

Good Luck Is Just Around The Corner

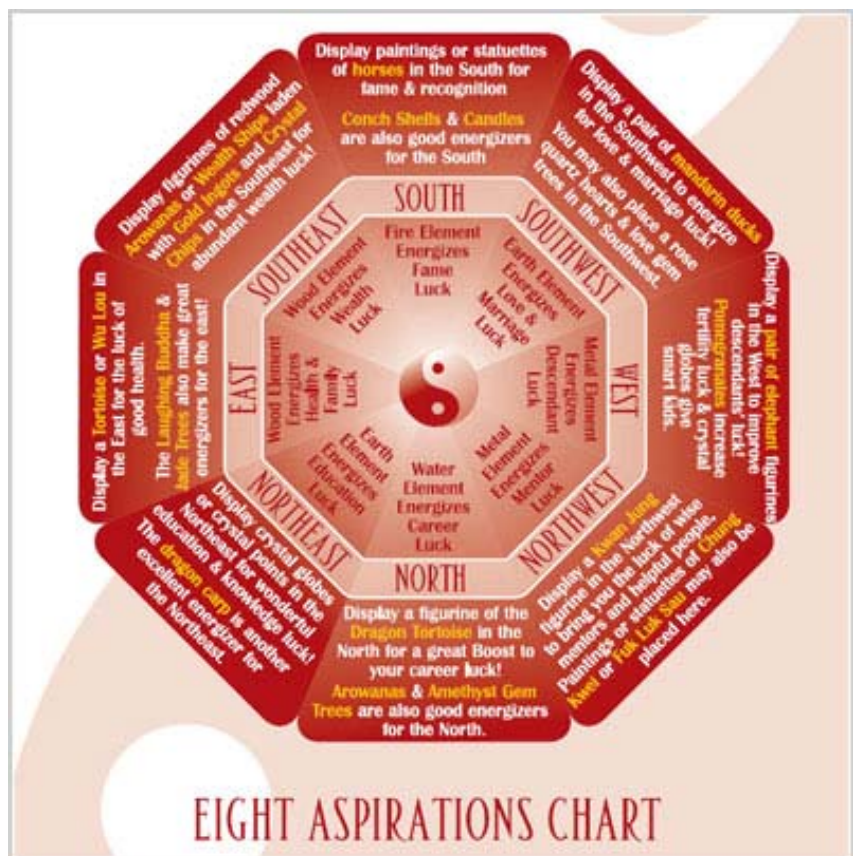
As an ancient Chinese practice that dates back centuries, feng shui has enough intrigue and mystique to pique the interest of many. Not only are its adherents convinced that feng shui's principles help create harmonious living spaces where a palpable sense of energy or chi circulates freely; they also believe that adhering to these principles can usher in the very best of health, wealth, and happiness.

By Ayah Victoria McKhail

Whenever Dee Johl sets foot on the plush dusty rose carpet in her bedroom, she's overcome with an overwhelming sense of peace and tranquility. The walls are painted metallic green, and on one wall, a painting of a delicate-looking white orchid hangs, revealing the word 'happiness' in Chinese.

Her bedroom, which is seen as a sanctuary that must reflect a safe and secure environment according to the principles of Feng Shui, is clutter-free and its contents are arranged in an orderly manner. On the Birchwood night tables, there are three wish fulfilling jewels that rest on glass. On her husband's side, there is a blue jewel to promote wealth and prosperity. On her side, one is purple to promote wisdom and spirituality, and the other is pink to promote love and romance.

There are also bejewelled lovebirds on each night table to promote a loving relationship between them.



Yet as passionate as Johl is about creating a serene and harmonious living environment throughout the home she shares with her husband and two teenagers, she's also quite passionate about imparting knowledge about fengshui to an increasingly diverse group of people. Pointing out that Feng Shui enjoys widespread appeal, Johl explains that the customers who visit the store, World of fungi Shui, which she operates along with her partner Dolly Sidhu, aren't only Asian, as some people might expect. Instead, they're predominantly Italian, Eastern European, British, and Spanish.

What's more, Johl credits the growing interest she's been witnessing in Feng Shui to our deep-seated fascination with creating aesthetically pleasing living spaces. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, but it's especially apparent in our seemingly endless infatuation with design shows and magazines that offer tips on everything from renovating one's home on a budget to selecting wallpaper. However, she's quick to point out that Feng Shui, which is the practice of creating a happy living environment within the home, goes beyond that: "It's really a way of life, and the science of living.

People around the world have recognized its benefits. For example, when we rearrange furniture in my house for Chinese New Year – people typically do this to change the energy around the house and to accommodate new energy – I've found that it's made such a difference. In fact, I've noticed that there's been less arguing and misunderstanding in my house, and everyone feels calmer."

Yet as eager as people might be to put the principles of Feng Shui into practice within their current homes and even offices, Malca Narrol, a Toronto-based Feng Shui consultant and instructor, points out several important factors to consider. As someone who advises individuals and companies on choosing and designing new properties in addition to improving their existing properties, she explains that accessing such consulting services at the onset of a property search can be very helpful. "What a lot of North Americans do not yet know is that Feng Shui is of great benefit in choosing or designing a new building as it is easier to create a highly beneficial environment right from the beginning than to correct built-in deficiencies," she says.

For example, Narrol explains that she can offer advice about whether or not a property will be beneficial based on factors such as the shape of the land and its terrain (if it's flat or if there are slopes), and the location of water (if there's a pond, river, lake or ocean in the vicinity). She can also give advice about how to site a new building, its entrance, and its main rooms for maximum benefit, or how to choose an existing one.

She explains that most buildings benefit from an open area at the front of the site so the building can receive energy, and an enclosed area at the back of the property in order to hold it. Buildings where the front is blocked often create financial trouble for their inhabitants, and buildings where the back is too open often lead to issues with health, relationships, fertility and an inability to save money.

Intrigued by the potential to create positive energy in her home, Catherine Whiteley decided to put some of fengshui's principles to use after reading a look on how practising it could enhance her life and increase her wellbeing. "I was really drawn to it because just the mere thought of bringing a sense of

balance to my home seemed very interesting and even somewhat exotic,” she says. So what’s the first thing she did? “My husband and I rearranged the furniture in our bedroom, and we felt a greater sense of tranquility and calmness there.”

And that’s exactly what Feng shui’s supposed to do. As Lillian Too, renowned writer and authority on fengshui who’s based in Malaysia, writes in Feng Shui Life Planner, “Good Feng Shui reflects the right balance of yin and yang energy while simultaneously ensuring there is harmony between the five elements – earth, fire, air, water and metal – that make up the cosmic universe we live in ... it’s created by arranging the flow of energy in one’s environment in a way that attracts good fortune – health, wealth, and happiness– to residents.”

For those interested in learning some easy steps that can be implemented for better Feng Shui, Juhl explains that people shouldn’t place plants, flowers or TVs in their bed rooms because they can sap energy from the residents. However, silk flowers are okay.

Having a laughing Buddha in the household is also important because it’s purported to bring happiness and prosperity. As well, hanging a Mandala painting, which can offer different benefits such as restoring harmony and peace, is also recommended.

The colour red is favourable, primarily in accents such as candles, but one should be mindful of what part of the eight sectors of the home they’re placed in. For example, the north is associated with career aspirations; the northeast with educational aspirations; the east with health; the southeast with wealth; the south with fame; the southwest with romance; the west with children, and the northwest with mentors.

For many, that’s enough information to get them intrigued by the purported benefits that have made Feng Shui as popular as it is.