

Capital Newspapers' Magazine of Home Life and Living

spaces

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The art & science of Feng Shui

Green and healthy
on the inside

Comfort food means
Mac and cheese

The art & science of Feng Shui

Achieve balance, harmony in your home with this ancient art

By Amanda N. Wegner for Capital Newspapers

In feng shui, everything matters. Or, says Jackie Patricia, “every thing matters.”

“Feng shui is based on the whole practice that everything has energy that affects how people feel. By adding things and subtracting them, feng shui creates a balance that supports and improves human relationships and human nature,” says Patricia, a longtime feng shui practitioner and co-owner of La Brioche True Food on University Avenue, which was designed using feng shui.

Patricia contends that society’s primary “ailment” is being too connected; we’re overly stimulated, doing too much too fast and exhausting ourselves. Feng shui helps to simplify and bring balance back to our too-much lifestyle by improving our spaces and, in turn, our relationships.

She adds, “Feng shui is about healing that ‘ailment;’ it is the greatest of all eight Chinese medicines.”

But applying the healing art and science of feng shui to your own home doesn’t mean it will be filled with Asian artwork, red or black walls or red fringe, says Jeanine Hanson, owner of Madison’s The Organizers, which offers, among other things, feng shui consultation and design.

“The commonsense part of feng shui works in any culture: a space that is beautiful, functional, comfortable and safe,” she says.

Three principles

In feng shui, there are three basic principles.

Everything is alive. This means that everything has energy, or chi. Not only does it have its own vibration, it’s alive with memory.

Everything is connected. Your belongings can evoke emotions, meaning you have connections to the objects in your home, and they showcase your personality and emotions.

Hanson gives this example of the first two principles: “If you look into your closet and have clothes that are in need of repair, don’t fit or you don’t like, it will deplete your energy and drag you down. They don’t showcase who you are or how you feel about yourself. But if you have a closet full of clothes you love, they fit and are in good repair, you start your day with strong energy; it ups your



mood and makes it easy to pick something out that will make you feel great and confident.”

The final principle: Everything is changing.

“People, seasons, situations, they all change,” says Hanson, “and what’s in the home should reflect your new interests or desires.”

Improved relationships

Take a look at your living room. How is the furniture arranged? Is it inviting? Does it allow for conversation or cuddling? Feng shui improves life and living spaces, such as the living room, by creating places that make people feel good and invite conversation and connection to balance the hustle and bustle of daily life.

“Take, for instance, the couch. What is its shape, size, texture, placement?” says Patricia. “All this matters. The furniture should ‘talk’ to one another, allowing people to talk to one another. The couch should be very seductive, inviting you to come and sit down, snuggle, hold someone

in your arms.”

If you share a bedroom, is there equal space for each partner to have their needs met?

“I’ve seen homes where one partner takes over all the closet and dresser [space], so the other has to go to another room,” says Hanson. “The person who owns all space becomes the dominant partner, leaving the other to feel less welcome.”

Feng shui can help children and improve family dynamics as well. Are your child’s belongings unwieldy, strewn about or constantly “talking”? Hello, overstimulation; good-bye balance. Do siblings share a room? If so, do they have their own private space? Giving each their own safe haven can help keep peace among siblings.

Intentions for the future

Feng shui not only brings harmony to your current life and space but can set the stage for your hopes, intentions



and desires. Hanson once worked with a single career woman, ridding her home of single energy and infusing it with dual energy.

They painted rooms in hues of apricot, which is good for attraction. They added chairs, a second nightstand in the bedroom and cleared space in the closets, all making space for her future partner.

“Within a few months, she found the man of her

dreams and within a year was married,” says Hanson.

Another client, a graduate student, was preparing to look for work in her field, and called Hanson for organizing assistance and feng shui expertise. Knowing she’d need to be ready to move once she found a job that suited her specialty, Hanson and the client organized and packed things the client didn’t need, but kept it accessible; they also rearranged her living space and added new art.

The outcome? Within a week, she was offered an opportunity to co-teach at a university and was subsequently offered a job, if she could move in 10 days. Already prepared, she moved in three.

“She set her intention and was ready to do what it took with organizing and feng shui,” says Hanson, “and the opportunity dropped in her lap. Feng shui can do that.” ■

Feng shui in practice

Creating balance in your home using feng shui is a personal matter, but here are a few tenets to start achieving calm and connection in your living space.

Keep it clean and uncluttered. “Dirt and clutter are stagnant energy,” says Patricia.

Minimize. How much “stuff” do you have in the room? Too much stuff creates imbalance and overstimulation.

Go large. “Instead of scattering a room with lots of little items, use fewer, larger items that call to you,” says Patricia.

Create connections. Arrange furniture to promote conversation and connection. If the room is very large, make it smaller with screens and furniture grouping.

Get the picture. Art and accessories shouldn’t remind you of past incidents; it should “tell you something you don’t know.”