

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

February Column

The Year of the Fire Monkey: Are You Ready to Energize Your Life?

The peaceful 2015 Year of Sheep is coming to an end. As the lunar New Year begins, the volatile Yang Fire Monkey enters with a blast of rampant energy. Get ready to be entertained, motivated and energized.

The lunar Year of the Yang Red Fire Monkey begins on Monday Feb. 8, 2016. This will be a year of adventure, discovery, questions and answers, when luck can strike at bizarre times and fortunes can turn in the blink of an eye. Risk, strategy, learning, change and progress feature prominently in a Monkey Year. Under the influence of the Fire element, expect an era of building, creating and forging ahead; hurdling obstacles with remarkable ease and reaching for the stars. It's a year of blazing opportunity and wild passions, a roller-coaster ride of the senses, and sometimes all you can do is hang on and surrender to the journey! This is especially true for people born in the years 2016, 2004, 1992, 1980, 1968, 1956, 1944, but all others will feel it as well.

It's best to take nothing for granted. Nonetheless, you may recall that the Space Age officially began in 1956, a Fire Monkey year. Expect to see innovative developments in the sciences, technology, education, commerce and the performance arts. The nimble Monkey is an opportunist. Even in difficult circumstances, this canny creature finds ways to overcome and succeed. It's important to keep a sense of humor and perspective this year. While there are many positive aspects to the Monkey Year, the Monkey a pervasive and powerful figure in myth and spirituality, which can also represent trickster energy. Don't underestimate this influence. Plans can go awry in the Year of the Monkey, but answers and solutions are found if you seek them.

This New Year is a great time to learn and acquire new skills on a practical hands-on level. Positive forward motion has happy results, and if you can work with the sputters and flares of this fluctuating energy you can blaze trails with confidence, inspire others and easily reach goals that once seemed impossible.

The Monkey year is an excellent one for entrepreneurship. Original ventures are destined for success. While innovative and daring ideas abound, you can also encounter unexpected pitfalls this year. Just remember that despite the Monkey's rebellious nature the prevailing movement is forward, as trends turn toward greater freedom and independence overall.

Social activity picks up as the garrulous Monkey loves to circulate, and always seems to attract new friends and admirers. Stimulating conversations, exciting people and spontaneous gatherings abound. The feeling is fun, flirtatious and lively.

Travel for education, business and personal interest picks up. With the emphasis on learning and discovering, we may forget to spend quality time in the moment. Be sure to relax and take time for yourself now and then, as the pace can be fast, and there may be many demands on your energy. While life is far from smooth in the Year of the Monkey, you can proceed with style and speed, knowing you're perfectly able to handle any mishaps along the way. It's a year filled with potential and bursting with delightful temptations and dramatic discoveries.

For prosperity, the Year of the Monkey is bright with inspiration and opportunity. Don't count on a steady income stream though, as money flow can be erratic. Following a budget is a challenge. It's best not to worry too much about money this year. Be sensible but allow some indulgence. The pleasure-seeking Monkey loves to throw money around, favoring lavish entertainment, stylish attire and generous helpings of the finer things in life. Enjoy!

Preparing for the Year of the Monkey

- 1) To prepare yourself and your home for this powerful year, begin by tidying up your home and office. Stop mess before it builds up for good luck in Fire Monkey year. Monkey is an active go-getter, and home is important to

