

# My Numerical Escape

By: Sal Buldum

I truly desire to share the beauty of logic and math with the world. How fascinating derivatives, integration, and graphs and their equations are. Math means the world to me. And my love of math can only be described as a limit that is infinity. But for you, dear reader, to understand the full equation, I must start from the very beginning.

I like to think of my fascination and interest in mathematics as something that has always been a part of me. I can vividly remember how in my early childhood, I never wanted to hear bedtime stories. I would always nag my parents to ask me math questions instead. By the time I was five years old, I was already set on becoming a mathematician when I grew up. As a curious kid, I had always seen math as a puzzle- just some lighthearted fun... that is, until primary school came along.

I was only six when I started to get ferociously bullied. I endured torment from neighbourhood kids, classmates, and even from people who I thought to be my friends. It has been eleven years (and counting) since my struggle with bullying first started, and I can still vividly remember the names and faces of the bullies from so long ago. Soon after the torment began, my past started to catch up with me, and mathematics was no longer a hobby; It was now an escape from reality.

As I was growing up, math was the only thing I could rely on. Math was, and still is, my lifeline. But back then, I did not know why this was the case- but now I do. You see, while doing math, I was able to let my guard down. I did not have to live in fear, waiting for the next attack. The bullying, the pain, it was all so irrational and unpredictable. No matter how hard I looked, I could not find a logical explanation for why I had to live in fear, shame, and with my head down. So I found comfort in the predictability and the logic of math. In a way, it was my escape from reality. Math never attacked me, never hurt me, never spread rumours or made fun of me. Math was always there to make me feel better. I found bliss and peace in numbers. And through dark times, math was always there to guide me through it all like a lantern in the night. I could always count on math to save my life.

As the years passed, I longed for more knowledge, more numbers and more equations to occupy my brain. And while the bullying continued, so did my quest for harder and more challenging math. Anything to keep my mind off of the living hell that surrounded me day in and day out. I was eventually labelled as a "math whiz" and other nicknames of that sort. However, even with the other advanced math kids, I still felt like an outcast. They did not have a love of math like I do. They have skill, but not passion. And when I would tell people about how much I love math, and how passionate I am, and that my lifelong dream as always been to be a mathematician, they would all just see me as utterly crazy. But I did not care, because I know that nothing in the world could ever come close to the feeling of absolute euphoria you get when you finally conquer a difficult math problem. And to me, even just that sensation is something so pure and beautiful, it is worth living for.

After a rough day, I can just let go and drift into the mystical world of algebra and calculus. I can finally relax knowing that here, unlike real life, everything has a solution or at least some sort of answer.

And as much as I hate to admit that I still deal with bullying, I am proud to say that math has always been, and will forever be my numerical escape for all eternity.