



FEATURED TEACHER AUTHOR

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On a regular basis when I tell people that I am a math teacher, their faces instantly cringe. “I hated math” or “I did not get math in high school” is usually the response I get from them. This is an epidemic in our society. Why does everyone hate math? Upon pondering this question, I have reflected on my own teaching practice. So, I have some advice for both parents and students.

Parents

If you did not have a great math experience or you just think you don’t know how to do it, do not tell your kids that. This sends them the wrong message; that it is okay not to work at math because “my parents did not get it.” Instead, tell them you are not really sure, and then go sit with them in front of their book, computer, smartphone, or whatever resources (means) are available, and look it up with them. There are a plethora of resources out there with videos on how to do the math. Just google “videos for math lessons” and you will find a ton of websites and resources. By doing this with your child, you are showing them that it is okay not to understand everything, but you need to put extra effort into your education when you are confused or not understanding. Too often I see kids shut down when they think things are too difficult instead of thinking about another way to confront the problem. By doing this one simple thing, you can have a great impact on your child’s education.

Students

If you currently are a student that hates math, you need a shift in your paradigm. Math can open so many doors for you in life. You need to learn to embrace the difficulty and find a way to break through to understanding. Theodore Roosevelt said “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty... I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.”

You might think this is where I am going to leave you, but I want to give you some ideas of how to get through the math. Like I told your parents, the internet has great resources at your fingertips, use them. Your math teacher is there for you, too. Find out the tutoring schedule and make sure you are going. When you seek tutoring from a teacher, make sure you do not waste their time or your time. Go into the class with questions and topics you do not understand. As a teacher, I can help a student out a lot more when they have thought about what they do not understand and ask specific questions. If you are not sure what you do not understand, have the teacher look at your work and help you find where you may be lacking in knowledge. This means you have to have been doing your work. If you find that you understand the homework, but just cannot take the quiz or test, then this part is for you. When you are doing your homework, do not rely on your notes. Maybe for the first couple of problems, use your notes. Then, put them away for the rest of the homework. If there are problems you don’t understand, try something so the teacher can see your thought process and where you are getting stuck. Be sure to

highlight or circle the problem(s) so you remember to ask the next day in class. I always tell my students that if you are missing more than three problems on an assignment, you should be in tutoring asking questions. One more thing to try is to write problems down that you could not figure out on a separate piece of paper. After you have five or so problems on the paper, take it like a quiz. That means no notes or help from anything else. If you can answer them, then you remember what you are doing. If you cannot answer them, take these to your teacher and ask for some help. The more often you put yourself into a testing situation the better at the tests you will become. If these suggestions still do not work, talk to your teacher about everything you have tried. They just might have another suggestion that could work for you.

I hope this helps you not to become an “I hate math” person, but a person that takes on difficult challenges and pushes through them without giving up. You may not love math, but at least you can say that even though it was not easy, I tried my hardest and got through. Remember we are all in this together. Our job is to help you, but you have to be willing to do the work. It will not be easy for everyone, but your hard work and dedication will be worth it in the end.

Thanks for reading,

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