

Math Diversion Problem 703

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If people knew how hard I worked to achieve my mastery,
it wouldn't seem so wonderful after all.
— Michelangelo

The problem is found at:

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR8UL8V7SaU>
Title: The Unexpected Harmony of Logarithmic Powers
Presenter: SyberMath

1 The Problem

Given the relation

$$x^{\ln 3} + x^{\ln 6} = x^{\ln 12}, \quad (1)$$

find the real values of x .

2 The Solution

Let's not overlook the trivial solution $x = 0$. Next, let's introduce a variable substitution:

$$x = e^\alpha, \quad (2)$$

then (1) becomes

$$3^\alpha + 6^\alpha = 12^\alpha, \quad (3)$$

On dividing through by 3^α , we get

$$1 + 2^\alpha = 4^\alpha, \quad (4)$$

or rather

$$(2^\alpha)^2 - 2^\alpha - 1 = 0. \quad (5)$$

But this is just a quadratic in variable 2^α with roots

$$2^\alpha = \frac{1 \pm \sqrt{5}}{2}, \quad (6)$$

but we'll only keep the positive root.

$$2^\alpha = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \approx 1.618, \quad (7)$$

where I'm following WolframAlpha's lead to obtain a numeric result. Hence,

$$\alpha = \frac{\ln 1.618}{\ln 2} \approx \frac{0.4812}{0.69315} \approx 0.6942. \quad (8)$$

And finally,

$$x \approx e^{0.6942} \approx 2.0021. \quad (9)$$