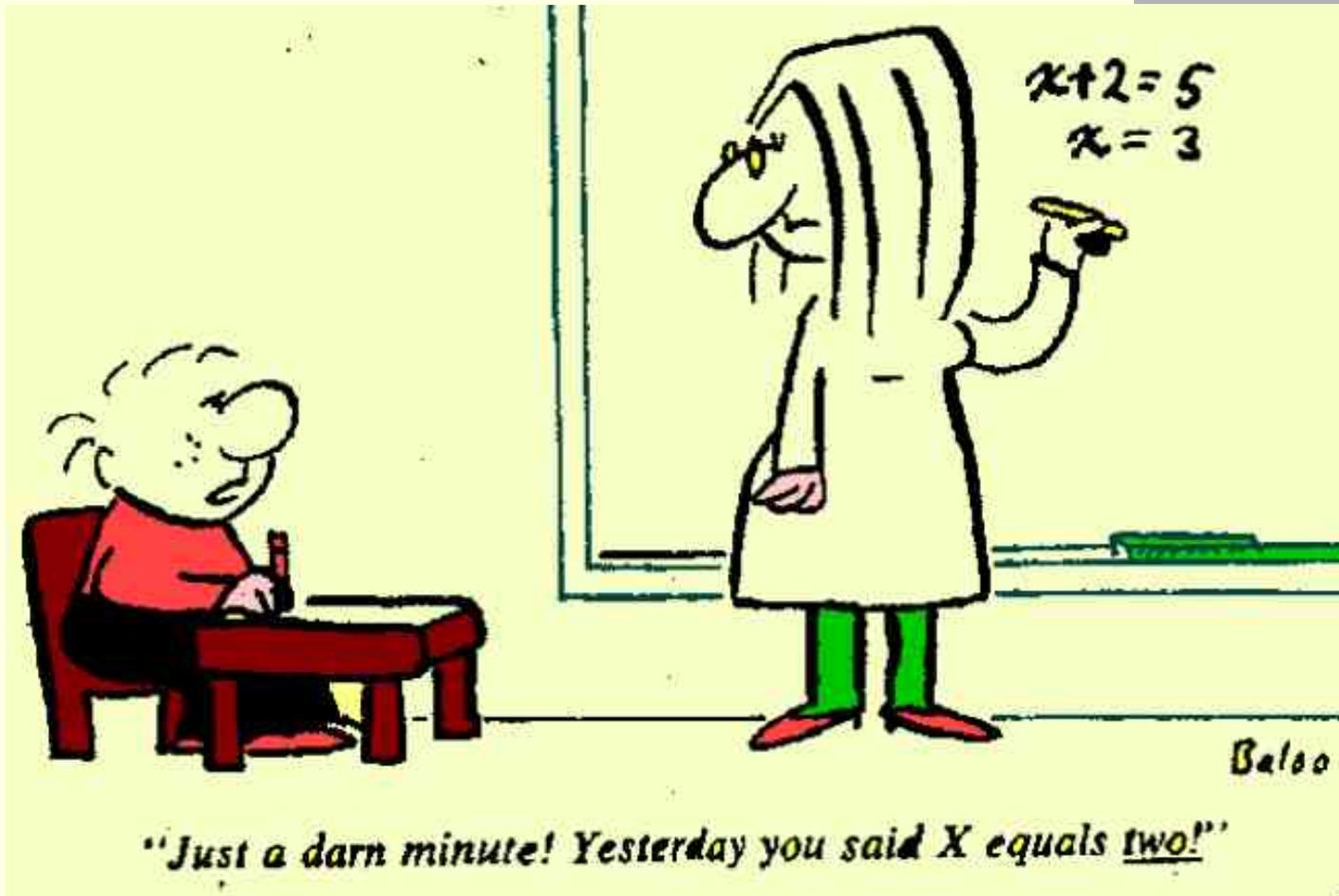


Math Anxiety

*How to overcome your Math Anxiety and
take tests successfully*

Algebra



What is Math Anxiety:

- It is a feeling of intense frustration or helplessness about one's ability to do Math.
- It is a learned response to one or more of the following:
 1. Participating in a Math class
 2. Listening to a lecture
 3. Working through problems
 4. Discussing Mathematics

Where Does Math Anxiety Come From?

- Negative experiences in working with teachers, tutors, classmates, parents or siblings.
- Stress or a personal problem that was going on at the time you were learning a concept.

