***Math anxiety,* a feeling of intense frustration or helplessness about one's ability do math (Smith, 2010).**

All too often when people ask me what I do for a living and hear my response of, "I teach eighth grade math," I get the familiar response of, "Ooh math…really?" "How do you do it?" It becomes more and more evident that it's NOT very high up on most people's list of favorite things to do. It then becomes reiterated again every year in September when students start to feel comfortable enough in class to tell me, "I hate math." I realize then, the strong distaste for math stems somewhere in the junior high years. I can remember during the two years that I spent as a substitute teacher in elementary schools, how excited young children would get when it was time for math, especially in the primary grades. They were so excited to learn numbers, "Can we learn times today?", "I love fractions," and "Let's do money problems" were a few of my favorite comments. Seriously, besides a fourth grader, who would ever utter the words "I love fractions?" In eighth grade, I have students who would rather sit and silently stare at the wall for an hour rather than do math. When did my students lose that love for numbers? When did the fear and anxiety of mathematics take over? What made some of them "hate" the subject to the point of giving up on math completely? I need to find out where some of the contributing factors of this new found "math phobia" stems from.

I teach eighth grade mathematics in a large city in Rhode Island. I have been teaching here for nine years. The population of the school is