

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI
Feng Shui by Maria
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Lighten Your Load for the New Year

A new year...a new beginning! What has been holding you back, dragging you down or causing conflict in your life? What are you willing to let go of as the New Year begins?

When bringing in the New Year, be sure not to bring all your baggage with you; whether clutter in your home, your personal habits, behaviors and attitudes that have annoyed you, or toxic individuals that bring you down. Choose something in your home to pass on, some behavior you want to change and/or some people that no longer nurture your well-being; you'll feel much lighter, allowing you to get a great running start on the year to come.

We all need change from time to time. It keeps us alive and vital. It keeps us engaged and on our toes. This is true for us as well as our homes. The three Feng Shui principles are: Everything is alive, everything is connected and everything is constantly changing. Embrace this change process for the New Year and watch as the energy shifts and wonderful new opportunities come your way.

Feng Shui, which has been practiced for over 3,000 years in China, is the enhancement of health, prosperity, and happiness through a connection with your environment; your vitality, resources, and loving connections flourish and grow best in harmonious, uncluttered environments that intentionally meet your unique needs and express your personal preferences.

Lightening your household load:

Organizing possessions and eliminating clutter can be viewed as an exciting mission that opens portals to your personal paradise. By getting rid of the things you no longer want or need, you revitalize your home and make room for what you really DO want to flow into your life; you enhance your happiness,

clarity and peace of mind. In Feng Shui everything counts, so your storage areas are as important as the most lived-in areas. In other words, if your room is orderly because everything is stuffed into a closet, you are not practicing Feng Shui.

Clutter is defined as any items that are disliked, unused, in excess and/or unorganized. To begin choose a space you consider cluttered, such as a closet, storeroom, cabinet, desk drawer, table top, or kitchen cupboard, and as you're organizing and decluttering, ask yourself these questions:

"Do I love it? Do I need it? Does it represent or support who I am now? What pleasant or unpleasant memories does it hold? Does it need repair, and am I willing to restore it right now? If I'm letting go, will I sell, lend, or give it away, and when?"

It is helpful to have three bags or boxes labeled, Keep, Throw Away and Donate or Sell. As you sort through each item you put it in its respective box or bag. As soon as you are done, immediately throw away the Trash box, replace the Keep box in an organized place and quickly drop off the donate box, and/or list the items you wish to sell.

Lightening your behavior load:

Are there behaviors in your life that make you unhappy? For example: always being late, procrastinating, not getting enough sleep, overeating, lack of exercise, being critical and negative, being overly stressed. Unhappiness with your behavior serves to drain you on a daily basis. On the other hand good Feng Shui nourishes you. Therefore as you enter the New Year begin small; choose one behavior you want to change and write it down as a positive affirmation, for example, if you are always late the affirmation would say, "I make sure to leave enough extra time when I go somewhere to ensure I am on time." Focus on that behavior, elicit the help of friends and reward yourself for small accomplishments.

As you let go of the negative fill yourself with behaviors that help transform you:

- 1) Show gratitude
- 2) Meditate
- 3) Breathe deeply
- 4) Listen to music
- 5) Laugh It Off
- 6) Exercise
- 7) Spend time with friends
- 8) Help others

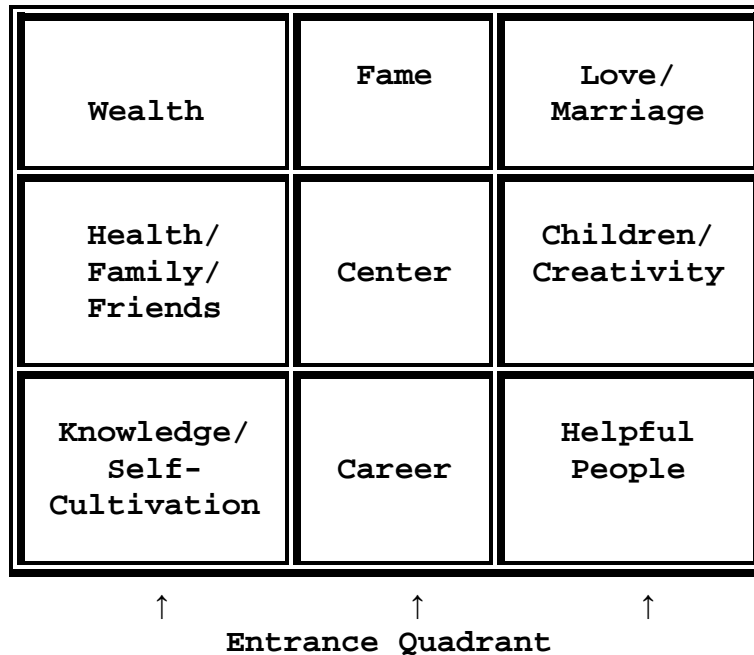
Lightening your people load:

