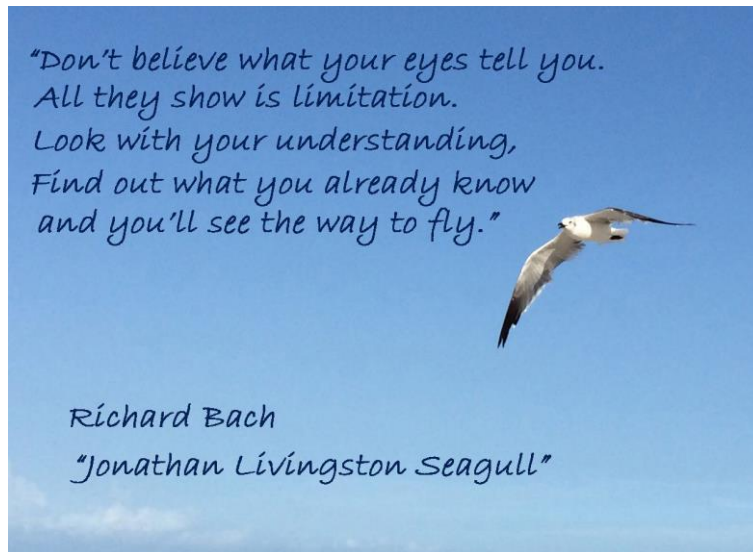
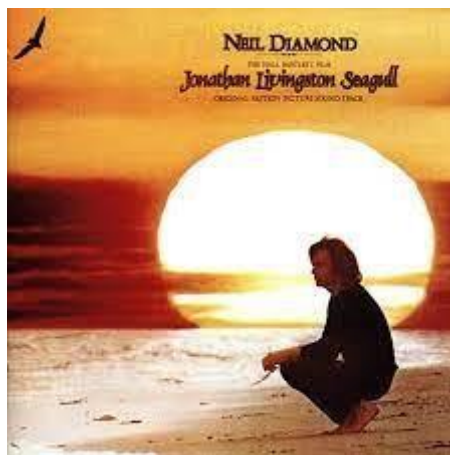


What can we learn about recovery from Jonathan Livingston Seagull



I first came across Jonathan Livingston Seagull by accident – I was an inpatient in mental health services and had gone to Woolworths (remember them!) with someone else from the same unit. The previous evening, we had been listening to some Neil Diamond. At that time in my life, I wasn't sure who I was and on reflection would do things in the hope I would fit in. We went up the high street and into Woolworths and I picked up this CD- The soundtrack to the film Jonathan Livingston Seagull.



I would listen to it at the end of the day between finishing sessions and our evening meal. I was so therapeutic the music and the words. I then invested in the book written by Richard Bach and was inspired by the profound message and often think about the message in relation to my own recovery from Mental illness.

The message is that we can all be so much more than we believe or are given to believe. That God - or fortune, if you wish - is on the side of the bold, the adventurous and the free in spirit.

Jonathan Livingston Seagull dared to dream.

He discovered that for those who dare to dream, even the sky is not the limit. Jonathan lived as all seagulls do – in a flock. This flock was quite unremarkable. Seagulls are scavengers that inhabit the

seashore, feeding off the debris that the sea throws out. Like all other seagulls, the members of this flock fed, bred and flew south in the cold winter months.

But Jonathan sensed, in the core of his being, that there could be more to life. Much more.

The question Jonathan asked himself was - Can I fly higher? Can I fly farther? Is there more?

One day, he announced that he intended to fly higher and further than any seagull before him. The effect of his words on the flock was interesting, to say the least:

“Seagulls are not meant to fly higher than this,” is what they said. “What makes you think you’re different from us?” They called him a dreamer and when he persisted in the pursuit of his vision, they cast him out.

Jonathan’s belief was that he would achieve his dream if he put in the effort and that belief gave him self-confidence in something beyond him – a higher power. We never think of the possibility of hidden capabilities that never see the light of day because they are not called upon. People achieve impossible tasks when they stop relying solely on what they know about themselves.

IMPOSSIBLE – spells I’m Possible

I am aware I often listen to the music when I am feeling reflective or troubled. It does take me back to the time when I was in hospital, but it also calms me and reminds me of my recovery journey.