

Contemporary Feng Shui:
Cozying up the Bedroom
By Mark Ainley

Feng Shui is an ancient science that increases awareness about our connection to our environment. When practiced sensibly, it can help us be more conscious about our surroundings and choices. Since we will likely spend more time in the bedroom than in any other room – about one third of the day, if we're lucky! – everything about this space has a profound effect on us.

While it might seem implausible to some that the layout or imagery in a room can significantly influence your life, consider how this is in fact the case. Where you place your bed affects the quality of your sleep, and if you do not sleep well, your mood will suffer. As a result, the quality of communication in your personal and professional relationships may be adversely affected. Your choices may tend to be more impulsive if you are not well rested and grounded. Compromised romantic relationships also take their toll on daily life, so a bedroom which is conducive to romance helps set the energy for happier and more productive waking hours.

As regards imagery, advertising executives are well aware of the effect of colours and symbols on potential consumers, even when viewed only for short periods of time, as in product placement in movies. What about the images that surround you for hours at a time, and when you are in a subconscious state of awareness? I have yet to meet a female client looking for a partner who didn't have artwork of single women (be they goddesses or grandmothers) all over her apartment! Making more conscious choices about the images with which you surround yourself – beyond the usual 'I like it' choice – can help clarify the direction your life might be taking.

One challenge is that modern living often calls for a room to serve a variety of purposes. Considering the function of any room is essential to creating a practical and supportive atmosphere. The bedroom is ideally the setting for romantic merging and physical rejuvenation. Sharing this space with structures that speak of another function – desks, computers, TVs – compromises the bedroom's purpose and effectiveness in your life. If there is no other place for these items, then shielding them from view with a cloth or screen can help transform a multipurpose room into a more sensual retreat.

The position of your bed has a great deal to do with the quality of sleep you experience. While Chinese Feng Shui focuses on aligning with compass directions in

order to harness heavenly energies, Contemporary Feng Shui focuses on the bed's physical orientation within a space. Energy travels fastest between doors and windows, and being in the middle of this flow can upset sleep patterns and health. (Beware the mindset of "more is better" – Feng Shui is about cultivating an appropriate *quality* of energy.) It is ideal to have the head of your bed along a solid and preferably inside wall, and as far away from the door as possible while still maintaining a view of the door. Sleeping too close to a window can lead to a drain of physical and mental forces, and often brings about illness.

Bed placement also speaks volumes about relationships. Partnerships built on equality call for a representative physical structure. Having one side of the bed up against a wall leads to one partner feeling...well, up against a wall! S/he does not enjoy the freedom and flexibility that has been granted the other, and feels 'less than'. Going to the bathroom at night can become a major issue, one which is often the source of verbal disagreement or which secretly leads to resentment (being literally 'pissed off'). Having equal access to the bed affords each partner the potential to come and go, yet still allows for merging. Matching end tables and lamps anchor the ability to see independently while being united.

Imagery and objects in the bedroom also play a significant role in shaping your consciousness for relationship. Pictures of single people speak of singularity and loneliness. Photos of friends and relatives limit the intimacy and privacy that would allow a new romance to blossom – or an existing relationship to deepen – without the influence of foreign energies. Predatory animals like tigers and wolves do not belong; nor do stuffed animals or dolls, which often become relationship substitutes. Water imagery and blue tones can lead to excessive emotional energy, be it flowing or stagnant, and too much green can make you look seasick and 'green with envy.'

Despite what may seem like excessive restrictions, there are many ways to make the bedroom more comfortable and intimate. Warmer colours – softer hues of red, orange, pink – create a cozy atmosphere, and make the skin look more attractive than do shades of blue and green. Rounded shapes imply the curves of the human body, symbolizing the yin-yang circle of masculine-feminine energy exchange. Art featuring loving couples creates a feeling of intimacy, while peaceful landscapes (minus the water!) and exotic tapestries provide a nourishing environment for rest and rejuvenation.

As most of the choices we make about our bedrooms are made impulsively when we move or are based on preferences that do not take their full impact into account, even one change can help shift the energy for the better. Adjusting only one factor in

any equation changes its outcome, so do not be overwhelmed if you feel that there is so much that needs to be done. Step by step, make conscious choices about your personal space that are more in alignment with who you are and the life you wish to live. You will thank yourself for it – and so will the people in your life!

© 2004 by Mark Ainley

Mark Ainley is a Vancouver-based Feng Shui Consultant and Emotional Stress Consultant. His website www.markainley.com features more information on the modalities in his practice. He can be contacted at (604)-915-9464 or at mark@markainley.com.



This bed is placed perilously close to the window, not only increasing the chance of illness and lack of support (also indicated by the lack of a headboard), but also putting the opportunity for a long-lasting relationship 'out the window.' The one nightstand (read 'one-night-stand') provides clarity and support for only one individual. The absence of red tones also limits the warmth of the room, and the blue hints at increased emotionality.



This bed is ideally located in the 'Seat of Power', diagonal to the door and away from a window. The headboard provides support (although a solid one is preferable), and the red tones add a good deal of warmth. The matching lamps and side tables anchor the potential for long-lasting relationships. Some more extensive bed coverings and images on the wall could add greater intimacy to the space.



This arrangement features a bed with built-in end tables. The hanging carpet above is a safe alternative to framed art and creates a sensual atmosphere. The artwork is peaceful and features no watery imagery. While the lamps are not an exact match – hinting at differences of opinion – they are nevertheless similar in style and the solid headboard provides a strong sense of unity. The bed is safely positioned out of the line between the door and the window.