

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Orienting yourself to Feng Shui
- » Getting grounded with some basic principles
- » Grasping the differences between Feng Shui schools
- » Uncovering solutions to your life problems

Chapter **1**

Discovering the World of Feng Shui

Everyone appreciates the benefits of beautiful, comfortable living environments. America's flourishing landscaping and decorating industries attest to this fact. But Feng Shui says your interior and exterior surroundings affect not only your material comfort but also your physical and mental health, relationships, and worldly success. Feng Shui (pronounced fung shway) examines how the energy of your environment (including your neighborhood, property, and home) intimately interacts with and influences your personal energy. Your personal energy flow determines how you think and act, which in turn affects how well you perform and succeed in your personal and professional life. Feng Shui affects you every moment of the day — whether you're aware of it or not.

The purpose of this book is to help you perform effective Feng Shui corrections. In this chapter, I present a brief overview of Feng Shui methods and show you how Feng Shui can bring increased abundance, improved relationships, and better health to your life.



REMEMBER

If you're new to Feng Shui, try to keep an open mind as you read. (A closed mind is bad Feng Shui!) When you're ready, select the methods and techniques that are most appropriate for your particular circumstances.

Demystifying Feng Shui

If you've read other Feng Shui books, you may find seemingly contradictory advice a bit confusing. Before I delve into the essence of Feng Shui, I want to help clear up some common Feng Shui misconceptions. Feng Shui isn't

- » A method of Oriental design that guarantees get-rich-quick results from mystically rearranging your furniture.
- » A superstitious, New Age belief system that's disconnected from the reality of your daily life.
- » A simple home and garden makeover.
- » A magical quick fix to be tackled in one afternoon.
- » A luxury only the rich and famous can afford.
- » A method chiefly concerned with the interior of your home. (In Feng Shui, your interior and exterior environments are equally important.)



REMEMBER

Now on to the million-dollar question: What is Feng Shui?

- » On the surface, Feng Shui is simply the interaction of humans and their environments. Taken a step further, Feng Shui allows you to strategically influence these interactions to achieve specific life improvements by positioning or designing your surroundings in harmony with principles of natural energy flow. As a result, you can achieve harmony with your surroundings. Feng Shui helps you right where you live and work.
- » Feng Shui is the study of the relationships between the environment and human life. Feng Shui principles were discovered by the Chinese, and Feng Shui has been practiced for centuries to design environments that enhance conditions for harmony, well-being, and success in life.

» Feng Shui is often referred to as the art of placement. How you position yourself on the globe and in your particular region, and how you orient yourself to your surroundings, help determine your life experience at every level. Feng Shui offers a unique way of looking at yourself and your environment. It also provides ways to bring balance, comfort, and harmony into your environment in a manner that's difficult to achieve by other means.

Interesting bits of historical Feng Shui confirmation are starting to emerge. For example, recent scientific research indicates that more than 28,000 years ago, Neanderthal cavemen (located in present-day Croatia) chose which caves to live in based on three criteria: The caves held the high ground in the area, the surrounding area was easily seen from the entrance of the cave, and the water source was easily accessible. Interestingly, all three criteria are in harmony with the basic principles of Feng Shui, which has evolved and become more sophisticated along with humankind. The survival of these early humans significantly depended on how well they adapted to their surroundings — a fact that shows that even our primitive ancestors were aware of the effects of placement in their environment. Well, trust me when I say that Feng Shui is as relevant and beneficial to humankind today as it was more than 28,000 years ago.

The Meaning of the Term Feng Shui

Feng Shui is a term composed of two Chinese words: *feng* (wind) and *shui* (water). Wind and water are natural elements that flow, move, and circulate everywhere on Earth. They're also basic necessities for human survival. Wind — or air — is the breath of life; without it, you die in moments. Water is the liquid of life; without it, you die in days. The combined qualities of wind and water determine the climate, which historically has determined mankind's food supply and in turn affects people's lifestyle, health, energy, and mood. These two fundamental flowing elements have always profoundly yet subtly influenced human individuals and societies.

The essence of these life-giving elements is *chi*, or life force. Wind and water are important carriers of *chi*, and their flowing quality reflects their essential nature. Feng Shui is the art of designing environments that attract and harness the beneficial flow of *chi*, and this flow supports and enhances one's personal *chi* or life force. (Find out more about the energy called *chi* in Chapter 2.)