A support system of friends and family is extremely important to our well-being. Yet sometimes people can be negative influences in our life and sap our energy. This may be the year to lighten your load and gently let go of:

1. The people who make your make your life stressful.
2. The people who use you.
3. The people who don't respect you.
4. The people who always manage to hurt you.
5. The people who drag you back into your old lifestyle.
6. The people who hold you back.

You do not have to make a dramatic production out of lightening your people load. Simply and respectfully steer clear of the people you are letting go of, and in time they will fade from your life.How a Cluttered Life Affects the Bagua - Affirmations Can Help:

In Feng Shui the Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, represented as a grid of nine sectors comes from the Chinese philosophy, "The I Ching," and literally means "eight trigrams", with the 9th area being the ever important Center, or hub. It is known as an environmental treasure map helping you locate specific energies in your home. There can easily be a correlation to storing an excess of items in a certain Bagua area and negative effects in that area in your life. For example a cluttered desk or closet in the Wealth area can lead to feeling stuck with finances. If your negative habits effect your health look at placing positive affirmations in your Health area. The same goes for affirmations regarding better friendships. Look at your home with Feng Shui eyes. What areas of your life could use enhancement? Where are you storing items, habits or friends that need to be passed on?



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 while you're in the process of clearing your life and passing things on:
 "Wonderful new opportunities are coming my way." "I am now healthier since I quit smoking." "I love my circle of friends."

Everything in life is limited; resources, time and space. You have to be very careful with not only what you choose to do, but with whom you choose to do it with. Leave clutter, habits and people that no longer nourish you behind in 2014, and build a better you for the new year.

Feng Shui at Work:

A student of mine hadn't been in a relationship for 26 years since her last marriage ended. She is a vibrant, beautiful, interesting individual ready to make changes. After taking my class she began using Feng Shui to transform her life; turning her bedroom into a romantic boudoir, letting go of clutter in her home and fears of relationships. She wrote positive affirmations of the life she visualized. These tasks opened up the energy flow to new opportunities. On a trip with a girlfriend she met a man who had been widowed for a year. They soon fell into an amazing relationship, travel together, have

met each other's families and are making plans for the future - which looks pretty bright at the moment.

In Feng Shui there is a saying, "That if you want a change in your life move 27 items in your home." 3 and 9 are auspicious numbers in Chinese numerology. My husband and I do this at the end of every year to welcome in positive change for the new year.

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. Passing on items from your home, letting go of negative behaviors and friends costs nothing but has huge payoffs.

Questions, Questions, Questions:

I encourage you to email me with question, which I will respond in this column or by email.

Reader: "Since we bought our new home everything has been harder. Contractors haven't worked out, costs have been higher than expected, and items we purchased turned out to be broken. What is happening?"

Dear Reader: "From the pictures you sent me I see the problem immediately. The front right side of your home is recessed and your Helpful People area is missing. There is also a dead tree in that area. I recommend pulling out the tree and anchoring the area in 3 ways:

From the inside 1) Hang a 30mm round faceted crystal in the corner just inside the missing area, 2) Hang a round mirror on the wall in the same area (both of these will act symbolically to push the wall out) 3) Anchor the outside by placing a large, white, round pot with a white azalea tree on the corner of the patio in the missing area. The Helpful People area is governed by the metal element which is represented by metal objects, the color white and circular shapes. Let me know if your synchronicity increases."

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), 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 - 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 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."