

## *Our New Year's Message: 2024*

### *Stand out in the Wind*

*“Stand out in the wind, for it is the wind that shapes the mountains and the seas.  
Stand out in the wind, for it is the wind that carries the seeds of life and change.  
Stand out in the wind, for it is the wind that whispers the secrets of the universe and the soul.”*  
—Unknown

At the start of a new year, with all its promise and uncertainties, we could use a dose of encouragement and inspiration. This message was written to help you face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It is my hope that it will inspire you to stand out in the wind.

To stand out in the wind is to be yourself, your authentic and unique self. It means not conforming to the expectations or pressures of others, but following your own vision and path. This includes not hiding your talents and passions, but expressing them with confidence and joy. When you stand out in the wind, you are not afraid of failure or criticism, but rather open to learning from experience and input to grow stronger. You are not swayed by the latest trends or fads, but create your own style and identity.

When you stand out in the wind, you are resilient, adaptable and flexible. The wind is not a weapon that knocks you down, but a tool you use to lift yourself up. The wind does not blow you off course because you are able to adjust your sails and steer in a different direction. The wind does not chill you because you warm yourself with your inner fire. The wind does not silence you as you raise your voice to make yourself heard.

It has been found that a tree grown indoors, without any wind, will be weak and can topple over from even a moderate breeze. A tree needs exposure to the wind to grow strong, stand tall and spread its roots. A tree grown in a closed environment cannot stand out in the wind.

Standing out in the wind is not easy, but it is rewarding. It is not comfortable, but it is exhilarating. It is not safe, but it is adventurous. It is not the common or ordinary path, but a remarkable and extraordinary journey.

So as you enter this new year, you are urged to stand out in the wind. Be yourself, be resilient and be outstanding. Make a difference, make an impact and make a statement. Stand out in the wind and stand out in the world.

*My wish for you is to stand out in the wind.*

*George E. Gercken*