

IN CELEBRATION OF PI DAY

Posted on March 1, 2022 by Angela Herrington



Does everyone know that we celebrate a holiday every March 14th (you know, 03/14)? It's Pi Day! Something you should know about me is that I LOVE math. Yes, it's true. In fact, I believe that **we learn many life lessons from our interactions with math**. I have spent decades teaching math to people who would have rather had a root canal than take a math class. When our youngest child was four, I re-entered the workforce on a part-time basis, teaching freshmen level math at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Best. Job. Ever. I lived for the days when a student would say to me, "I get it!" or "I didn't know I was good at math until now." Hallelujah!

How many of you have been utterly miserable in a math class? That's a rhetorical question—don't answer out loud. But I suspect most of you. Hey, I'm a math person and I've been miserable in a math class. It's only those math prodigies out there who have never had a confused look on their face. For the rest of us, we know what it is like to struggle. And there is nothing quite like that blissful feeling of finding the answer after an intensely frustrating struggle! And, voilà, you just developed perseverance. Congratulations and welcome to the many benefits of studying math!

We can even use math in our parenting. We all experience the need to feel competent, and it's important to recognize the role we play as parents in

communicating that sense of competence to our children. But it is possible for almost all children to be competent in math, even if they are reluctant participants. And in this effort, they might **realize they are competent to find a solution when life presents a struggle**. Because struggling is one of life's harsh realities, we can use the disciplines we learn in the classroom to develop a habit of **hope**. We want to develop a pattern of **perseverance** that will fan the flame of **confidence**.

Although none of my four children pursued a vocation that was math-oriented (that's okay, it's just wasn't their "thing"), they were all competent. Anyone who has mastered courses like Algebra II, Pre-calculus, or College Algebra has experienced enough math to learn this lesson. Remember those dreaded story problems? You know, the ones with all the words where you have to figure out what on earth is going on here and what do these numbers have to do with anything. Just because a number was in the problem didn't necessarily mean you had to use it. Ah, yes, the memory is coming back to you now, isn't it?! Well, that thought process is developing the ability to **analyze and discriminate**—two very important thinking skills. Developing math skills helps us nurture strong character qualities and critical thinking skills. People who have good thinking skills are not easily fooled. And that's a gift to give our children.

What can you do now?

1. For fun, listen to [this 20 minute podcast](#) from the Veritas Forum where we hear about how math teaches the virtues of **discernment, persistence, and hope**.
2. If your child needs help with math, do three things: 1) let them know it is normal to struggle, 2) find a tutor, and 3) heap praise on them for the character qualities being exhibited.
3. Celebrate March 14 this year by serving a pizza pie for dinner. And if you really want to go all out, serve your favorite pie for dessert. Have fun!