

## What is Feng Shui, and How Does It Work?

by: Stephanie Roberts Feng shui (say "fung shway"), often called the art of placement, could just as accurately be called "the art of flow." This ancient Chinese practice, literally translated as "wind" and "water," aims to maximize the beneficial movement of chi--the universal life force present in all things--through an environment. Just as fresh air and clean water nourish our bodies, so does fresh, clean chi nourish our homes and our lives. When the flow of chi through our space is blocked, weak, or misdirected, our relationships, cash flow, creativity, health, and career can suffer. Chi wants to meander gracefully through a space, like a gentle breeze or a winding stream. When it flows too strongly, it becomes like a hurricane or flood. We are likely to feel tossed about by winds of change, unstable, prone to crises, struggling to "keep our heads above water." Where chi is blocked it becomes stale and stagnant, like a pond choked with algae and fallen leaves. We may feel tired, run down, depressed, unable to focus, hampered in our efforts to move forward in our lives. In a corporate environment, poor feng shui can result in miscommunication between managers and employees, conflicts among team members, and lack of support for key initiatives. Individuals may be overlooked for promotions or deserved raises, suffer damage to their reputation in the company, or even lose their job. The company may have difficulty attracting or keeping key customers. In a retail store, feng shui problems can block the flow of customers into and through the store, contribute to theft and staffing problems, and have a negative effect on the amount and size of sales. Feng shui provides tools and guidelines for analyzing and correcting the flow of energy into and through our space. It uses the arrangement of rooms and the placement of furniture to create a smooth pathway for chi through a home, office, or retail location. Blockages and other forms of negative chi are removed or counteracted in order to welcome in opportunities and encourage progress. Colors and shapes associated with the five elements--wood, fire, earth, metal, and water--are used to create movement, balance, or protection, depending on the needs of the client. Imagery and objects such as paintings, photographs, statuary and other accessories are chosen and placed to enhance and reinforce the client's intention. Feng Shui reminds us that everything is connected, and that our physical surroundings have a significant impact on our mind, body, and spirit. It teaches us to be mindful caretakers of our environments, so that we may be mindful caretakers of our lives. Copyright © 2002 Stephanie Roberts

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