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Feng Shui

By Michele Duffy



Living plants, like these succulents, are good Feng Shui. Photo provided

Spring is definitely in the air, ruled by the wood element, and the "It" color of 2017 is emerald green, symbolizing new beginnings. Instead of beginnings, however, I'm going to the past, sharing some of my local client adventures to help illustrate fixing the less-than-favorable Feng Shui solutions I've often run into and to help clarify some of the misconceptions I've encountered in my travels.

While Feng Shui is not a dualistic design modality - there's no right or wrong - we can certainly speak in terms of "less favorable" or "less auspicious" Feng Shui. Feng Shui is a holistic approach, so often what I discover is that the big picture has been overlooked or was not factored into the specific recommendation or "cure." One example is, when I find an abundance of crystals (earth) in the Wealth (ruled by wood) area (wood struggles to get through earth) or other cures that seem arbitrary or just plain silly. Sometimes our sources are neighbors, family or well meaning friends but as a professional it is easy to spot what is not working on several levels.

So, this is just a sampling of common missteps I have encountered out in the field and hopefully it will inspire your efforts to create energy-rich, nature-inspired Feng Shui in all of your environments.

1) The foyer is not a dumping ground.

Certainly after last month's front entrance Feng Shui column this area is now sparkling with lively chi of healthy plants flanking the front door, working porch lights, no cobwebs, a new welcome mat, and zero clutter. As you enter your home, the foyer is an extension of the front door and the "mouth of chi" so it should be healthy energy in this "heavenly gate" area too. The foyer should not include multiple pairs of shoes, personal photos, stained rugs, coats or piled up backpacks. Instead your foyer should be an open, well-lit, tidy, clean space so life-force chi will waft through your entire home unobstructed. The foyer does well with a fresh wall color, abundant lighting, lively art, a mirror or a bubbly fountain.

2) The furniture does not fit the space properly.

If your furniture from your last home doesn't work in your new home, if it's too big or too small, the energy (chi) in your home simply will not create a nourishing flow. If you are tripping over chairs or angling your furniture to fit, it's time to rethink the spatial arrangement and let some pieces go. Think of regifting cumbersome or nonfunctional pieces back to the universe and donate to others who perhaps need it more than you. Reconnect with making comfort a priority!

3) Release broken items and clutter.

Feng Shui won't be as effective if your home and yard are beset with cluttered or broken items. We are all part pack rat! Most of us have too much "stuff." So, without judgement, just set aside a half day and work on your yard and garage, bagging old, broken, dirty, cracked, chipped items to toss out or donate, then see if some of the items strewn around your yard can now find a home in your garage.

Next, go room by room, starting with your master bedroom so you have a clutter-free haven to rejuvenate each night. It's truly liberating to release clutter from inside and outside of your home which creates the lasting freedom to get unstuck in your life. If you need help, there are pros that can make short work of the stuff that is overwhelming you!

4) Artwork is a downer draining the life force of your space!

I'm very visual and so are many of my clients, so the images we surround ourselves with are so much more than subliminal messages. Remove low energy, sad, lonely, depressing, sick or unhappy art images and place art that supports your highest intentions of happiness, health, abundance and joy. Better yet, place the Five Elements of water, wood, fire, earth and metal strategically to strengthen the Feng Shui of your space.

5) The beds, home office, or stove are not in "Commanding Position" to support you!

Energetically, set up your home so YOU are supported by not placing beds/desks in front of windows, in line with the bedroom door, or so your back faces the door. The "Commanding Position" is opposite and preferably diagonal from the door. A solid supportive wall should always be to your back so you are fully in control of the work or rest you want. This support concept also applies to the no-no of beds missing a bedframe or headboard, a key element of strong Feng Shui for security, sound sleep and support in the same spot you spend eight hours daily. Make these simple adjustments and immediately feel the difference!

6) Picking Yang (active) colors for bedrooms.

We love color but let's not overlook the function of the rooms we are painting. Bedrooms map back to the two R's: Rest and Romance. If your bedroom walls have strong hues or loud colors and you are having trouble sleeping, look no further for the solution. To break the insomnia cycle choose a softer yin more neutral color with a hue that is gentle for a sound night sleep and amp up the other design elements for a romantic, restful master bedroom retreat. Strong hues are great for pass through rooms, guest baths, family rooms or other rooms you want to encourage conversation or stay awake in. If color palettes also map back to the Bagua area of your bedroom, the color actually strengthens the Feng Shui. For example, if your master bedroom is in the wealth area (far left), ruled by the wood element, choosing a soft agave, or light blue-green color activates the wood element and strengthens the Feng Shui of your wealth area.

7) Plastic or dry flowers and knick-knack abundance.

Life-force, real energy, comes from design elements reflected in nature, for example healthy fresh flowers and plants. If your space is overwhelmed by dusty fake flowers just give them the heave ho and opt for silk in low light areas and live plants elsewhere. If you cannot find a spot for your coffee mug because your "collections" have taken over your space, it's time to prioritize towards functionality and comfort. Scale back on the tschotkes, sell them, or create one area to display them and free up your space and life for living. This is especially true for things in your space that no longer feed your joy and so as you let them go, notice how the renewed control over your space empowers a sense of renewed well-being.

With so much not under our control it's nice to know that if we change our space we can begin to change our life in meaningful ways. Taking the first step IS a new beginning so allow these Feng Shui tips to honor the spring season in your own home, and just experiment with what resonates most for you.



De clutter like the kitchen drawer in this Moraga home, as even drawers and closets matter in Feng Shui.



Beds, desks and if possible the kitchen stove should be in the power or "Commanding Position" like this correctly placed student's desk in Orinda.

Mandala Feng Shui



SPACE AS MEDICINE

WEALTH & PROSPERITY XUN Wood Southeast Purple	FAME & REPUTATION Li Fire South Red Summer	RELATIONSHIPS Kun Earth Southwest Pink
FAMILY ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	HEALTH TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	JOY & COMPLETION DUI Metal West White Autumn
KNOWLEDGE & SELFCULTIVATION GEN Earth Northeast Blue	CAREER & OPPORTUNITIES KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

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