

The story of Carlo

Background

Carlo grew up in a two-parent family in which his father was employed in construction and the family was mostly on a medium income, but there were times of unemployment, health and financial problems.

At 6 he liked everything about school, but was seeing a specialist about his attention disorder.

At 12 his learning, attention and behaviour problems had meant he changed in Year 6 to a special school. He looked forward to school and wanted to be a mechanic. At 15 he left school (an alternative school) during Year 8. At 16 he had tried carpentry, concreting, a cabinet making pre-apprenticeship and was hoping to start a bricklaying apprenticeship.

June 2007 (age 17)

Leaving school I was going to this school ... it wasn't a school for me really. I was at a primary school at the start, and from there I had a lot of fights, a lot of arguments, so I had to go to a school that Taught me to control behaviour problems. But the school that I went to, it was crazy you know, it wasn't really for me. I was in a school at the time studying and this guy came into the school, I don't know what it was about. There was me talking to a girl, he took it that I was talking to his girl, something like that, and he came into the school and really belted the hell out of me. I didn't want to go back to school any more, you know, I felt fear. So I stopped going to school and tried to find some work.

My parents said to me, you know, 'School is school, you should go, but if you don't want to go to school you should find an apprenticeship fast or some work'. So I've been looking everywhere ... I really really want to start working because it's really getting to me now. They've asked me a couple of times do I want to go back to school, or do you want a tutor, [to] help you out. I don't want to go back to school, school's for some people and for some people it's not. So really, I just want to work, that's about it.

December 2007 (age 17)

Carlo had been at home unemployed for almost a year. Since I left school, what did I do? I did a carpentry apprenticeship, it went for about five to six months and it didn't work out. So from there, I started getting some experience in concreting with my father, he took me on, but the job wasn't for me because it was a bit over the top. From there I done a pre-apprenticeship in cabinet making, I done that for about two days and it was a bit too hard for me. So I couldn't do it. From there I actually did one day of bricklaying as an apprentice. I enjoyed the job, it was pretty good but it was summer at the time and I was, I don't know, it was pretty hard to do, like a very hard job and I couldn't do it.

From there, for all this year I haven't done anything, I've been sitting at home, I've been actually looking for work and I haven't found any, so yeah, from last year the work, what I've been doing isn't too much, just at home, looking for work, asking people. I actually look through the papers. Look through all the internet, Yellow Pages, ask people around in the area, family, anything I can find actually. I'm really tired of being at home. It's every day you don't feel normal you know, it's shocking. I have a couple mates employed, but I don't really go out much anymore because I don't work, I don't like to ask my family for money. I had one mate he was doing a baking apprentice, I don't know if he's still doing it, but he was doing all right. I've got another mate who was doing a brickie apprenticeship, bricklaying, he's doing seven days a week about 12 hours a day, an apprentice, he's earning good money, he's doing well, he's learning, he's laying bricks, he's pulling mixers, he's carrying mud, he's doing pretty good. The rest, most of them from the schools I went to, they weren't too good, so most of them are probably on the dole, or could be criminals, you never know. They chose to live that life, most of them are just on drugs and stuff like that, so I don't associate with them really, I see them, I say hullo or whatever.

Employment experience and options

Carpentry wasn't a bad job. There was a bit of difficulties with all the power tools. It was pretty dangerous and with experience you would pick it up, but it was a pretty dangerous job. Plus the foreman there, they treated you pretty bad, always swearing at you, pushing you around and you can't hit back, because you'd get sacked right away and it's not good anyway. I've got offered actually, about a month ago, from my uncle if I wanted an apprenticeship, but he told me it's five years. I said I'm not going to do an apprenticeship for five years. I want to be qualified in about three or four you know. He said all right. That would have been in the city, on a building site there. That would have been a carpentry apprenticeship, a chippy. Cabinet making, that's with a ruler all day and I don't really understand rulers and markings and big drawings and you've got to do with stuff like that. It really confuses me. He tried to teach me, the guy at the TAFE, but I said, 'No, it's not me'. So I left there.