THE ENVIRONMENT RULES! FENG SHUI FACTORS HAVE DETERMINED THE PATH OF HUMAN CULTURE

Many respectable, successful, and highly intelligent Western individuals are recognizing and applying in their own lives the basic premise behind Feng Shui — that your immediate environment affects you on a daily basis and can influence your long-term destiny. One individual who's deeply aware of these ideas has written a great book on the topic. Jared Diamond, biologist and author, won the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction for his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (W.W. Norton & Company). Written after years of research, Diamond's book explains why some societies and peoples developed farming, then writing, then steel, and finally higher technologies, while other societies remained in hunter-gatherer mode.

Previous theories that attempted to explain this difference of cultures included racial factors, intelligence differences among peoples, and an evolutionary head start (or the lack of one). After examining all of these factors, Diamond decided that none of them satisfactorily explained the puzzling differences in human cultural and technological progression. Though his book doesn't discuss Feng Shui, he finally comes to this conclusion: Throughout human history, the dominant factor that has determined the evolutionary destiny and rate of progress among human societies has been the quality and types of environments in which they've lived. Feng Shui strikes again!

Ancient Chinese Secrets: The Big-Picture View of Feng Shui

Feng Shui is rooted in a holistic worldview. It sees all things and creatures as part of a natural order, a vast environment that's, alive and in flux, ever moving and changing. All things in this natural order are equally alive and possess an energetic value or component. Everything — plants, animals, people, and things — exists in a vast landscape that swirls with vital energy.

The same energy that flows through the world flows through you as well. In fact, according to this view, your essence — the part of you that makes you alive, unique, and vital — is this energy. And your body is the vehicle or environment through which this energy flows.

THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF FENG SHUI

Feng Shui has been practiced in one form or another for several thousand years. Its origins reach back to China's ancient shamanic practices and nature-based religions. The earliest Feng Shui comprised a mixture of divination, ritual, magic, and ancestor worship. It was practiced as a means of integrating one's earthly life, embedded in nature, with the world of chi or energy. In ancient times, gravesites were carefully selected according to energetic (or Feng Shui) principles with the thought that happy ancestors were more likely to promote favorable fortunes for their descendants. Eventually these principles were brought into common use and applied for the benefit of the living to improve the quality of their daily lives.

Feng Shui energy principles were also used to predict the weather; to determine the best times to plant crops; and to fix dates, times, locations, and positions for building sites. These principles were even applied to decide when to wage war and where battles should be fought.

Systems similar to Feng Shui have evolved in other cultures throughout the world. In India, practices used to create harmony with the environment are called *Vastu Shastra* and *Sthapatya Veda* (both methods of aligning human spaces with the natural forces of the universe). The Japanese use a related method. Going back in time, Celtic and medieval European cultures used magical methods such as *geomancy* (literally “earth magic”) to influence their relationship with their environment, align themselves with the power of the land, and improve their earthly lives.

Feng Shui divides the vast environment or landscape that is the universe into more manageable units — like human beings and their homes, property, living rooms, and bedrooms. You can't control the Feng Shui of the world at large, but you can design your personal environment according to the same universal principles of energy flow by which planets spin in their orbits and galaxies wheel through space. I delve deeper into this energy, which is the basis for Feng Shui, in Chapter 2.

Unearthing Basic Feng Shui Principles

Examining a few basic Feng Shui concepts, such as yin and yang and the Three Realms of Influence, can help get you started thinking in Feng Shui terms and help you better understand your environment and its effects on you. (*Note:* If you're already aware of the basics of Feng Shui, you can skim the rest of this chapter and go straight to Chapter 3.)

The ancient Chinese not only determined that the universe was composed of two complementary energy principles — yin and yang — but also assigned three categories into which these two essences flowed — Heaven, Earth, and Human. The ancient philosophers made an intensive study over many generations to discover how these interconnected categories could be manipulated or influenced in order to improve one's personal life, fortune, and destiny. Feng Shui was developed out of this prolonged and profound consideration. Read on to further examine these primary elements.

Yin and yang



REMEMBER

Everything in the universe is made up of two opposite yet complementary principles or qualities: yin and yang. *Yin* symbolizes the passive side of nature, and *yang* represents the active side. But yin and yang don't exist independently; they simply describe the two primary qualities in which all existing things partake. Therefore, nothing is 100 percent yin or 100 percent yang; all things contain relative amounts of both yin and yang energy.

Figure 1-1 shows the symbolism of yin and yang interacting. The white fish symbolizes yang, and the black fish shows yin. Note how each quality carries the color of its opposite within itself, showing that within all things is the seed for potential change.

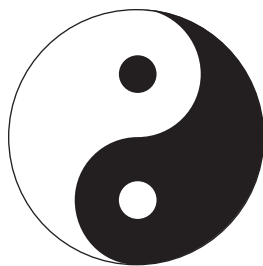


FIGURE 1-1:
The interaction
and harmony
between yin
and yang.



