

QUIZ: Do You Have Good Or Bad Feng Shui?

COUNTRY COLLECTIBLES PRESENTS #22

Decorating SOLUTIONS

CREATE CUSTOM LOOKS ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET

95

BEFORE & AFTER!

Problem Spaces MADE PERFECT

forget white!
see color expand a room

Chris Madden
Re-Decorates
Your Living Room

18 top designers
offer their best advice
for free!

Step-by-Step

SOFA COVER • ROLL-UP SHADE
DUST RUFFLE • DUVET COVER



DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 9, 2005 / PRINTED IN USA

QUIZ

DO YOU HAVE BAD OR

Does your home attract the chi you need for a healthy and happy life? BY LAURA BENKO



Feng Shui principles teach us that bed and desk positioning have a massive impact on our health, wealth and relationships. While at your bed or desk, you want to be able to see the door, but not be in direct alignment with it. Although this desk position puts a back to the door, a mirror allows you to see who is coming from behind.

SECTION 1 Positioning

1. In my bedroom, my bed _____

A Is in direct alignment with the door and my feet face the bedroom door.

B Is not facing the door but if I turn my head I can see it.

C Is farthest from the door, my back is to the wall and I can clearly see the widest portion of the room and the bedroom door.

2. My desk is _____

A Facing the wall with the door directly behind me. I look at the wall.

B Against a wall with a side facing the door.

C In a far corner, with my back against a wall. I can see the door.

3. When I am standing at my stove _____

A My back is to the door and/or my burners are not all working.

B My side is facing the door.

C It is positioned on an island and/or I can see who is coming and going while I'm cooking. All the burners work properly and I keep it sparkling clean.

Add up your answers for Section 1 here.

A's _____ **B's** _____

C's _____

PHOTO BY MARK LOHMAN

GOOD FENG SHUI?

Take a look around you. Your environment has more of an effect on you than you might realize. In Feng Shui, you are a mirror for your environment and your environment is a mirror for you. What you surround yourself with—from objects to color to furniture—and how these things are placed, can have a massive impact on your life. Feng Shui is rich in symbology as well as plain old logic. Every home tells a story. Take this quiz and discover what your environment says about you.

SECTION 2 Yin & Yang Of Your Home

Choose **A** or **B**.

Complete the following sentence:

In my home the ceilings are mainly:

A Low **B** High

Displayed collections are:

A Many **B** Few or none

The patterns I have tend to be:

A Floral **B** Geometric

Wall colors are mainly:

A Medium, dark or muted

B Light or bright

Electric lighting is:

A Dim **B** Bright

Open floor space is:

A Small Amounts **B** Large expanses

Furniture colors are:

A Dark **B** Light or bright

Furniture shapes are:

A Curved, round lines

B Straight, angular lines

Natural light is:

A Low **B** Bright

Interior design tends to be:

A elaborate, ornate

B Plain, uncomplicated

Add up your answers for Section 2.

A's _____ **B's** _____

SECTION 3 The Power Of The 5 Elements

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being most important and 5 being least), rank in order what areas of your life are in most need of balance, attention or change right now.

___ My reputation and integrity. How others see me and getting recognition deserved.

___ Spirituality, inspiration and relaxation.

___ Good communication, independence and mental focus.

___ Intuition, creativity, expansion and growth.

___ Having physical strength, boosting stability, practicality and creating a nurturing environment.

SECTION 4 Organization & Clutter

On a scale from 1 to 5, what is your level of organization?

Pick One.

1 ___ Highly Unorganized

2 ___ Messy but semi-functional

3 ___ On the surface I look organized

4 ___ Organized

5 ___ Meticulously organized

If someone were to stop over at your house unexpectedly, would you be embarrassed by your surroundings?

YES or NO

Do you spend at least one hour a week looking for lost or misplaced items?

YES or NO

Do you have an organized filing system for your important records and papers?

