

Bringing Beauty Home

Harmony & Balance Decorating
Feng Shui Design



A Workbook Extraordinaire
Crafted by Melissa Nelson



Welcome

Julie Andrews sang a song about a few of her favorite things: “Raindrops on Roses and Whiskers on Kittens.” I love this song; probably because I love kittens and I smile when I see them. I’ll bet you do, too.

Have you ever wondered why you love your favorite things? Have you ever wondered why you find one “thing” beautiful and not another? How about your decor: does it speak to you about a beautiful outlook on life?

“Bringing Beauty Home” offers a fresh approach to interior decorating by focusing on understanding why we decorate our homes the way we do. Based on the principles of Feng Shui, this 9-step guide empowers you to create a space that reflects who you are and supports the life you want to live. You will find three questions at the end of each of the nine steps. As you answer them, your thinking will be stimulated and lead you to begin to discover your own interior decorator.

“Bringing Beauty Home” will also help you create a lifestyle. Implementing the suggestions offered in each of the nine steps will clear the way for you to see how your outside world reflects your inner story. If you let it, your home will become a stage, the decor will act as a scenic background, and you will enable yourself to become the director of your script.

Melissa Nelson

BRINGING BEAUTY HOME

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How To Use This Workbook

Within this workbook you will discover ancient Feng Shui principles meeting modern-day interior decorating strategy. The primary goal is to help you create a living space infused with clarity, balance, and purpose.

Through guided reflections, tips for creating your vision board, and ways to use practical tools, you will discover how to align your environment with your goals and your daily actions with the deeper purpose that calls to you.

This workbook is not meant to be rushed through or read once and set aside. Like light moving across a room, it is designed to unfold slowly.

Each page invites you into a conversation between your inner world and the one you are creating around you. Some exercises ask for words and lists, others for reflection, sketches, or simple awareness. None of them are tests. They are invitations, small openings through which clarity and inspiration can enter.

You may move through the pages in order, or you may open to the section that calls to you most. Follow your intuition; it knows where your energy needs to go. Use a pencil, a pen, or colored markers. Tuck photos, swatches, or notes between the pages. Let the workbook become a living record of your unfolding vision, your personal map of beauty and balance.

Take time after each exercise to pause. Look around your space, notice how your thoughts feel in your body, then listen for what shifts. Insight often arrives in stillness, not speed.

You can return to these pages again and again. Each time you will find new layers because you will be in a different season of your own growth.

My Story

In the spring of 1997 I picked up a grocery store magazine—one of those freebies I typically skim through and then throw away. However, this time my eye caught a headline about something called Feng Shui. Not knowing what the words meant, I began to read the article. The author, the owner of a local metaphysical shop, stated with utmost authority that I could change my life by moving this and adding that. And, by using my mind and my feelings, I would discover the path I wish to travel.

I was hooked and in that moment I knew I must master the ancient art of placement called Feng Shui.

The shop was hosting a class. I immediately jumped in. After studying locally for over a year, I branched out to study with a few of the current Feng Shui Masters. I read and outlined every Feng Shui book I found and subsequently compiled the outlined data. I had heard the call of Feng Shui and answered it with passion.

It took about five years for me to believe I knew the left-brain or placement aspect of Feng Shui. Next, to awaken the right-side or intuitive side of my brain, I began to study dowsing. At the same time, I started my own business as a window covering decorator. My years of bookkeeping experience and knowledge of Feng Shui enabled me to keep it on track for 27 years.

Yet, throughout these 27 years I continually believed something was still missing: the intuitive or right side of my brain was still calling to me. In 2018 I took another jump off the diving board and enrolled in a year and one-half long certification course. In May of 2019 I became a “Certified House Whisperer.”

My journey continued with a certification in Biophilic Design, a discipline rooted in our innate connection to nature. Biophilic Design focuses on bringing the home into balance with the natural world by engaging all six senses—yes, six senses. Light, texture, airflow, sound, scent, and the emotional response a space evokes all work together to support well-being.

And now, I wish to close my story by sharing with you what I have learned.

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"You've always had the power
my dear, you
just had to learn it for yourself."

Glinda, The Good Witch
The Wizard of Oz (1939)



Why Feng Shui?

Evil Queen: "Magic mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?"
Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (1937)

Have you ever wondered why some homes *feel good*? Have you wondered how to create this *feel good* environment in your own space? I believe you can accomplish this by simply applying the principles found in the ancient Chinese art of placement known as Feng Shui. When these concepts are used as the platform for your decorating design, you will create a space that attracts prosperity, fosters well-being, and supports you in your journey.

Here are Three Reasons Why:

- As a philosophy of interior design, Feng Shui focuses on creating harmony and balance throughout your space.
- As an intuitive system, it goes beyond traditional decorating by showing you how to locate and eliminate “blocks” holding you back from achieving your goals.
- Feng Shui principles teach you how to create echoes of nature within your environment so you can delight your senses and nourish your soul.

Is It Magic?

Your home is the arena where your outer existence converges with your inner field of thought. It follows that how you interact with your environment is a reciprocal process. The furnishings, colors, and décor in your space influence your outlook, attitudes, and emotions. In return, those inner feelings shape the way you experience your surroundings.

This interaction creates an energy field which can “feel good” or “feel not so good.” To understand Feng Shui, you must first believe the *magic* occurs because the energy residing in your home mirrors the energy found in you.

Let's Add Beauty To The Mix

It is impossible to define beauty because the concept of beauty is a feeling that is specific to each of us. This feeling enters your awareness through your five senses. As this happens your brain sends you a flash—a 6th sense or intuitive thought—and you say to yourself “I like this.” “This is beautiful.” The converse is also true. For example: if the item is comprised of a color you don't care for you might say to yourself “Ugh! This is not for me.”

When you first perceive something to be beautiful, you delight your senses. As time passes and you make the "something" your own, it becomes a way of self-expression. It also becomes a mirror, encouraging your interaction with the world around you. You experience your life in the present moment, become connected to all that is, and nourish your soul.

Why Beauty?

When you delight your senses and nourish your soul, you begin to enter into a relationship with your space. Once established, that relationship allows you to feel truly at home and discover your sense of belonging. Bringing Beauty Home is the key to creating a sanctuary for you and yours.

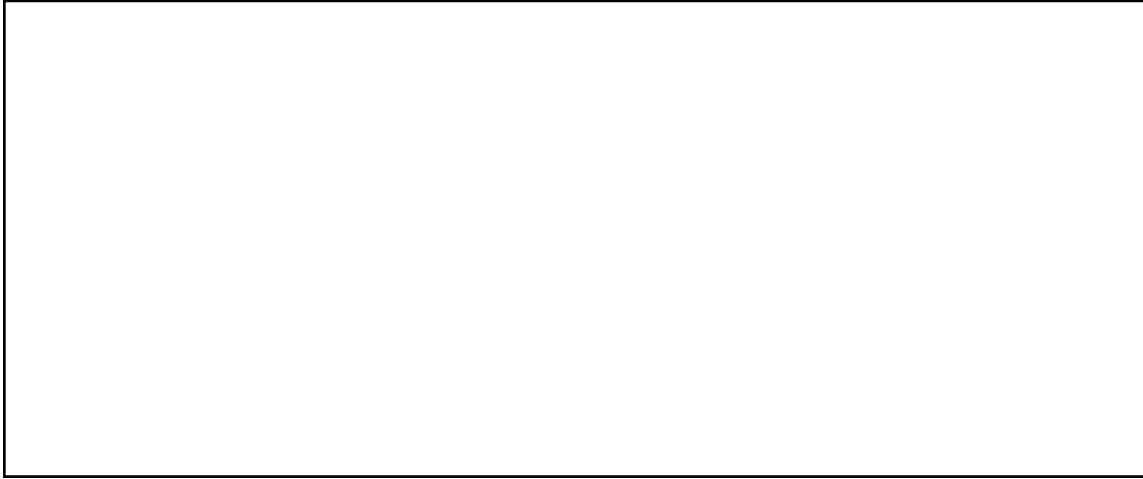
What Makes A Space Beautiful?

You do! And the process is not difficult. Completing and initiating the following nine steps results in creating a beautiful space you will call home. Implementing principles from the first four (the path to your front door, clutter, harmony, and balance) allows you to set the stage for a space that will delight your senses. Implementing the remaining four steps (intention, symbolic decorating, using color and shapes in decorating, and celebrating) enables you to create a space that nourishes your soul. Putting it all together, the final step, shows you how to create a “container” for your beautiful space.

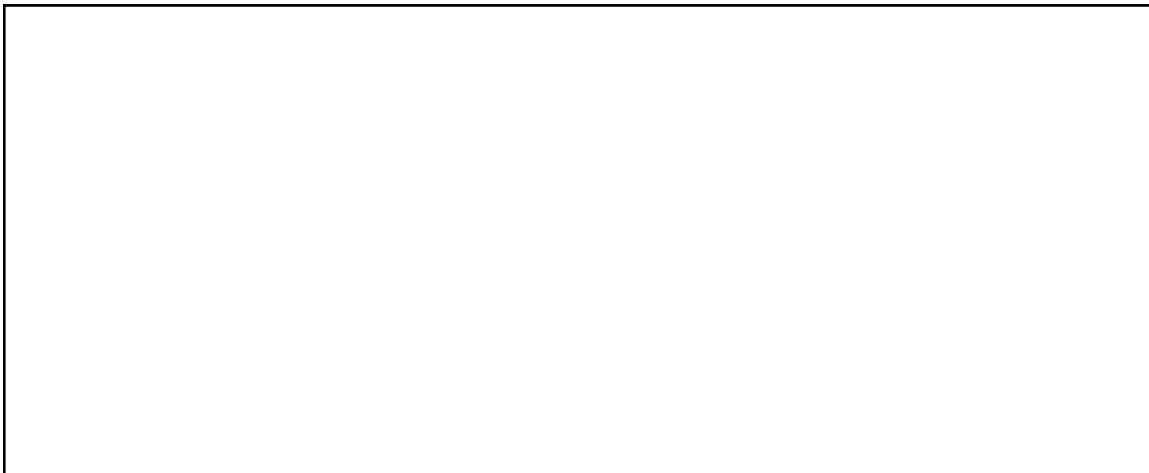
Ready To Begin?

And Now It's Your Turn

Visit each room in your space. Ask yourself: how does each one feel?

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What do you find beautiful about the decor?

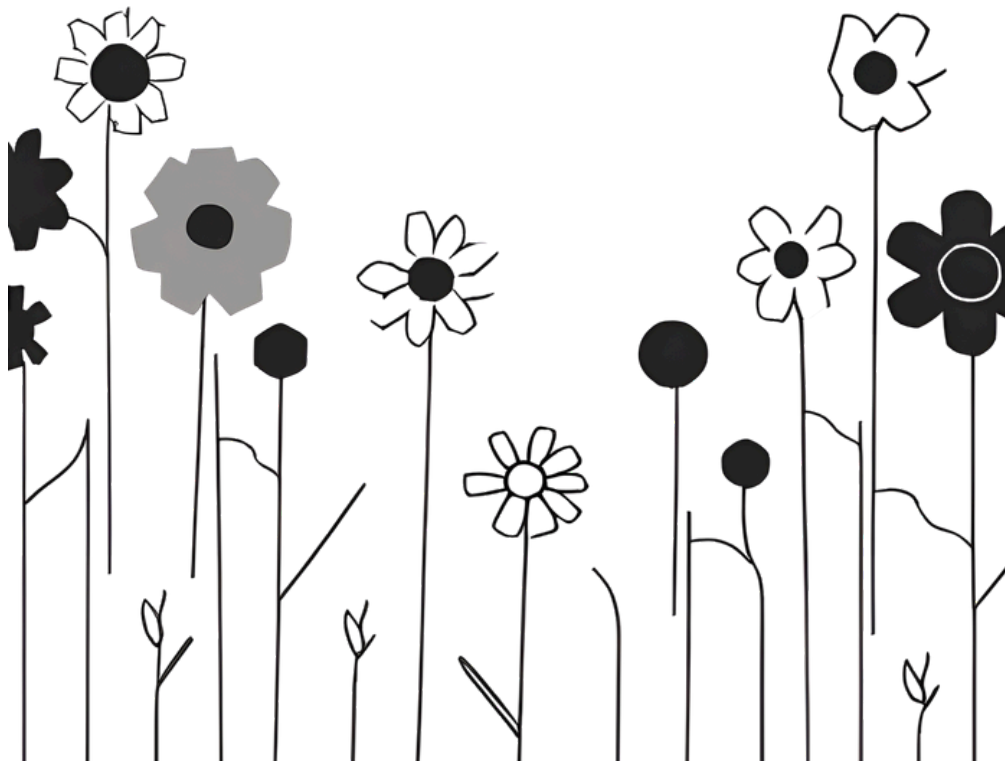
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question about what they find beautiful about the decor.

How can you increase this feeling throughout your space?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question about how to increase the feeling throughout the space.

Part I

Delight Your Senses





The Path To Your Front Door

“Keep a green tree alive in your heart and perhaps a singing bird may come.”
Chinese Proverb

Long before words, humans sang. Our earliest voices rose in melody, imitating birds, wind, and water. Song was our first language—our first way of belonging to the present moment. To sing is to breathe deeply, to listen closely, and to be here, now. The path to the front door holds that same invitation: a gentle reminder to walk with an awareness that welcomes beauty, so that life itself may sing back to you.

This path represents the sum of your life's journey and serves as a vehicle for inviting new opportunities into your life. A meandering walkway is best because it gently guides positive energy to your front door; conversely, a straight path carries the risk of allowing that positive energy to rush past you like a fast-moving river. Don't worry if your path is straight. You can visually soften its appearance with pots of flowers or garden art arranged in a meandering, wavelike pattern.

