

# How Math Saved My Life

Jewel Rivera

Coming out of a domestic violence situation has forced me to measure my quality of life every day as I attempt to repair the broken pieces of my heart. I had no idea what to expect as I walked

**I had no idea what to expect as I walked through the doors of my first shelter.**

sadness and confusion. As soon as I saw them, I took on a “grandmother” role.

Remembering what made me happy as I child, I started baking cookies and other sweet

through the doors of my first shelter. The biggest surprise for me was how many young, innocent children were also living at the shelter. Their eyes carried so much

things to help brighten their spirits. For anyone who has ever baked, you know certain basic math skills are required. From measuring cups of sugar to scooping teaspoons of baking powder, every recipe needs just the right amount of ingredients for a tasty dessert.

At this point in my life, I hadn’t taken a math class in over 40 years, so I had to teach myself how to double recipes correctly and how to convert ounces to cups. Sometimes, I let the kids bake with me. I would count with them and show them how to use a measuring cup. It wasn’t easy, but baking for the kids gave me purpose. Although I always wanted children, I couldn’t have any of my own, so being the “grandmother” of the group made me feel loved and needed for the first time.

I knew I wanted to go back to school. I wanted to learn even more ways to use numbers and how to incorporate them into other aspects of my life. I am grateful for math because it saved my life. Math gave me a way to connect with the children. And now I am motivated to continue my education and make changes in my personal life.

**AFTER YOU READ:** How did math save Jewel’s life?

*Jewel Rivera was born and raised in Alabama. In her life, she has experienced abuse and neglect, but she is a survivor. She attends school at Norwich Adult Education in Norwich, CT. Her goal is to achieve her high school diploma. She says, “This is something I’ve wanted for 40 years.”*



**Baking for the kids gave me purpose.**

## Ingredients for Best-Ever Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 1) 1 cup (8 oz/240g) butter
- 2) 1¼ cups (7½ oz/225g) light brown sugar
- 3) ¾ cup (6oz/180g) white sugar
- 4) 2½ cups (12½ oz/375g) all-purpose flour/plain flour
- 5) 1½ teaspoon salt
- 6) 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 7) 2 large eggs
- 8) 2 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- 9) 2 cups (12oz/360g) bittersweet chocolate chunks

**How would you double** this recipe? List the ingredients and the quantities.

**“Cups” measure something different** than ounces or grams. Explain the difference.

**Look up the complete recipe** and try baking the cookies!

[www.biggerbolderbaking.com/best-ever-chocolate-chip-cookies](http://www.biggerbolderbaking.com/best-ever-chocolate-chip-cookies)