



Real Estate Reality Feng Shui... What is That?

-Debbie Yost

What's all the talk about Feng Shui? What is it? How do you pronounce it? Is it real or just "woowoo" stuff? And what does it have to do with real estate?

I've been a believer in the power of Feng Shui for many years and own many books on the subject. My favorite book is called "The Western Guide to Feng Shui, Room by Room" by best selling author Terah Kathryn Collins. Collins defines Feng Shui as "the study of how to arrange your environment to enhance the quality of your life." It's pronounced "fung shway" and many people and corporations believe in its power so strongly that every piece of real estate they purchase is evaluated and built according to its principles. The Hyatt hotel chain designs every hotel it builds according to Feng Shui principles and Donald Trump has been quoted as saying that every site he considers and every building he constructs utilizes this philosophy.

For those who are immediate disbelievers, take a moment to think of a commercial building you might know of where business after business has failed. You can also probably identify a house where only negative seems to occur for families who live there. Working in the local real estate business for many years I can rattle off a dozen such locations easily. I can also name locations and homes where business thrives and families grow and prosper. I don't believe it's a coincidence, and neither do Feng Shui practitioners.

In this short space I cannot explain the intricacies of the history, various schools of Feng Shui, how to use the bagua grid, or the five elements. Instead I hope to introduce you to the topic enough so that you might pick up a book on the subject if any of the concepts intrigue you.

As with any philosophy or concept, there is always the opportunity to jump on miracle cures and quick fixes. Please don't be tempted to run to the internet and buy red tassles, octagon shaped mirrors and wind chimes to instantly transform your home and life into one of prosperity, health and happiness. The practice of Feng Shui is much more personal and involves "seeing" your home or work space with new eyes. To quote Ms. Collins once again, "when individuals open their Feng shui eyes, they can no longer view their homes as just "things" or their belongings as just inanimate "stuff." Their homes, and all the possessions within them, suddenly come alive and are intimately connected to their quality of life. They see that their difficulties are not separate from, but actually held in place by, their homes."

No, I'm not talking about "airy fairy" stuff because you can't see and touch Feng Shui principles. You can't "see" the internet either but you know it's there! When I first began studying the principles, I thought they were complicated. However, I've learned that many of them are really intuitive and involve applying common sense. For example, we've long known that a packed, cluttered home feels unhealthy and the inhabitants typically feel overwhelmed, have no energy and are tired. We also know that a home locat-

ed at the intersection of two streets (located at the T) will be difficult to sell. We know that certain colors, such as cool tones, cause us to relax, and restaurants decorated in energetic, fiery colors will cause diners to eat more quickly, rather than linger casually over a meal. Many home buyers will not purchase a home where the front door is directly lined up across from the rear door. Most buyers don't know "why" they don't want to purchase a home located at a "T" of two roads or don't feel comfortable in a home that seems to meet their requirements. These properties have difficulty selling and we aren't sure why.

Do properties have fatal flaws that can't be remedied? It's almost never the case. I'm remembering the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino that was built in Las Vegas. I remember that originally patrons had to walk through the mouth of the lion to enter the casino. Revenues were drastically less than anticipated and experts were brought in to remedy the situation. They recognized that people raised in the East know and practice Feng Shui for generations. Walking into the mouth of a lion symbolically and energetically caused patrons to avoid the MGM. Once the lion head entrance was replaced, and a few other adjustments made, revenues soared. Making adjustments to a home or business seldom involve such a drastic cure.

A good friend of mine recently asked for my help in rearranging and redecorating her home. She felt frustrated, drained energetically and stuck. In two days time, we redid her living room and home office, hauling out item after item that she really didn't like. We agreed on one rule. Before anything could be placed in either room, she had to LOVE it and it had to be in good repair. Without buying anything new and getting rid of things that didn't make her feel good we created two rooms that sparkle, create great feelings and embrace her and her family. This project started a process that has resulted in a "new" home. Systematically she has gone from room to room, removing things that no longer are useful or wanted, things that were handed down by relatives that she felt she "should" keep but really hated, clearing excess clutter. The garbage man and Goodwill have benefited from this energetic cleansing of her home. The result is that her family is happier, more energetic, and new opportunities are flowing into her life, now that she has made room for them. I've heard of and seen many "miraculous" cures to real life problems that have been addressed by using Feng Shui to bring your "outer world" into alignment with your "inner world."

If spring is stirring redecorating thoughts, you may want to look at the book I've recommended. It's easy to read and many of the adjustments can be made easily by you. I imagine that most of the concepts will seem as practical and common sense to you as they do to me.

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