

## EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria  
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### **The Year of the Earth Dog: New Opportunities for Lifestyle Changes**

What a couple of years we've had! First the Fire Monkey brought us many opportunities, new beginnings, but surprise after surprise. That was followed by the year of the Fire Rooster with his ambition and willingness to take on challenges. Both years left is feeling exhausted and whiplashed.

Beginning on February 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be finally out of the fire element and into Earth for a more stabilizing and grounding year. Following the Chinese calendar, which rotates in 60-year cycles based on 12 animals and five element years, 2018 is the Year of the Earth Dog. Earth is a stabilizing and conserving force, marking a significant shift from two consecutive years featuring the fire element which brought some disharmony and impulsiveness.

Highly perceptive, the Earth Dog is kind, efficient, skilled in communication and an auspicious animal that can bring peace. Faithful, intelligent, warm and full of energy, the dog has long held its place as man's best friend. That's good news because, according to the Chinese calendar, the next 12 months will be largely shaped by canine traits.

A much needed trait that the year of the dog brings is social justice. Strength of character, education, morality, social life, health and caring for our elders are all fundamental questions which should be revised and improved during this pivotal period, giving way to the more universal values of empathy and social justice. We can also expect to witness the birth of new ambitious industrial projects, completely remodeling the modes of production and exploitation of energy resources, particularly in the field of solar energy, which now matured enough to become one of the main cheap sources of electricity both in transportation and at home.

Social awareness and action, for the many rather than the few, are expected to be the overarching themes of the year. In order to gain in joyful fulfillment throughout the year, it's auspicious to show solidarity and brotherhood, so that the noble and vigorous righteousness of the Earth Dog got converted into material and spiritual wealth.

2018 is expected to bring prosperity, particularly to those who, like the dog, are proactive, work hard and communicate well. Moreover, experts predict that those who show generosity to others will reap the greatest benefits throughout the year. This is because the notion of fair play and social justice is fundamental to the Year of the Dog. Historically respected in China as a work animal and for showing solidarity in a pack, the dog represents integrity and equality.

The Year of the Earth Dog is also a good time for lifestyle changes (time to quit smoking or change residence) and for the start of new business ventures. There will be a particular stability through the entire year which should allow you to organize your personal and professional life more confidently and efficiently.

In this year success, in love as in work, depends primarily on the quality of the communication between people, and learning that being selfless and generous can bring the promise of a more generous harvest in return.

### Relationships and Family:

The doggy traits of generosity and faithfulness are said to be good news for friendships and marriage in 2018, although some family fallouts are to be expected. Ultimately, though, the dog's unfailing loyalty is expected to bring positivity to relationships, both on an individual and group basis. If you happen to be single during this yearly cycle, you shouldn't have trouble finding a partner. This is also a good year to have a baby.

### Career:

The creative cycle of Fire and Earth means that money can come to those who decide to choose honesty and fairness in their dealings. Companies ensuring the welfare and health of their consumers, particularly through increased investments in the areas of recycling and renewable energy, will be rewarded with increased revenues. This will be a great year where life plans and investments start to pay off in a big way especially if you have led a fairly honest and fair life. Dog years can bring many changes, good and bad and economically and they are normally growth years. Thanks to the dog's intelligence, training and discipline, experts say the Year of the Dog is a good time to try new business ventures or make lifestyle changes because it will be easy to consider their pros and cons.

### Health:

The Year of the Earth Dog is a year of social change and also a change to how we live our life; we will see changes in our diet, smoking, drinking and junk food and possibly new laws brought in to let the people know the true dangers associated with eating and drinking, this will be a year of change for the whole world.

In personal terms, as the dog is full of energy, 2018 offers plentiful opportunities to be sociable. With them, however, comes the risk of time-related pressures, stress, exhaustion and other health problems. In other words, pace yourself!

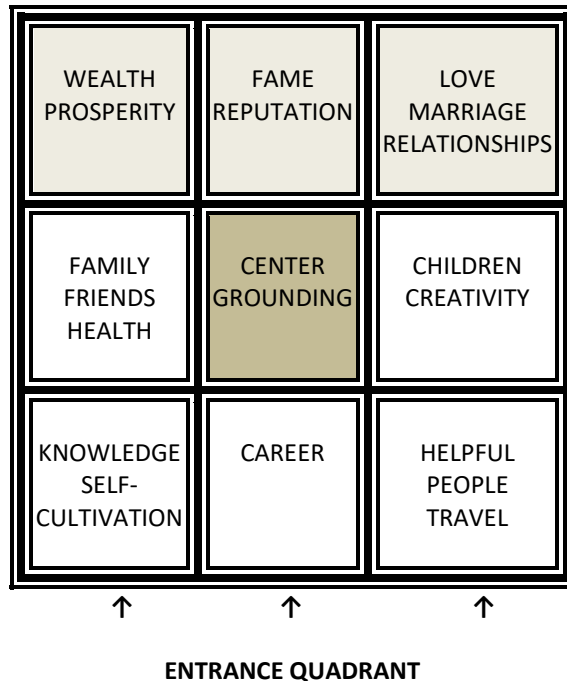
This is especially true for people born in the Dog years 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, and 2030, but all others will feel some of this as well. Predictions for the lunar New Year are not one size fits all. Each of the 12 lunar signs may be affected differently in this year of social consciousness and lifestyle changes.

### **Preparing for the Year of the Earth Dog**

- 1) To prepare yourself and your home for the year of the Earth Dog, begin by tidying up your home and office. Clean your entry to welcome all the good luck that will come into your home and place of business; make this area clean, well lit, and inviting.
- 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.
- 3) This is a perfect time for Feng Shui to help you imbue the grounding spirit of the Earth Dog. By enhancing the Center Earth area of your home with the following sample enhancements, you will experience feelings of being grounded, balanced, organized, and stable.

### **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.



### **Center Area (Earth Element)**

- \* Art and items in the yellow color spectrum depicting earthy landscapes of deserts or fields.
- \* Square or rectangular shapes
- \* Items made of adobe, brick and tile, ceramics or earthenware objects

Since the Fire Element makes Earth, it is recommended that the three fire element areas of your home also be enhanced during this year.

### **Wealth/Fame and Love Areas (Fire Element)**

- \* Items in the colors purple, red and pink
- \* Art that depicts people, animals, sunshine or fire
- \* Shapes such as triangles, pyramids or cones
- \* Items representing the fire element with candles, lighting

When using the Bagua map, be sure that all areas are clean with no clutter. 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 expressed as if they have already happened are very important. Examples while you're in the year of the Dog: *"I have changed my eating habits and am healthy and thriving."* *"I feel stable and grounded."*

### **Feng Shui at Work:**

A client had a hallway facing her front door as her Center Area. I told her that the first thing she sees when she opens her door can have a very powerful effect. She bought a large Diego Rivera painting of a woman holding large sunflowers and has a beautiful ceramic vase below it. It not only helps ground and center her but it nourishes her each time she enters. Her daughter moved her business to her home and both are thriving.

The Year of the Dog is set to offer opportunities aplenty for people who follow their heart, embrace positivity and are devoted to their family, environment and goals.

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), (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.

### **Maria McCullough**

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 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.”