

# Let It Flow

A little  
feng shui  
can go  
a long  
way.

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When Lisa Hall's boss gave her a gift certificate to have a feng shui master come to her home, she was skeptical but thought it probably wouldn't hurt. "When you have three kids, you'll do anything to help the flow," she says with a laugh. The results were instantaneous: Her youngest son, who was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, actually fell asleep easily after moving his bed to a more restful position. But it was a comment from her oldest son's science teacher that really caught Hall off guard. "He said that Zach was doing much better in class. On a whim I told him that Zach had been feng shuied. He asked if I had it done two weeks ago - it had been two weeks to the day," Hall recalls. "I thought, 'OK, this is kind of freaky.'"

The Chinese - as well as other ancient cultures such as the Native Americans, Celts, Druids, Greeks, and Romans - developed systems based on the energy of objects and how that energy was most helpful to humans. These ancient cultures knew what Einstein later proved on paper: all objects have energy. The technique we know today called feng shui (pronounced fung shway) works to balance energy or chi

(chee), thereby creating better living and working spaces.

Gary Hendrickson, the Boulder feng shui consultant who worked on Lisa Hall's house, says such positive results are common. "Feng shui works on two levels: the physical plane and through intention. Physically, certain things have a higher vibration level and attract more positive energy. Intention works on a subconscious level as a reminder of things you want to call to you," says Hendrickson. "Positive changes from feng shui are so common in fact that major corporations, international banking institutes, and even financial tycoons such as Donald Trump are incorporating feng shui in their business environments."

The confusion for most people happens, however, when they actually try to decipher the multitude of feng shui books, look through the phone book for a consultant, or attempt to recreate scenarios seen on TV. Here's why: More than 10 styles of feng shui exist, some of which complement and others that contradict each other. Basically, feng shui can be applied in a left-brained, data-based fashion or in a right-brained, intuitive style. Some feng shui books and consultants combine styles, others pick and choose. Are you still confused? Take heart. Most consultants study

for years under masters who learned from masters who learned from masters - you get the idea.

In America, the two most common forms of feng shui practiced are the highly intuitive Black Hat Tantric Buddhist Sect and the fact-and-figure based Compass School. All styles of feng shui work to improve your luck or at least minimize your unlucky aspects. Both the intuitive and logic-driven styles agree that your home or office can be divided into sections of a Ba Gua (see grid on page 85) and that each section is dedicated to a specific part of your life: knowledge, family, wealth, fame, relationships, children, helpful people and travel, health, and career.

Out of the two disciplines, Black Hat is a little more forgiving - a good one for beginners to try on their own. Where the Compass School can be strict about placing certain objects made of a particular element in the proper rooms, Black Hat asks how you think about the item before choosing a placement in the room that corresponds with your feelings and intentions. For example, a book on Rome may bring back fond memories of travel, in which case you'd want to place it in your travel corner (the corner to your immediate right as you walk in the front door).

But does it really work?



## Before and After

**What's wrong with the top picture? In terms of chi, pretty much everything. The author feng shuied her relationship corner (bottom photo) by removing clutter and the microwave, washing windows, adding a round table with two chairs, painting the walls a pinkish hue, and placing healthy plants together in pairs.**

After taking a class in feng shui, a welder at a machine shop discovered that having a bathroom in the wealth corner (the far left-hand corner of the building) could mean that money was literally being flushed down the toilet. He cleaned the bathroom and put down the lid on the toilet. As he persisted day to day in tidying things and lowering the seat, an interesting thing happened: his boss gave him a raise, then a promotion and another raise. Was it good feng shui? A clean freak boss who recognized a kindred spirit? Or did his good intentions manifest in a larger paycheck?

As much as one ponders the question, the reality is no one knows for certain - it's what each individual believes and feels about things that ultimately influence any situation. The degree of feng shui that may work for you may also depend on your sensitivity. If you've ever walked into a room right before a meeting and you felt you could "cut the tension with a knife," you've felt negative chi. Sometimes negative chi can build up in a space, causing things to deteriorate. Such was the case for Boulderite Diana Keck, who started to sense the energy in her own space declining along with her business.

After dealing with many clients in her psychotherapy practice, Keck began to feel tired of her office and it started to show in the decreasing flow of clients through her door. She called on Penny Vesel, who works with Black Hat feng shui, to perform a space clearing, a technique Vesel studied in Bali. The two cleared out and rearranged Keck's office, burned incense, and worked with sound to move the chi. To her delight, Keck felt better about going to work and says her business greatly increased within the first month. Former clients returned and new clients called. "It was as if everything was new, yet

nothing had changed," she claims.

Rina Coury had a similar problem, only it wasn't money but love she was missing. Coury wanted to get married and the clock was ticking. She dated frequently but she wasn't experiencing that butterflies-in-the-stomach good chi feeling. She had just about given up when her friend Jane Hagan approached her about the feng shui class she had taken. Hagan arrived at Coury's house and discovered that the relationship/marriage corner - the far right-hand corner as you stand at the front door - was a sun porch where her single friend stored old stuff. Coury took Hagan's advice to clear out the space and fill it with items and images that symbolized love and relationship. Within six weeks, Coury met the love of her life. A year later they married and are currently expecting their first baby.

The secret of feng shui cures, however, is that when you make changes and set your mind to fixing a corner of your life, the unexpected could happen. "Your highest intent will speed along change," says Vesel, recalling a very personal experience she had when first studying feng shui. She had been enhancing the relationship corner of her house, yet her marriage seemed to get more difficult with every improvement she made. Finally, she called the feng shui master she studied under and he explained that the feng shui was absolutely working. "He told me that using feng shui will most often get you to where you're destined to be. That may not always be where you think you're headed." Although her marriage ended, it was an amicable split and Vesel did go on to find the man she is now married to, who she believes is exactly right for her.

