

Chapter 1

Figuring Out Feng Shui

In This Chapter

- ▶ Walking the balance beam with Feng Shui
- ▶ Going over a few good schools of Feng Shui
- ▶ Figuring out the basics
- ▶ Putting it all together
- ▶ Using your intentions positively

The ancient wisdom of Feng Shui applied to your workspace can make you feel more comfortable during working hours. It can help you get along with that difficult and challenging co-worker, make you more productive and efficient at your work-related tasks, and can even help you play well with others. Not a bad day's work for what's basically a design philosophy!

Getting along Famously: Balance and Harmony

Feng Shui literally means *wind and water*, referring to the two universal forces necessary for life. These universal elements are connected to *chi*, which is life energy or life force. Wind and water carry this life energy throughout the world. Feng Shui shows you how to harness this life energy to enrich your environment and create balance in your life. See the section, "Flowing Like Chi" later in the chapter for more information on chi. Chapter 2 talks about chi at length.

Feng Shui, a classic Chinese philosophy of design, is something between an art and a science. It brings balance, blessings, and abundance to a space through harmonious placement and use of appropriate design elements.

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Creating balance and harmony is the essential purpose of Feng Shui. If your environment is in balance, you will feel comfortable and welcome there. That's the important thing — how your environment makes you feel. Feng Shui principles show that when any element in a design is out of balance — too much of one element and not enough of another (see Figure 1-1), or the elements are in conflict with each other — then *you* feel out of balance. Without balance you don't have harmony. In other words, you've got the Feng Shui blues. But don't worry. We have the cure for you.



Feng Shui emphasizes our basic interconnection with nature. At its core, it's about living in harmony with our environment. When we are in harmony with our environment we are happier and more productive! That's why you should Feng Shui your workspace.

Feng Shui affects your material success, your health (physical, mental and emotional), and your relationships with others. It does all this even if you pay no attention to where your desk is positioned. If your desk is in the right spot, more power (literally) to you. If it's in the wrong spot, look out: Even if you don't pay attention negative energy can leave you feeling ungrounded and less than powerful. Of course this affects your productivity and wealth!

The staircase dominates the room.



The plants are a good attempt at balance but insufficient.

Figure 1-1: This entryway is dominated by one element — Wood.



Applying Feng Shui's principles to your workspace doesn't have to be complicated, time-consuming, or expensive. And the rewards are well worth any time and energy you spend.

Showing What Feng Shui Can Do for You

All that talk about balance and harmony is fine, but bottom line: What does Feng Shui do for you? It can make you more productive, which is good for your career. Case in point: in Feng Shui, order is a prime principle and clutter is banished. You can easily imagine that being more organized will make it easier to do your work. Or how about this: Facing the entrance to your workspace (a Feng Shui golden rule) allows you to anticipate what's going to happen next. You'll actually be able to see what's coming instead of being surprised when the boss taps you on the shoulder. Being prepared can't hurt your career.

But that's not all. Feng Shui also helps you accomplish your career goals in another way. As you design your space according to the principles of Feng Shui, you create and use *intentions* — stating what you want to accomplish by making these changes. You use Feng Shui principles with awareness and thought. If you decide to place your desk in a more favorable position, it's because you intend to be more successful in your career. That intention is extremely powerful.

Making efficiency with an ounce of prevention

We know, we know, it seems like it might take some energy and time to transform your workspace into Feng Shui central. And it might get a little complicated, especially when you can't figure out which way to turn the Bagua, or when you find out that what you thought was the Wealth sector was actually the Children sector all along, which explains why your son won the Lotto and why you didn't get the raise you were looking for. Chapter 3 can help you get that stuff straight.



Relax. Take a deep breath. Feng Shui takes exactly as much time and energy as you want to give it. And spending some time upfront will save you time (and energy and frustration) in the long run. If you don't have a lot of time right now, just start with a small, fundamental change, like clearing the clutter out of your office. This

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alone helps you feel better and energetically lighter. See Chapter 2 for more information on clutter busting.

And even if you do make a mistake, you can easily correct it. You're making positive changes and are on the right track!

Getting what you want

The beauty of Feng Shui is that it can help you achieve your goals (in addition to perking up your workspace). Every time you place an object so that it enhances a Life Sector, you're creating and maintaining an intention — you're trying to get closer to your goals. Chapter 3 talks more about these things: so crucial to Feng Shui's success!