If your home has a side entrance—one that does not face the street and, instead possibly faces a brick wall, there is no need to run into it. Correct this “view” with garden art so you can “see” a world of opportunity from your front door.

A replica of the Phoenix Bird attached to the wall is a good example. (More information on the power of the Phoenix Bird can be found in Chapter 9.)

The front door is the portal through which positive or negative energy flows into your home. When you place your hand on the door knob you are literally shaking hands with your home. *What is your front door saying to you?*

Next, the entry into your space is the transition between your outer world and your inner sanctuary. Because it sets the stage for your experience of the space, it follows that your foyer's decorations will send a message. A bright and cheery entry sends one message and a dull and drab one sends another. Ask yourself, *What am I inviting into my home?*



Tips For Inviting Positive Energy Into Your Space

- Begin by using your five senses to create an energy map of your path.
- Represent the sum of your achievements, dreams and goals with garden art placed strategically along the path to your front door.
- Keep the path free from blockages. Prune trees and shrubs, pull weeds as necessary. Hide your garbage cans because what you see is what you get.
- Attract energy by lining the side of your path with crystals - start at the street and place them in increments of 9 to reach your front door. The number 9 is the number representing infinity and is considered to signify wisdom and new beginnings.
- Painting the front door is a subjective choice and depends on how you view the meaning of the color. Some people believe red will bring good luck while others may see fire at their front door.
- A personal power symbol is a representation of something that empowers you. For example, if one of your goals is to create a path that reflects wisdom and a cat speaks to you as a symbol of wisdom, consider purchasing a statue of one to both welcome you home and give you the sense of wisdom as you go out into your world. Place your personal power symbol near your front door so you will see it every time you leave and come back home.
- Energy needs to enter through your front door. Because the element of water is a major energy attractor, your water feature belongs in this area. Wind chimes work well, too. They signify someone or something is calling to you.
- It is easy to enter our homes through our garage. Consider entering your home through your front door at least one time each day. This simple act reinforces your belief that you are queen or king of your home.
- If your entry or foyer is non-existent or less than desirable, find a way to beautify and/or create one. A pleasant foyer has the power to turn away negative energy and invite you into a welcoming gathering room.

Keys to Creativity

Beauty As The Way

The ancient Greeks believed beauty was a reflection of truth, goodness, and harmony. They saw beauty as the bridge to the divine because when the senses were awakened by what was lovely, the soul was lifted closer to the heavens.

Plato taught that to encounter beauty is to remember who we really are. Each glimpse of symmetry, each sound of music, each scent of blossom awakens the part of us that longs for wholeness. So when you walk the path to your front door, beauty is not just what we pass by along the way, beauty is the way.

Our Five Senses Are The Companions That Guide Us

Sight: Your eyes reveal your focus. Do you see possibility, beauty, and light? Or do you notice clutter, shadow and what feels undone? The way you see your path reflects the way you see your life.

Sound: Your ears tell you how open you are to receiving. Do you hear birds singing, the play of children or the rustle of leaves? Or do you notice noise and distraction? What you hear represents what you allow into your inner world.

Smell: Your nose awakens memory and mood. The scent of earth, grass or blossoms carries you into present time. Breath-by-breath you learn to take in this moment.

Touch: Your skin is a storyteller. The ground beneath your feet, the air brushing your face, the leaf you graze with your fingers—each texture reflects how you meet the textures of life.

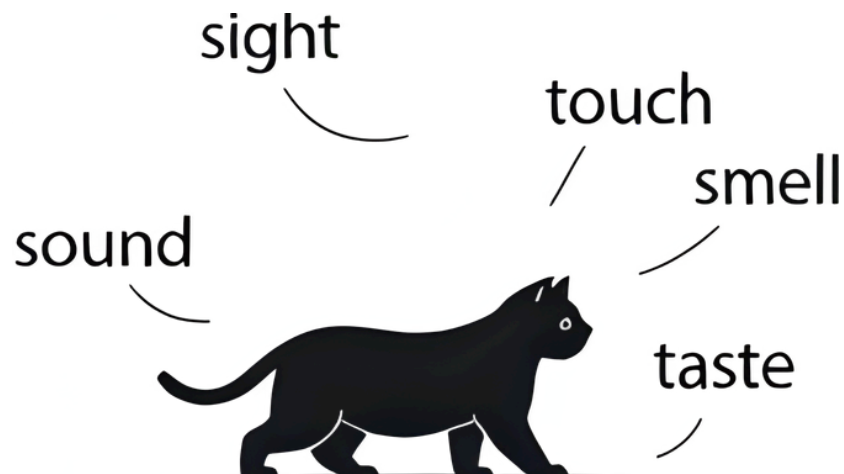
Taste: Subtle but powerful, your sense of taste connects the outer world to your inner being. Morning air, a trace of mint or even thirst can remind you that every step leaves an imprint within.

A Guided Practice

Walking With Your Senses

- Stand at the beginning of your path. Take one deep, grounding breath. Close your eyes for a moment.
- Open your eyes. Slowly take in the colors, shapes and shadows around you. Whisper: This is how I see today.
- Listen. Close your eyes for a moment to slowly let the sounds come to you. Whisper: This is what I am willing to hear today.
- Notice taste. Lick your lips, breathe in through your mouth. Whisper: This is how my life enters me today.
- Touch what is near; perhaps a leaf, a wall or a doorknob. Whisper: I am aware of the energy of what I touch.

Arrive at your door. With your senses awakened, step across the threshold carrying the gift of presence into your home.



How do you create a path to your front door to represent your life's journey?

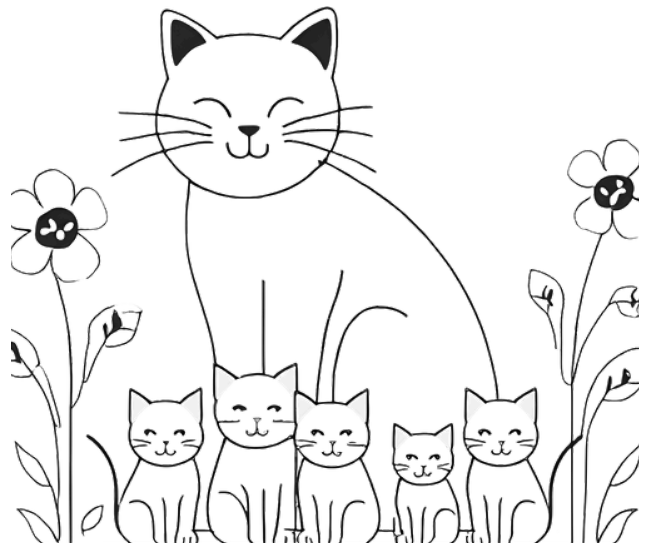
It's easy when you follow these 3 steps:

Take your backpack
off and
leave the past behind.



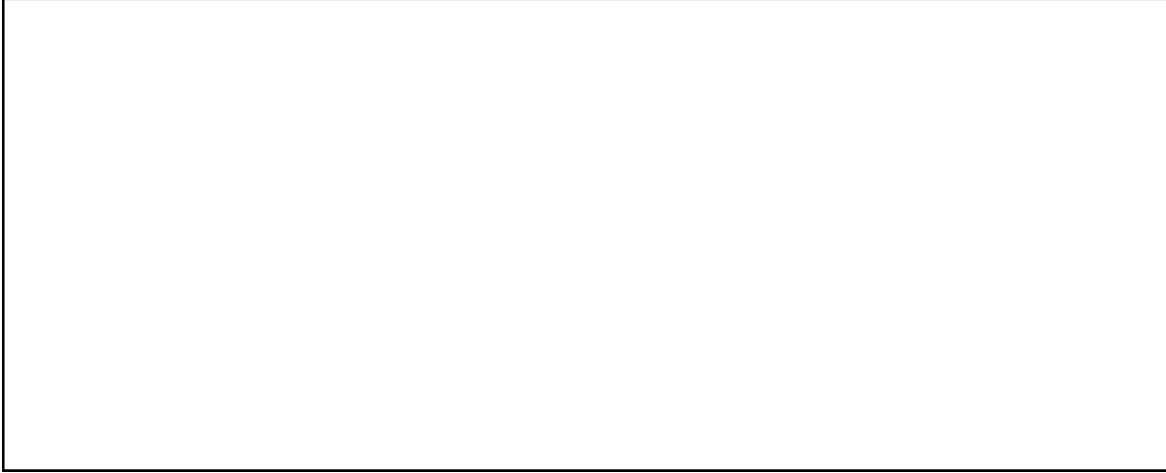
So you can walk the path
to your front door in
present time.

And enable yourself with the
ability to create your
successful future!

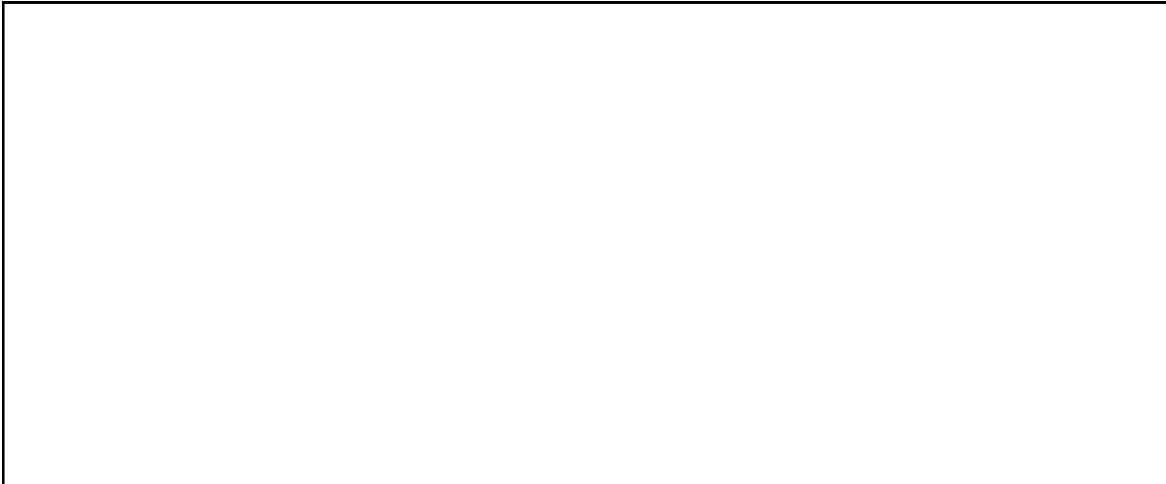


And Now It's Your Turn

Use your senses, then describe what you see, hear, touch, smell and even taste as you walk toward your front door.



What story is your path telling you?



What changes will you make?





Clutter

"The quicker you let go of old cheese, the sooner you find new cheese."
Spencer Johnson, M.D.

Clutter in the Feng Shui World has become synonymous with stuck energy. When energy is stuck, our perception of life becomes stuck, too. Bringing beauty home becomes impossible.

What is Clutter?

Because everyone defines clutter differently, we will use the simple definition that states *clutter is simply stuff that accumulates where you don't want it to*. More often than not we fill our homes with too many things to make us feel successful. The reality is that unnecessary "stuff" causes us to feel overwhelmed, crowded, and longing for a quieter, more simple life. Instead of expanding beyond who we are today, clutter blocks us from moving forward. Living in the moment becomes an impossibility.



Don't Despair!



If you are a do-it-yourself individual, you probably already know that book stores have sections devoted to clutter clearing. If you prefer to hire a trained outsider, professional organizers abound and are ready to help. They are now a viable, entrepreneurial force. Implementing their suggested techniques will work; but, if your space remains clear for only a short period of time and clutter reappears, it definitely has a life of its own. You need to use your sixth sense or your intuition and ask yourself why. Once the reason is discovered, correcting the underlying cause becomes easy.

A Clutter Free Home Produces a Healthy Home

Too much clutter will also change the status of your home from healthy to unhealthy because clutter simply enables dust, mold, and animal dander to collect. All three contribute to allergies and even to asthma. Too much clutter also increases the clutter in our minds; mental clutter also has the potential to cause unhappiness and stress. Instead of beauty we see bleakness.

Tips For A Clutter Free Environment

- Time: Be present in your space. Take time to ask: *What is my space saying to me?* Let your intuition and your senses guide you to where your trouble spots reside. If there is one area in your home that is continually messy, 1) ask yourself *what function do I perform within this space?* and 2) *what blockages do I have surrounding the function?*
- Actions: Clutter often represents a postponed action. Ask yourself, *Why am I avoiding this?* Then ask, *What decision am I putting off?* Or, *Does my clutter reflect the belief that I am not capable? Am I simply covering up that belief?* Conversely, consider whether your clutter is telling you to stop the current process because it is no longer aligned with your goals.
- Corners: Corners are traps for stagnant energy. Hang potted plants, or mobiles in your corners to create movement.
- Closets: The statement “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” is simply not true because you subconsciously know where the black holes of your home reside. Clean and remove clutter from your closets, cupboards and even under your bed. Don’t forget your garage!

- Spring Cleaning: Clean with intention because that which you focus on expands. Cleaning with intention not only clears the clutter from your home, it cleans the clutter from your inner mental and spiritual space.
- Space Clear: Clear stagnant energy on a weekly basis. If you don't like burning sage or similar fragrances, take a bell and ring it throughout your space—especially in the corners. Sound vibrations will also rid your home of stuck and negative energies.
- Projects: Unfinished projects create a perpetual roadblock to your ability to move forward. If you don't wish to finish the project, abandon it so you can move on to something new.
- Stuff: Leave empty space on your coffee table and bookshelves. This act signifies that you have room for new opportunities to arrive.



