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“A Typical Sunday”

*I don't need math*, I think. Looking to my right at the alarm clock, I see the time as 10:30. With a bedtime of 11, three meals of thirty minutes each, and about two hours for relaxing, I calculate that this gives me 9 solid hours to work.

*Math is dumb*, I mutter to myself. I take the stairs two at a time, reaching the bottom floor with ease. Since the staircase has 24 steps, I could take them two, three, or even four at a time and still reach the bottom with no remainder.

*Why do I even learn math?* I ask in my head. On my wall hangs a multiplication table that I learned long ago—it's been drilled into my head since I was 6. It's saved me a remarkable amount of time when ordering food or buying packages, since the only calculator I need is in my brain.

*Math sucks*, I grumble. As soon as I open the cereal cabinet, numbers jump at me from the sides of the boxes. I'm not terribly concerned with my health, but the values and percentages coalesce into patterns in front of me. Instinctively, I reach for the box with the highest amount of sugar per serving, but I stop myself and, with a few quick calculations, I swap it out for the less sweet option. Maybe I'm adding a few days to my life.

*Math is useless in everyday life*, I tell myself. As I read the newspaper, I notice all kinds of numbers popping out of the page. They immediately make sense in my mind. I eagerly flip to the puzzles section, where a brand new KenKen awaits. It's surprisingly easy, perhaps because math has taught me critical thinking and reasoning skills.

*I'll never need math*, I silently declare. I do my math homework.

*Math will never help me*, I think. I do my physics homework.

*Being good at math doesn't matter*, I proclaim via chat. I proceed to guide friends through the physics assignment, which just clicks for me. They enviously laud me for understanding how to approach the problem. It certainly helps that I can draw a good diagram—years of training and problem solving have taught me at least that much.

*I should stop caring about m-AGLGLGK*, I sputter as I choke on my water. Although this is a frequent occurrence, I still see flickers of my memory dance across my mind. A lot of them have to do with math—competitions, practices, more competitions. I notice that my trophy cabinet is nearby. I try my hardest not to be vain, but since nobody's watching I open it and admire the shiny prizes.

*They should teach life skills instead of math*, I grumble as I tie my shoes. Leaving the house, I decide to try a brand-new running route. After 20 minutes of pain, I realize I've run on a near-circular path. Using my knowledge of distances and circumferences, I calculate how long

I've run and how far I need to go to get back home. Fifteen more minutes of pain, and I arrive back home having reached my goal.

*Math doesn't apply to my life.* I sit down and begin writing an essay about how math applies to my life. It doesn't, right? All of a sudden, I go through my day, and everything seems to connect back to math. Being good at math and the way I visualize life actually go hand in hand. Oftentimes I use math without even realizing it because it's so ingrained into my thought process.

*Math doesn't matter. Oh wait, it does,* I remind myself before closing the document and preparing to waste 15 minutes on the computer. 900 seconds well spent.