

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

June 2013 Column for Benicia Herald

Pools of Calm

"The way you start your day can affect your whole day...Begin with a smile, calmness of mind, coolness of emotions and a heart filled with gratitude." Positive Outlooks

Does your home nurture a calm peaceful feeling in you? Do you have a beautiful area in which you can just sit and breathe? Or are you surrounded by frenetic energy from the moment you enter your door? Like I wrote in my May column, some houses are affected by "Raging Rivers of Chi"; through staircases, large windows, massive beams, or just clutter. None of these create a feeling of calm.

How are you achieving balance and fueling yourself? Where do you go to have quiet down time? Assess your lifestyle. In our hurried western society we pride ourselves with how much we can get done in a day. Multitasking has become the thing to do, and I am a personal example of this as I even wrote a "how to" guide on the best methods for mastering "multitasking." While multitasking is a necessity, taking time out of our day to relax, unwind and rejuvenate is a necessity as well. I still struggle with this but have learned that Feng Shui isn't an event – it's a lifestyle. By learning how your environment is holding in balance your ability to work, rest and play, you can make the easy changes that will help you regain and sustain your balance of life, and quiet yourself down.

Terah Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, refers to creating places in your home for calm as "Pools of Calm." These are places that nurture you; places where you can BE, not DO.

How to begin the calming process:

If you find that you are surrounded by chaos, begin small. Find one room, or area of your home or in the garden where you can create a sanctuary; where you can declutter, enhance with soothing colors, art, pictures, flowers, music and objects that you love. Look to create a five element display -

<http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html> (Sept. 2011)

Find a small bit of time daily, or at least a few times per week, for "being present" in that space – breathe, read, meditate, sleep – anything that calms the body down. Couples and families are the happiest when every member of the family has a space or sanctuary to call their own.

Ideally your entire home will eventually be a pool of calm, but if that isn't realistic the following three rooms are the most important for calming your senses and nourishing body and soul:

1. Master Bedroom – This is a room for rest, health, vitality and loving relationships. Sleep has a direct effect on health, vitality and longevity. Therefore special attention needs to be paid to beautifying the space.
Enhance with:
 - * Walls of soft, warm hues
 - * Accents in the red spectrum
 - * Pairs of objects to represent romance
 - * Soft bedding, a chair for quiet reading, soft lightingAvoid: Exercise equipment, creating a home office with desk and computer, TVs (can be closed in an armoire or covered with a cloth at night), and large mirrors. All of these activate the energy, detract from a soothing calmness, and rob you of sleep and vitality.
2. Dining Room – No matter how small, this is where we stop to take in nourishment and allow ourselves to peacefully digest. Even if alone, take time to set a place setting, enhance with:
 - * Candles and soft music
 - * Beautiful colors and decorations
 - * Surround yourself with the things you love so you can look at them, or a peaceful view when you eat.

* Take time to eat slowly and enjoy conversation.

Avoid: Clutter on the table, uncomfortable chairs and large mirrors. Once again all of these items work to activate energy and will “talk” at you during the entire meal. Also avoid grabbing a quick bite in front of the TV on a regular basis. To begin this routine, start small, a few days a week – you’ll notice how much better you’ll feel.

3. Bathroom – This room is where you cleanse yourself, eliminate your body’s waste and revitalize yourself. It should be a pleasant space to relax in a luxurious bath or shower, and a place where you are surrounded by:

* Art, colors and items that you love as you dress and prepare for the day

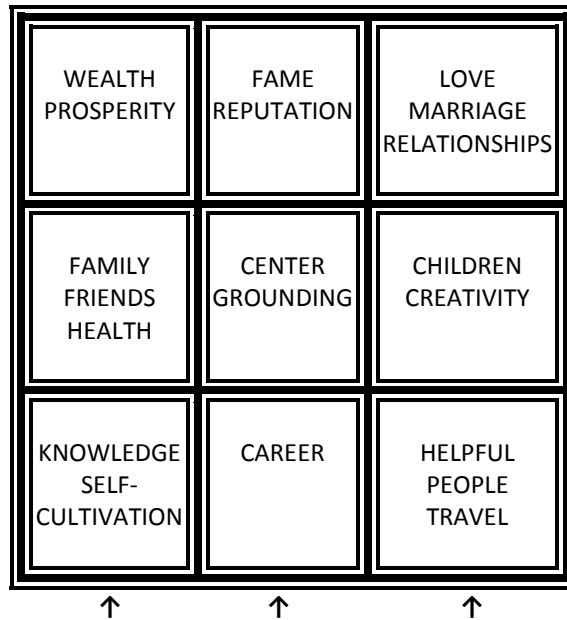
Avoid: Keeping drains and toilet open, as they will drain your energy, as well as dirt and clutter.

Each of these rooms also needs to take on the qualities of the Bagua in which it resides. For example, if you choose to make your dining room your calm retreat, look on the attached map and find where in your house the dining room is located. Is it in the Helpful People corner, or the Love corner, etc.? Make sure that as you decorate you incorporate imagery, colors and elements that represent that area of the Bagua as well.

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.”

Learn all about it in my next class on Sat. June 22.

Read past columns on the Bagua on: <http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>



ENTRANCE QUADRANT

A calm and tranquil heart will maintain our vitality and longevity. Give yourself the gift of time and space to go inside of yourself and breathe.

Affirmations and Inner Work:

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 of affirmations for the calming the energy:

"I pull in for short moments to take care of myself. The tranquility and beauty that surrounds me allows be to breathe and be nourished. I am renewed and filled with vitality."

Feng Shui at Work:

I once heard that the best way to get up in the morning is "to be a cat." In other words, move slowly and stretch. Rather than staying in bed until the last possible moment then leaping up and rushing to the shower, I set my alarm for 30-45 minutes earlier, so that I can lay in bed, stretch like a cat doing some light yoga moves, then enjoy a cup of coffee and read the paper or a few pages from a book before getting out of bed. This is a quiet routine I look forward to every morning.

Sleep research states that sleeping in a totally dark room increases your chance for deep sleep. I found that I was sleeping deeper and better in hotel rooms with room darkening shades, so we purchased them for our bedroom. The room is very cave like at night; we close the TV in the armoire and have a peaceful night's sleep. I have also found that wearing a sleep mask has a similar effect. I actually do both, so that I am totally in the dark.

A client has a small bathroom in her Knowledge and Self Cultivation area. She has enhanced it with soft shades of greens, silk plants and decorative wooden items. To make it her calming sanctuary she placed a Buddha statue with a sand Zen garden and inspirational words on small rocks, along with inspirational books on a small wooden table in the corner. It has become a lovely Pool of Calm in her already beautiful apartment.

Two other clients have found their personal pools of calm. One single woman sets a pretty place setting for her breakfast each morning, and looks out at her water view, while reading the paper and journaling for a few minutes before starting her day. Yet another relaxes in her garden hammock with her book for a few minutes after work to decompress before beginning dinner. It doesn't take much...but it makes world of difference.

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. Clear a space in your dining room or dining area for you and your family to have dinner together. "Shop in your own home" for items you love that you can bring to this space. Light candles, play soft music, turn off the TV and cell phones and enjoy conversing with one another.

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.

COME TO MY NEXT CLASS and Receive \$40 Off a Home Consultation

I will be teaching another 3 hour class through the Benicia Parks and Recreation this summer:

Saturday June 22 - 9:00 am

The Parks and Recreation Guide is now available, if you'd like to register. (Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.) - Mark your calendars and invite friends.

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.”