Intentions help you

- ✓ **Set goals:** Goals that are important to you, not to anyone else.
- ✓ **Focus:** When you decide to do some work in your Career sector for example, you can take the steps you need toward success.
- ✓ **Clear clutter:** Not only do you clear the clutter out of your workspace, but in doing so it helps you clear the clutter out of your mind.

Allow myself to introduce myself . . .

Feng Shui helps you discover yourself and what is important to you. Contemplating the Nine Life Sectors and considering which ones are most important to you right now gives you insight, as does thinking about your intentions. In addition, seeing the world with *Feng Shui eyes* — with a perception attuned to the principles of Feng Shui — requires you to reflect on what you think and feel.



As you settle into Feng Shui, don't dismiss the sensation when a room makes you feel uncomfortable. Analyze it, discovering what in your environment causes the sensation. You get more in tune with your feelings and your intuition. (For help on that flip to Chapter 3.) You become more connected with your environment. Feng Shui doesn't just help you decide where to put your credenza. It helps you grow as a person.

Going to Design School

According to legend, Feng Shui originated in approximately 2900 BC, during the reign of Emperor Fu Hsi, who is said to have created the pattern of line symbols that make up the trigrams of the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, the oldest book in China. The distinct pattern of the numbers that emerged is called the lo-shu, or Magic Square (see Figure 1-2), and provides the foundation for Chinese numerology, astrology, and Feng Shui.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Figure 1-2: First the magic bean, then the Magical Mystery Tour, and now: The Magic Square.

The earliest forms of Feng Shui combined figuring out auspicious placement for graves of revered ancestors and for temples, palaces, and imperial buildings. Over time, Feng Shui developed into several specific styles called *schools*.



Kan Yu: The early Feng Shui masters

Kan Yu was the term used for the Feng Shui masters of old who were called upon to determine the most auspicious placement for a grave. The ancient Chinese believed they had a direct connection with their ancestors, so if parents and grandparents were resting comfortably and happily, they bestowed blessings and good fortune on their children and grandchildren. The ideal burial site had mild breezes and rich land; the preferred entrance to a burial site faced south (into the sun) so that the strong winds and nasty weather coming from the north were avoided. These principles became the early foundation of the Feng Shui we practice today.

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Gee, Nancy! Tell me about geomancy

Early Feng Shui masters advised people on the best places to build homes and other structures. These experts assessed the energy or *chi* they felt in the land. They considered how harsh the forces of nature were in a given location, how the area might be subject to strong winds or erosion, and took note of the symbolic shape of the land. They observed the land for signs of healthy plants and animals, good, free-flowing water, and rich soil. Rocky outcroppings, dry waterways, and little plant life were all signs of areas to be avoided. This early science of studying the earth was called *geomancy*, and it eventually developed into the environmental design science we understand today as Feng Shui.

Form school

The *Form school*, sometimes called the *Landform school*, is one of the oldest approaches to Feng Shui. In this school the best locations for living and working are determined by looking at the land itself and recognizing its shapes, climate, and other related natural conditions. If you lived in a mountainous area, for example, it's most favorable to have the back of your house to the mountain. In the background, the mountain gives your home a feeling of stability, but if you have to look at it very up close and personal from your front door every day, you may start feeling a little hemmed in.

Compass school

The *Compass school* relies on an understanding of Chinese astrology (based on the *I Ching* described earlier in this section). Particularly important are the directions — or more precisely, the *energies* of the eight directions. Yes, we said eight directions. And you thought four was enough. The Compass school adds north-east, northwest, southeast, and southwest.

Your *personal life directions* (otherwise known as your most favorable directions) are determined using a specific formula, and ideally your space is designed so that it aligns with your most auspicious personal direction. If your best direction is north, then sleeping with your head facing north is considered auspicious. The timing of your birthday is also crucial in this approach to Feng Shui.




Identifying your Celestial Animals

Chinese astrology is similar to Western astrology in that it is believed that people born at certain times share certain personal

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characteristics and traits. However, a cycle of 12 animals is used and one animal rules each year. See Table 1-1 to figure out what kind of animal you are.



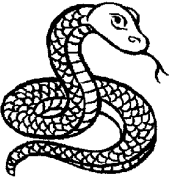


Your Celestial Animal and directions predict your personality type and give clues about how you will behave under various conditions. The best directions would guide you how to sit or face when making important decisions, negotiating contracts, and the like. These are directions of empowerment. Conversely, your worst directions would be where you do not want to face in important situations.

