

Welcome to Feng Shui for Real Life, a monthly e-newsletter that provides Feng Shui tips and other information that can help you bring simple Feng Shui changes into your life. Feng Shui for Real Life is available by request. To subscribe or unsubscribe, visit: <http://www.FengShuiForRealLife.com>.

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Carol M. Olmstead, FSII

Feng Shui Tip: Attracting Love This Valentine's Day

A few subtle Feng Shui changes can help you attract love into your life—or add some pizzazz to the love you already have:

Are you spending Valentine's Day alone this year? Invite a new love into your life and you won't be alone for long: clear out some space in your bedroom closet, medicine cabinet, and fridge to make room for a lover's possessions. Be sure to leave room for an extra towel in your bathroom.

Do you want to get closer to your date? Plan a romantic dinner at a table with only two chairs. If you have a large table, move out the extra chairs and set two places at one end, at right angles to each other rather than directly across from each other, which can be confrontational. Use the rest of the table to display flowers and candles.

Does your sweetheart need to relax and de-stress? Use the Water Element to encourage relaxation. Set the table with a vase of multi-colored flowers, and use decorations that are flowing and curvy. Flowing, curvy lines represent this element.

Is your Valentine shy? Use the Metal Element to help keep the conversation focused: float white flowers in a round glass bowl. Round shapes and white colors represent this element.

Does your sweetheart need help making a commitment? Use the Wood Element to grow the relationship. Choose a tall, rectangular vase and a pair of

orange flowers to stimulate change. Rectangles represent this element.

Do you need to rev up your love life? The bedroom should be a place reserved for rest and romance and nothing else. Here are my 5 favorite tips for the bedroom:

1. Remove the family photographs—your love life will improve if your children, parents, or pets aren't staring at you in bed!
2. Remove all work-related materials to keep you from being distracted.
3. Remove stuffed animals, dolls, and an excessive number of pillows from the bed to make room for a lover.
4. Add a pair of night tables—or replace mismatched night tables with a set—to invite a partner into your bed and equality into your relationship.
5. Hang romantic art and display objects in pairs, such as two candles.

Clutter Clinic: Computer Screen Clutter

You have finally cleared the clutter from your office, but your computer screen is another story. Visual clutter on your screen is just as much a problem as piles of paper clutter around you. These tips for organizing your computer desktop can help:

- Keep only the files that you work on every day; delete unnecessary files or file them in folders on the hard drive.
- If you keep an e-mail message, rename it with a subject that immediately tells you about the content; e.g.: *FengShuiNwsltr* rather than *Fw:Re:Re:FengShuiNewsletter*.
- If you use a file often, place an underscore (_) before the name so it will appear at the top of your list, e.g.: *_FengShuiNswltr.doc*.
- Rename your files in a way that helps you find them; e.g.: *FengShui.Carol* rather than *Letter to Carol about Feng Shui*.
- Frequently clear your cache and refresh your web browser so you can see updates to the sites you frequently visit (including www.FengShuiForRealLife.com, which has a new newsletter subscribe page).

Success Story: Marsha's Home Office

Marsha made the changes to her home office so fast it made my head spin. I came back to her home in less than 24 hours to drop off a bagua mirror, and she had already used floor screens and standing plants to create a private office space within her living room. Marsha's business had outgrown the den, and she moved it into the living room, which was the least-used room in the house. Although that put the office in the Helpful People area of her home—an excellent place for a business—her desk, files, and office equipment were visible when she and her son walked in the front door, when they were cooking in the kitchen, or eating in the dining room. "Your business will prosper in that location, I told her, you will never escape from the business, and it will be a part of your life—and your family's life—24/7." To remedy this situation, I suggested she use screens and plants to enclose the office area so it was not as visible. The newly-created space is the perfect compromise—Marsha gets more space to grow her home-based business, but she

can symbolically "open " it in the morning and "close" it in the evening. And that gives her time for family, friends, and the social life she had been missing.

Feng Shui Q&A

Q: Where is the best place to sit at a conference table during a meeting?

A: If you can, always choose the "power position," which is the chair or seat farthest from the door, facing it on a diagonal rather than in a direct line with the door. Try to avoid sitting with your back to the door, since it is considered the most vulnerable position. Actually and symbolically, things happen "behind your back" when you cannot see the door.

Q: I am going on vacation. Can I do anything Feng Shui-wise to protect my house while I am gone?

A: In addition to the obvious things of stopping the newspaper and holding the mail, put the radio and television on a timer so they will periodically play in the house while you are gone. This will keep some "yang," or active, energy in the house so that it doesn't become too still ("yin" energy). A still house draws more negative energies to it, such as burglars. Another technique to ward off intruders is to turn a broom upside down next to the door. Be sure to remove the broom once you have returned. *(With thanks for this answer to my colleague Kathryn Weber in Cuevo, Texas.)*

In the News: "Feng Shui—Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business"

My interview on Feng Shui and Business on the radio program "Talking Change with Ane Powers" is now available on Internet radio archives. To listen, please go to www.thewhitehawkgroup.com, click on TUNE IN! TALKING CHANGE, and select Carol Olmstead: Feng Shui - Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business 1-25-06.

Do You Want A Feng Shui Consultation or Workshop in Your City?

I offer consultations for homes and offices and conduct workshops and seminars in many areas of the country. Appointments do fill up fast, especially on the weekends. If your location is not on this list and you would like to schedule a consultation or workshop, please e-mail me (carol@FengShuiForRealLife.com) for details.

Here is my current planned travel for February and March:

Santa Fe/Albuquerque: February 6-10

Washington, DC Area: February 27-March 7

I Welcome Your Referrals in These and Other Locations!

Partner Profile: C.M. Mayo

I just listened to the most amazing essay on Mexico City, recorded by my colleague, award-winning writer C. M. Mayo. I was magically transported by this warm, inviting, and intimate journey through the Coyoacan neighborhood that Mayo takes with her dog, Picadou. The recipient of the Lowell Thomas Award for Travel Journalism, Best Personal Comment (2005), and the Washington Independent Writers Award for Best Essay (2005), Mayo captured the attention of both readers and critics with this essay, "The Essential Francisco Sosa or, Picadou's

Mexico City," published in Creative Nonfiction's special issue.

I highly recommend the CD, which is available for \$10 from www.cdbaby.com. A portion of all proceeds benefit *Presencia Animal*, a Mexican dog and cat rescue organization (www.presenciaanimal.org.) You can read more about this C.M. Mayo at www.cmmayo.com.

Beyond Feng Shui: What Women Want in Home Design

Women make up 51 percent of the population, but they control 85 percent of home buying decisions. What do these influential home buyers want in their homes? It's no surprise, but according to Better Homes and Gardens Magazine, the two most important areas in the home for women are also the most critical areas from a Feng Shui perspective: the kitchen and bath. The magazine reports that women want more multi-level surfaces, large pantries, and bigger islands in their kitchens. They also want large bathrooms with cabinets that look like furniture, luxurious plumbing fixtures, extras like towel warmers, and narrower countertops so they can get closer to the mirror. Throughout the house, women want the best natural lighting they can get. You can read more at: www.bhg.com/bhg/story.jhtml.

My Client-Centered Approach to Feng Shui: When I recommend cures for a home or office, I consider each client's goals. I try not to recommend anything that you will find unattractive or unacceptable. Rather, I suggest practical, appropriate, and workable cures that are based on solid Feng Shui principles and fit in with the way you live. I try to recommend several practical solutions that are appealing to you and fit your decor and your budget.

Carol M. Olmstead, FSII
Certified Feng Shui Practitioner
1-800-652-9038