Conversations with My Daughter
I'll kick you in the face!

Tuesday June 25th, 2009

T: I'm eight years-old why do you expect so much from me?
Dad: What makes you think I expect so much from you?
T: It's my summer; why do I have to study math?
Dad: Learning the multiplication table is not – exactly – math?
T: Then what is it…If it's not math?
Dad: it's the basis of learning multiplication and division.
T: Dad, dad! Look… if I learn this stuff now I'll be board in third grade.
Dad: I don't think so! You'd have an easier time learning divisions and fractions.
T: But I don't want to learn it now. They teach us the multiplication table in the third grade.
Dad: Here is what we're going to do… What's today?
T: Thursday.
Dad: Thursday, good. You will start learning the entire table from 1 to 12. You will stay home and stay on this task until you completely learn the multiplication table.
T: I'm grounded?
Dad: No. Of course not! You'll learn it in the next hour you'll return to your normal activities.
T: What if it takes longer?
Dad: As long as it takes. Why should it take long?
T: It's not fair! *Gets up and goes to her room…*
Dad: No closing bedroom doors - in this house… remember that!
T: fine!
Dad: I'm making some banana shake… come down if you want some. *Does not answer…*
About ten minutes later…
Dad: Would you come down – please? It feels lonely here without you.
T: I want to play with my dolls.
Dad: You can play with your dolls later. I need to talk to you.
Comes downstairs…
Dad: Have a sit – please. Why do you think I want you to learn the multiplication table?
T: Dad, they teach us the multiplication table in the third grade.
Dad: I know. I know! But I have a system that would help you learn it in no time and you'd never forget it. You're not memorizing it – you know…and once you know it you'd feel a lot better!
T: Fine!
Dad: Not like that! I can only teach you the method if you're nice to me. No yelling!
Looks on…
T: I know it up to 5.
Dad: That's almost half of it.
T: I know all the fives… it's like counting by five.
Dad: And the sixes are like counting by six, the sevens counting by sevens, so on and so forth. Now look at this: say you want to lean six multiplied by nine; create a little equation in your mind. Here is what I mean: 6x9=9x6=54.
T: Like fact families.
Dad: Right! Here is what I would like you to do: review this equation in your mind:
Six times nine equals nine times six equals fifty four. I promise you once you learn this you would always know it. Do this for all other numbers... Get started so if I come and wake you up in the middle of the night and ask you what is 7x8 you would tell me 7x8=8x7=56.
T: You wake me up in the middle of the night and I'll kick you in the face!