What are the symptoms of Math Anxiety?

- Panic - a feeling of helplessness. **You feel that you are up against a brick wall and have reached your limit in Math.**
- Paranoia - a feeling that everyone knows the answer except you.
- Passive - you have a Math mind or you don't. **You can't do better in Math. You don't take action.**
- Lack of Confidence – You don't trust your intuition. **You memorize rules instead of learning concepts.**

Taking Possession of Math Anxiety...

- 1st step - recognize that Math Anxiety is an emotional response.
- Think back and identify some experiences. Write them down along with your reaction for both how you felt then and how you feel now.
- Then take out a fresh sheet of paper and in a few words sum up your feelings about Math at this point in your life, together with the reason/s you wish to succeed in Math.
- If you would like to share your memories, please feel free to do so. This can be very beneficial.

Unconstructive (Hurtful) vs. Constructive Ways for Dealing with Math Anxiety

Hurtful

- Rationalization
- Suppression
- Denial



Constructive

- Bring anxiety to awareness
- Acceptance of feelings without self-criticism
- Learning strategies for disarming Math Anxiety

Hurtful Approaches - Rationalization

- Find reasons why it's okay for you to have Math Anxiety (I'm not smart enough).
- Rationalizing will make you feel better about having anxiety but will not lessen it or get it under control.

Hurtful Approaches - Suppression...

Have awareness, but try not to feel it
(it is usually accompanied by):

- Severe self-criticism.
- When unsuccessful, self-criticism may worsen and loss of self-esteem can occur.
- Don't want to feel anxious, want to overcome it by force.
- Can be self-destructive.

Hurtful Approaches cont...

Denial

- Avoid Mathematics as much as possible.
- Choose college majors and careers that don't require much Math.
- Let bank or spouse balance checkbook.
- This approach has the advantage that feelings of frustration and anxiety are mostly avoided.

Denial and Its Consequences...

- People who are in denial have lives that are constrained - fewer than 25% of all careers are “Math-Free.”
- Personal choices and professional goals are limited with “No Math” (Math-Free jobs usually = low-pay & low-status employment).

Ways to Reduce Math Anxiety...

- Realize you are not alone. **Many people feel anxious about Math.**
- Admit it! **Once you recognize that you have Math Anxiety you can start to correct it.**
- Become aware of where your Math Anxiety originated from.
- Overcome negative self-talk and correct it with positive self-talk.
- Avoid people who aren't helpful or supportive.
- Trust your instincts and don't put down your approaches to a Math problem. Do Math in the way that is comfortable for you. **Remember there is more than one way to do Math.**
- Ask questions. **This is for better understanding.**
- Know the basics - In most cases you need to know Math from previous courses. **If you don't remember go back and review.**
- Consider Math a foreign language - **it must be practiced.**

Ways to Reduce Math Anxiety cont...

- Don't rely on memorization. Try to understand concepts. **If you are anxious, your memory is the first to go.**
- Don't put Math until the last minute. **It's better if you do a little Math every day.**
- Decide what type of study environment works best for you.
- Take breaks. Don't work for hours on end. **It's a good idea to take a break every 1hr or so.**
- Get help. **If you are having difficulties figuring out a concept, seek assistance from teachers, tutors, or peers.**
- Don't pressure yourself. Take pride in strides you make. **Math Anxiety is not cured in a day. It's a slow process.**
- READ your Math text.
- Study Math according to your learning style.
- Try to get help as soon as you can if you don't understand.
- Be relaxed and comfortable while studying.
- 'TALK' Mathematics.
- Be responsible for your own successes and failures.

Overcoming Math Test Anxiety:

■ Preparing For The Test

- Prepare early
- Know expectations
- Keep up
- Ask questions
- Review weekly
- Final review
- Rehearse
- Summarize
- Use your study team

■ Test-Taking Strategies

- Arrive early
- Organize yourself
- Read and listen to all instructions
- Pace yourself
- Review

■ After The Test

- Reward yourself
- Analyze and assess

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Twelve Math Myths



- Men are better in Math than women
- Math requires logic, not intuition
- Math is not creative
- You must always know how you got the answer
- There is a best way to do Math problems
- It's always important to get the answer exactly right
- It's bad to count on your fingers
- Mathematicians do problems quickly, in their heads
- Math requires a good memory
- Math is done by working intensely until the problem is solved
- Some people have a "Math Mind" and some don't
- There is a magic key to doing Math