

## **Telescoping Series**

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### ***Zeno's Paradox***

In order to get where you're going, you need to first get halfway there. In order to get halfway there, you need to first get halfway to halfway. The arrow never reaches its target; Achilles never catches up with the tortoise. But what if you're not moving to get somewhere, and you're moving to move, living to experience? He likes to say that every time in his life is the best time in his life. The sum of an infinite series can be finite.

### ***2150***

He is a man who took the SAT with me, who studied and did the practice tests at 63, who committed to the challenge with a hidden agenda of motivation. Victory was mine, bittersweet with its implications of intelligence and how his age affected it. He likes to say that he's glad he lost, because if he hadn't he wouldn't be able to tell the story. Stories are important. He pieces them together with embellishments and flair, ever the entertainer, and always almost too much the center of attention. He likes to say that he scored in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile, but his daughter scored in the 99<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Proof by Induction***

To prove something true for all Natural numbers we first prove it true for the first number, 1, assume it true for  $n$ , and then prove that implies it's true for the next number, or  $n+1$ . I learned

this at twelve, or maybe older or younger, in a casual conversation with my father. There was no agenda, no requirement; it was simply an exploration into the beauty of logic. Simple, elegant, and reticent of its implications of future use. Mathematics has a grace to it, a delicacy that renders the world in black and white. Prove something true for one, and true for the next, given the one, and it is true for all. A self-perpetuating proof, where the qualities of the first bring out the same in the next. A straightforward, uninvolved way to look at the world. Plato understood this.

## **24**

He often tells the story of the most he's ever eaten in one sitting. Twenty-four sausages – maybe more or maybe less, but not by much – accompanied five pounds of potato salad – or so he says – followed by a dive into the ocean. The early tellings of this story lacked a crucial detail, an attempt to protect children from bad influences of being under influences—a detail that would be obvious once recognized.

## **2 years**

Will you remember this in two years? Asking the question is a technique I still use, suggested by him during a bout of my existential angst. There are few anxieties in life that you will remember the details of two years down the line. You may recall the circumstances, or the outcome, but hardly ever the details, and if it won't matter enough to remember in two years, why should it matter now? The technique doesn't work to assuage any anxiety but it acts to reassure, to create hope for a break in pattern.

## **#1**

This is a man who threw around the word favourite, meaningless in his own eyes, but not to others. As the recipient of the descriptor – outside of the dog – I recognize it for the humor it was, a misguided attempt to show that sometimes words mean nothing. It did not have its intended impact; instead inspiring ire, long term antagonism. An understandable response, given the circumstances, given the feeling of being an outsider, given being the only sibling to the recipient. Children take words at their face value; children don't differentiate the nuances. A relationship ruined; maybe not forever.

## ***P = density x gravitational pull x height***

This is a man who learned to scuba dive, or relearned. He tells the story of the time he took a college elective on scuba diving and his buddy – with diving, you always have a buddy – ran out of air, so he had to share his tank on the way up, an emergency procedure. To this day, I don't know if this really happened. Diving is another adventure, descending deeper into unknown waters with rising pressures. Adjusting to the external forces in search of rarely experienced beauty. There's an entirely new world to experience, if only for a short while.

## ***Probability***

Probability has always been a comforting tool for us. What if I don't get into any of the colleges I applied to? What if all my friends are not in my class in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade? He answered these and so many other concerns with statistics he helped me calculate. He taught me how to look at the world in possibilities and potentials, calculations and clarity, still pushes me to question my anxieties with sample sizes, biases, and conditionals. Probability, he understands, he identifies

with in a way he sometimes can't understand other people's emotions, and he uses it to ground his humanity.

### ***CareersYear<sup>-1</sup> = 1/5***

This is a man who seeks out new experiences, builds them from the fluctuations of his life. When he decided to get married, he issued a disclaimer – I plan to change careers every five years.

There is always more to understand, to feel, to live. Why limit oneself? We all seek to make our lives meaningful; some with stability, him, with transience.

### ***61 candles***

We were supposed to share a birthday, but I came out early, ever contrary, defiant. When I turned sixteen, he turned sixty-one a month later, and the candles, the 1 and 6 were used again. This was a source of amusement, for exploration, for interest, but only to the two of us. Our findings:

-If two people are  $9n$  years apart, where  $n$  is some positive integer, then when the younger is  $n$  years old, the older's age will be the reverse of the younger's in digits.

-Every eleven years, this pattern will reemerge.

-Therefore, if person A is  $m$  years old and person B is  $(m + 9n)$  years old, and if age is represented by  $(10x+y)$ , when  $m = (10x+y) = (n+11k)$  for every positive integer  $k$ ,  $(m + 9n) = (10y+x)$ .

Every eleven years we are the same but in reverse, reflections of each other.