Keys To Creativity

Using Your Sixth Sense (Intuition)

Long before we had words for it, our ancestors trusted something we now call intuition. Imagine an early human standing at the mouth of a cave. The forest looks calm, yet something inside says “wait.” Moments later a predator silently passes by. That invisible nudge, that knowing without knowing why, was humanity’s first awareness of a sixth sense.

As we painted caves and buried our dead with care, we began to see this inner knowing as sacred. Dreams, visions, and whispers of the unseen became gateways to survival and meaning. Ancient Egyptians associated it with prophecy, the Greeks with wisdom, and the Chinese with harmony. Across continents, intuition was honored as a gift from the gods or the ancestors. In ancient Greece, seekers traveled to the temple of Apollo at Delphi to hear the words of the Oracle.

Philosophers later gave it language. Plato spoke of sudden illuminations, Aristotle of a higher intellect that grasps truth without proof. In the East, sages described it as awakening or flowing with the Tao. In the Middle Ages intuition was revered in visions of saints and mystics, while Renaissance artists like Leonardo da Vinci trusted flashes of insight to *guide* intervention.

Today, science tells us that intuition is the brain’s lightning-fast ability to recognize patterns before the conscious mind can catch up. Psychology calls it subconscious processing; neuroscience shows us the networks that fire before logic has a chance. Yet for all our modern explanations, intuition still feels as mysterious as it did to that person standing at the cave’s edge: a quiet, invisible companion that whispers *trust me*.

Intuition is our inner oracle. It is the sixth sense, guiding us beyond what we can see, hear, or measure. When we trust intuition, we uncover meanings hidden in plain sight: why a certain drawer overflows with clutter or why we hesitate to release an object. Clutter is never random; it gathers where energy has stalled, where we’ve avoided something, or where we’ve held on too long.

To clear clutter with intuition is to listen to the voice beneath the noise—the inner oracle who says: *This belongs. This no longer serves. Trust me!* Clutter is a mirror of your inner life.

Room By Room Effects of Clutter

Entryway

- Clutter produces blocked opportunities, resistance to new beginnings, and the feeling of being stuck.
- Clutter-free produces fresh starts, open energy, and new opportunities.

Bedroom

- Clutter produces strained relationships, restless sleep, lack of intimacy or self-care.
- Clutter-free results in restful sleep, harmony in relationships, self-care.

Office / Desk

- Clutter produces career stagnation, financial disarray, overwhelm.
- Clutter-free produces clarity in work, focus, productivity, and a flow of abundance.

Kitchen

- Clutter produces poor health choices, low energy, lack of nourishment.
- Clutter-free produces vitality, healthy routines, abundance in food & life.

Closets / Storage

- Clutter produces holding onto the past, indecision, fear of change.
- Clutter-free produces freedom, room for growth, future readiness.

Living Room / Shared Spaces

- Clutter blocks effective communication between household members.
- Clutter-free produces connection, joy and a lively gathering space.

A Guided Practice

Listening To Your Clutter

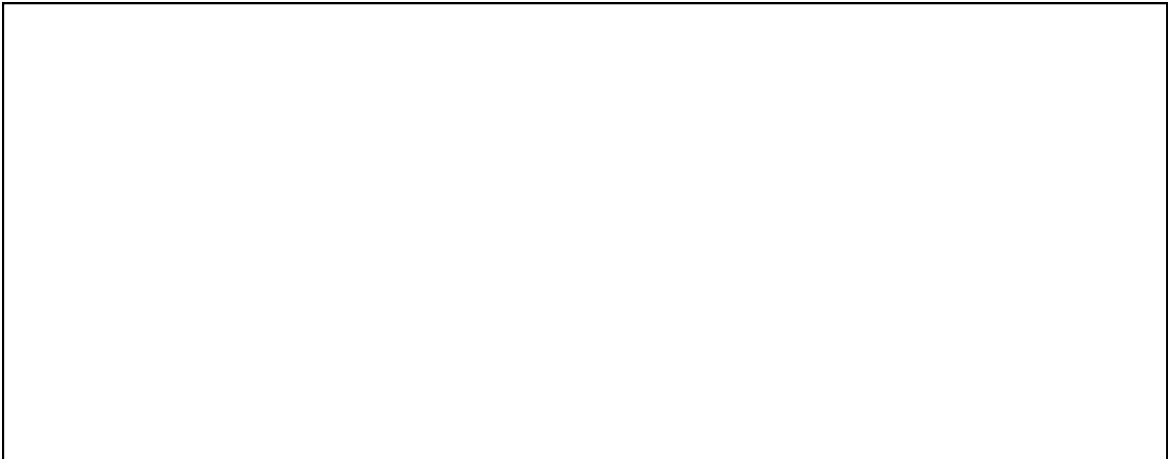
- Choose One Spot.
 - Stand before a cluttered drawer, shelf, or corner. Close your eyes and breathe.
- Pick Up One Item.
 - Hold it gently. Ask yourself: Does this still belong to me? Does it carry life or does it carry weight?
- Ask the Question.
 - Place your hand on your heart and silently ask: *Why is clutter living here?* Don't think. Instead listen to your sixth sense. Notice the first word, image, or feeling that arises.
- Trust the Whisper.
 - If your intuition says yes, keep it with gratitude. If it says no, release it with thanks for the role it once played.
- Clear the Space.
 - Remove what no longer belongs. As you do, say aloud: *I clear this space to open space in my life.*
- Notice the Shift.
 - Step back. *How does the air feel now? What emotion rises in you?* This is your self affirming the change.
- Close with Intention.
 - Place one small object of meaning in the cleared space—a candle, a flower, or simply a breath of emptiness. *Whisper: I trust my intuition to guide me.*

And Now It's Your Turn

Visit each room to determine if clutter prevails. Decide how each one feels. How will you clear the clutter to bring the space into balance?



Look through your closets—which items will you donate?



Are you postponing certain actions? Discover why, then determine how to proceed.





Creating Harmony

*“With an eye made quiet by the power of harmony,
and the deep power of joy, we see into the life of things.”*

William Wordsworth

We’ve all felt it—that sigh of relief when we walk into a room that simply feels right. Nothing calls attention to itself, yet everything seems to belong. The air feels lighter, and without knowing why, you can finally breathe. This is harmony: not a single object or color argues with the other. The quiet conversation between them creates a welcoming space.

It follows that harmony in the home is simply a by-product of how you arrange your favorite things to 1) look like they belong together and 2) enable the energy to flow smoothly and freely throughout the space. Your favorite things are at home and so are you.

Defining Energy

In Taoist thought, the Tao (often called Chi) is the invisible current of energy that flows through all things. It is the great mystery, the unseen thread weaving all things into harmony. It is the breath of the universe, rising and falling like the tide, shaping mountains and carrying each leaf along its way.

Think of the Tao as a river. It may flow gently through your home like a slow, meandering stream or rush through it like a torrent of water. The goal of Feng Shui is not to stop the flow, but to guide it.

Because the Tao, or life energy, exists within each of us, everything in our home has the power to affect us in one of three ways: 1) Positive energy creates a space that feels fresh and alive; you are achieving your goals. 2) Stagnant energy often stems from a barren or cluttered environment, leaving you with the feeling of hopelessness. 3) Ominous energy, such as cow skulls placed over your front door, can leave you feeling angry and depressed.

Wondering how to begin creating positive energy? Once again, use your five senses to examine your space: room by room, determine if energy is able to enter through your front door and flow smoothly to all areas.

There is no need to worry if you find yourself living in less than desirable conditions as there are “cures” that can be applied to your space to help produce positive energy.

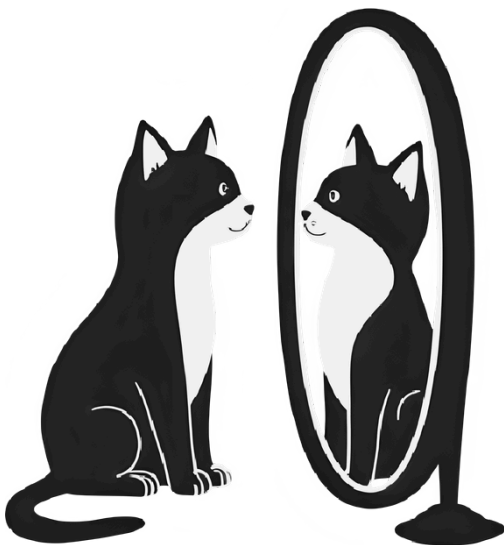
Tips For Creating Positive Energy

- Determine if each room is used to its potential. For example, do you own beautiful dining room furniture and find that you sit on the sofa to eat? If this is happening, use your intuition to find out why and what you can do to correct the situation.
- Power Points: The power point of any room is one of the two back corners—it is typically the one that is caddy-corner from the entry. Positive energy will be yours when your bed, sofa, desk, and, if possible, your stove have the largest view of the room. Avoid placing furniture in a direct line with the door because strong energy might sweep in and “hit” the people using it.
- Furniture Placement: You will feel and be in control when primary pieces of furniture are placed against a solid wall. The *wall* will have your back. Create a conversation pit in the gathering room by simply staging the pieces of furniture to face each other and not the TV.
- Light: Good lighting offers you abundant, vibrant Chi. Shed light on problem areas, stimulate Chi in stagnant areas and, at the same time, avoid creating a harsh environment full of glare.
- Statues and large objects: Bring the feeling of strength and confidence into your environment with a statue that speaks to you.

- Plants: You will create a sense of abundance when you place real or silk plants throughout your space. Avoid live plants in bedrooms as they take in oxygen at night.
- Music: Music has a positive effect on you and your environment. It's all in the rhythm—your heart starts blending with the beat which in turn causes you to feel good. This feeling then spreads throughout your house.
- Mirrors: Mirrors attract and magnify positive energy. They also activate stagnant energy in areas where there is too little light. However, placement of them is important because you must be aware of what they are projecting. Here's an example of what might happen: walking toward a short mirror in a hallway will project back to you that you are “cut in half.”



Disharmony



Harmony

Keys To Creativity

Centering With Tai Chi

The ancient Taoists taught that harmony begins in the center. From the still point, all movement flows. From balance, strength arises. From softness, resilience is born.

Tai Chi—the martial art whose name means “the great ultimate”—was created as a way to embody this truth. Unlike the rigid clash of force against force, Tai Chi movements are slow, flowing, and circular. They draw energy back to the body’s center—the dantian—a point just below the navel believed to be the wellspring of life.

To practice Tai Chi is to return to your center, again and again, until harmony becomes your nature. It is not about defeating an opponent, but about aligning your own energy so completely that life itself flows through you with ease.

Your home has such a center as well—the Tai Chi—the heart of the dwelling. When it is blocked or cluttered, the whole house feels unsettled. When it is open, honored, and alive, harmony radiates outward, steady and strong, just like the calm strength of Tai Chi.

To bring harmony into your home is to practice the art of centering. When you stand in the middle of your home and breathe deeply, you embody the Taoist truth: from the center, all things find their balance.

A Guided Practice

Centering Yourself Into Harmony

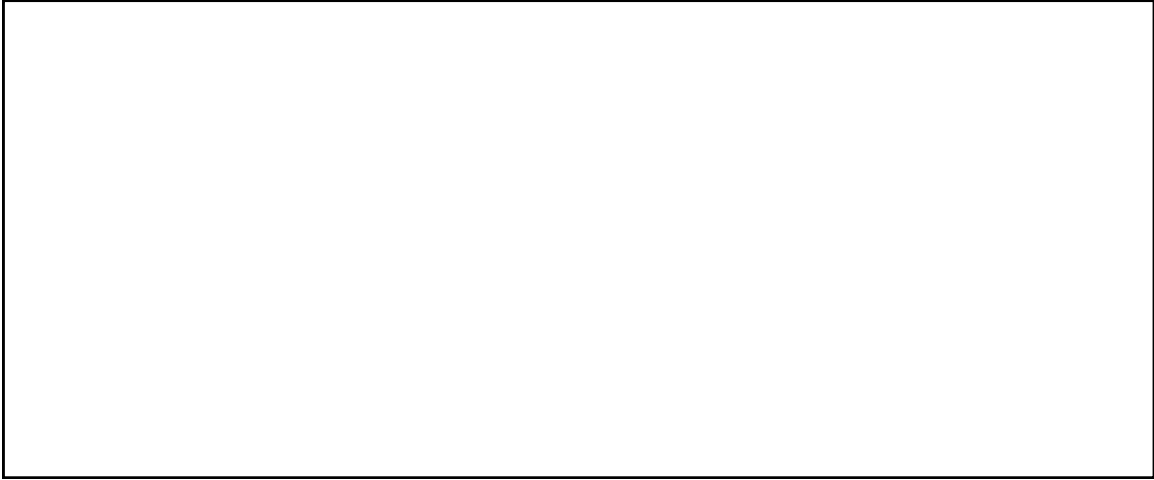
- Find the Center
 - Walk slowly through your home and stand in the space that feels closest to its heart. This may be a living room, a hallway, or even a spot without obvious significance. Trust that this is your Tai Chi.
- Clear the Space
 - Remove anything that feels heavy, or out of place. Sweep, dust, or simply open a window. Imagine the home exhaling.

- Stand in Stillness.
 - Close your eyes and breathe deeply aligning your heartbeat with the heartbeat of the home. Notice how clear the space feels. Whisper: *Here I am centered. Here harmony begins.*
- Create a Point of Beauty.
 - Place one object in the center that symbolizes harmony to you: a candle, a bowl of water, a smooth stone, a vase of fresh flowers. Let it serve as a quiet altar to harmony.
- Notice the Flow.
 - Step back and sense how the energy shifts. Do the rooms feel lighter? Does the air feel softer? Harmony is subtle, but unmistakable.
- Return Often.
 - Whenever life feels chaotic, come to this spot. Breathe. Remember that harmony in life begins with harmony in you.

