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Personal Space

Feng shui brings harmony to the home

By **Robyne L. Curry***Special to The Seattle Times*

When Kathy Weber's 21-year-old son moved out of her house and into a place of his own, she decided it was time for a change.

"His moving out was the end of an era ... my role as the hovering mother," laughs Weber, an attorney and single mom who seized the opportunity to redo her once child-centered house and "reflect on what I really wanted in a home."

What she wanted was a warm and welcoming adult space. To get it, she enlisted the principles of feng shui, and feng shui practitioner **Piper Salogga** (naturalbalance9.com or 206-660-0995).

Salogga, who incorporates interior design in her work, taught a class in creating harmonious environments that sparked Weber's imagination. Before, "I hadn't thought of consulting with someone," Weber says. Now, eight months after their initial consultation, Weber has repainted, refurnished and rearranged her 800-square-foot Ballard home into the tranquil and inviting oasis she desired.

Feng shui ("feng" means wind; "shui" means water) is the ancient Chinese art of placing objects, furniture or buildings to create balance and harmony through the flow of positive energy. It aims to promote success, prosperity and well-being in a person's life.

"Feng shui speaks to the human energy," says Cynthia Chomos, a Seattle feng shui consultant for the past 10 years (www.cynthiachomos.com or 206-919-0107). "How we create our space reflects how we create our lives."

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In her new kitchen, Kathy Weber, left, and feng shui practitioner **Piper Salogga** chose light blue walls and knobs to add lightness and upward-moving energy.

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Positive changes

To better understand spaces, feng shui practitioners rely on the Bagua, a mapping system that identifies eight key areas of life: wealth, fame, relationships, creative/children, career, helpful people, health/family and knowledge. When applied to an office or home floor plan, the Bagua helps determine the design elements needed to encourage success in these areas.

"I use the Bagua to identify what I feel are the major sticking points [of energy] and the changes that need to be made," **Salogga** says.

For example, Weber's life map revealed that her son's old bedroom sat in the relationship corner of the house. This made sense: "He always had three to four really good friends around," Weber says. So **Salogga** turned his room into the new master bedroom because it aligns with one of Weber's long-term goals: to find love and romance.

Moving to the smaller room "was a significant change that I wouldn't have done on my own," Weber says. "But it really does feel cozier to me, and I'm closer to the garden — and I like that."

Since the old master bedroom occupied the prosperity corner of the house, it was a no-brainer to make it the new home office. Painted a pinky-beige with purple undertones (purple is the feng shui color associated with wealth), the room has ample space to spread out when Weber needs to work at home.

Other changes to the house:

- The once-crowded living room that doubled as an office now holds only a sofa, a loveseat and a rocking chair — all new and cushy, to boot.
- The bathroom walls boast new lilac paint, chosen to complement a stained-glass window. White paint on the vanity, display shelves and storage cupboard doors lends an air of freshness.
- The kitchen soothes away cares with watery-blue walls that make a tranquil backdrop for blond-wood furniture and crisp white cabinets.

A strong selling point

Wanting to bring balance into their lives right from the start prompts many new homebuyers to seek feng shui advice. "I work with people just moving into homes, creating interiors and exteriors to maximize the enjoyment of their home," says Chomos.

Creating harmonious living spaces seemed a natural fit for people selling real estate, too. So two years ago she founded the Feng Shui School for Real Estate Sales to give agents a leg up in business.

As color consultant, Chomos advises homeowners and agents to consider paint from a feng shui perspective. Rooms, she says, are either yin (relaxing) or yang (active and public). These characteristics determine their optimum color.

Yin rooms (bathrooms, bedrooms, studies) generally live best in cool colors: blues, greens or purples. Yang rooms (living rooms, family rooms, kitchens) usually prefer warm colors: reds, yellows, oranges. Painting rooms accordingly promotes better chi, she says.

Realtor Suzanne Lambalot agrees. Last fall, she had three listings that just weren't selling. Chomos helped her rearrange furniture, stage the homes to attract buyers and do an energy clearing ("There was bad energy left over from people who had lived there," Lambalot says.). Within a week, all three houses were under contract.



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"When that's the only difference you make and listings start selling," you become a feng shui convert fast, Lambalot says.

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