

In January 2021 when Home Schooling was in place again, due to the Covid 19 pandemic. I decided to record myself giving two talks, one aimed at primary school children and one aimed at secondary school children. I put these recordings onto YouTube and emailed a few schools to let them know that they were available. Unfortunately, this work did not take off But my Primary School version *was* seen by a local vicar (who was also a puppeteer) and he got in touch with to ask whether I would like to do some work with him and his puppet. His idea was to break my talk down into short puppet episodes. Those of you who know me, know that I don't like to turn down new opportunities for creating Disability Awareness. I therefore said 'yes' and sat down to write the first episode.

At the very beginning of the first episode the puppet laughed when I started talking but, Instead of him being afraid to ask 'Why?' he was brave enough to ask me why. Why did my speech sound "funny." The rest of this episode sought to address assumptions which people (especially children) often make when they meet me for the first time. These being, that Cerebral Palsy is an illness, that all of my friends have Cerebral Palsy and that I can't do things which other children enjoy doing, for example, going swimming. At the end of the episode the puppet, whose name is Karl, apologises for laughing saying that he is now used to my speech and he won't laugh again.

After writing the [first episode](#), I had a Zoom call with the puppeteer. We spent the first part of the call reading through the script, he suggested some minor amendments and we then hit the 'record' button! This was the format of every subsequent Zoom call, although 95% of the script was what I had written I did sometimes change some of the wording to reflect his comments. We had a running joke that most of my scripts were more than one page in length and the whole idea was for them to be short episodes. We therefore worked together removing anything we could, without removing key messages. (Most episodes are between 4 and 5 minutes.) It is also worth noting that although I would love children to watch all of the episodes, each episode is stand-alone so they can dip in and out.

In total there are 11 episodes and each episode presents as least one important message. These messages range from:

Disability does not mean that you can't do anything at all – it just means you need to find different ways to do certain things. ([Episode 2.](#))

The importance of being determined and not giving up when things are difficult. ([Episode 4.](#))

The importance of taking time to understand *why* people are different and not excluding people who are different. ([Episode 6.](#))

That there are a whole range of different disabilities and some are 'Hidden disabilities.' ([Episode 8.](#))

[Episode 10](#) is Karl introducing me to his friend who is named Burt (In this episode therefore there are two puppets and me (A huge thanks to the second puppeteer.)) Similar to when Karl met me for the first time, I scripted for Burt to also laugh at my speech. Burt said to Karl, "you didn't tell me that Heidi can't talk properly" and Karl immediately corrects him by replying, "Heidi talks differently, but she still talks properly." This episode covers a little bit of new material but the main objective is for Karl to help Burt to understand about disability therefore encouraging children to share with others what they have learnt.

[The last episode](#) was an important one for me and puppeteer to film as it covers my Christian faith and how although I cannot help with the serving of teas and coffees in my church, I can serve by using other gifts which God has given me. I also share two of my favourite bible stories with Karl.

Acknowledgements: I would like to Rev A Janes who worked with me on this project as well as Kevin who helped to record episode 10 with Rev A Janes and myself.