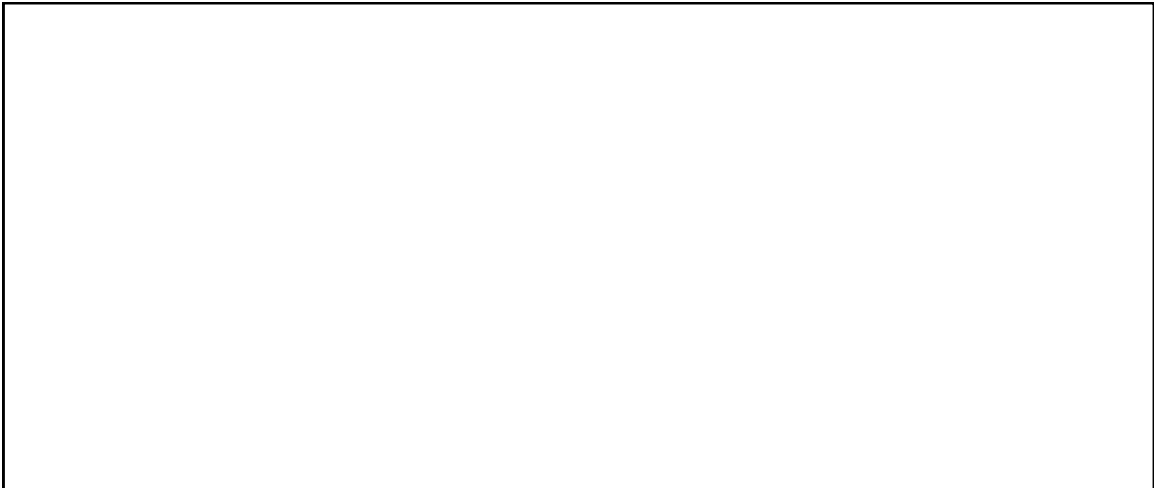


And Now It's Your Turn

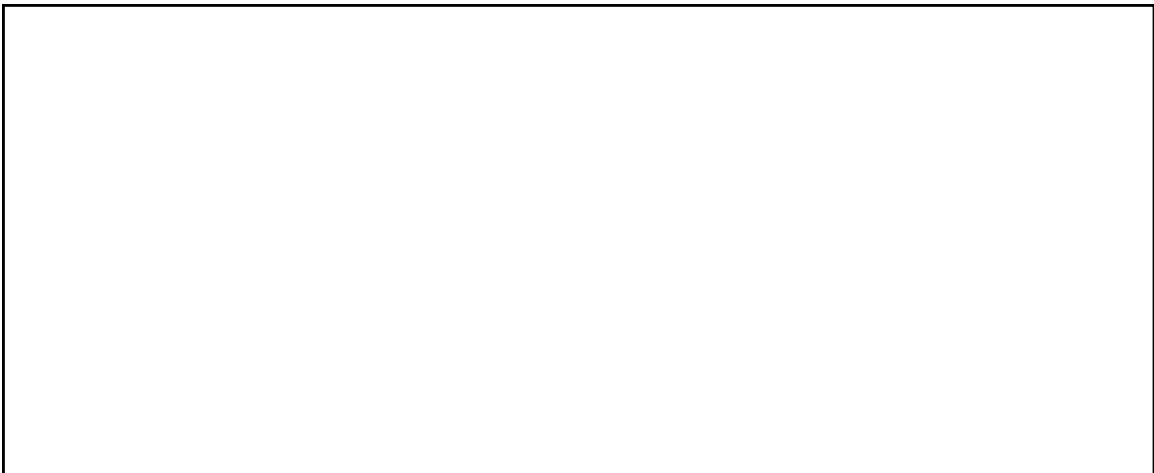
How does your energy flow through each room? What corrections need to be made?



Evaluate the lighting in each room. List necessary changes.



Are your mirrors highlighting strengths or cutting you in two? *Ask: what do I see and what am I creating?*





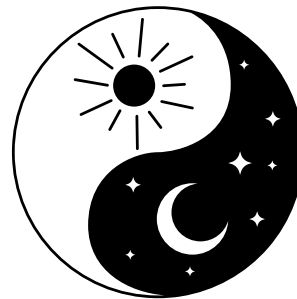
Creating Balance

*“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”
Albert Einstein*

To understand how a home cultivates balance you must first understand that energy or Chi is the foundation for everything visible and invisible in your home and in the universe. It is never static.

According to Chinese legend, yin (the feminine essence and resting force) and yang (the masculine essence and moving force) formed as Chi moves.

These two polar opposites comprise the building blocks of our universe; one cannot exist without the other. What begins with yang ends with yin. When you think of yin and yang, think of night and day, winter and summer, or birth and death; two seemingly opposing forces that together become complementary cycles of life.



Today, as we examine our daily lives, we find that this legend holds true as we dance between the opposite ends of our daily tasks. Some examples include earning a living versus spending time with our family; independence versus interdependence with others; and answering emails versus reading a book. A space that honors our dance between polar opposites is crucial because we are most powerful when our lives are in balance.

Keys To Creativity

The Dance of Opposites

Balance is not a fixed point; it is a living, energetic rhythm. The Taoists taught that all things are born of yin and yang—shadow and light, rest and movement, feminine and masculine. From this dance of opposites life takes form.

Out of yin and yang arise the Five Elements—water, wood, fire, earth and metal—the building blocks of nature itself. They are not abstract ideas, but living forces: the tree pushing skyward, the flame leaping, the soil grounding, the mineral clarifying, the river flowing.

Today, we call these instincts biophilia, or the love of nature. It is an irresistible call because humans are designed to flourish in connection with nature. When we live in awareness of the five elements, we instinctively feel restored. When we bring them into our homes, we embody balance. Biophilic Design is quickly becoming a mainstream decorating platform.

You Can Feel It

“Balance isn’t a mindset, it’s a frequency.”

MasAti

The Five Elements are more than symbols—they are living forces that shape both nature and our inner world. Each element carries a frequency and an emotional gift. When one is out of balance, it carries a shadow.

We are naturally attuned to vibration. Every room, color, object, and emotion carries a subtle frequency, and your body senses it long before your mind names it. This is why some spaces calm you instantly while others make you restless without explanation.

Because each element is full of quiet energies, your intuition will tell you which one resonates with you right now. Sometimes you need Wood’s vision, sometimes Fire’s joy, sometimes Earth’s stability, Metal’s clarity, or Water’s depth. Balance is not something you think into place—it is something you feel.

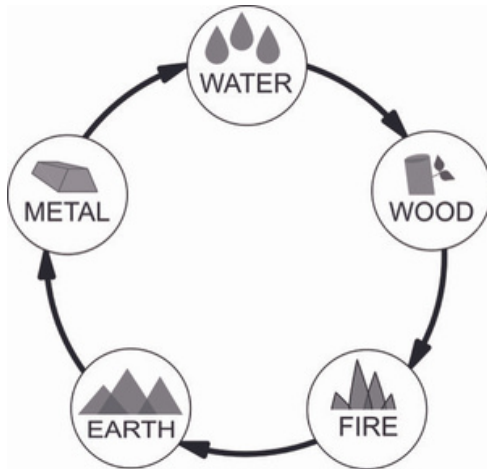
When you live in balance you will feel aligned from within; your inner world and your home resonate in harmony. This is the quiet gift of the Five Elements. They help you return to the truest version of yourself.

Five Element Theory

"Elements are known as 'Wu-Hsing' or the five performers."

James Earl Moser

Diving deeper into Five Element Theory reveals two cycles of manifestation. The first is positive and productive because each of the elements assist in supporting and producing the element that follows in the cycle.



Positive Cycle of the Elements

The second relationship occurs when one element is skipped; it is known as the cycle of destruction. Water puts out fire, fire melts metal, metal chops wood, wood depletes earth, and earth absorbs water. However, this cycle can be beneficial, too. The skipped over element serves to ease the conflict of the two on either side by reducing their strength and potentially damaging effects. For example, if you continually waver between yes and no for decision making, adding the element of earth will resolve the indecisiveness.

Bring Your Home Into Balance

Balance is not about achieving perfection; it is the art of living with nature's rhythm, inviting each element in when its energy is needed most. A balanced home contains each of the five elements in the right place and right amount.

Take an elemental inventory of each room in your home—it will reveal the necessary corrections. Make them. If you still feel out of balance, check to see if there is too much of one element in the space: then use the destructive cycle of the elements to curtail its negative aspects. Here's an example: if there is too much fire (the color of red) in one area and you are feeling "hot," introduce water as it is the element that puts out fire.

A Guided Practice

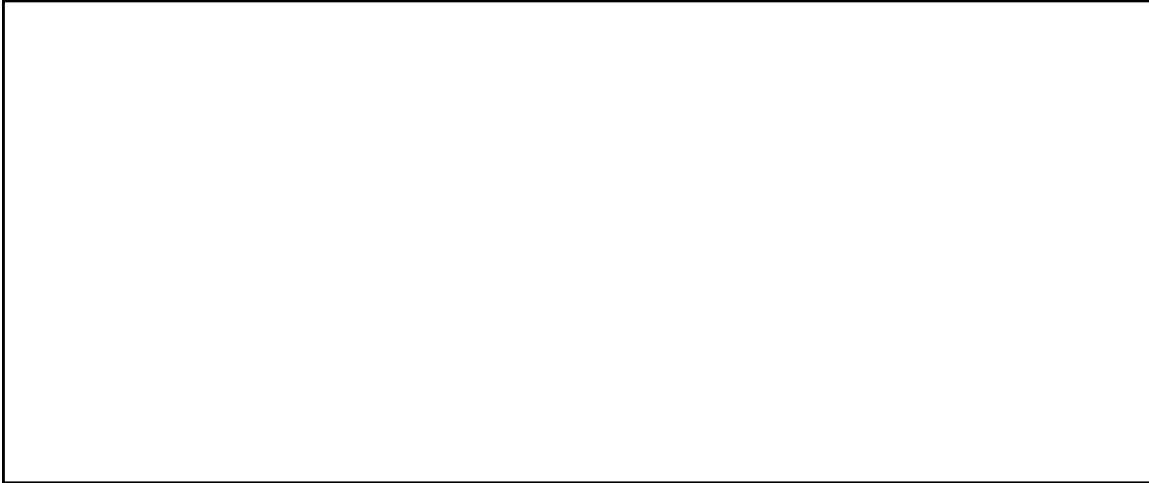
Living the Balance of the Elements

- Pause at the Center.
 - Sit quietly in your home. Close your eyes. Take three slow breaths. Imagine yin and yang circling within you—shadow and light, rest and action, inner and outer. Whisper: *I welcome the balance that keeps me moving.*
- Meet the Five.
 - One by one, call each element into your mind:
 - Wood: growth, vision, determination.
 - Fire: joy, passion, vitality.
 - Earth: nurturing, stability, care.
 - Metal: clarity, focus, refinement.
 - Water: depth, flow, wisdom.
- Read The Emotion
 - Ask yourself: What emotion is most present for me today?
 - Anger may signal blocked Wood.
 - Anxiety may signal ungrounded Fire.
 - Worry may signal burdened Earth.
 - Grief may signal rigid Metal.
 - Fear may signal stagnant Water.
- Invite What's Needed.
 - Choose one element you want to strengthen. Bring it into your home.
 - Wood: add a plant, write a new goal, step outside under a tree.
 - Fire: light a candle, wear red, play uplifting music.
 - Earth: cook a meal, sit with both feet on the ground.
 - Metal: polish something, add white or gold, clear a surface.
 - Water: place a fountain nearby, listen to flowing sounds.
- Balance in Motion.
 - Whisper aloud: *I invite ____ into my life today. I live in balance with the rhythm of nature.*
- Notice the Shift.

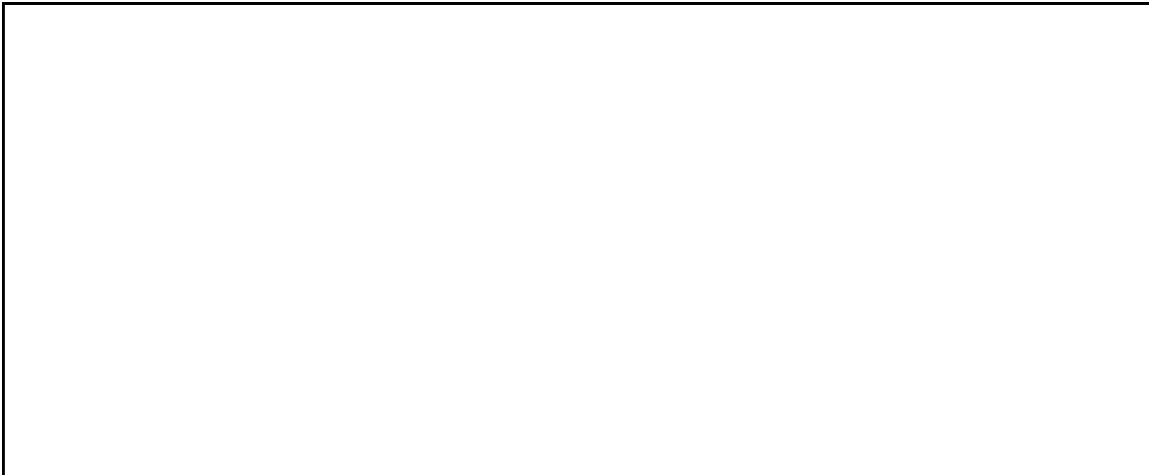
Step back. Feel how this one small action shifts the energy in your space—and in you.

