

LINDA ELLSON: Feng shui for the home



Linda Ellson tried feng shui as a lark—now it's a career. Below, right: The Pa Qua illustrates the basic principles of feng shui.

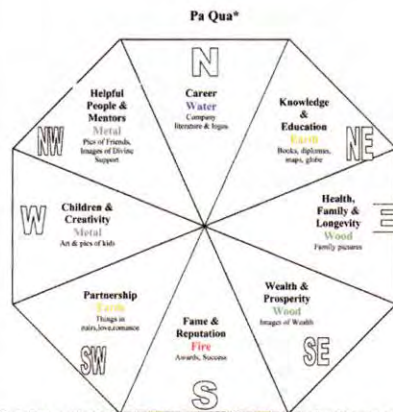
On page 34, we feature a Williamsville home that was decorated using feng shui recommendations from Linda Ellson, owner of Feng Shui Your World. Now in business for ten years, Ellson was first drawn to feng shui when a coworker gave her a book about it. Ellson, who had just returned to Buffalo after a stint in New York City, hadn't heard of feng shui, but was intrigued and, wanting to be happy and successful in her new job, decided to experiment. Following the book's advice, she angled her desk accordingly, and bought a plant and a fountain. It was all in fun, until she saw the results.

Buffalo Spree: *So what happened?*
Linda Ellson: People started migrating into my office—from accounts payable up to the CEO—and saying, 'Wow, it looks really nice in here,' but the bigger thing was that they were saying 'It feels really good in here.' And then over the next nine months, I got two job promotions and three pay increases, and I thought 'There must be something to this!' I started reading every book I could get my hands on and started daydream-

ing about how I'd love to do this for other people. Eventually, I became a Certified Feng Shui Practitioner in the traditional classical form, which looks at how energy changes in a home over time.

So what is feng shui?

On my website [fengshuiyourworld.biz], it says that feng shui (which is pronounced foong-schway) translates to wind and water. It's the ancient Chinese art and sci-



*The Pa Qua is an eight sided octagon map of your home or office used to interpret Feng Shui sectors in space or a given room. It corresponds with the four cardinal points of the compass and the four sub-directions.

The Five Elements

The Five elements are the five different types of energy. Use this chart as a reference for elemental enhancements.

Fire	Metal	Water	Wood
Colors: earth tones, beige, browns and yellow.	Colors: white, gray or metallic like gold and silver	Colors: blue or black	Color: green
Shape is Square.	Shape is a Triangle or pointed like a star.	Shape is wavy.	Shape is a rectangle.
Examples: Crystal and gemstones, pottery or a picture of a mountain	Examples: A gold picture frame, a fireplace, a star or silver candlesticks	Examples: A picture of a blue sky, a fountain (where called for), blue bottles or a black throw rug	Examples: Plants, wood furniture, picture of a forest or flowers

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“I don’t consider feng shui a magic pill, but in a stressful, demanding world, if we can find a way to make life a little more harmonious, it’s worth a shot.”

ence of placement, which links people to their surroundings to promote success in life, health, love, wealth, and happiness through the awareness of the flow of chi (universal life-force energy), and by creating a space that is balanced, peaceful, and energized all at the same time. In traditional form feng shui, there are five elements: earth, fire, metal, water, and wood. It’s what we find in nature, so you’re creating a space based on a 3,000-year-old-tradition that taps into the rhythm of nature

Then there are different sectors, so if someone wants to enhance their career, that’s the north. If they want to support their children or their creativity, that’s the west. The east is about family and longevity; south is fame and reputation, and also the media. Southeast is wealth and prosperity, northeast is knowledge and education, northwest is helpful people, mentors, and male head of household, and southwest is love, marriage, partnership, and female head of household. If you want to tip the energetic scales, or enhance a certain [aspect], you would support or fortify that area.

How do you do that?

I work with a formula and an analysis that uses a combination of the direction the house faces, when it was built, the date people moved in, the dates of major renovations. (I also look at directions that people sit and lie in bed at night and there’s a formula based on the person’s birthday to put them in their power direction—should the bed be on the west or north wall, etc.) The basic language of the elements is the same, but specifically where you need those elements is going to vary.

So if you need earth to enhance a certain area, in a modern home, that could trans-

late to colors like yellow, taupe, beige, brown, the neutrals. It could be adding something decoratively like Italian pottery, or choosing marble or granite floors instead of wood. For water, it could be a fish tank or glass bottles because to the chi, glass represents water. Maybe you need wood in the east for vitality of family, and that could be a potted plant or two, or floral designs; striping also represents wood. If you need metal in your home, it

could be faux finishing with metallic colors, or in the west, simply putting pictures of your children in metal frames instead of wood. It’s all about why you feel so good in nature. If you go to Delaware Park, there’s Mirror Lake—water—and the sun is shining—fire—and the trees are in bloom—wood—and you sit on a nice metal bench and that’s really tapping into the five elements.



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Who are your clients?

Sometimes people who move into a home and just want an analysis, or sometimes people come to me with real issues like they're battling depression and want to know what they can do to support themselves and their homes. Ultimately, feng shui goes beyond what color the walls are; for many, it's a lifestyle. For a person who's really into it, if something is going on, they look to the home. If the family is bickering, they may realize that in the east, they've been neglecting the garden so they go trim back the bushes, and that is their empowering step in improving the family dynamic.

What kind of feedback do you get?

Mostly I'll hear about kids doing better in school, relationships improving, meeting someone, or getting a promotion. Years ago, I had a client with a young son in the hospital for ten days with RSV [respiratory syncytial virus], and she called me to feng shui his room. The first thing I noticed was that his crib was in direct line of the door—which is called a poison arrow—and right under a window. It was a noisy room with all the monitors going and we moved him to be sleeping to the northeast to take him out of the line of fire and all of the sudden, the room fell silent, and the mother started screaming and crying and pointing to the monitor—his oxygen saturation had gone to 100 percent, which is unbelievable. Does that always happen? No. Was it miraculous? Yes.

I don't consider feng shui a magic pill, but in a stressful, demanding world, if we can find a way to make life a little more harmonious, it's worth a shot. If nothing else, it creates mindfulness. It opens up dialogue: how is my career, my family, health, kids, bottom line, am I happy? In feng shui, we look to balance things out, even symbolically, maybe as simply as having a happy family picture in the east to slow you down and put a little attention there. Maybe energy flows to where we give it attention; it could be that, too. ■

Donna Hoke lives in a south-facing house, which signifies a female head of household in the media who is known in the community.



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