So, are you ready to let the feng shui fly? Here are some quick feng shui fixes to try in your home and office.

Financial troubles? As you stand at the front door, walk to the far left-hand corner of your home or office.

Are there broken appliances, burnt out lights, or piles of unwanted junk taking up space? Fix these things and clean up your space. Add more light and, if you want to really spice things up, add the color of wealth – purple. Paint the walls purple or add a picture with lots of purple in it. Also, the front of your house, especially the door, is considered the mouth of chi, where all energy enters. Apply a fresh coat of paint to your door (white is always a safe, energetic color) and sweep the front porch and walkway clear of leaves and dirt. Repair any broken steps while you're at it.

Stuck in a rut? Increase energy flow in your house by clearing furniture out of pathways. Move things that block the circulation flow. The key is to let chi meander through your home. Every little thing adds up in your house, so pay attention.

And, how about getting that dog from the Dumb Friends League you've been talking about? Aside from reducing your stress level, pets such as dogs, cats, and fish add life force energy to a home. If you're not into pets, add healthy plants that grow up or meander up and out. Avoid cactus, though, as the prickly ends interrupt the flow of chi. If you do have cacti that you love, put them in the fame corner of your home (center back as you stand at the front door). They do help spark chi, which could help spark your stature.

Want to get pregnant? Clean out everything from under your bed and add fresh flowers to your children and family corner, which is the center right-hand side of your house. Spruce it up with family photos and images that make you think family.

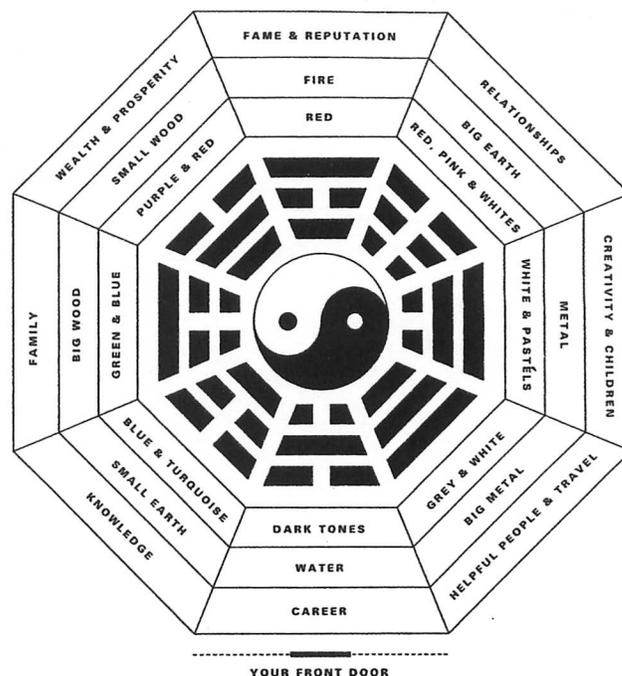
Need a new career? Write your intentions on a piece of paper (more money, nicer boss, no boss, corner office, etc.) and place those intentions in a box that has meaning. Set this box full of your thoughts in the career area – front, center area of your home or office – and spend a few moments each day thinking about what it is you want most. Picture yourself in the best possible position. A fountain with moving water placed in your wealth corner also helps generate energy while it stimulates your creative mind. The Chinese consider the stove a symbol of wealth and abundance, so keep your stove clean and use all your burners regularly.

Having trouble sleeping? See if your bed is in a position of power in your room. The best location is one where you can see the doorway in the room but where your feet are not headed directly out the door.

Love, love, everyone wants love. If you are having a hard time attracting someone to you, look through your house for old photos and mementos of your past relationships. Why are you still holding onto them? Get rid of that old stuff and make room for someone new. Put pairs of things in the relationship corners of your house and of your bedroom. Put a nightstand on either side of your bed in preparation for partnership.

Finally, don't get rid of things you absolutely love – and don't think you have to buy Chinese fu dog statues and hang crystals everywhere. The things you have and enjoy will help you the most. If something seems out of place, keep trying to find a spot that works. But be aware that sometimes it's best to let go and make room for new things to come your way.

If you are interested in deeper work and want to find a feng shui consultant with whom you feel comfortable, it is best to call several people to get a feel for their styles over the phone. Consultants



## A Map of the Feng Shui World

**The Ba Gua, also called the Feng Shui Octagon, works as an energy grid of your home. The Ba Gua literally maps out which parts of your environment directly affect your life. To read your home's chi, stand at your front door and hold the map with the "career" sector closest to you (as pictured), from there, you can determine your areas of wealth, romance, and so on. As you get more involved in feng shui, the Ba Gua also gives information about colors and objects/elements you might want to incorporate into specific spaces.**

charge anywhere from \$60 to \$1,500 an hour, so make sure you like the person you're working with. Ask up front how long they've been working in the field and where they studied. Also, ask which school of feng shui they use and don't be afraid to have them explain any terminology you do not understand.

Many consultants will ask the year you were born. It's a surprisingly insightful way to determine your personality and the type of consultation you will want: intuitive, facts and figures, or a combination of the two. You should prepare yourself for the visit and know that feng shui is an ongoing practice that will require you to always make time to clean your space and add positive intentions for your life.

To read more about feng shui, try Jane Butler-Biggs' book *Feng Shui in 10 Simple Lessons*, David Daniel Kennedy's *Feng Shui-Tips for a Better Life*, or *Harmony by Design* by Nancy SantoPietro. If you want to tackle the more involved Compass School, try Lillian Too's *Complete Illustrated Guide to Feng Shui*.

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*Freelance writer Rose Glaser lives and works in her positively chi charged home in Denver.*