And Now It's Your Turn

Determine if each room is for gathering or resting. Is the current essence correct? What needs to change?



Are you moving forward in your life or are you stuck? Check your proportions of yin and yang.

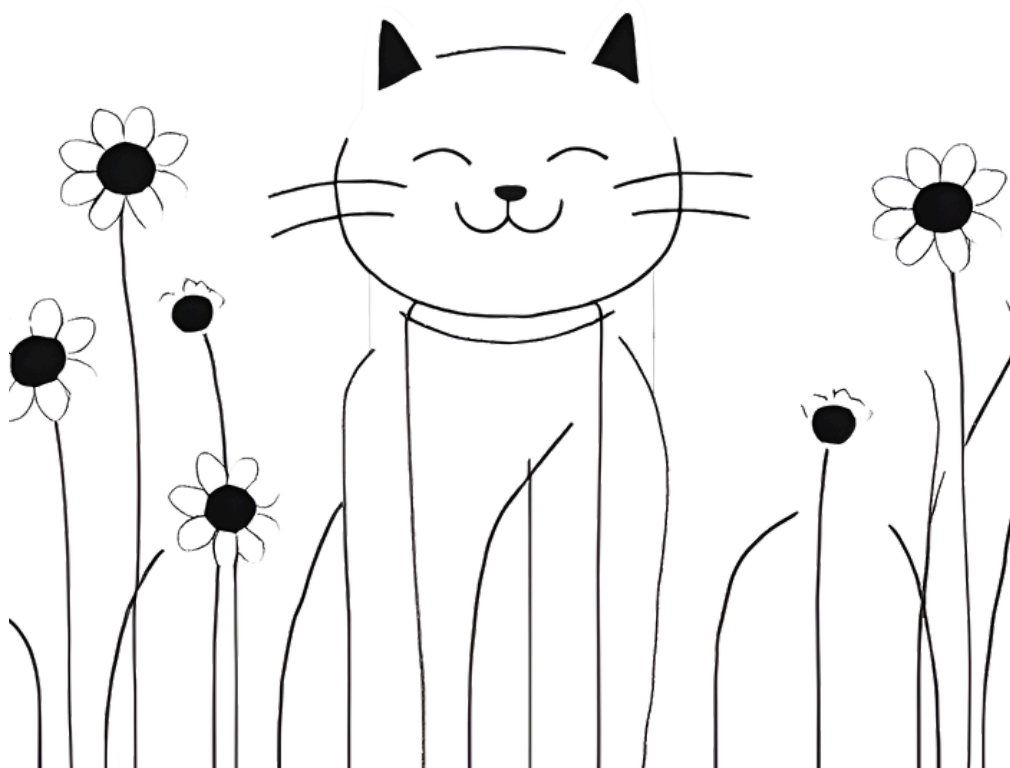


How are the five elements interacting in your home? What corrections or additions need to be made?



Part II

Nourish Your Soul





Intention

"Your heart knows the way, run in that direction."

Rumi

You more than likely fell in love with your home believing the environment to be an extension of yourself—it held the space that just might allow you to fulfill your hopes and dreams. If you listened quietly to your surroundings, you may have even heard whispers calling to you.

The heart whispers first. To set an intention is to align with that whisper so you can allow your life and your home to run in the direction of your truth.

Setting an intention—your purpose and/or your goals for your life's journey—is simply claiming what the "it" is that you want. And, even though desires can be tangible or intangible, it is imperative to find the right words to describe what the "it" looks like.

Defining your "it" sets the stage so you can begin nourishing your soul.

Tips to Help You Set Your Intention

- When you purchase new clothing, you typically try on the garment before making the purchase. You can try on your future with visualization. Once you can see "it," your intention can easily be set.
- Be passionate. The more enthusiasm and passion you instill into your subconscious, the clearer and more certain the outcome.

- Even though our brains are hard-wired to analyze and continually question, *is this good or is this bad*, ask instead *is this appropriate?*
- Never doubt your ability to achieve your goals.
- Be Positive! Your thoughts are seeds—do you want to grow flowers or weeds?
- Maintain an attitude of gratitude for the positive aspects of your life. Push away limiting thoughts to expand your awareness of possibilities.
- Write it down—keep a journal of intentions.



Stuck in a Rut? Your Home Holds the Answers to Change.

Don't despair if you are not moving forward and find yourself living the life of Sisyphus, continually rolling your rock uphill only to watch it tumble back down. The beliefs that keep us stuck are often hidden from view, yet they leave traces everywhere. They appear in what we keep, what we avoid, what we postpone, and even in the stories our homes quietly tell. If your deepest desire is to share your life with someone, yet every image in your home celebrates only one person, your surroundings may be inviting you to ask a deeper question: Does my environment reflect the future I hope to create?

Change happens when you discover why you purchased your home in the first place. Your space holds clues to who you are today, and if you let it, it can reveal the blockages keeping you from moving forward. Focusing solely on what is will only bring more of the same to your front door. Ask: What is my connection to this property? Sit quietly in your space and ask your home what it wants to say to you; dig deep within yourself to find the answers. Once you do, alignment with your goals is possible.

Accept Chaos

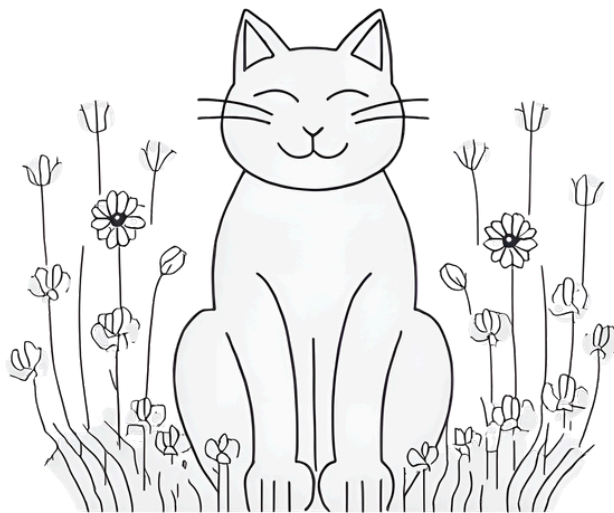
As you begin this process, chaos may appear at your front door—don't judge it. This may be life's way of reorganizing circumstances so you can move toward your goals. Keep in mind that because you, too, consist of energy, life is never static. After manifesting one set of your goals and sensing that change is imminent, go back to your drawing board to rehearse a new set of intentions.

Finally, because you are subject to changing energies and polarity shifts, your Feng Shui practice will not guarantee a life void of problems. Without them, though, we would stay glued to the same spot.



Non-Acceptance

To Acceptance



Keys To Creativity

The Art of Making A Decision

Intention is the invisible architecture of your life. Conquer the art of making a decision because every choice you make—where to place a chair, what color to paint a wall, or which object to keep—becomes a quiet declaration of who you are and what you invite into your world.

Too often we hesitate. We hem and haw, asking: Should I? Could I? What if I get it wrong? In the pause of indecision, energy stalls. Our homes and our lives will reflect our indecisiveness.

Abraham Hicks reminds us to “Make a decision, and then make it the right one.” It’s not about perfect choices. It’s about momentum. Once you choose, energy moves. Beauty, flow, and opportunity rise up to meet you. Indecision keeps you in circles; decision opens a path.

Every time you decide with intention, you align your inner world with your outer world. You begin to tell your story.

Something To Ponder

In Greek mythology, Clio is one of the nine Muses—the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne or Memory. Each Muse presides over a different domain of inspiration in the arts and sciences.

Clio is often called the Muse of History and sometimes lyric poetry, but her deeper gift is remembrance and clarity. Her role connects us to creativity because she inspires storytellers, poets, and historians to create works that preserve memory. She symbolizes the creative power of narrative, turning events into meaningful stories.



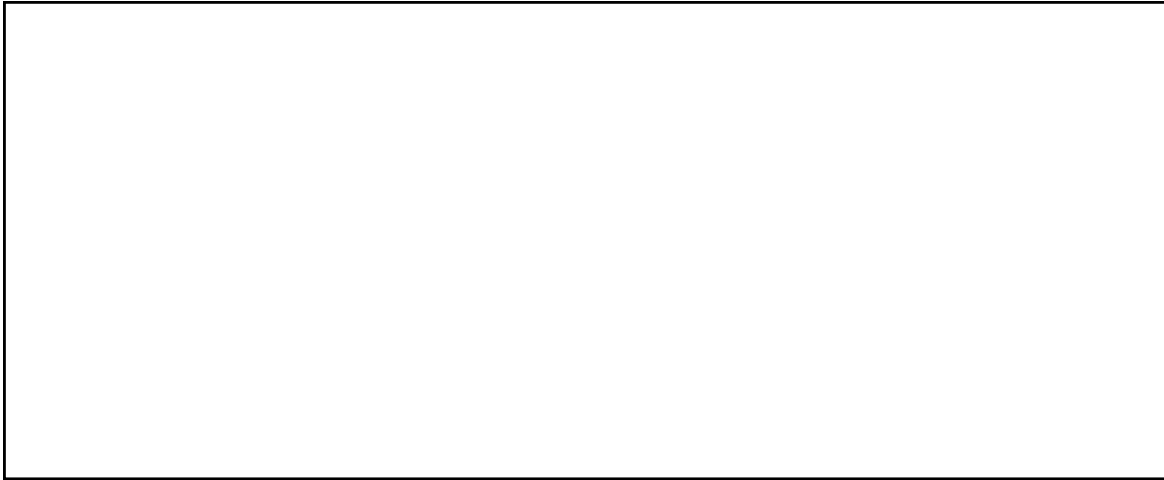
A Guided Practice

Deciding with Intention

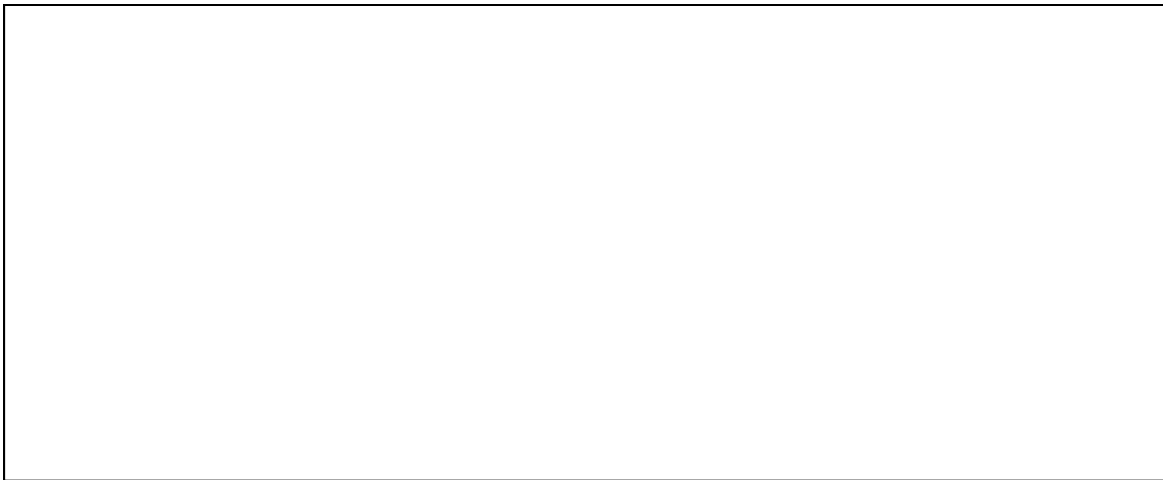
- Pause Before a Choice.
 - Find one small decision waiting in your home—a stack of magazines to keep or throw away, a piece of furniture to move, or an item you’ve been unsure about.
- Ask the Question.
 - Place your hand on your heart and ask: *Does the choice I make reflect who I am becoming?*
- Trust the First Whisper.
 - Notice the first feeling, image, or thought that arises.
- Seal It With Intention.
 - Whisper Abraham Hicks’ reminder: *I made my decision, and I make it the right one.*
- Notice the Flow.
 - Step back and breathe. Feel how the energy shifts. Even the smallest choice ripples through your home—and your life.

And Now It's Your Turn

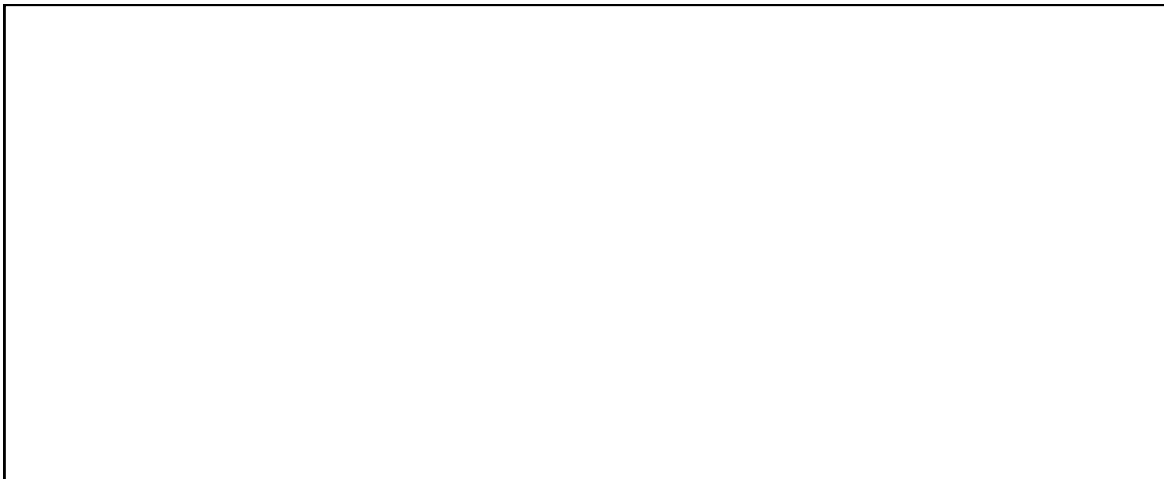
Why did you choose your home? What intention did you have for your journey? Does the space mirror it back to you?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the first question.

