

Clearing Clutter the Feng Shui Way

Letting Go Brings Clarity and Confidence

by Susan LaForte

Spring is a great time to clear the way for revitalizing energy to enter our lives, and the ancient art of *feng shui* can provide a new perspective and guidance on the perpetual issue of clutter. Feng shui—literally translated as “wind-water”—evokes the same energy as early spring, when it’s finally time to open the windows to fresh air. The life-affirming practice of feng shui inspires this feeling of freshness and new hope year-round.

Feng shui works with energy, or *chi* (also called *qi*), and the job of a feng shui practitioner is to assess what type of energy is present in a living space. Is it blocked or stagnant? Is it flowing too fast or slow? The qualities of positive chi flow are meandering and unblocked as energy moves at a speed that is just right.

The biggest obstacle to good chi flow is clutter. Energetically speaking, clutter is unmoving and stale. There may be compelling arguments for saving things that we don’t currently use, such as the idea that we might need them someday. Yet, energetically, it makes better sense to give ourselves permission to let go of anything that is no longer vital, nourishing, cheering, satisfying or useful. Lurking beneath the reasons to hold onto such items is some form of fear—worry about not having enough, of what tomorrow might bring or of an unkind universe.

The process of letting go is ongoing, not something that can be accomplished in a weekend with a few plastic bins from the dollar store. When we focus on the truth of our “stuff”, we begin a process that creates its own momentum; once we get going, it



will carry us along. Almost immediately, this refreshing journey starts to bring rewards of greater clarity and more confidence.

GIVE CLUTTER THE CHI TEST

Clutter comes in many categories besides broken or messy. In fact, it might apply to items that are nice,

useful or even beautiful. Good examples of clutter masquerading as something desirable are gifts or inherited items. Many people declare that they cannot eliminate these things from their lives due to sentimental reasons, but guilt is a clue that the items are clutter.

The first thing to ask when considering keeping something or letting it go is, “Does my energy go up or down when I think about it?” The item is probably blocking the flow of life if it makes us feel worried, anxious, heavy, pained, serious, weepy, burdened, stuck or responsible.

Another way to assess an array of potential items for discard is to ask, “Does it express who I am now or who I would like to be?” Unfinished projects, collections, scrapbooks, cards, letters and old photos tend to anchor us to the past in ways we have outgrown. It can be freeing and enlightening to let some of this go when we are ready.

MOVE 27 THINGS

A powerful exercise that can open our space and life to a new sense of freedom and possibility is also simple: moving 27 things. According to feng shui masters, the number nine represents completion, fulfillment, attainment, realization and universal wisdom, so working in sets of nine brings

enhanced effects.

The first nine—throw away. Start by meandering through a space and finding at least nine items that are broken, worn out, spent or dried up. These items have no vitality and their effect is deadening. Toss them.

The second nine—give away. Keep in mind a goal of having only things that complete and satisfy you, from which you derive pleasure and a sense of joy. If you are holding onto things that are either unused or unloved, give yourself permission to let them go. There are many outlets for unwanted items, and it is gratifying to know that someone is using and treasuring them. Be generous.

The third nine—relocate. When an item that is truly beloved has been in the same spot for too long, we tend not to see it anymore. Moving it to another location reenergizes the item and its owner.

DON'T RUSH THE PROCESS

The work of clearing clutter is something that affects people on many levels and shouldn't be underestimated. Starting small and keeping it simple is important. The benefits of simply cleaning a drawer or behind a door are valuable. If there is doubt about anything, leave it alone. There is no need to rush the process, because once we set the intention to let go, the moment will come in which it will feel perfectly right to do so. Also remember to stay hydrated by drinking water while removing clutter, to keep your energy flowing and focused.

Clearing clutter is truly an exercise in trust. Releasing something that has been held for a long time prompts a sense of freedom within us; it creates an opening for something new and wonderful. Rather than being a discouraging anchor, clutter can be a beacon in our lives, showing us from where we have come and directing us to the next path.

Certified Feng Shui Practitioner Susan LaForte owns Feng Shui for Home & Business, serving western and central Massachusetts for more than 10 years. She is also the author of Awakening Your Feng Shui Soul! A Practical Guide for Everyday Use. For more information, call 413-253-0722 or visit FengShuiWesternMass.com. See ad, page 30.