

Ditch your maths phobia and become number friendly!



BY MINOOC JOKHI

Constantly tell yourself and train your mind that "I can do maths and I will do it well". Amongst students it is seen that math phobia and stress can range from general discomfort and mental disorganization, to feelings of stress and feeling lost, eventually leading to total panic. This need not be the case if you follow some simple tips...

Renowned philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson had very correctly said: "Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world."

Indeed, life begins when all fears and phobias end. And children as well as adults of all ages must not have 'Math Phobia' but start loving this wonderful subject.

In all these years of doing 'Mathemagic Shows' and conducting memory enhancement classes, the subject, which kids are most petrified of that I have seen unfortunately, is maths. Numbers, figures, roots, equations... all these wonderful concepts are alien to so many school and college going children. I myself was a failure in maths till my 9th standard. But encouraged by my mother, I improved my skills in this amazing subject called Maths.

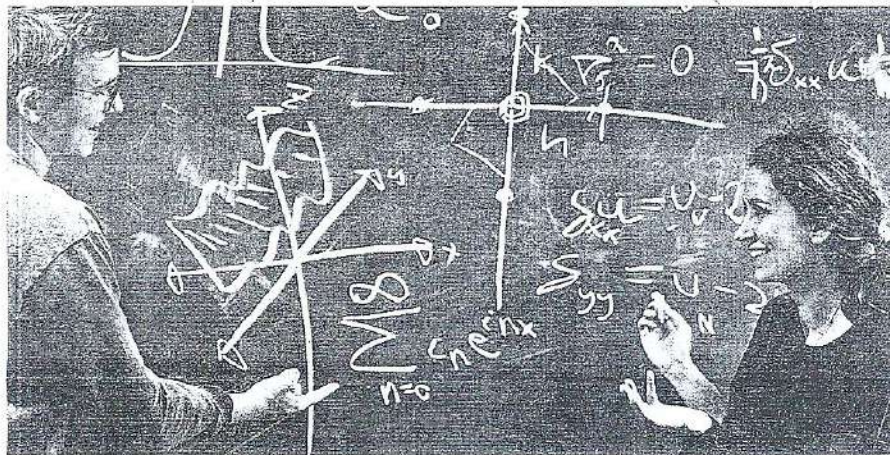
Children undergo needless tension for mathematics and a proper assessment of this problem can ensure that instead of fear children enjoy and develop a fun-cum-learn attitude towards mathematics. This will ensure that they work hard and strive for good results.

First of all, constantly tell yourself and train your mind that "I can do maths and I will do it well". Amongst students it is seen that math phobia and stress can range from general discomfort and mental disorganization to feelings of stress and feeling lost, eventually leading to total panic.

As Ernst Junger had rightly said: "The more the panic grows, the more uplifting the image of a man who refuses to bow to the terror." Even though many children do cope with this distress, for some the fear is so huge that it affects their math learning abilities and then the fear arises.

TIPS TO REMOVE FEAR AND BE A MATHS CHAMPION:

- 1) **No self-denial:** If you are a weak student in maths don't deny it; accept it with a smile and improve.
- 2) **Deflate wrong notions regards maths:** Remove all false thoughts, which creates stress and anxiety. Having wrong thoughts in your



mind will confuse you and leave you flummoxed. Some are a little slow to learn and they must not be discouraged.

3) **Do regular practice without fail:** In maths you solve sums, not learn answers; so solve sums regularly as it will help increase your speed and accuracy.

4) **Do calculations mentally often:** Avoid using the calculator all the time; it makes you over dependent and you don't improve. Students should use mental calculations to solve basic questions at least. It is commonly observed that students get stuck with complex difficult calculations but with the mental calculations of at least simple arithmetic, they will be able to save their valuable time and efforts. Top level students accept this fact that they do mental calculations on their own, without a calculator and they play with numbers and become quicker and accurate. I myself, when I started in 9th standard, used to add bus numbers, car numbers, then subtract etc. mentally and it became a lifelong number crunching habit.

5) **Solve the word problems in fun way:** Treat the word 'problem' as fun! Just as one enjoys puzzles, brain teasers, stumbers, one liners, treat the problem as a fun challenge and you will surely succeed.

6) **Be positive always:** Sometimes a

MATHS TRICK

Take 2 numbers ending with 1 and 9. The first digits have to be same. E.g. 91 and 99. Multiply 1 and 9 and we get 9 but don't write 9, write 09 and the first digit 9 multiply by 10 (next number) and the answer is 9009.

Also 41 times 49 is 2009 and 151 times 159 is 24009.

child may get good marks, sometimes not so good. But never lose hope or confidence. Even parents and teachers should never discourage but see that the child gets courage and confidence and does well in the subject.

7) **Have strong basics:** Basics like additions, subtractions, and tables have to be strong. All the basics have to be constantly improved; only then you can do complex problems with ease. The more a child practices basic math concepts, the stronger their logic skills will become, which in turn will help in gaining confidence. Practicing mental maths will improve their working memory and help them proceed ahead.

8) **Have keen sense of observation:** If you have to minus 9 from a two-digit number e.g. $46 - 9 = 37$ what I

do is minus 1 from tens place (4) and add 1 to unit's place (6) and we get 37. You can do this with bigger 3 digit and more numbers too. So always be very observant; it helps a lot in maths.

9) **Along with observation be creative:** Creativity is one aspect, which has been neglected by one and all whether with regards to memory or any other thing. This is a core issue to be tackled. By employing a dry, boring way of reading and then forgetting it will not take us far. Also some, rather many, individuals especially young students try to learn any subject even mathematics by mugging the topics. This way they learn for some time and then forget the stuff. But this doesn't help.

10) **Music-Maths connection:** Try listening to different songs while doing different maths problems. It motivates you a lot. Change the song for a different problem. The biggest similarity between math and music is patterns. E.g. music has a pattern of repeating verses and choruses while math uses patterns to explain the unknown. You can use different mathematical combinations in music.

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