What are you projecting into your space that is stopping you from achieving your goals?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the second question.

How will you change your decor to reflect new intentions?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the third question.



Symbolic Decorating

"When I saw you, I fell in love. And, you smiled because you knew."

William Shakespeare

A symbol is a concrete representation of an abstract thought. Symbolic decorating works like this: every time you see a piggy bank, you more than likely think of saving money. If you don't place a value judgement of right or wrong on the symbol, the idea of wealth enters your subconscious mind. Over time, you just might start believing you are prosperous and, like a boomerang, you send those signals out into the world on a clear path so they can return in a form of prosperity. Symbolic decorating is a powerful and effective way to manifest your goals because nothing is ever accomplished until you first see it in yourself.

Becoming

Symbolic decorating will help you attain your goals, but only to the extent of your belief. For example: if your subconscious mind views your wealth symbol as a joke, you will continue traveling through life with a poverty mentality. It is my belief that while computers have aided in making our communications easier, the devices we carry and use daily have complicated our lives more than we could have imagined. Why? The number of images that come before our eyes and into our minds is enormous and this leaves very little room for the concept of sanctuary to enter. It is up to each of us to clear the clutter in our minds to make room for positive thoughts. When our minds are cleared of clutter we "become."

Let your symbols tell a story. See your home as a stage and your decor as the set design. As protagonist, your symbols enhance your developing story.

Nine Life Aspirations

The Bagua is a map representing nine life aspirations. It is shaped in the form of an octagon with three rows. The bottom row represents your now: the knowledge you have garnered, your career and the helpful people in your life. The middle row focuses on your support in life: family, health, and your creativity. The last three or top row will assist in creating your future: the money or prosperity you wish to gain, what you want to be known for and the relationships you wish to find or the ones you wish to maintain. Keep in mind that each of the nine life aspirations should contain an aspect of the overall intention you have for your space. The Bagua presented on page 47 is from the teachings of Professor Thomas Lin Yin, founder of the Black Sect Tantric Buddhist (Black Hat) School of Feng Shui.

Want Change? Start With Your Vision Board!

A vision board is a visual display of pictures that represent your aspirations. Here is one way to create one: Gather images that reflect your goals and arrange them on a board using the three rows described above. Ask yourself what is happening now in the bottom row, what supports you in the middle row, and what you are moving toward in the top row. When you are finished, place the board where you will see it throughout the day.

There are many different types of symbols and you may be wondering if there is only one correct symbol and one correct way to use it. The answer is NO to both questions. Here's why: Beauty is indeed in the eyes of the beholder. Use examples of themes that appeal to you. Become the author of your own creative style. Here are a few examples:

- Geraniums are believed to attract prosperity.
- Turtles represent longevity and career luck.
- Dragons symbolize wisdom and strength.
- Horses running toward you show opportunities are on the way.
- A pair of birds represent union between two people.
- Oranges are indicative of wealth and heavenly blessings.
- Hematite is the stone of protection.
- Bells speak of something or someone calling to you.

Keys To Creativity

Every Symbol Tells a Story

Every object in your home is more than decoration. It is a symbol that reflects who you are, what you value, and what you invite into your life. What you place on your walls, your shelves, and your tabletops quietly tells the story of your inner world.

When your symbol carries beauty, it multiplies beauty. If it carries heaviness or confusion, it quietly reinforces that energy every time you see it. A misinterpreted or unconscious symbol can whisper a message you never intended.

This is the quiet power of symbolic decorating. Your surroundings tell your story, and in return, they gently influence the story you continue to live.

Think of the symbols you choose—a piece of art, a photograph, a sacred image, even a family heirloom. Each one tells a story. The question is: *Is it telling the story you want reflected back to you?*

In Greek mythology, Narcissus mistook his reflection for reality. He became captivated by an image instead of understanding what it represented. Symbols can have the same effect. When we fail to understand the messages surrounding us, we risk becoming trapped by them rather than transformed by them. The lesson is timeless: reflections matter, but they must be understood.

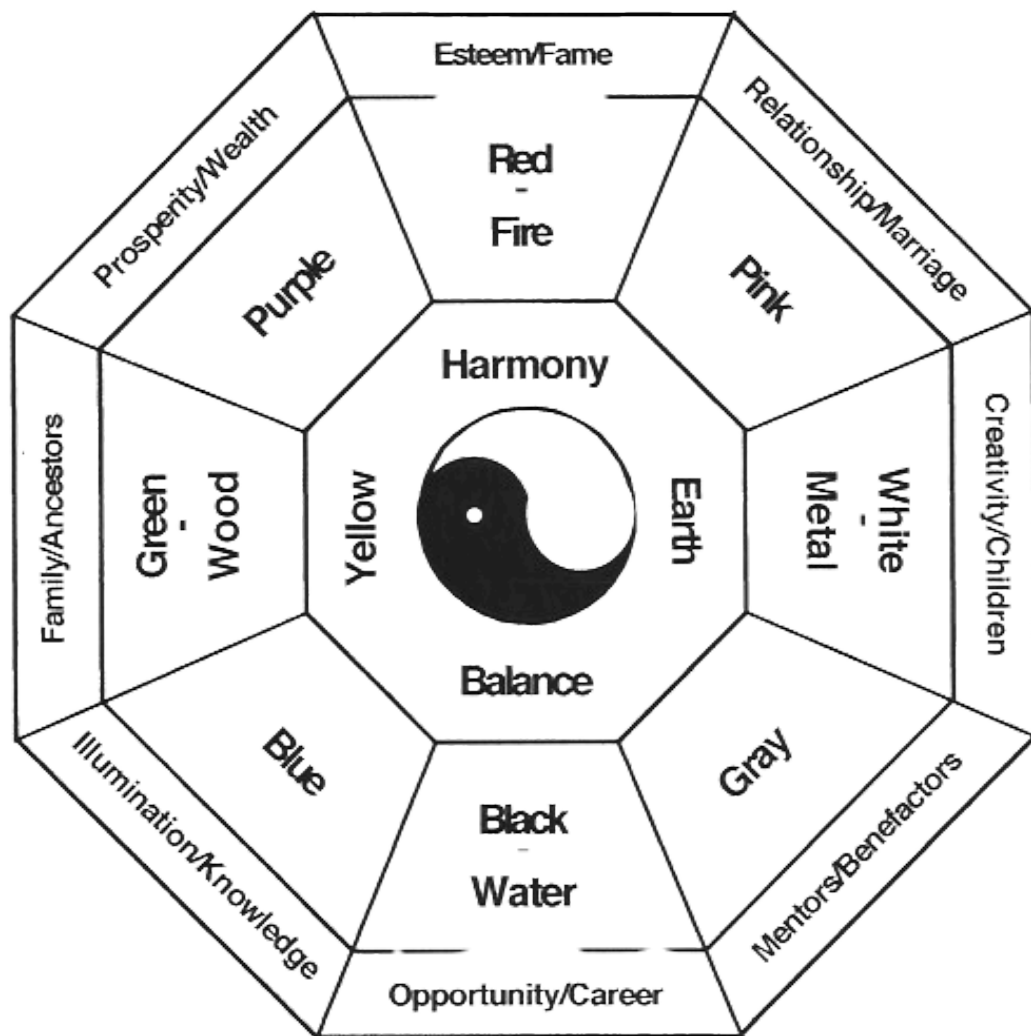
So it is with our homes. The symbols we choose become part of our story. They can either echo confusion or multiply beauty. The question is: What story do you want your home to tell?

A Guided Practice

Reading Your Symbols

- *Choose One Symbol.*
 - Walk through your home and stop at one object on a wall or shelf that catches your eye—a picture, a symbol, a keepsake.
- *Ask What It Reflects.*
 - Stand before it and whisper: *What are you showing me about myself?* Notice the feeling or memory it brings.
- *Discern Its Meaning.*
 - Does this symbol uplift you? Does it tell the story you want to live now? Or does it echo something outdated, heavy, or confusing?
- *Decide With Intention.*
 - If it affirms you, keep it in place with gratitude. If it feels off, move it, store it, or release it. Say aloud: *I choose what reflects me now.*
- *Return Often.*
 - Make this a ritual: walk your home with new eyes. Ask your symbols: *Are you still telling my true story?*

The Feng Shui Bagua



And Now It's Your Turn

Write down your intention for each of the nine life aspirations

Your Now

Your Knowledge _____

Career _____

Helpful People _____

Your Support

Family _____

Health _____

Creativity _____

Your Future

Prosperity _____

Fame _____

Relationships _____

Find Your Pictures, Create Your Vision Board



Decorating With Color & Shapes

*"I found I could say things with color and shapes that
I couldn't say any other way."*

Georgia O'Keeffe

To appreciate how color and shape influence a room, it's helpful to see how each one has influenced human life across time. Their history reveals why we instinctively respond to them the way we do.

A Short History of Color

Since our earliest days, humans have turned to color to understand the world. Ancient people painted cave walls with red ochre and charcoal to record stories and sacred moments. Egyptians used blue for the heavens and green for life; across Asia, color became a system of harmony tied to seasons and elements. Over time, artists discovered that color is simply light made visible, yet it still affects us in ways that are emotional and deeply human.

A Short History of Shapes

Shapes are some of the oldest symbols we know. Circles appeared in the sun and moon and came to signify wholeness. Squares and rectangles offered the stability of early shelters, while triangles lifted our eyes toward temples and pyramids. Cultures around the world used these simple forms to express unity, grounding, aspiration, and growth. Even today, the shapes in a room shape how we feel—often without us realizing it.

Keys To Creativity

Emotional Response to Color

Color is a language the heart understands without translation. It stirs memory, shifts mood, and awakens energy. To decorate with color is to paint your home with emotion, turning walls and objects into reflections of how you wish to feel. Color in the home tells a story.

Keep in mind that while the emotional response to color is specific to the individual, a universal theme is found in each color. Here is a presentation of ways color can be used to influence how you feel. (*Feng Shui Design* by Sarah Rossbach and Master Lin Yun 1998)

- Purple, deep red, or plum are the colors of richness and power.
- Peach stands for romance and attraction.
- Orange is optimistic and connotes happiness and enthusiasm.
- Red is auspicious, the color of passion and fame.
- Pink connotes love, joy, romance and happiness.
- Yellow stands for tolerance, patience, and wisdom.
- Blue symbolizes trust, loyalty and wisdom.
- Green evokes hope, family tranquility, spring and growth.
- Brown stands for stability, depth and the passage of time.
- Tan or cafe au lait evokes new possibilities.
- Gray is the marriage of black and white and is akin to balance.
- Black or deep, dark colors convey spirituality and wisdom and can also, in large amounts, invoke depression and lack of hope.
- White is the color of purity, perfection and honesty.

Everyone sees color differently. What looks soothing to one person might feel flat to another. The best color palette for your home often begins with something you already love—a scarf, a painting, or a picture frame. Let your favorite color become the seed for an entire room's color scheme.

When you choose a shade you love and a form that speaks to you, you are composing your own personal palette of energy. A cobalt-blue circle mirror, a golden square pillow, a red triangular candleholder—each one is more than décor. It is part of your story, anchoring your thoughts and desires in place and reminding you of who you are becoming.

Keys To Creativity

The Power of Shapes

Don't stop with color. Long before we studied design, shapes spoke to us by echoing the patterns of nature that stirred responses deep in the body. In decorating, shapes are more than outlines; they are the silent architecture of feeling. A round mirror feels different from a square one. A tall, triangular roofline lifts our gaze upward in a way a low, flat ceiling never can. Shapes are a visual language that speaks to us at a level deeper than words.

Throughout history, certain shapes grouped together to become what is now called sacred geometry. Plato described the Platonic Solids—five perfect 3-D shapes (cube, sphere, tetrahedron, dodecahedron, icosahedron,) as the building blocks of the universe. Across cultures, sacred geometry has shown up in cathedrals, mandalas, temples, and even in the cells of plants. Shapes are not just decoration; they express nature's harmony.

Here are a few shapes and the feelings each one invokes:

- Circle: Heaven, wholeness, unity, timelessness.
- Square: Earth, stability, grounding, balance.
- Triangle: Fire, aspiration, movement, transformation.
- Spiral: Growth, unfolding, the journey of life.
- Flower of Life: interconnection of all things, the web of creation.
- Seed of Life: beginnings, potential, a reminder of fresh starts.
- Vesicca Pisces: the union of opposites, a doorway into new possibilities.
- Sri Yantra: a map for spiritual journeying, inward and outward.
- Metatron's Cube: the cosmic blueprint, containing all the Platonic solids.

You don't need to memorize them all or decorate with each one. Even one meaningful symbol can subtly shift the feeling of a room.

Shapes in Relation to Five Element Theory

Five shapes represent each of the five elements. The *rectangle* represents *wood*, the *upward-pointing triangle* represents *fire*, the *square* represents *earth*, the *circle* represents *metal*, and *wavy lines* represent *water*. If your color palette is comprised of neutrals, and you wish to add more emotion to your room, add the feeling with the element's appropriate shape.

Keys To Creativity

Adding Yin and Yang Decorating To The Mix

The energy of your home, in balance, will be approximately 60% yang and 40% yin. You will not move forward in your life if the balance is 50/50.