I was doing bricklaying. It was a hard job, I'll say that, but there was not much education involved because I don't have much, you know. It was pretty basic really, I understood it pretty good. I still understand it now, not all of it, but mixes and stuff like that. I actually enjoyed that job but it was a bit over the top in the summer, because the boss never had no breaks, nothing, it was just bang, straight up, it was 'Finish this while we can'. Yeah that wasn't too bad.

Concreting, I was starting to pick it up. Not really, because the screening and that, I wasn't too good at. It's not too bad I guess, but you need a lot of experience for that type of job.

Carpentry, that was not too bad, but cabinet making was the hardest, I'll tell you that. Those drawings. All that stuff confused the hell out of me. But bricklaying was one of the hardest physically, mentally it had to be cabinet making. Bricklaying was probably one of the most easiest, that had not much involved in it and it was a bit enjoyable.

A friend of mine offered me a landscaper job, but I sort of wanted at the time a bricklaying job.

Like I was dedicated to it, I wanted this job. I've actually done work in gardens, helping out family, friends, [but] it's not really my thing. It's a pretty good job, you make big money if you work for yourself as a subcontractor. But I don't know. I've never really looked into it. I've actually got a good family friend, my uncle's son, he's doing it at TAFE, he's saying to me it's great, you know, the work it's not light and it's not heavy, it's just nice, you've got a nice pace and he said it's a pretty good job. But me, I just want something a little bit heavy, not too heavy, just something not bad you know.

A friend did help me out. I asked him for a brickie apprenticeship, but the work it's all in Caroline Springs and all up that way and I don't even have a learner's permit, you know, and there's no transport out there unless I get out at one station and walk another 45 minutes or half hour. But all the jobs are up that way, all the housing, a lot of units and stuff like that going on. And in the city there is work, but it's hard to get in, apparently very hard. So he did ask around for me. He done well but all the work's too far out, I don't have a car, a licence, I'm not even 18 to get your P's, so it's out of the question for me.

Assistance

My dad, he's very old-fashioned and he said, 'Just get a job, a job's a job'. I said to him, 'Ba (I call him Ba because we're Italian), you got to enjoy a job you know and I can't do everything because I haven't got the education'. And he's like 'Nah, nah no, you go on, you learn.' They're very thick because they're very old-fashioned. But my mother's like, 'Find something that you like, but do it soon because you're going to be 18 next year, you're going to be an adult, they're probably not going to give you an apprenticeship at that time at 18, cos they like the young people, you know 16 and around there'. And my sister, she's just full on work and everything else. She finished high school. Now she does casual or part-time work catering.

But in the family, there's not really no-one that points me out and talks to me about it.

Centrelink really didn't do much for me actually. I asked them straight out, 'I'd like a job if you can get me a job', that's all I wanted. They wanted to send me for courses and things like that, I don't like courses, honestly. I like to go in there, do my work, get some experience and learn it, you know straight into the job. And they said this, they said that. So I said all right I don't care. So I left

there, they done nothing for me really. And family, half the time you can't rely on them, so I've actually had really no help from any of the places that I've gone to. Centrelink put me through a course ages ago but I left there because they really pissed me off. I don't remember what it was called. It was like a tutoring place ... Every time I go to a place that helps you for work, they send you to a course, I do not like courses. I'm going to ask, 'Can you give me a job or not, can you put me in, can you tell me where to go and I'll go'. Because these courses, they take so long, they're confusing for me. I know they teach you there, but it's not my type of thing, I just like to go to the work, do my work, experience and learn.

Learning difficulties

Maths for me is pretty difficult. Language, it's not too bad. English and all that, not too bad either. I haven't actually done it for about three or four years. My reading's OK, it's not good you know. I probably would need help with maths, it's a very big thing, algebra and all that stuff. In the cabinet making it was a very big issue. And carpentry, at one stage with a tape measure because I did not have a clue how to use the thing, but one of the guys, he sat down with me, he was a really good bloke, he taught me how to use it patiently and I learned. And from there I wasn't working for a year, now I've lost everything, you forget, really. Plus when you're smoking, cigarettes, you lose brain cells, I'm telling you.

