

A letter from Willo, DJ and Music Producer from Ableton

Dear Future Music Makers,

I'm Willo, a DJ and music producer from Sydney. I wanted to share some advice and things that have really helped me along the way.

Practice beats perfection. Learning any skill at the beginning is super hard. But don't get too bogged down on the technical side, we're so lucky to have heaps of free online resources, tutorials and Ableton communities. Things changed for me when I decided I would open Ableton every day. I set myself a goal of at least 10 minutes a day, just to get comfortable with the software now it's a natural habit for me. It was life-changing.

You don't need expensive gear to start. Some of my best songs were made in Ableton on my laptop speakers. It's not about having the "perfect" setup. Even things like downloading the Ableton app, Note, is a great way to start if you don't have a laptop yet.

Your unique taste is your superpower. I always felt like I didn't fit into one particular sound, because I love all types of music. But now I'm realising it is a superpower. So, mix it up and try different genres because you can build skills that work across everything, and that's exactly how you create your own sound. Some days will be hard and you might feel like you're not getting much done or it doesn't sound good, but try your best to finish these ideas. Treat them like little journal entries. No one else has to hear them, but it's great to track your progress and there could be pieces of gold in all these "failed" songs.

Put yourself out there. Post a snippet. Tell your friends. Tell your family. Get comfortable with sharing your music and being proud of it. Putting yourself out there can feel cringey, but it's cringe until it's not. Think about the audience and community you're building, rather than just your friends or what people at school might think.

Say yes and enjoy the journey. When I was starting out, I took every gig and opportunity, big or small. I've played to thousands of people, and I've played to basically no one but it's all added to my experience and helped me build confidence behind the decks. There will be opportunities that feel really big and scary, like your first gig, sharing a track with someone, applying for something you think you're not ready for. Say yes anyway. Most people in the music world are just figuring it out as they go too. Be kind, be grateful, and pass on the good energy.

Whether you end up DJing festivals, making beats in your bedroom after school, or doing something completely different, the skills you learn from music, like listening, focus, collaboration and creativity will always be useful. So play around today. Press buttons. Make mistakes. Make noise. And if you love it, keep going.

Best of luck and I hope to see you on the dance floor one day!

Willo