

## A story - The Flock of Seagulls

There was a flock of seagulls living on the south coast and they would happily go about their daily business by walking everywhere. They would walk to the shops, to school, to work, down to the pub. They walked absolutely everywhere.

One day a young seagull was in the village square when a mild breeze ruffled his wing feathers. He thought, "That was nice" – well, it isn't it? On a hot summer's day don't you lift your arms to let a gentle breeze cool your armpits? It is nice, isn't it? – Anyway, this young seagull decided to do it again and this time the breeze was a little stronger and it lifted him off his feet. He flapped his wings in panic trying to get back to the ground. Well, what do you think happened? He took off towards the skies. Once his initial panic subsided he began to experiment with his newly found skill. He began to do loop-the-loops, death dives, spirals and all manner of aerobatic activities. Above all, he liked it. He was laughing. He felt happy inside and so he decided to share this with the rest of the flock. So he came back down and landed, very gently, in the village square. He rang the church bell, which was the flock's method of getting everyone together for important announcements. All the other seagulls left their houses, schools and workplaces and walked into the square wondering why the church bell had summoned them.

"Watch this," the young gull said, "it's absolutely brilliant!" He flapped his wings and took-off. He gave an aerial display worthy of Farnborough and landed back in the square. "Try it, guys, it really is the most fantastic experience!" After a short period of indecision one of the elder gulls flapped his wings and took-off. Very soon the skies were filled with laughing seagulls. They were 'buzzing' each other, pretending to be bomber-planes, loop-the-looping, spiralling and generally enjoying themselves in a way they had never before experienced.

After a few hours they all landed back in the square. They were giggling with each other. "Did you see me do that death dive?" "How about when I nearly hit you mid-air? What a great roll that was" and so on. They were in a fantastic mood and were all delighted with their newly found skills.

Do you know what they did next?

They all walked home!

*How often do we spend time and effort learning a new piece of knowledge, a skill or an attitudinal change, only to walk home?*

*Did you notice how easily you 'got into the story' and how natural listening to a story is? How often do we use stories to get our message across?*

*(Nick Owen has produced two great books full of stories that you can use to get your message across see 'The magic of metaphor' on our [recommended books list](#).)*

*Food for thought?*



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