

Feng shui practitioners promise clients harmony, health, prosperity

By [Paul Clark – Asheville Citizen-Times](#)

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WEST ASHEVILLE — Things just didn't feel right in Diana Kantor's West Asheville craftsman-style home, so she and her husband hired a feng shui consultant.

"We just felt we didn't have things set up right, and we didn't know why, and it was really bothering us," Kantor said.

"No matter where we put the furniture in the living room, it didn't feel right. And we didn't know which bedroom to use. It felt chaotic and sort of unfinished."

Flowing energy

Kantor and her husband, John Keck, hired Leslie Grotenhuis, of Asheville Feng Shui (www.ashevillefengshui.com). Grotenhuis did a "residential reading." The consultation, which cost \$99, took about an hour, with Grotenhuis walking through the house, taking measurements and compass readings.

Grotenhuis worked up some suggestions, one of which was that they use the bedroom they were sleeping in, which had the potential for argument, as a guest room, and use the bedroom they'd used for a guest room as their primary bedroom. That room had better creative energy, Grotenhuis said, and since Kantor and Keck, both computer engineers, like to work in their bedroom, being where the creative energy is appealed to them.

"It was an instant change," Kantor said. "As soon as we set it up that way, we started working on projects that we hadn't worked on for a long time. I'm kind of a skeptic, but I was really shocked at how much of a difference the changes made. It was so immediate."

How feng shui works

Feng shui is a practice thousands of years old that practitioners say helps people bring balance to their homes and helps their businesses prosper. It is with the addition or subtraction of five elements or their representatives — water, wood, fire, earth and metal — to areas of the home that have to do with things such as knowledge, family/health, creativity and relationships/love.

Energy "flows" are different in each space, so it is difficult to come up with generalities that apply in all cases, Grotenhuis said. But she offered a few guidelines.

- Clear the clutter. Clutter paralyzes and saps energy.
- Removing dead plants and debris from inside and out. Dead energy can be draining.
- Balance dark with light (lamps, paint, windows).
- Balance the public front of the house by making the back private.
- Energy should flow through the house. Is each room a natural progression of the last?

"If a deluge of water were to come in your front door, how would it flow?" said Grotenhuis. "Would it meander around like a stream, or would it flow quickly through? We should be looking for a calm meandering flow of energy."

Joanie Lamb's office

Joanie Lamb had her office laid out along feng shui principles.

"I can always recognize a feng shui home and office building, and they always feel good. I wanted to have that in my home," Lamb said.

"It's a feeling when you walk in. It feels comfortable and light. The energy feels good."

Lamb and husband Scott hired Jaan Ferree, another feng shui consultant in the Asheville area. Ferree owns Intentional Design (www.intentionaldesigner.com), a design business she has had since 1995.

Though not exclusively dedicated to feng shui, her company attracts many clients who complain of being stuck emotionally or career-wise or in some other regard. Ferree will suggest remedies that employ feng shui.

"Often people will say, 'We want romance in our lives,'" Ferree said. "I'll look in their bedroom, but there are no pictures of the couple. There could be a seashell that you picked up on the beach together. You want to have beautiful, soft fabrics in there.

"You want to set the stage. One woman's husband wrote a song for her, and she had it framed and it hangs in their room. It reminds them, 'This is what attracted me to this person.'"

"The thing she helped us with most," Lamb said, "was making sure objects in our home reflected our values. We got a painting that represented some of our spiritual beliefs. And we have quotes around the house that reflect our beliefs, so that we are always reminded of what's important to us."

To set up their office in their home in North Asheville, the Lambs created a "bagua" map, a feng shui tool for determining where different aspects of their life together was represented in their workspace.

Each of the nine geographic areas corresponds to an aspect of life, such as relationships, reputation, health, career, knowledge and prosperity. The Lambs made sure each part of the office was doing its part to enhance aspects of their professional and personal lives.

Now, "It's everyone's favorite place," Lamb said. "It just feels so good. Everyone wants to be in there and work in there."

What is feng shui?

- The basic principles of feng shui include placing strategic representations of five natural elements around your room — earth, water, fire, metal and wood.
- Modern feng shui divides your room or home into a grid of nine equal areas, called a bagua map. Each area corresponds to certain values in your life, such as love, career and spirituality.
- Feng shui practitioners promise to enhance health, harmony and financial gain.

Source: The Associated Press

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