Table 1-1 A Horse Is a Horse, of Course: The Celestial Animals Chart			
<i>You're such a</i>	<i>When were you born?</i>	<i>Tell me a little about yourself</i>	<i>Can you send a picture?</i>
Rat	1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996	The Rat is associated with the element of Water and is most compatible with the Dragon and the Monkey. The Rat is an opportunist devoted to family, sociable but sometimes petty.	
Ox	1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997	The Ox is associated with the element of Earth and is most compatible with the Snake and the Rooster. The Ox is reliable, sturdy, organized, methodical, and slow to forgive.	
Tiger	1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998	The Tiger is associated with the element of Wood and is most compatible with the Horse and the Dog. The Tiger is impulsive and easily distracted; naturally enthusiastic; Tigers take failure hard.	

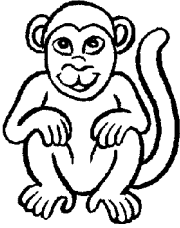


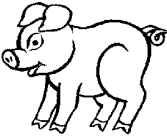
(continued)

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Table 1-1 (continued)

<i>You're such a</i>	<i>When were you born?</i>	<i>Tell me a little about yourself</i>	<i>Can you send a picture?</i>
Rabbit	1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999	The Rabbit is associated with the element of Wood and is most compatible with the Goat and the Pig. The Rabbit avoids conflict and is diplomatic. Rabbits may seem docile but are very confident.	
Dragon	1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000	The Dragon is associated with the element of Earth and is most compatible with the Rat and the Monkey. The Dragon is prideful and helpful; Dragons are hard working and generous but cannot bear restrictions.	
Snake	1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001	The Snake is associated with the element of Fire and is most compatible with the Ox and the Rooster. The Snake is self-reliant and introspective; Snakes can be demanding but intuitive.	
Horse	1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002	The Horse is associated with the element of Fire and is most compatible with the Tiger and the Dog. The Horse is tireless and active; Horses must set their own deadlines and are sometimes quick to judge.	
Goat	1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003	The Goat is associated with the element of Earth and is most compatible with the Rabbit and the Pig. The Goat is emotional and kind. Goats are polite but shy, and worry too much.	

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<i>You're such a</i>	<i>When were you born?</i>	<i>Tell me a little about yourself</i>	<i>Can you send a picture?</i>
Monkey	1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004	The Monkey is associated with the element of Metal and is most compatible with the Rat and the Dragon. The Monkey is an intelligent problem solver; Monkeys can be oblivious to others and may not understand how their actions affect other people.	
Rooster	1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005	The Rooster is associated with the element of Metal and is most compatible with the Ox and the Snake. The Rooster is sociable and enjoys being the center of attention; Roosters are strong-willed but can be negative.	
Dog	1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006	The Dog is associated with the element of Earth and is most compatible with the Tiger and the Horse. The Dog is loyal and dependable. Dogs listen to others but can be critical.	
Pig	1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007	The Pig is associated with the element of Water and is most compatible with the Rabbit and the Goat. The Pig is honest, kind and friendly. Pigs are popular and dislike conflict; they tend to overindulge.	

Discovering your Compass numbers

Numbers have energy or *chi*, just as everything else does. Every person has his or her own Compass number, sometimes called a *Kua* number. Use this number — which relates to the Magic Square — to

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help find the most favorable position for you to face when sleeping and making decisions. See Table 1-2. Here you'll see that male and female energies are treated differently in Feng Shui. This goes back to the separation and complimentary aspects of yin and yang energy.

Table 1-2 Discovering Your Compass Numbers

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Year Born</i>	<i>Compass Number</i>
Men	1936, 1945, 1954, 1963, 1972, 1981, 1990, 1999, and 2008	1
Women	1932, 1941, 1950, 1959, 1968, 1977, 1986, 1995, and 2004	1
Men	1944, 1953, 1962, 1971, 1980, 1989, 1998, and 2007	2
Women	1933, 1942, 1951, 1960, 1969, 1978, 1987, 1996 and 2005	2
Men	1943, 1952, 1961, 1970, 1979, 1988, 1997, and 2006	3
Women	1934, 1943, 1952, 1961, 1970, 1979, 1988, 1997, and 2006	3
Men	1942, 1951, 1960, 1969, 1978, 1987, 1996, and 2005	4
Women	1935, 1944, 1953, 1962, 1971, 1980, 1989, 1998, and 2007	4
Men	1941, 1950, 1959, 1968, 1977, 1986, 1995, and 2004	5
Women	1936, 1945, 1954, 1963, 1972, 1981, 1990, 1999, and 2008	5
Men	1940, 1949, 1958, 1967, 1976, 1985, 1994, and 2003	6
Women	1937, 1946, 1955, 1964, 1973, 1982, 1991, and 2000	6
Men	1939, 1948, 1957, 1966, 1975, 1984, 1993, and 2002	7
Women	1938, 1947, 1956, 1965, 1974, 1983, 1992, and 2001	7

