

## EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

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### Finding Your Perfect Balance Through the Elements

#### Can you feel it?

“Every time I enter your office, I want to stay there and take it all in. It feels peaceful, harmonious, and meetings held there are always productive and pleasant. The positive energy makes it a space where people enjoy gathering.”

#### On the other hand – have you felt this?

“My bedroom is grey and monochromatic. It feels cold and uninviting. I don’t want to stay there long. Come to think of it my love life feels about the same; not many sparks or fire.”

What makes these two environments so different? ELEMENTAL BALANCE

#### Nature’s Elements:

The elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water are considered the building blocks of everything physical on earth. Feng Shui observes that the most harmonious places in nature are where an interplay of all five elements occurs.

The first environment listed in the example feels peaceful and productive because it is Elementally Balanced, while the second environment is imbalanced – dominated by one element, in this case Metal.

Human beings are made up of a combination of all five elements and therefore are most comfortable when all five are represented in a home or workplace.

In last month’s column you learned to identify and enhance the Bagua areas of your home. To achieve perfect harmony each of these areas also needs to be elementally balanced; and here is your step by step guide.

There are three skills we develop and use when working with the 5 elements:

1. Define the elements in an environment
2. Assess the needs for elemental additions and corrections
3. Make the necessary changes to establish elemental balance

#### Defining the Elements:

Elements do not have to be literal. In other words, you do not actually have to have a block of wood to represent the Wood Element. Colors, shapes, art and textiles represent the elements as well. Below you will find many of the various items that can be used to represent specific elements in your environment.

#### The Wood Element is found in:

Wooden furniture and accessories, wooden paneling and decks, all indoor and outdoor plants (including silk, plastic or dried), plant based cloth and textiles, floral prints, art depicting landscapes, gardens, plants and flowers, columnar shapes and stripes, the green and blue color spectrum.

#### The Fire Element is found in:

All lighting (electrical, candles and natural) things made from animals (fur, leather, bone, feathers, wool etc.), pets and wildlife, art that depicts people, animals, sunshine or fire, shapes such as triangles, pyramids or cones, the red color spectrum.

#### The Earth Element is found in:

Adobe, brick and tile, ceramics or earthenware objects, shapes such as squares and rectangles, the yellow color spectrum, art depicting earthy landscapes of deserts or fields.

#### The Metal Element is found in:

All types of metals, including stainless steel, copper, brass iron, silver, aluminum and gold, all rocks and stones such as marble, granite and flagstone, natural crystals, rocks and gemstones, the white and light pastel color spectrum, the shapes of the circle, oval and arch.

#### The Water Element is found in:

Water features of all kinds (fountains, aquariums, and birdbaths), reflective surfaces such as glass, cut crystal and mirrors, flowing asymmetrical shapes, the black and dark tones color spectrum, art depicting water scenes.

#### Assessing the Needs:

The fastest and easiest way to learn the language of “Elemental Combinations” is to evaluate your environment in elemental terms going room by room. On a piece of paper list all the items in the room and what element they represent. Recognize that items can represent combination of elements; a wooden chair (Wood) when painted red represents both Fire and Wood, but if painted black represents Water and Wood. Once you have completed your list, notice what is dominant and what is missing.

Elements actually nurture or control each other. For example, Fire melts Metal. If you have a room dominated by Metal, adding a few touches that represent Fire, such as a red candles, or art depicting people or animals can help bring balance. (In our second opening example art depicting a romantic representation would also spark the person's love life.) Likewise, if you had a room that was lacking the Wood Element you could add some flowers (Wood) and a fountain, or mirror (Water) to further nurture the wood. See the complete cycles used to bring the other elements into perfect harmony.

To reduce/control elements use the Controlling Cycle:

Wood consumes Earth, Earth dams Water, Water extinguishes Fire, Fire melts Metal and Metal cuts Wood.

To strengthen/nurture elements use the Nourishing Cycle:

Water nurtures Wood, Wood feeds Fire, Fire makes Earth, Earth creates Metal, and Metal holds Water.

Quick Reference to Making the Necessary Changes to Establish Elemental Balance:

**When the dominant element is Wood:** Introduce the controlling element of Metal and highlight with Earth and Fire. Do not use much Water or Wood.

**When the dominant element is Fire:** Introduce the controlling element of Water and highlight with Earth and Metal. Do not use much Wood and Fire.

**When the dominant element is Earth:** Introduce the controlling element of Wood and highlight with Metal and Water. Do not use much Earth or Fire.

**When the dominant element is Metal:** Introduce the controlling element of Fire and highlight with Water and Wood. Do not use much Metal or Earth.

**When the dominant element is Water:** Introduce the controlling element of Earth and highlight with Wood and Fire. Do not use much Water or Metal.

The 5 Elements in Use:

A client of mine had a home dominated by the wood element; wood shingles, wooden front deck, wooden floors, built in wooden cabinets...wood, wood, wood!!! She felt rooted, tangled and overwhelmed. Her home did not need any houseplants or more oak furniture – what it needed was a strong dose of the Metal element – the controlling element of wood. I suggested a cream couch, with rounded arms and back, pastel linens and cream carpeting. We added bronze lamps and natural rocks. To strengthen the Metal element even more we brought in some Earth which nourishes Metal, with a large yellow candle on the coffee table. We avoided adding any dark colors or water features because we did not want to feed the Wood with Water. Simple additions produced great results! Her home looks amazing, and has a truly revitalizing feel to it. Consequently, she now has a renewed burst of energy.

A Quick Fix - 5 Element Arrangements:

Creating a small 5 element arrangement in any room helps to strengthen the Chi, and adds power to affirmations and enhancements. It marks the beginning of positive change and invites the Chi to move. For example, adding a 5 Element Arrangement to the center of your home can help ground you when you're feeling overwhelmed or tired. Quick Fixes are also excellent when you need a boost to specific facets of your life, such as when seeking a job, deciding to start a family, or beginning a large remodeling project.

I advised a client who was having major reconstruction to her home to place a small table displaying all 5 elements in her Helpful People area, with an affirmation. She called me stating that after doing this, all facets of the construction were very smoothly. My husband and I are currently having our deck redone –so taking my own advice, I placed a metal tray, (Metal) with a glass vase (Glass) holding a yellow flower (Wood and Earth) and a red fan (Fire) in my Helpful People area for more support. The project has been going smoothly, our contractors are wonderful, and the deck looks beautiful.

Learning to identify the elements can be a lot of fun. With practice you will see that there are no “random acts of decorating”. Whatever you add to a room should be purposeful to help you create harmony. Think of all the different combinations you can using the things you love. Remember that Feng Shui is about “Living with What You Love.”

For questions or home consultations email at [mtmccull@aol.com](mailto:mtmccull@aol.com) and put “Feng Shui” on the subject line, or visit my website at [www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://www.fengshuibymaria.com), or Facebook “Feng Shui by Maria”.

## **Maria McCullough - Bio**

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of **Feng Shui by Maria** ([www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://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."