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Math: My Struggle

In school children are exposed to a variety of different subjects. As time goes on, children begin to identify their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes. In my case, mathematics was always an area in which I had difficulty. This is because math, unlike other subjects, such as the humanities, requires the use of numbers and formulas on a constant basis. Since I was a child math never came naturally to me. I felt as though the numbers were rushing at me, each one making me dizzier than the last. This initial struggle with math weakened my confidence in my abilities towards the subject. I felt as though my struggle was in vein and I would never comprehend what was being taught. As I grew older I realized that I could in fact do well in math if I ignored my insecurities and focused. This would require me to work on my math fundamentals, maintain good study habits, as well as being more optimistic in order to put forth my best effort.

In elementary school, I experienced my first troubles with math because I had difficulties with basic math fundamentals. Every day my teacher, Mrs. Frank would have a lesson planned for the day and would follow up with questions to determine if we understood the lesson plan. She would call on random students to solve the problems given and I could never solve them without any help. One day, my teacher called on me to solve a multiplication problem and I got nervous because the numbers would get scrambled in my head. Feeling shut down I told my teacher "I do not know”. With my classmates laughing at me, I felt embarrassed. I remember going home with tears in my eyes running to my father’s lap telling him about that day. Since I did not want to feel senseless in front of my teacher and classmates, I had to do extra work by memorizing my multiplication tables every night with my father. To improve my perception, my father bought me a multiplication education keyboard. Every night I would try to memorize my multiplication tables with my multiplication education keyboard by pressing the keys and testing myself. I ended up making a lot of progress and passing elementary school math. It turned out elementary school math was easier than I expected.

In order to build on the progress I had made in elementary school I would need to maintain good study habits throughout high school. Since it was a higher level of math, my father could not help me like he did in elementary school because he only learned simple math back in Ecuador. I had no one to help me with my math homework when I got home. It came to the point where I wanted to give up on myself. I would get failing test scores and I would be barely passing. Failing math, made me feel like I could not accomplish anything. My teacher, Mr. Tan, made a plan for me. He told me that I should stay after school every day so I could get extra help one on one. Being consistent, I would stay afterschool for tutorial sessions until 6 in the evening in which I got help with homework and previous tests that I failed. My teacher told me that the effort I put into math also counts at home so, at night I studied everything I learned that day.

Slowly I began to gain confidence in my mathematical abilities, as a result of this I developed a more positive, optimistic attitude toward the subject. My test scores steadily increased, and I could now complete my homework without any assistance. These noticeable improvements made math more enjoyable, and therefore easier to learn . When it was time to take the regents in June, I got a seventy-eight on my Trigonometry regents. I found out that I was one of the four that passed my trigonometry regents out of twenty-five students because it was a difficult exam.

In the end I realized that understanding math is like teaching a child how to read, it takes time and effort. Improving my math fundamentals, conducting better study habits, and being more optimistic about myself in math made me realize I could accomplish anything and not just math.