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<i>Sex</i>	<i>Year Born</i>	<i>Compass Number</i>
Men	1938, 1947, 1956, 1965, 1974, 1983, 1992, and 2001	8
Women	1939, 1948, 1957, 1966, 1975, 1984, 1993, and 2002	8
Men	1937, 1946, 1955, 1964, 1973, 1982, 1991, and 2000	9
Women	1940, 1949, 1958, 1967, 1976, 1985, 1994, and 2003	9

By knowing your Compass number, you can determine your most favorable direction (see Table 1-3).

Table 1-3 Determining Your Most Favorable Direction

<i>Number</i>	<i>Favorable Direction</i>
1	North
2	Southwest
3	East
4	Southeast
5	Center
6	Northwest
7	West
8	Northeast
9	South

- ✓ The Number 1 is associated with Water.
- ✓ The Number 2 is associated with Earth.
- ✓ The Number 3 is associated with Thunder.
- ✓ The Number 4 is associated with Wind.
- ✓ The Number 5 is associated with Earth.
- ✓ The Number 6 is associated with Heaven.
- ✓ The Number 7 is associated with Lake.

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- ✓ The Number 8 is associated with Mountain.
- ✓ The Number 9 is associated with Fire.

Depending on your Compass number, you are either a member of the East Group or the West Group. Table 1-4 tells you more.

Table 1-4 Which Side of the Tracks Are You On?

<i>East Group</i>	<i>West Group</i>
1, 3, 4, 9	2, 5, 6, 7, 8
Members of this group have favorable directions of North, East, South, and Southeast.	Members of this group have favorable directions of Southwest, Northwest, West, Northeast, and Center

Black Sect school

The Black Sect Tantric Buddhism (BTB) school (usually called Black Sect and sometimes Black Hat) is a more recent approach that has been refined and developed by Grand Master Professor Thomas Lin Yun, who brought this concept from China to the West over 35 years ago.



I only have Feng Shui eyes for you

Instead of following a prescribed list of steps to turn your workspace into a Feng Shui paradise, develop and fine tune your Feng Shui eyes. When you understand the concepts of Feng Shui design philosophy, you can *see* how these concepts work in different spaces you encounter.

When you walk into a reception area that immediately makes you feel relaxed and at home, you might look around and notice that the space is furnished with natural materials, that the spotless windows allow natural light into the space, and that the area is clean and uncluttered. Your Feng Shui eyes are picking up on the elements that make you feel comfortable.

You can also use your Feng Shui eyes to understand what makes you so uncomfortable about your next-door neighbor's house. Maybe it's the collection of wrought iron gates she has displayed in her living room (too much metal). Maybe it's the way every available surface is crammed with ornaments and knickknacks and you can't make your way to the kitchen without scraping your shins on the pointed corners of a coffee table (interference with the flow of energy through the space).

Black Sect is a practical combination of traditional Feng Shui, Buddhism, Taoism, energy theory, and Western concepts. Black Sect is simpler than Compass School Feng Shui, and seems to work better in the context of Western culture. It relies on the position of the front door, called the *mouth of chi*, and especially emphasizes the occupant's intention. BTB has become very popular in the United States, and it's the method we use in this book. Roll up your sleeves and get started!

Getting in Touch with Your Masculine Side with Yin/Yang

Taoist philosophy, a traditional, mystical Chinese philosophy that teaches how unassertive action and simplicity can create long life and good fortune, says that the universe is made up of opposing yet harmonious elements. These elements are complementary to each other: day and night, dark and light, male and female, yin and yang. You cannot have one without the other.