Gathering rooms such as the living/family room, dining room, kitchen and entryways are predominately yang in nature. Conversely, those rooms that are private, such as bedrooms, libraries, and meditation rooms are yin in nature.

Use hard shiny surfaces, elements and bold colors that evoke the sense of yang in common rooms and choose soft fabrics, elements and pastels or neutral colors to create the feeling of yin in private rooms.

While each element has a mixture of both yin and yang, metal, fire and wood lean toward the yang side while earth and water offer softness and the feelings of yin.

A Guided Practice

Creating your Personal Palette

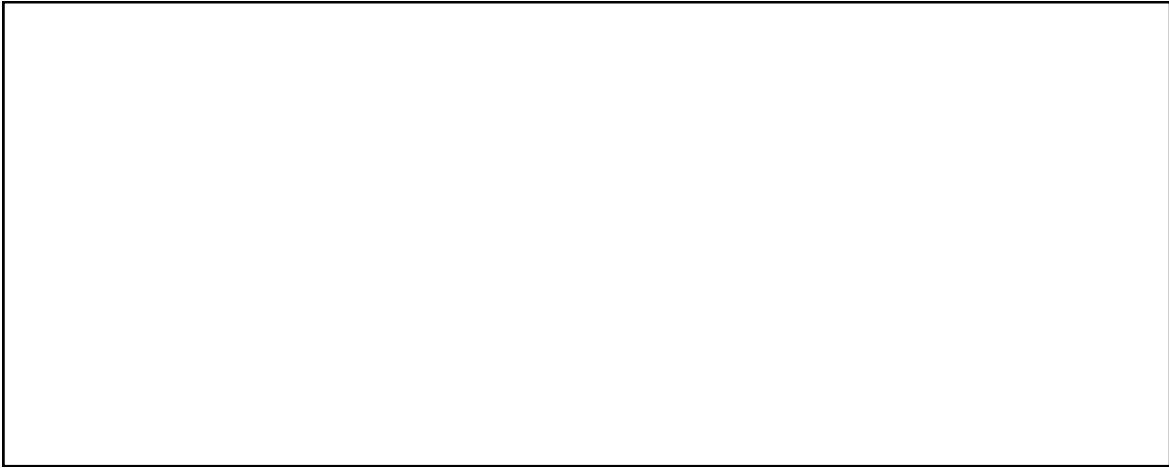
Close your eyes. Take one deep breath in ... and slowly let it out. Picture a color appearing before you. Let it come naturally. Breathe it in and notice how it makes you feel.

Now, see a shape forming within the color ... maybe a circle, square, triangle, or spiral.

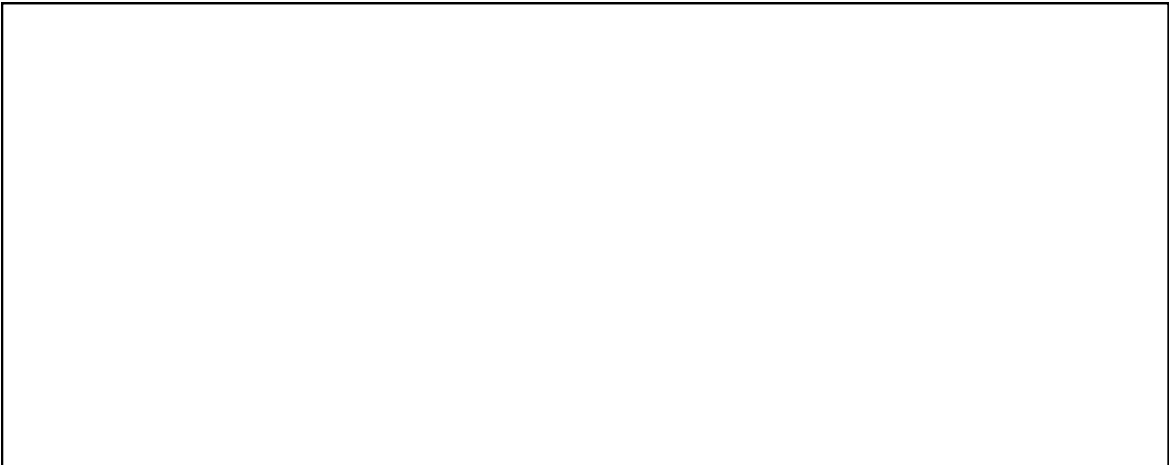
- Trust what shows up. This color and shape are your allies today. Imagine placing them somewhere in your home as a small object, artwork, or simply in your mind's eye.
- As you notice your color and shape, remember they can also connect with elements—the circle with heaven and wholeness, the square with earth and grounding, the triangle with fire and transformation, the spiral with growth and unfolding. Together, color, shape, and elements create the aura of your home.
- Take one more breath ... and when you're ready, open your eyes, carrying this color, shape, and element with you.

And Now It's Your Turn

Are the colors in your space creating the feeling of beauty?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to write their response to the question about colors.

How about the shapes of your decor—do they add the appropriate emotional meaning?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to write their response to the question about shapes.

What changes, if any, will you make?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to write their response to the question about changes.



Ceremony

*“That I think, is the power of ceremony. It marries the mundane to the sacred.
The water turns to wine; the coffee to a prayer.”*

Robin Wall Kimmerer

You are almost to the finish line—you created your intention, your energy is flowing smoothly, you are living a life of balance and you are realizing your goals. Your home is reflecting back to you who you are in this moment.

So, What Is Next?

In our modern digital society, our heads are buried in computers, phones, and entertainment devices, leaving little time to stop and smell the roses. At first blush, finding moments of stillness may seem impossible. Reset yourself by taking the time to celebrate the cycles of life. Appreciate the beauty around you. Small acts like these allow you to be fully present in the moment. Your senses engage and your perception of beauty increases.

The act of “Ceremony” is the tool that allows you to deepen your ability to connect to yourself and to others. Even though we typically celebrate birthdays, spiritual holidays and special occasions throughout each year, we often slip quickly back into the clamor of our daily routines.

Become a friend to yourself by adding simple acts of ceremony to your daily routine. The unwanted noise in your mind will subside—new inspirations will rise to the surface.

Tips For Creating Ceremony

- Set aside time to observe and honor the rhythms of nature: Spring is the phase for new growth, summer is akin to high growth, fall is the time to harvest and winter is when we rest.
- Rotate garden art, your dining place mats, and perhaps your comforter to acknowledge these cycles of life.
- Recognize the solstice and equinox junctures, the moon cycles, and each day the sun as it rises in the morning, then turns her power over to the moon at night, only to rise again the next morning.



- Learn a new language.
- Join a drumming circle.
- Listen to your favorite music.
- Create a daily routine that honors your need to be in the moment: visualize, prepare nourishing meals and exercise. Set aside time to spend with family and friends. Get outside—putting your bare feet on the ground is a great way to connect with nature.
- Leave the worries and concerns of the day outside your space. Create a ritual by placing a worry-pot by your front door and as you re-enter your space leave your worries in the pot.
- Volunteer: the act of helping others makes us feel good about ourselves.
- Journal—write down and describe your affirmations. Make a “today I will” list. Ask: what is the most important task I need to accomplish today? Then complete it.
- At the beginning of the year, create new goals. Change the pictures on your vision board to reflect them.
- Recharge your batteries by taking a yearly vacation or even a staycation with intention—one that is full of “happenings” that enrich your life.

Keys To Creativity

Become an Alchemist

The ancients looked up at the sky not only for timekeeping but for wisdom. The movement of the sun through solstice and equinox was more than celestial mechanics—it was the unfolding of an eternal mystery: the meeting and transformation of opposites.

At the Equinoxes, light and dark stand as equals. These thresholds taught that balance is a dynamic, living tension—a dance where opposites touch and, for a moment, dissolve into harmony.

At the Solstices, the sun reaches its furthest edge and either floods the world with light or cloaks it in the longest night. These extremes are celebrated as reminders that transformation is born from contrast: the beauty found in life requires both abundance and withdrawal, brilliance and shadow.

For the alchemist, seasonal gates became symbols of the inner journey. Just as metals are refined in fire, so the human soul is tempered through the rhythm of nature. The solstice reveals what is hidden in excess or absence; the equinox whispers the secret of union.

To celebrate these moments is to enter the same living alchemy, to embrace duality, to honor the cycle, and to discover wholeness in the turning of the year.

Composting is Part of Creative Alchemy

Just as the alchemists worked with base matter to reveal hidden gold, the earth teaches us the same lesson through composting. The fallen leaves of autumn, the withered plants of summer, and the scraps of daily life return to the soil, breaking down in the dark quiet of winter. In this dissolution, nothing is wasted—what seems like decay becomes the fertile ground for spring's renewal.

The act of composting reminds us that our endings are never final; they are transformations. To honor the turning of the seasons is to trust this alchemy of nature: that death feeds life, darkness nurtures light, and what we release becomes the seedbed for new beginnings.

A Guided Practice

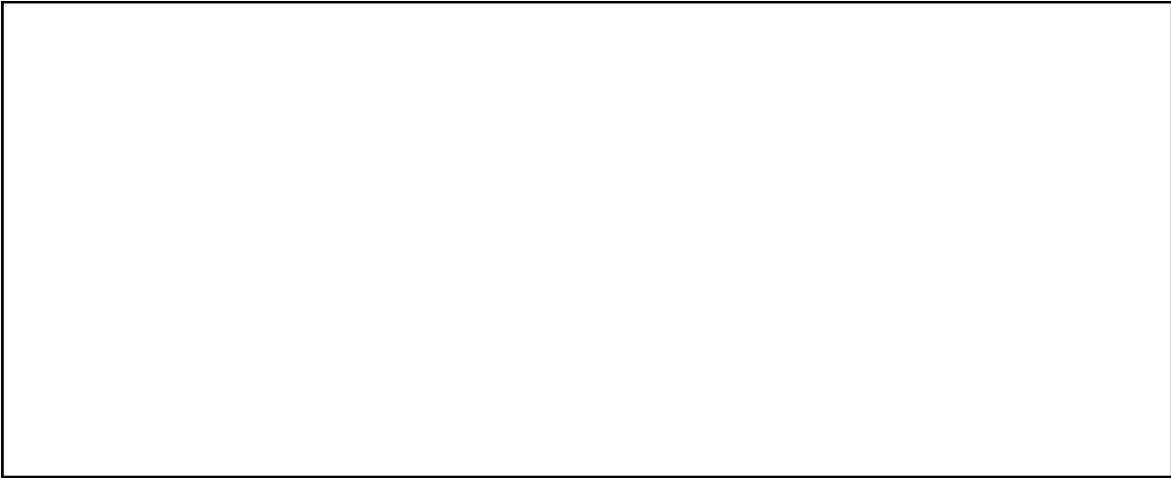
Trust Yourself, Trust in the Rhythm of Life

Alchemy is never a straight path; it's a cycle of dissolving and reforming, darkening and brightening, trial and transformation. To enter that process requires faith in the rhythm of life: the process is not rushing the stages, not fearing the darkness and not clinging to the light. This is the essence of trust.

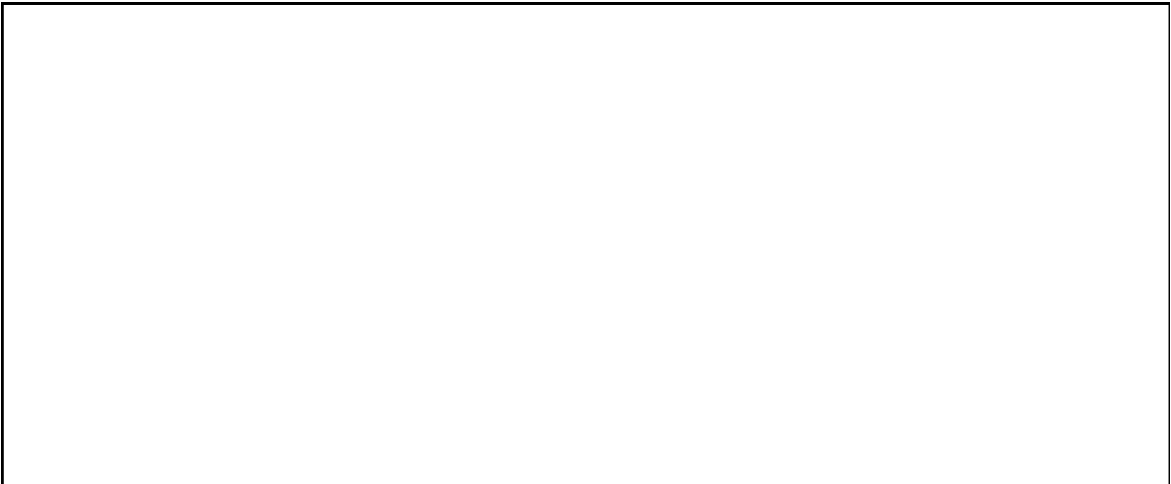
- Visualize the Circle of the Seasons. Imagine the wheel of the year turning around you—spring, summer, autumn, winter. Feel yourself held within this great rhythm, knowing you are a part of the circle.
- Descent and Rising. As you inhale, imagine descending into stillness, like winter's quiet. As you exhale, imagine rising into light, like summer's warmth. Notice how each is necessary, how one breath contains both.
- Trust in the transformation. Bring to mind a challenge, uncertainty, or question in your life. Place it gently in your heart space. Whisper inwardly: I trust the rhythm of my life. I trust the alchemy of change. Feel the words sink in, as if the earth itself is holding them for you.
- Integration. Rest in the awareness that every birthday, every season, every stage, has its purpose:
 - Darkness ripens the seed.
 - Light reveals the blossom.
 - Balance restores the whole.
- Trust that you, too, are moving through your own perfect cycle.
- Take a final deep breath. As you exhale, bow gently to yourself honoring your willingness to trust the alchemy of your own becoming.