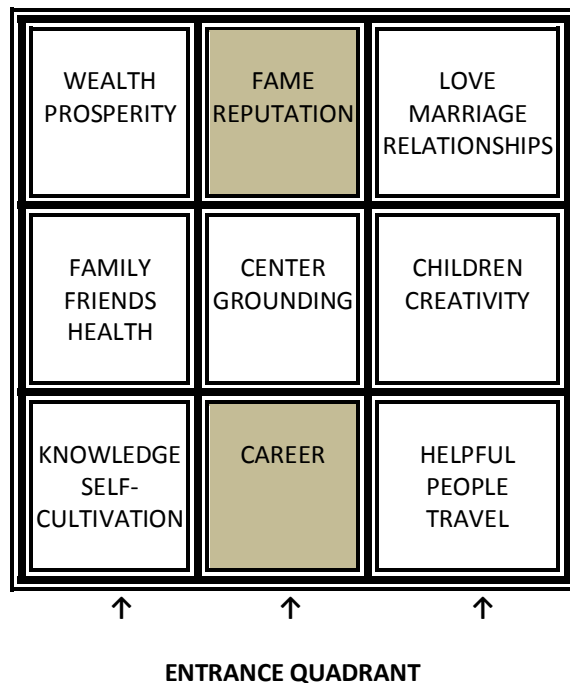
Monkey to provide a secure, safe place to come home to, especially for Monkey children. Some things might be out of your control in a Monkey year, but you can control how you maintain and organize your living space. Start at your front door. Clean your entry to welcome all the good luck that will come into your home and place of business in the New Year. Wash, sweep, or vacuum the front steps, porch, entry hall, and lobby. Make this area clean, well lit, and inviting. Check the entry's lighting fixtures, make sure the doorbell works, and touch up scuff marks with a fresh coat of paint, or add a new rug to welcome the New Year.

- 2) Add beautiful flowers to welcome the New Year! It's fortunate to add plants, flowers, and healthy bamboo to your home and workplace to increase abundance. Fresh flowers bring fresh aroma that clears the air for New Year. The energy of a room is brightened by the addition of flowers and plants. And plants offer fresh oxygen to improve health. Lucky flowers are orchids, peonies, and lilies. Avoid thorny plants like a cactus, indoors or outdoors. Instead, grow lush plants that have soft round leaves like a jade plant or philodendron. Silk flowers are superb in Feng Shui because they are a wonderful way to add light and life to your environment. If you bring home a lovely orchid, after the flower wilts, cut away the dead stalk and insert a good-quality silk orchid into your container. Then your orchid seems to be always in bloom, instead of a dead stalk tied to a stake. Keep watering it and watch it bloom again.

- 3) This is a perfect time for Feng Shui to help you imbue the energizing spirit of the Monkey. The Bagua focus to create abundance for Fire Monkey year is the Fame/Reputation area. This is located in the far back wall from the entry. The more fame and recognition that Monkeys receive for their wild schemes and innovative concepts, the more inspired they are to accomplish and create. The second area for focus in Monkey year is the Career area, located opposite the Fame/Reputation area. Monkeys apply more of their ingenious wit and dynamic energy to a career that they find personally satisfying. By enhancing both of these areas with the following sample enhancements, your prosperity and creative energy will begin to flow.

The Bagua

The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors. The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, "The I Ching," and literally means "eight trigrams", with the center being for centering and grounding.



Fame Area (Fire Element)

- * Photos or art representing achievements, inspiration, stars, suns, people, animals representing upward movement
- * Items in the colors red
- * Items representing the fire element with candles and lighting

Career Area (Water Element)

- * Items in items in black or very dark colors, glass/crystal items
- * Water features, (fountains, waterfalls or aquariums)
- * Art depicting water scenes and/or representations of your current or intended career

When using the Bagua map, be sure that all areas are clean with no clutter. Avoiding clutter in the Monkey year will avert feelings of being overwhelmed or confused. Keep a clear path to your aspirations. Make sure that the first thing seen in each room is beautiful and inspiring. You do not want to see a pile of paperwork or any type of mess.

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 have already happened. Examples while you're in the year of the Monkey: "My book is being published," "I just received a check advance for my creative idea," "I bought tickets for my around the world cruise."

Feng Shui at Work: (Client testimonial)

"Recently a close relative was floundering in a career "blockage." A Fung Shui visit from Maria revealed that many areas in the living space were conflicting with the flow of energy. Moving and/or eliminating some of the decorations had almost immediate effects: a payment for future services was received the next day. A career vision board was hung and one week later, the job offer hoped for was received! Wow... "

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. The Year of the Monkey will allow you to have renewed energy to entertain, redecorate, begin a business and creative projects. Go for it!!!! Try new things, declutter your home, and take up your creative pursuits; all for free...

Wherever the Monkey takes you this year...enjoy the ride! Opportunities abound.

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, (where you can read past columns and learn more enhancement ideas), or **Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria"**, where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

* Check out my **BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

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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 20 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."