Money

I haven't got Youth Allowance. I went to Centrelink a while ago and I tried to get an allowance, but they wouldn't give me it, because I didn't have enough points type of thing. They wanted a driver licence, birth certificate, school reports, all that type of stuff. I only had one school report because I didn't really care about it at the time. I had a bank card but they wanted more identification of myself and I didn't have enough so they wouldn't give it to me, so Centrelink has given me nothing. No dole, never.

My mother and father they always say to me, 'Would you like some money, would you like to go out?'. I say to them, 'No, no, no, you've worked, I want to stay home, I'll do whatever I need to do'. You know I can go for a walk, I've got the creek right here. I don't like to rely on other people, I like to rely on myself, I really do not like borrowing money because then you've got to pay it off and if you don't have money and you're in debt, or whatever, I just don't like it. So last time I went out was probably February this year, I don't remember actually, it was a mate's party – no it was in September, sorry, I had a mate's 20th and just went there and that was it really, the last time I went out. I'm not much of a party person, you know. I'd rather stay home and watch some movies with family and that's it, you know.

Honestly, if I had the money, enough of it, I'd buy a beautiful XYGT, that's my dream car. I haven't even got a licence but they're sooo beautiful, that's a dream. You never know it might happen, but I doubt it. That's about it really, I just don't really want nothing, I've got everything here, got the house, family.

The future

I may have a job coming up in the next month. It's concreting, learning, or there's all different courses at this job site, it's a huge company ... This job is coming up, it's on the line, I don't know if I'll get it but I'm pretty sure I will because the foreman is going to put a word in for me, so I should be all right. There's concreting involved. He said to me, 'You could either do concreting or we could find you an apprenticeship or we could get you to go for a course and get your ticket as a dogman or a rigger or a crane driver or whatever'. So I said I'll look into it and if I enjoy it I'll go for it. So I'm just going to wait for this to come up, then hopefully I'll be starting work and I'll be all right.

A ticket, it's like a type of licence that you need, you go to TAFE I think, and you study, if it's crane driver, dogman, rigger whatever it is. So you do probably three days a week at TAFE every fortnight or something like that, I'm not sure what it is. You go to TAFE, you study it, then you go there, experience builds up and if the teachers at TAFE will pass you on the course then I guess you get

those tickets, then your licence, and you start working for yourself or you can do what you want. I've actually never done it before, but I'm pretty interested in it and I really want to do it. If you haven't worked for one year straight you want to do anything you know, you just want to get in there.

In the next year or so, I'm going to be hoping I have a full-time job, I'm learning, as a rigger or as a dogman or whatever, I'm earning not too bad money, and just hope I'm in full-time work and I'm dedicated to it and I don't lose the job, that's it.

That's my main thing now, getting stuck back into work and I don't care about going out, just going to work, work, work until I make enough and then you know that's it.

Advice for services to help young people

If I was telling a service how to help young people who had left school, I'd tell them, well, there's a lot of us, my kind of people – I have to say 'my kind', because we've left school, we've had a lot of fights, we've had a lot of dramas, we've gone to a lot of different schools, you know at the end of the day it's not really all worth it ... I would say to the blokes that had just got out of school and need a job or something: 'Dedicate your job, like pick a job like bricklaying, carpenter, electrician, plumber whatever, a good trade, because in the future tradesmen are going to be very wanted, you know, they're going to be getting probably paid a lot, because there's not many left'. And so I'd say to the blokes or the guys, 'Dedicate a job, stick to it, work, finish your apprenticeship, then when you want you can start up your own business, make heaps. If you want to go out places, don't start any trouble or don't look for trouble or if there's trouble going on don't get involved, keep out of it, mind your own business'.

At school I sort of said to myself, 'What am I doing?, I'm hanging around with these guys, you think you're a big tough guy, but you're nothing, you're just a punk teen at school, a teenager'.

And I said there's no use going to school, acting macho, starting fights, hurting people. You want to go to school, I regret it you know, if I could go back to school, which I don't wanna really, but it would be good to get some more education in me ... you go to school, you learn, you become something one day, that's why schools are there. I didn't do that, I had a lot of fights, had a lot of dramas with teachers, but if I could change it I would, don't worry. I'd go to school, I'd would never answer a teacher, I'd never swear, I'd never start a fight, I'd keep dedicated to the work I'd got to do at school.