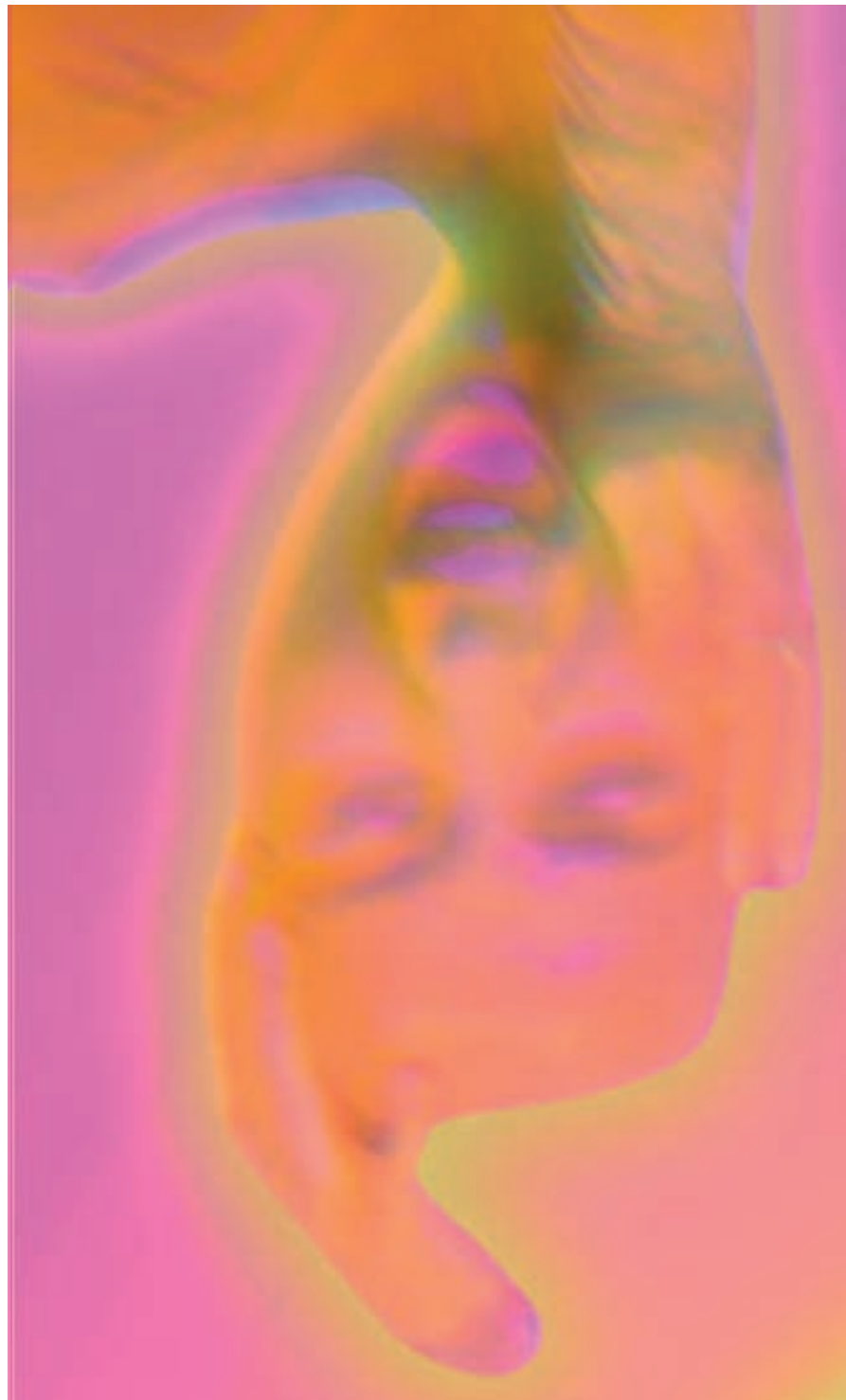
The process of becoming overwhelmed can be described as a wildfire. There are many factors that must coincide to create an environment where this development can occur. Once this environment exists, all it takes for a wildfire to start is a spark, and it can quickly develop into a rapid destructive force that cannot be stopped. It can be controlled with varying success, and it can be limited to certain areas, but stopping it is often impossible. This is very similar to how we often cannot quickly solve a situation where we are overwhelmed, we can only do our best given the situation. For example, I would suspect that most of us felt quite overwhelmed during our first study period at SSE. The very intense introduction week, meeting more than 300 new people, starting studying new subjects, the required readings, assignments, duggor and the looming threat of exams all contribute to an environment where feelings of inadequacy and failure easily grow. It would hardly be surprising if one would feel overwhelmed during this period – I sure did. Was there any value to me being overwhelmed? The comparison to a wildfire might help us answer these questions.

One might think that something as destructive as a wildfire would have no benefits whatsoever, but that is not completely true. In fact, wildfires are often not suppressed due to their positive effects. The destruction rinses the affected area of dead materials that might have a negative impact on the ecosystem, decreasing the risk of a catastrophic fire in the future. Furthermore, wildfires create a more fertile environment for quite a few species of plants and animals. Similarly, should we also allow ourselves to feel overwhelmed? Being overwhelmed forces us to abandon unhealthy habits, change our relationships and balance our life in new ways. It can be a painful process, but it is also a process that might help us avoid even worse failures in the future as we reshape our life in, hopefully, more healthy ways. It might even create a perfect platform for personal growth and development of new habits creating space and time that we can fill with new things.

However, as previously mentioned, this more positive view on failure and being overwhelmed is almost always a position held by those who subsequently succeed. But trying to achieve success is also a major driver behind developing feelings of being overwhelmed. This probably holds especially true at a school such as SSE, where

hustle culture is synonymous with school culture. There is always more to strive for – higher grades to reach, a prestigious internship to get, an important role in SASSE to apply for – and you can have it all by working even harder. When an environment like this is populated by ambitious and talented students, hustle culture can easily become a wildfire, consuming, and overwhelming you. It might destroy good habits or relationships that you lack time and energy to maintain or prioritise, but also your health and self-esteem. This is something I have personally struggled with. I have often felt that “if I only achieve this specific thing I will feel satisfied”, but the sad truth is that I won’t. Once I get there my goals will have changed, and I will think “If I only achieve this other thing, then I will feel satisfied”. If we let these feelings consume us like wildfire, we are likely to end up overworked, burned out and with a feeling of never being enough.

In conclusion, being overwhelmed is neither only a positive thing, nor only a negative thing. In the long run it can help us develop better habits and create a perfect starting point for personal growth and development. Does this mean that we should not strive to limit situations when we are overwhelmed? Mostlikely not. A wildfire does not only have positive consequences, it is also a rapidly spreading destructive process. Some habits and relationships, such as close friends, family, and partners, are valuable and important, and worthy of maintaining. As SSE students, one very important aspect of this is to avoid being completely consumed by the hustle culture, inevitably ending up feeling like a failure, struggling to keep your head above water. Totally giving up on control and letting the feeling of being overwhelmed rapidly spiral out of control would be a very destructive process. Instead, we should try to control the feeling, but perhaps also accept that there can be some value to failing. Maybe the saying should not be to **fail fast and fail forward**, but rather **fail controlled and fail forward**.





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