

## Insights and inspirations from the world of...

*Feng Shui: Make the most of your environment before it makes less of you*

By Rhea Blanken

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To find one's equilibrium and to flourish in the world – feeling expressed, satisfied and fulfilled – requires practice and discipline. While we may say harmony in our lives and in our environment is what we want, achieving it with any consistency does not seem to come easily. Suppose that the universe without us is in balance and it's us humans creating our own imbalance. Maybe constructing our work and home lives and environments as renewing spaces matters more now than ever. Maybe it's all related to how the world occurs for us – since that's what gives us our actions, notions and predictions about the future.

There are numerous practices and disciplines available to enhance our capacity for creating a balanced life regardless of the demands, influences and impact of work and home responsibilities and worldly circumstances. The Chinese practice of feng shui may offer access to our relationship with the physical universe and our environment.

***Half-a-bubble-off*** When our lives seem “out of kilter,” we may find ourselves saying “Why does this keep happening?” Feng shui offers observations to help us understand how circumstances can alter what's occurring in our environments. It offers a series of practices regarding our physical world – how it reflects us, allows us to alter who we are and who we are yet to be.

“Feng” means wind and “shui” is water – both are natural elements that flow and move everywhere on earth. Each has its visible and invisible aspect. Yin is the passive side of nature and Yang is the active side. They are complementary opposites. Training ourselves to observe when we are leaning toward one side will enable self-correction and re-balance. Further, feng shui has a holistic view of the world and how it is related through energy (chi – life force) flowing or being blocked. Take the time to examine where our lives move forward or are being thwarted; adjust the environment to promote the flow; then our actions and intentions become clearer. Great athletes visualize and feel desired results

before they happen, and further, expect the results to happen – we could do the same.

### **Three realms of influence**

The practice of feng shui includes actions that involve:

- The Heaven realm that takes into account the daily influencers of climate, air quality, etc. and timing to begin an endeavor for its best chance for success.
- The Earth realm relates to the materials needed to sustain life, including how we position ourselves and orient our surroundings to impact our welfare. The idea is to minimize negative influences and maximize positive ones, to live in harmony with our environment.
- The Human realm includes the people involved in our projects and the harmony between us, having the right people around us supporting our efforts.

Whatever practices we use to get our hands on the levers and dials of our lives, each demands we pay attention to what’s actually happening and see the flow or blockages – to know where our chi is going. Consider these actions and ideas fellow assn executives are taking to balance their energies:

- **Steve Bonoff**, president, IPA, Assn of Graphic Solutions Providers (ipa.org), Minneapolis: “The saying that true happiness is present when there is no distinction between your life and love, and work and play, is one I believe fully. Balance for me is less about the time I spend in one activity or another and more about the way in which that time is spent.”
- **Mary Detloff, CAE**, executive director, Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers (mnspe.org), West St. Paul: “Take time to do something that matters to you for at least 30 minutes EVERY DAY. Take a walk, talk with your spouse or kids, read a book or whatever relaxes you and helps you to shake off the issues of the day. You CAN make the time!”

• **Thomas K. Bannon**, CEO, California Apartment Assn (caanet.org), Sacramento: “If I consciously and deliberately allocate time each day for some very specific activities and thoughts, my life is more balanced and I feel more at peace with myself and those around me – like learning something new, engaging in some form of physical activity, doing or saying something nice to a stranger, and taking time to think about what is important to me and dream about it.”

• **Clyde McElvene**, executive director, Hurston/Wright Foundation (hurstonwright.org) supporting writers and readers of black literature, Hyattsville MD: “If at the end of a productive week, I don’t feel accomplished, because all I can see is what I haven’t done, I know it is time for a break. When inspiration, insight and creativity become over-powered by my to-do list, I know it’s time for some emotional refreshment. My first remedy is to read a good book, wash my car, or watch a good movie. And if none these work, I know one thing – I’m not living in the moment.”

*“Your view of the future shapes your actions today, and your actions today shape your future.”* – Daniel Burrus, futurist

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