And Now It's Your Turn

Create a daily routine that honors you and nourishes your soul.



How will you recharge your batteries this year?



Do you revisit your intentions yearly? If not, determine why.



Part III

Putting It All Together





A Container for Your Story

"Human nature is like water, it takes the shape of its container."

Wallace Stevens

The ancient Chinese believed that good fortune would be theirs if their ancestors smiled down on them. This would only happen if their graves were placed in auspicious positions away from possibilities of damage by the elements. Wind blew away sand covering the graves; water easily washed away the site. The Chinese word for wind is Feng and water is Shui; the philosophy of placement called Feng Shui came forth from the need to keep wind and water away from grave sites.

This "need" produced a style of Feng Shui known as the Land Form School of Thought. Four "Celestial Animals" are positioned to create a container to host the site of the dwelling. The home is nestled in front of a high ridge of mountains or trees—think of a Turtle with its hard, protecting shell offering shelter from the elements. On the left side (as you look out the front door) visualize a lower ridge of hills or trees and the Dragon appears to offer even more protection. On the right, see the Tiger granting its wisdom and sitting on an even lower barrier of hills or shrubs. The front of the home is open to the world so that its Phoenix Bird can fly high and free to search for new opportunities.

Today, we are no longer guided by the siting of graves, yet the truth remains: the spaces we live in hold us, shape us, and tell our story.

Microcosms of Nature

Coming home to a space that honors nature and her rhythms helps us to remember to live a life of balance. Representing the Yin and Yang of nature with her elements reminds us of our daily dance between our polar opposites and most of all reminds us to create beauty in our home.

Creating microcosms of nature begins when you visualize your property as a container with your home sitting in the middle. In your mind's eye see the empty space between the outside walls of your home and the walls of the container. Use your senses to determine how the empty space feels? Do you see microcosms of nature? Do you see beauty?

Just as garden soil, rich with nutrients, enables seeds to sprout and grow, your property can become fertile soil, rich with your intentions, that allow you to sprout and grow and become all that you choose to be.

The Power of Biophilic Design

“The power of Biophilic Design is not about discovering something new, but about rediscovering what we already know.”

Nicole Craanan

Biophilic Design is an approach to design that intentionally connects people with microcosms of nature through elements such as natural light, materials, colors, forms, and views. It supports well-being by evoking the harmony and vitality found in the natural world.

Its scope reaches beyond our homes, moving from interiors to the creation of Biophilic designed buildings, to landscaping, and outward to the exteriors of the natural world. Along the way, it illustrates how exposure to nature enhances how you feel and how sustainable practices protect the resources we depend on.

In relationship to Feng Shui, Biophilic Design can be seen as its modern complement—both seek balance, flow, and connection to life's energy. While Feng Shui uses ancient principles of spatial harmony and energy alignment, Biophilic Design lets us express these same ideals through contemporary, evidence-based design that nurtures human health and emotional resonance with nature.

Create a Classic Armchair For Your Property

It's easy to create your own "Classic Armchair" no matter where you live. Use symbols and place them with intention. Be creative. If your home is sited on a yard that does not offer the Turtle for protection, plant a tree in the center of the back yard that will grow tall and wide. The dragon can be created with wavy garden art: place stepping stones to create the dragon's tail or use trellises of uneven heights. The Tiger can be created in a similar, but lower manner. And finally, if you are fortunate enough to enjoy a front door that is not blocked by a wall or large tree, your Phoenix Bird will fly free and without obstruction. If your view is blocked, place garden art on the wall outside your front door. Choose items that represent the opportunities you wish to see.



Here's How It Works In Apartments

Turtle

- Meaning: Support, stability, protection.
- Apartment use:
 - A solid wall or high-backed headboard behind your bed or chair.
 - Tall bookcases, cabinets, or solid artwork behind seating areas.

Dragon

- Meaning: Yang, vitality, growth.
- Apartment use:
 - Slightly taller, stronger furniture or décor on the left side (plants, lamps, a bookcase.)
 - If using shapes: vertical, upright forms (rectangles) or leafy plants—do not use wavy lines (those belong to Water, not Wood/Dragon.)

Tiger

- Meaning: Yin, control, restraint.
- Apartment use:
 - Lower, softer furniture on the right side (a chair, side table, low shelf).
 - Shapes: round or softer edges (metal association).

Phoenix Bird

- Meaning: Vision, opportunities, openness.
- Apartment use:
 - Keep an open, clear space in front (don't block with tall furniture.)
 - A small, symbolic "perch" like a coffee table, rug, or artwork can represent the Phoenix rising.

Keys To Creativity

Tell A Story

Just as water takes the shape of its container, our life stories are shaped by the containers we create.

Your home is more than a shelter. It is a stage upon which your daily life unfolds. Every chair, window, and table speaks in the language of your story. When you choose colors, arrange furniture, or bring in beloved objects, you are authoring the narrative of who you are and how you wish to live.

This is where beauty becomes practical. A well-designed “container” not only protects your energy but also encourages you to flourish. Just as the turtle shields, the dragon lifts, the tiger steadies, and the phoenix bird opens the way forward, your home can cradle you while offering a clear path toward the future.

Space That Delights Your Senses and Nourishes Your Soul

Earlier, we explored how to create space that delights your senses and nourishes your soul. This is the essence of home as the container of your Chi or energy: one that feels safe, yet alive with possibility. It is a place where beauty does more than please the eye—it supports your body, lifts your spirit, and whispers encouragement for your journey.

Your home does not need to be large or luxurious to be powerful. Even a single room, lovingly arranged, can hold your Chi with grace. When you step inside and feel peace, when you breathe in and sense delight, you know your container is serving you well.

You know you are Bringing Beauty Home.

Guided Practice

Building Your Container

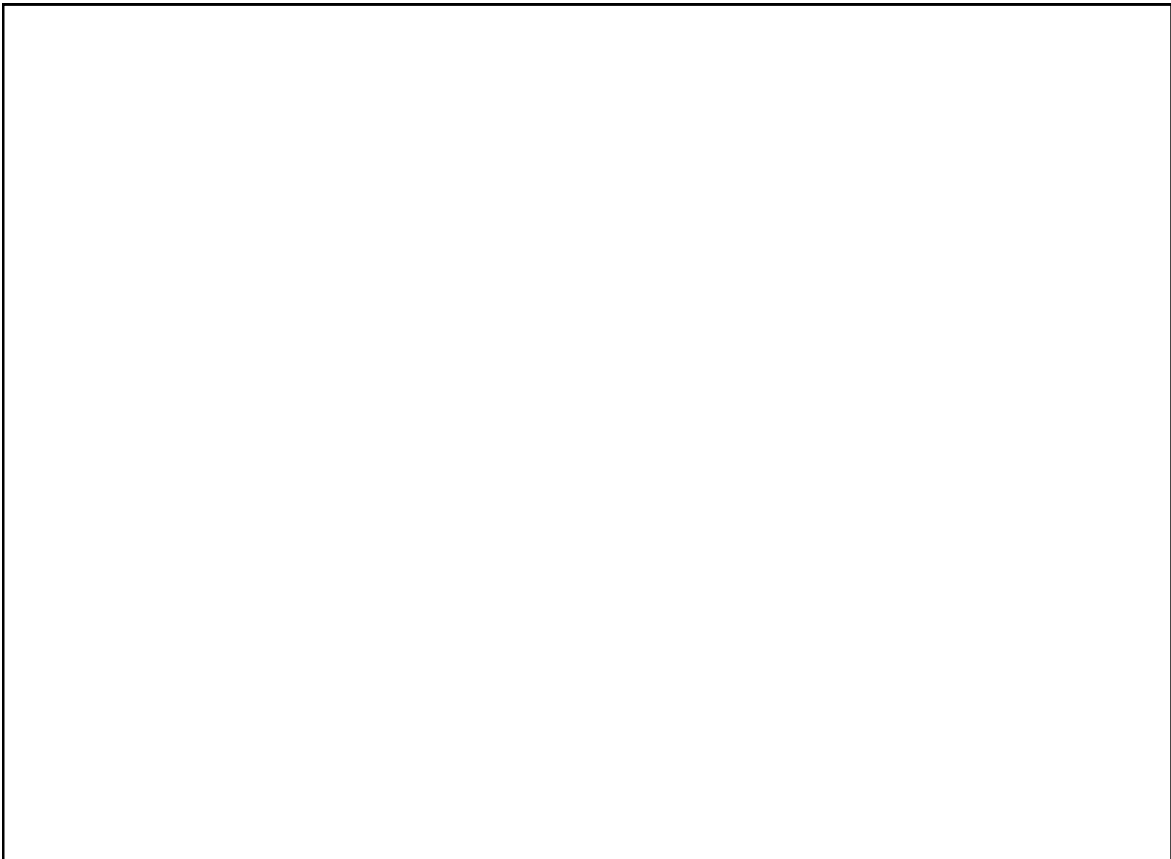
Find a quiet place to sit, with a journal nearby, if you like. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, settling into the present moment.

Imagine your home as a vessel—a bowl, an armchair, a sacred container. See yourself sitting within it; you are supported by the turtle’s strength, lifted by the dragon’s energy, steadied by the tiger’s wisdom, and opened by the phoenix’s vision.

Now, ask yourself “What story do I wish my home to tell?”

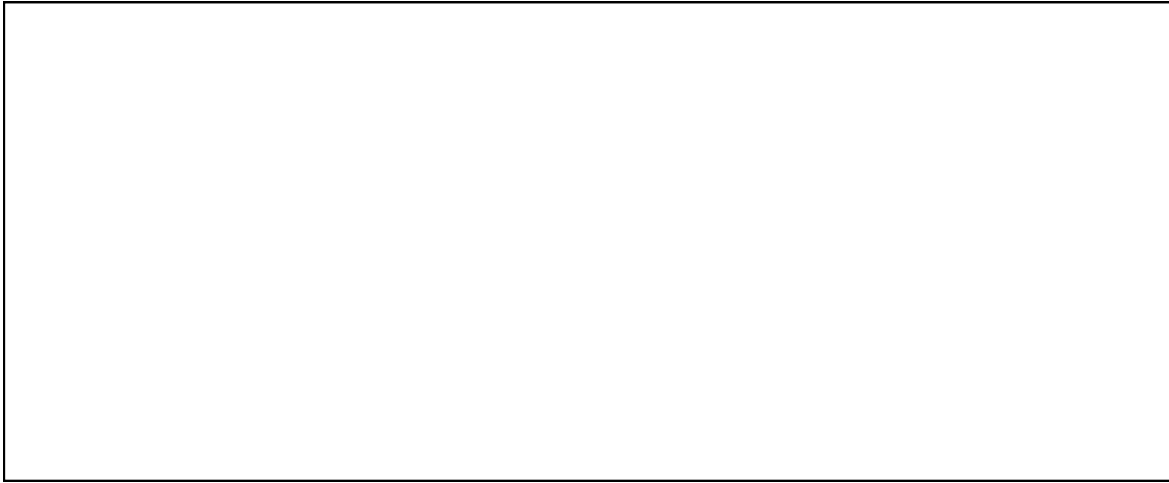
- Is it a story of rest and peace?
- A story of joy and laughter?
- A story of growth and creativity?
- Or all three?

Let the answer rise gently. When you’re ready, open your eyes and write down the story you wish your home—your container—to hold.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their story.

And Now It's Your Turn

Do the boundaries of your property keep your positive energy within? If not, where are the holes?

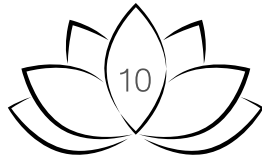


Do you see a microcosm of nature within these boundaries?



What changes will you make?





"You Say Goodbye And I Say Hello!"

"Hello, Goodbye." Magical Mystery Tour, Apple Records,
1967.



Beauty as the Beginning of Creation

*“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes”*

Marcel Proust

When we Bring Beauty Home, we are not simply decorating a space—we are tuning into the atmosphere of our lives. A beautiful home does not shout; it whispers balance, calm, and possibility. Every clear surface, every chosen color, every open window invites the energy of harmony to settle around us.

From this quiet harmony, inspiration begins to stir. A home aligned with beauty becomes fertile ground for creativity, clarity, and courage—the same qualities that shape meaningful work in the world. Order in your surroundings becomes order in your thoughts. Flowing with grace in your rooms naturally allows grace in your choices. The gentle rhythm of your daily space begins to echo through everything you create.

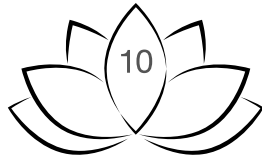
Entrepreneurship, artistry, leadership—all are born from this same center of stillness. When the home supports the soul, the soul feels free to expand outward, to imagine, to build, to serve.

So as you close these pages, see your home not only as a sanctuary but as a studio—a place where beauty gives birth to ideas, where inspiration becomes tangible, and where the art of living and the art of working meet in one continuous flow. Your story flows easily and effortlessly from here!

What Is The Story You Wish To Tell?



Make It Magical—Make It Beautiful



Odds & Ends

"Even the Odds 'n Ends have a story to tell."

Melissa Nelson



Chinese Coins

Circle = Heaven and the Square = Earth

Helpful People

MasAti
www.thexicode.com

Christian Kyriacou
www.thehousewhisperer.tv

Nicole Craanen
thebiophilicinstitute.com

Jill Morton
www.colormatters.com

Carol Assa
www.invisiblearchitecture.com

Helpful Creative Resources

Canva
www.canva.com

ChatGPT
www.chatgpt.com