YES or NO

SECTION 5 Symbology

True or False

- 1 ___ I have a treadmill or exercise equipment in my bedroom.
- 2 ___ My faucets leak and my toilet often runs.
- 3 ___ I have some furniture I don't really like but it was given to me and I feel like I should keep it.
- 4 ___ When you enter my home, the first thing you see is a wall.
- 5 ___ Most of my artwork or photographs surrounding me do not really represent who I am.
- 6 ___ I have pictures of fast moving objects (sports cars, crashing waves, etc.) in my bedroom.
- 7 ___ There are a lot of repairs throughout my home that need to be made.
- 8 ___ My environment is chaotic, cluttered and disorganized most of the time.
- 9 ___ I have pictures of friends and family in my bedroom.

of Trues _____ **# of Falses** _____

WHAT YOUR ANSWERS MEAN

Section 1. Positioning

You may not have thought about this before, but if we spend a third of our life sleeping (in a bed) and a third of our life working (at a desk), two thirds of our life is determined by positioning. On a primordial level, the evolutionary advantage goes to the person who is most protected and secure. In Feng Shui, the placement of your bed, desk and stove are very important in creating a commanding position of how you view the world and how the world views you. Ideally, your back should be against the wall, viewing the widest part of the room and clearly seeing the door.

If you answered all C's, congratulations, you are aligning yourself for balance and harmony in your life.

If you answered mostly B's, you might want to consider moving your bed or desk to a more favorable position. If it is structurally impossible to move your bed, desk or stove so that your back is against the wall, think about installing a mirror on the stove wall and/or your desk wall so you can see who is approaching you from behind. You can also hang a mirror in your bedroom so that while lying in bed you can see who is entering. If mirrors are not an option, Feng Shui adjustments such as a multi-faceted crystal or wind chime placed above your head can improve this dilemma. Crystals redirect energies toward a more beneficial direction, add light, expansion and can harmonize confusing or chaotic chi.

If you answered mostly A's, your chi or energy is certainly being challenged, but keep in mind no house is ever Feng Shui perfect. Roll up your sleeves, start moving your furniture and add some Feng Shui adjustments. Chances are you will feel a difference right away.

Right: Position your desk with your back to the wall so you can see the door but are not in direct alignment with it. A commanding and secure position like this will give you an advantage that you can feel immediately.



Bottom right: Stimulate and strengthen new energy in your home by adding chimes. **Top right:** Redirect energies toward a more beneficial direction, add light and expansion or harmonize the flow of chi throughout your home by applying intention and adding a crystal.



Section 2. Yin & Yang Of Your Home

Yin and yang are the Chinese perspective of balance and continual change. The Chinese divide everything in the universe into two categories, yin and yang. The female, dark colors, soft seating, dim lighting, quiet rooms like bedrooms and bathrooms represent yin. The male, bright lighting, large spaces, bold geometric patterns and active rooms such as laundry, kitchen and family rooms represent yang. This fundamental and profound theory of Feng Shui views opposites as evolving and cycling. There is neither a right nor a wrong but there is balance, transformation and interaction. Nothing is 100 percent yin or 100 percent yang. A duality cannot exist without both parts, which mutually create a balance. The A column represents yin and the B column represents yang. If you have an even balance of the two in your home, you are most likely dwelling in an environment that is well adjusted for your needs. If you have more of one column than the other, see how you can balance these opposite forces in your home.



An "alter" is simply a created space containing honored objects that you cherish and can reflect upon. A windowsill, nightstand or corner in a garden can all be alter areas that promote reflection or meditation.

FENG SHUI BAGUA GRID

WEALTH	FAME Fire	RELATIONSHIPS
FAMILY Wood	HEALTH Earth	CHILDREN/ CREATIVITY Metal
KNOWLEDGE 1	CAREER Water 2	HELPFUL PEOPLE/TRAVEL 3

ENTRYWAY


WALL

Align the door of either your entire floor plan or just one room with the entryway wall side of the bagua. Your door should line up to section 1, 2 or 3.

Section 3. The Power of the Five Elements.

