**Not having a TV at home.**

My family have never had a TV in the house. I think the households they came from did have TVs, but they made the conscious decision not to include one in the first house they got together. I’ve never been sure why. But I’m pretty sure it has shaped who I am. I’m quite bookish, and I have a good imagination. So I suited not having a TV, because I ended up reading a lot of books when I was young. Antony Horovitz, Brian Jacques, Roald Dahl. Lots of audio books as well. Of course these theories break down when we got a computer. We were ahead of the curve – using a computer to replace programmed television. We watched DVDs and then iPlayer later, and we watched it as a family, and only what we wanted to watch. It is difficult to assign any particular effects to this, but I feel it has shaped who I am.

**When I broke my arm in Primary 3.**

I broke my arm falling off a small wall. The doctors said it was because I fell with my arm underneath me that broke it. While this was a big incident for my body, it only really affected me in the short term. It was very painful at the time, but once my arm was in a cast, it was quite fun learning to write with my right hand (I broke my left arm which is my writing hand), and getting all the attention you get at school when something like that happens. It gave me an excuse to use the computer at school all the time as well! I think I trust my body to be pretty resilient most of the time. Obviously that will change as I get older. I think the only long-term effect it might have had is that I now have a quite irrational fear of climbing. Not a fear of heights – I’m fine looking over tall buildings – just climbing.

**Having a computer in the house for the first time.**

I distinctly remember the moment my parents told me we were getting a computer.

Computers to me are not tools to get things done, or wastes of time, or computational machines. They are places to explore.

Getting a computer was the beginning of a long investigation I have made into how humans react to and interactive with computers. I have only recently been aware I am doing this: I just found it frustrating the way user interfaces were designed, and I was forever making up new control systems for computer games.

**Learning to play the saxophone.**

Some of my earliest memories are from playing the saxophone.

I work hard, sometimes too hard, and try to move too fast, both through the pieces (consequently I am a good sight reader) and also to progress faster than what I perceived as average.

I still haven’t really mastered the art of preparing for a specific event, particularly essays. But when preparing for musical performances it seemed to come naturally to me.

**My first job as a waiter at the Norton House Hotel.**

I really enjoyed my time at the Norton House: it was my first job.

I think it really forced me to talk to people I didn’t know, and have my first stab at getting paid to be punctual, polite and hard-working. And I found I could do it.

I also learnt the difference between a job and a career. Because it wasn’t something I wanted to do for the rest of my life, but it got me some savings, and was a good start to my working life.

**Leaving home to go to University.**

I was very keen to move away once I had decided to go to university. I wanted to prove I could fend myself, and I think I wanted a bit more independence as well. I’m glad I did, because it has made me more confident in my own independence. Perhaps a little too confident. Now I am living with my parents again, I feel there is a lot I can still learn from them about caring for a house and organising time to do chores.

**Leaving my job at Gear4music.**

I started working for Gear4Music in 2011, through a referral from a friend from York University.

I was pleased that I had managed to get a job straight from University. It was by no means a graduate position, but it was a start, and I really got along with the people there.

It turns out I am more principled that I thought, but I chose to follow some principles too rigidly, and I ignored some more worthwhile principles in the process. It turned out alright in the end (I now have my job at BT), but it was a bumpy ride.

**My experiences at a call centre in Ipswich.**

In short, a call centre is a terrible place to work. That was my expectation, and that is how it turned out.

Somewhere in the middle though, I did get carried along in the hype created by the recruitment process, and that led me to believe it would be a worthwhile place to meet similarly aged people, and to help customers over the phone.

Fortunately I could leave after six weeks for a job at BT. But so many people can’t. I’m not saying the place is a Victorian workhouse – Directline are providing jobs that pay people a reasonable wage. But the atmosphere and environment serve to either repel most people, or trap them in a dead end.

**Having music as a hobby or a profession.**

When I left home for university I was keen to become a professional musician, because I thought being an amateur was somehow worth less than being a professional. I now know this to not be true: it’s an absurd generalisation.

I met musicians who regarded themselves as professionals at university who were not really invested in their music – it was simply their easiest way to make money.

I’ve met plenty of amateurs who invest less time in their craft and who are not paid, but yet produce amazing results.