

## Passion

I taught myself computer programming when I was 8. QBasic would complain because I would often misspell INTEGER as INTERGER. I didn't really know what an interger was, but it was an easy fix.

I discovered some instructions that would make the tiny PC speaker buzz! I honestly have no idea how I achieved this, but I transcribed a trumpet song I was learning at the time into a computer program. I debuted my electronic beats, nervously awaiting your response. You gave a chuckle and went back to the morning newspaper.

It was difficult as an 8 year old to find programming resources in a pre-internet age. Luckily I was able to pick up where I had left off a decade later in university. I had access to the resources I was so desperately craving.

We went to the show one year and I bought a show bag with a yo-yo in it. I discovered I had a knack for this yo-yo thing. Later during holidays, I got to play with my best mate's new toy - a Yoho Diabolo! This is awesome I thought. I could really do some insane shit with this compared to a yo-yo! I asked you to buy me a Yoho Diabolo.

One Sunday afternoon you said you've got something for me! You made me stand expectantly as you revealed what was hidden behind your back. It was a Yoho Diabolo! Well, kind of. It was two plastic kitchen bowls fastened back-to-back with a piece of shower rail. Compared to my mate's toy it was much more difficult to achieve a balanced spin, but dad assured me I'd get better if I practiced hard.

The next day I proudly took my new toy to school. At lunchtime it shattered into pieces after I attempted my first trick. Maybe this version didn't have sturdy flexible rubber like the genuine ones. I might just give up on this hobby... I'd hate to see dad upset because I broke the brand new toy he made me.

It's cool, I'm glad you were able to better allocate that \$19.95 towards mortgage repayments.

In late high school I would jam on guitars with my mates during lunchtime. It was so fun and it fit perfectly with my burgeoning love of metal music. Those guys could really shred!

I was able to find an affordable second hand electric guitar and amp in the weekend classifieds. Over the following months I re-finished my guitar in an exquisite custom paint job. I learnt how to sand and prepare the wood. I designed a method to produce an alternating checkerboard pattern. I had to build up the pattern very slowly, one layer of paint at a time. It took many patient afternoons and weekends. I researched the best quality top-coats and how to buff the paint to a mirror finish. Anonymous internet people were very

encouraging of progress pictures I posted on a guitar forum!

At nights I would begin to unwind by practicing guitar. You'd burst into my room and tell me to cut that racket! Study should come first, then other things. I was so confused by this because of my straight-A report cards.

By this stage I'd given up on band, rugby and cricket. I did find the initiative to join a Peer Support team, however. I was fortunate enough to be an extraordinarily cool, calm and emotionless child. My parents had taught me so well that even the slightest deviation from constant happiness was not to be tolerated. I couldn't bear to think what it would be like for another student to be, like, depressed or sad or something. So I counselled others as my own cry for help was ignored.

Later on in university I was failing courses semester after semester. You'd pull me aside for an inspiring tough love conversation.

"You know what's wrong with you, Bobby? You don't seem to have a passion for anything."