One of the essential concepts of Feng Shui is *balancing the qualities of yin-yang* that are present in your space. *Yin* is associated with feminine, darkness, rounded shapes, and passive energy. *Yang* is associated with masculine, light, angular shapes, and active energy. Table 1-5 has more yin-yang opposites.

In Feng Shui, the correct balance between yin elements and yang elements should be present. By balancing colors, shapes and textures, you can prevent your space from being out of equilibrium. Too much red paint on the walls equals too much yang; not enough lighting means too much yin. Too much passive yin and you fall asleep at your desk; too much active yang and you can't concentrate on the report you're writing.



You can often tell a space has too much yin or too much yang by how uncomfortable you feel after a while. Feeling dispirited and depressed, or feeling groggy and ready for an afternoon nap probably indicates too many yin elements; feeling high strung, distracted, and even angry can mean too many yang elements. Remember with good Feng Shui, *it's all in the balance!* Chapter 3 can help you achieve that balance. Chapter 4 tells you what you need to know about color, texture, and lighting. Oh, and plants, too.

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Table 1-5	Yin/Yang Opposites
<i>Yin</i>	<i>Yang</i>
Earth	Heaven
Moon	Sun
Feminine	Masculine
Cold	Hot
Dark	Light
Night	Day
Soft	Hard
Passive	Active
Round	Angular
Quiet	Loud

Flowing Like Chi

Feng Shui relies on the concept of *chi*, or energy. Feng Shui teaches that chi is the life force that flows through the universe, and is present in all living things; it permeates the land and sky as well as people.

In the same way, chi flows through our spaces. If chi is blocked, a depressed energy level may result and we may be uncomfortable in our surroundings. Freely moving chi makes us feel good. When you walk into a space where the chi flows freely, you may think, "This is a good atmosphere. This is a happy place."

To imagine how chi flows, think of it as a flowing river. Could water move freely and gently through your space? If, in your workspace, a current of water would get stuck in cluttered corners (like an eddy in a stream eventually becoming stagnant and filled with debris) you probably need to make some changes and remove the clutter to unblock the chi. Chapter 2 talks about getting chi where it needs to be: Ban the clutter!

High Five-ing Elements



Feng Shui teaches that everything is made up of Five Elements. These elements are Earth, Metal, Water, Wood, and Fire. Each of the elements has its yin (passive) side and its yang (active) side. Think of water. In a placid lake, water is calm and tranquil. Now think of a storm at sea, with the water pounding against the shore — this is water that can erode a cliff. Ideally, we want to surround ourselves in our office or home with *balanced* elemental energy.

When selecting materials to use in your space, take into consideration how they represent the five elements, as shown in Table 1-6. A wooden floor is more inviting than a vinyl floor. Wicker, wood, and cotton fabrics are all comfortable and attractive. Natural lighting is better and more restful for our eyes than artificial lighting, and natural objects, such as plants and flowers, raise our spirits and our chi! Chapter 2 helps you raise chi and Chapter 4 explains textures, lighting, and plants.

Table 1-6 Elements and Their Materials

<i>Element</i>	<i>Associated Materials</i>
Bamboo and wicker	Wood
Natural fabrics (cotton and linen, for example)	Wood
Lighting (natural or artificial)	Fire
Glass and mirrors	Water
Metal furniture, picture frames, light fixtures	Metal
Clay, terra cotta, and ceramic	Earth
Stone, granite, and marble	Earth



Heed this warning, though: Too much emphasis on one element has its drawbacks.

- ✓ Water helps you feel renewed, but too much can make you feel like you're drowning or wishy-washy in decision making.
- ✓ Wood enhances flexibility, but too much is associated with extreme idealism (not very businesslike).

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- ✓ Fire invigorates, but too much can over stimulate you.
- ✓ Earth supports you, but too much is associated with being overly cautious and fearful of risks.
- ✓ Metal makes you feel strong, but too much is associated with aggression or being unwilling to compromise.

Going with the Octagon

Each direction and area of your office has a different type of energy associated with it. An eight-sided figure, called the *Bagua* (ba-gwa) symbolizes the different energies of the directions.



The Bagua (also called the *Pakua* or *Feng Shui Octagon*) shown in Figure 3-2 (in Chapter 3) shows each direction's quality. The center is associated overall health and well being and corresponds with the number 5.

- ✓ The outer edge shows the sector, or *gua*.
- ✓ The next row shows the element.
- ✓ The element's shape is next.
- ✓ The color associated with each sector is innermost.