

elements

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF LONG ISLAND LIVING WINTER '04



DESIGN FASHION TRAVEL HOME FOOD ARTS WELLNESS PEOPLE

HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND WISE

Practitioners of the ancient Chinese art of feng shui say that your existence mirrors your environment, and vice versa. Every area of your life—wealth, health, relationships, career, family, etc.—is anchored energetically in your living space. When the *chi* (or energy) cannot flow freely in a specific area of your home, there is the propensity for sluggishness, disorganization or inactivity in the part of your life corresponding to that area. Serenity in the home creates equanimity in the individual.

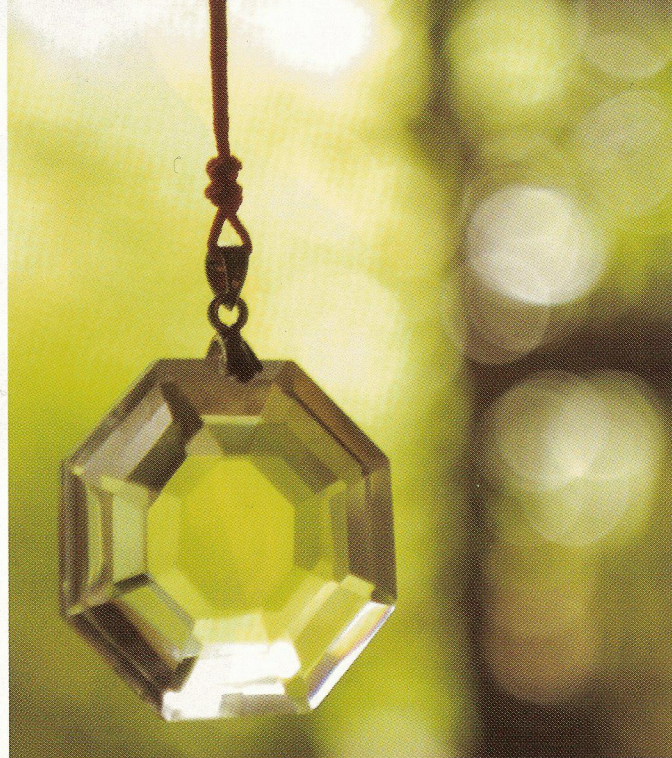
According to Brooklyn-based feng shui consultant Laura Benko, this 5,000-year-old practice not only frees up *chi* but also “seeks to provide a balanced, comfortable and harmonious living environment that supports your life goals. It’s more important than people realize,” she stresses.

Chi, quite simply, is life energy. “Everything is alive with it, connected to it,” explains Benko. “It circulates through our bodies as well as our homes. It is tied to physics—on a subatomic level of movement—and to acupuncture, which is concerned with balancing the *chi* that flows along meridians in our bodies.”

Traditionally, feng shui employs a variety of tactics (or what are referred to as “cures”) to achieve a healthy flow of energy in a home. Aesthetics of design, furniture shape and position, room arrangement and the use of colors—as well as the placement of mirrors, lights, plants and crystals—all play an important role in creating an environment that either does or does not bring luck, success and prosperity to those who live in it.

Because there are three different schools of feng shui (black hat, compass and landform), the study of this time-honored art can become very complicated—especially for the lay person. Benko recommends working with a trained professional. “There is so much information; it is so much easier when a professional does it.”

Benko, who says she rarely tells clients to knock down walls or do expensive renovations in a home that appears “unhealthy,” believes that feng shui cures should be “practical, inexpensive and as easy as possible”



to implement. “You can do the best you can with what you have. I often tell clients to move their furniture around. Moving items, paintings, and furniture is an integral part of the feng shui process.”

Benko claims that two simple ways to improve the health of your living space are to get rid of clutter and minimize your exposure to EMFs (electromagnetic fields) in the home.

“Just taking a look where your clutter keeps accumulating and setting your intention to clear out that space can have a profound effect on your success in the department of life to which that area of your home corresponds,” she explains. “Clutter in the ‘wealth’ corner of your home, for example, will clog your cash flow and make it hard to create abundance in that area of your life. Clutter in your ‘career’ area will make you feel like you are in a rut or stuck in a job you don’t really like.”

“Electromagnetic fields (EMFs),” Benko continues, “are another concern. When we are constantly being bombarded by a myriad of man-made electromagnetic energy—from computers, microwaves, cell phones, transformers, electrical appliances, TVs and lighting—there is data which strongly suggest biological dangers can occur.”

So what does Benko recommend for someone who may not be ready for a professional feng shui consultation but wants to do a little home health care? “First,” Benko suggests, “never sit with your back to a door. The most important positioning is where you place your bed, desk and stove. Second, make any and all repairs—clean up doors, windows, leaky faucets, plumbing, etc. Third, clear the clutter.”

Want to be healthy, wealthy and wise? Repair and rearrange your way to good fortune—the feng shui way.

Laura Benko can be reached at 646.236.2454 or www.benkofengshui.com

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