

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

December Column for Benicia Herald

Get the Most Out of the Holidays – Embrace Stillness

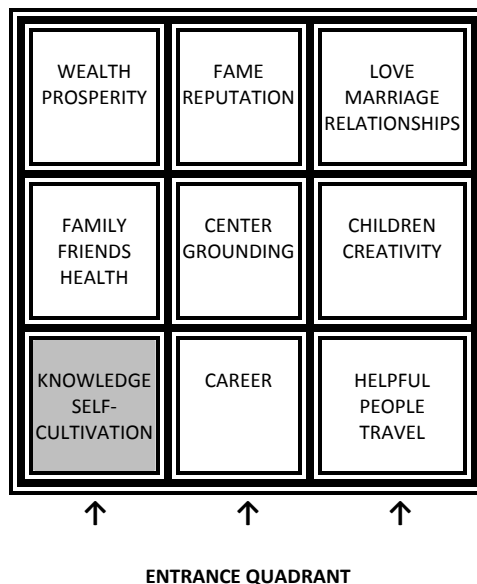
The holiday season can be a time of great joy or a time of stress, a time of renewal or a time of frantic preparation, a time of happy gathering with friends or a time of exhaustion. The serenity you create in your home has a great deal of influence on your outlook.

Although all areas of your home lend themselves to harmony; the left front section of the structure is particularly related to “Stillness.” In the Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, represented as a grid of nine sectors, this area is referred to as the “Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area”. It operates under the premise that we assimilate knowledge best when we also cultivate a peaceful mind by practicing some form of regular “keeping still.” This can be accomplished through meditation, contemplation, and introspection. With the New Year upon us, now is a good time to build quietude into your daily routine, and honor the full rhythm of life. Knowledge is viewed as the seed of wisdom, therefore when we spend time keeping still, our field of knowledge will be lush and productive. This teaching reminds us that to be truly brilliant, creative, and productive, we must also embrace stillness. “One cannot see one’s reflection in running water, but only in still water.” Chung Tzu

The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, “The I Ching,” and literally means “eight trigrams.” In the “I Ching” the Knowledge and Self Cultivation area of your home or business is called “still mountain” as it refers to taking the time to climb the peaceful inner space where you can integrate and assimilate your daily experiences.

Whatever room your Knowledge and Self Cultivation area resides, applying some basic Feng Shui principles can help you create a peaceful sanctuary.

The Knowledge and Self Cultivation area is located in the left front corner of your home/office/business.



Enhancements in this area are particularly helpful if you are a student of any subject. Whether full time at a university, attending trainings or workshops to advance your career, or taking classes at your local recreation center, enhancing this area will help you achieve your goals. Not just for students per se, this area is also helpful to people in counseling or those engaging in any kind of self-growth activities, or you just want to cultivate a more peaceful mind or lifestyle.

The element for the Knowledge area is Wood, and the colors are black, blues and greens, therefore representations of this element can be used inside and outside of your home or business.

Enhancements for energizing Knowledge and Self Cultivation inside your home or business:

- * Keep this area clutter free, since clutter does not act to soothe the mind.
- * Items in the colors of blues, greens, or black
- * Items in the shape of columns or stripes
- * Posters, paintings, collages and/or photos of mountains, woods, or anything that depicts a quiet outdoor space or meditation gardens, pictures or collages of figures such as teachers and wise people in your life in meditation, contemplation or repose
- * Wooden tables or bookcases holding books, tapes or material being studied
- * Healthy plants with rounded soft leaves

Enhancements for energizing Knowledge and Self Cultivation outside your home or business:

- * This area is best enhanced outside with beautiful lush, healthy plants.
- * Figurines of people you consider wise, or blue/green gazing balls
- * A wooden or wicker bench or seating area for quiet reflection

Note: If this is where your front door is located, the Chi, the vital energy, is invited to flow in through a peaceful, serene entrance.

Elements to Avoid:

In my September column, I wrote about the nurturing and controlling cycles of the elements. Because the Knowledge and Self Cultivation area represents a wood element, it's important to understand that the presence of some elements can actually diminish the potential benefits this area will bring to your life. Wood is cut by Metal, so avoid an abundance of metal objects, stones or circular or oval shape or white colors. On the other hand, Wood is nurtured by water, so free flowing shapes, ponds, the color black, and/or glass objects work to further enhance this area.

A Missing Knowledge Area:

If your knowledge area is missing from your floor plan - I recommend anchoring this area by doing one or a combination of the following: planting a lush meditative garden, adding a bench or quiet seating area, or placing a statue or gazing ball in the corner. The key is to complete the space, and simultaneously create a peaceful environment.

Feng Shui at work in my home:

In my home, part of the Knowledge area is outside of the Bagua, while the rest is in my master bedroom. To anchor it I placed a blue/green glass gazing ball at the exact location of the missing corner, and have a flower garden completing the space outside of the bedroom window. The bedroom was a challenge, because blues and greens are too cool for a bedroom (not enough fire). Ideal colors for bedroom walls are the entire spectrum of skin tones from light cream to dark browns. I had the challenge of bringing in the cool wood element, and yet keeping the fiery passion of the bedroom. To keep the serenity of the Knowledge area I brought in many wood pieces and kept the lights dim. My favorite meditative spot in the house is a brown wicker chair and ottoman in the corner. This is where I love to sit, read and "be still". I brought in more wood through a large artificial ficus tree, and a few floral arrangements. The walls are a light gold. To maintain the fire element needed in a bedroom, I hung romantic pictures, added pairs of items such as candles and figurines, and added accents of burgundy.

Feng Shui at work in other's homes:

My daughter has her knowledge area outside of her kitchen; she anchored this area on her patio with a beautiful wicker loveseat, chairs and a table. It's a perfect area for reading, reflection and entertaining.

A client who was also missing this area decided to anchor it in her garden with two wooden Adirondack chairs facing a statue of St. Francis surrounded by a round flower garden. Again – perfect for stillness. She meditates there and has since located the meditation classes she was looking for.

Two of my clients have this area in their bathroom. One painted a large mural of bamboo shoots on the wall, and the other enhanced hers with the color sage green, a shower curtain with brocade leaves, a picture of a forest, an orchid, a wicker basket of inspirational books and small wooden figurines. Both have a feeling of calm and soothing.

Another client has this area in her much cluttered garage. Once she cleaned and organized it with wooden bookshelves, she made extra money through a garage sale, and used the money to take meditation classes at a beautiful mountain retreat.

Affirmations:

Remember that In Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. That's why all enhancements need to be made with intentionality; written or stated affirmations are very important. It is also important for them to be expressed as if they are already happening.

Examples or affirmations for the Knowledge and Self Cultivation area:

"I am peaceful and calm, and share knowledge with others," "In stillness, I deepen my inner peaces and wisdom," "In all situations, I always know what to do and say."

The holiday season is a perfect time for giving of oneself. Give YOURSELF the daily gift of stillness. By taking a time out from being active every waking minute, you deepen the peace and wisdom within you.

Wishing you peaceful holidays!

For questions or home consultations email at mtmccull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria".

* **I NOW have a BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": I will respond to your questions quickly.

I will be teaching two more 3 hour classes through the Benicia Parks and Recreation:

Sat., Feb. 4th – 9:00 am, Fri., April 6th - 9:00 am. These are the same classes repeated. The Parks and Recreation Guide will come out in December if you'd like to register. (Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.)

Until then...Blessings!

Maria McCullough - Bio

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of **Feng Shui by Maria** (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 15 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."