The five elements are Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood. Each element corresponds to different natural locations in your home as well as specific areas of your life. Adding certain elements into your surroundings can assist you in creating a supportive environment for your goals. Take a look at the Feng Shui grid map to discover the best location in your home to add each element.

- If you are looking to enhance your reputation and integrity, add the Fire element into your life. Fire can be found in candles, lighting, triangular shapes and the color red. Whether you are hanging artwork with red tones or lighting a candle,



Place more of the Fire element in the Fame section of your home if you're looking to strengthen your reputation and integrity. The Fire element can be found in the color red and candles.

place this element in its natural location, the Fame gua and visu-

alize yourself getting the recognition you deserve.

- If you are seeking spirituality, inspiration and relaxation, welcome the element Water into your life. This element is found in water fountains, pools, fish tanks and streams and is symbolized by asymmetrical shapes and the color black. Its natural


location is in the Career gua of your home. A water fountain also promotes a healthy, refreshing release of negative ions, which provides a sense of well-being and makes breathing easier.

- Looking to enhance your communication, independence and mental focus? Bring Metal into your environment. This element is found in all metals, cement, rocks, stainless steel, and is symbolized by the color grey, sphere and dome shapes. Envision improved communication as you

add this element to the Children and Creativity gua.

- Intuition, creativity, expansion and growth are all energetically fostered by the element Wood. Wood furniture, live plants, plant based materials, the color green and pillar shapes all represent this developing element. Add Wood to the Family gua in your home and imagine the rivers of creativity flowing your way.

- Earth is the element that enhances physical strength, boosts stability and practicality and creates a nurturing environment for caregivers. It can be found in earthenware, ceramics, tile and adobe and is symbolized by rectangular shapes and the color



Adding brick, earthenware, tile or ceramics can create a sense of stability and practicality in an otherwise chaotic environment.

yellow. Add your pottery and yellow colors to the Health gua, and visualize the security that you need.

Section 4. Organization and Clutter

Before any Feng Shui adjustments are made, the first thing you must assess is your level of organization. You must clear out the clutter first. If you are a 3 or less, start getting rid of items that have no significance for you. Clearing it frees up the energy in your home and releases new vitality in your body. When the chi (energy) cannot flow freely throughout your home, you are creating the propensity for sluggishness, disorganization and chaos in your life. According to the American Demographics Society, Americans waste nine million hours per day searching for misplaced items. That's a lot of wasted time that could be spent in other ways. Start with small projects like junk drawers and medicine cabinets and lead up to closets, basements and implementing effective filing systems. Be mindful of how you feel as you complete each project and think of how you won't feel embarrassed when unexpected visitors drop by.

Section 5. Symbology

If you answered "true," take a closer look at what you are surrounding yourself with and ask, how is this serving me?

- Exercise equipment, fast moving imagery and pictures of friends and family do not belong in the bedroom. This room should be a place for you (or you and your mate) to unwind and relax and not be reminded of how you need to work out more. Pictures of others have their honored place anywhere else in the house, just not the bedroom.

- Do not delay tending to any necessary maintenance.

Energetically, unresolved repairs weaken your chi and represent emotional and financial drains.

- If the first thing that you see upon entering your home is a wall, hang a large mirror to open up the space and deflect the feeling of being "up against a wall" every time you enter your home.

- Keeping items out of obligation only begets guilt and bitterness on a subconscious level. Get rid of items you no longer use or want, give

them to someone who does or sell them at a yard sale.

Surround yourself with artwork and photographs you truly love and that reflect your current or desired state. By heightening your awareness of your surroundings and applying the principles of Feng Shui and intention, you can easily create an environment that's balanced and harmonious and congruent with your life goals.



Adding items grouped in two's in the bedroom will strengthen romantic relationships.



Laura Benko has been trained in the "Black Hat" Sect Tantric Buddhism (BTB) Feng Shui created by Grand Master Thomas Lin Yun. She lives in New York, teaches, lectures and consults full time. www.BenkoFengShui.com.