By Matthew Bone:

Perhaps my biggest handicap is a speech problem.

I am not a person who has a disability the Government would recognize. I don’t think anyone would look at me and say I was disabled, but as time has passed I have realized I have a problem which is as great as those suffered by the people I know with disabilities.

What is my problem?

Very simply put I have a tendency to judge based upon what I have seen, heard, or assumed. I tend to jump very quickly to a conclusion. In my job, I do a great deal of troubleshooting and the ability to quickly spot a problem is something I have worked very hard at for a very long time. I like to think I am good at it.

The problem is when I am dealing with people, I need to set that skill aside and take time to get to know people. It may not sound like a big problem, but it is. When you are quick to classify people based upon an observation, you limit yourself in what you can learn about that person.

As an example, if I see a person who has problems speaking clearly, do I decide he is mentally incapable in some way? If so, I may have missed the opportunity to have some delightful conversations with a person with a wonderful intellect. Instead, I need to accept that this person may not be able to speak clearly and not make any other judgments based upon that one fact.

As I get to know people, I find many of us have things that we have difficulty with. Some people have issues that are more easily seen than others do. Yet if you get to know them, you find they have many wonderful things to offer. And often those who have no outward appearances of having major issues can often have the most difficult issues to overcome.

I for one know I am trying to take my time and not rush to classify people, but instead to get to know them and find the things about them which are nice to know. Perhaps by doing this, I can overcome my greatest handicap.