REMEMBER

Things with characteristics such as passivity, receptiveness, silence, darkness, and inwardness represent yin. In contrast, things with active, hard, projecting, loud, and bright characteristics represent yang. Neither is better than the other, and both are necessary for life and the universe to exist. As philosophical concepts, yin and yang poetically describe the dualistic world. Nothing is completely good or pure, just as no one is totally evil or without redeeming qualities. Everything that exists is in some way a mixture of yin and yang. This is an important basis of Feng Shui thinking.

In Feng Shui terms, a too-yang environment is disturbing and leads to the loss of peace and harmony. For example, a bedroom facing a noisy street can rob you of

the quality rest you need because there's too much disturbance or yang energy present for restful sleep. On the other hand, an overly yin area — like an office looking out onto a dark narrow alley — can cause you to become overly subdued and lethargic and can limit your energy and efficiency. Similarly, an overly yin entrance to a residence — one that's hidden and dark — may not attract enough money or energy. Note that the yin and yang levels are relevant to the specific environments; each environment has an appropriate balance of yin and yang energies.



REMEMBER

Yin and yang can also describe activities, events, and even emotions. For instance, a funeral is usually yin in nature (think quiet, sober, and subdued). On the other hand, the Super Bowl is the epitome of yang energy (think active, colorful, noisy, and intense). If you're overly yang, your emotional state is angry or explosive. But if you're overly yin, you can become withdrawn or depressed. To help you counteract or enhance certain qualities and tendencies, you can design your environment according to Feng Shui. At their essence, all the Feng Shui cures you discover are ways of balancing the yin and yang within you and your environment.

The Three Realms of Influence

Another important Chinese model for looking at life is called the *Three Realms of Influence*. This concept relates to Feng Shui because Feng Shui excels as a way of influencing the destiny with which a person starts. Three realms of the universe influence you — Heaven, Earth, and Human. These areas are both literal (they actually exist) and figurative (they symbolically influence you). To get the most out of your life circumstances, you want positive conditions in each of these Realms. On the other hand, a powerful way of improving your circumstances is to pay close attention to these Realms and begin to move into alignment with the best that they can offer.

Through the centuries, the Three Realms of Influence have become associated with three types of luck, one for each realm. According to Chinese belief, aligning your life — your activities and thoughts — with the natural order of all three Realms brings you improved luck and success. Feng Shui is a fundamental method that follows this principle. The following sections help you better understand each of the Three Realms of Influence.



REMEMBER

Analyzing the Western approach to life in light of the Three Realms of Influence shows that most people rely first on themselves and their associates or family (Human luck), then on providence (Heaven luck), and very little (if at all) on environmental circumstances (Earth luck) — that's Feng Shui to you and me — mainly because they don't know it exists. In reality, all three Realms are equally important. By waking up to the power and influence of Feng Shui, you can increase your luck and grow into your fullest potential.

HOW THE EAST CAME WEST

During the latter half of the 20th century, the Oriental mindset infiltrated the West in several different waves. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Beat Generation discovered Zen Buddhism, meditation, and haiku poetry, and in the 1970s, Oriental martial arts (including karate and kung fu) started to gain popularity. In the 1970s and 1980s, acupuncture, acupressure, macrobiotics, yoga, and tai chi also became very popular; their use and influence continue to grow by leaps and bounds. In the 1990s, Feng Shui burst onto the scene, and its popularity has grown enormously. More than just a passing fad, the main reason for this surge in Feng Shui awareness is that people in the West started to experience amazing and exciting results from the applications of Feng Shui in their lives. Many Westerners have experienced the positive life benefits that come from arranging their homes and offices according to the timeless principles of Feng Shui. And all the Oriental systems I mention (martial arts, acupuncture, tai chi, and so on) are based on the same fundamental insights into the energy (chi) that flows everywhere, in the environment, in your body, and throughout the universe.

The Heaven Realm

Heavenly energy physically influences you daily through the climate, atmosphere, and air quality. Miracles and other unexpected interventions from above are considered to be the workings of heaven. (Perhaps you've heard someone exclaim, "The heavens opened!" when describing an inspiration or a narrow escape from danger.) The Heaven Realm is also connected to you through the place and time of your birth.

Positive timing, which is somewhat easier to control than heavenly help, also falls under the category of the Heaven Realm. To have Heaven luck is to have proper or auspicious timing for your endeavors. To realize your greatest chances for prosperity and good fortune, plans should be started at the best possible times (the times with the most favorable chances for success).

The Earth Realm

The Earth Realm provides humans with all the materials needed to sustain life: food, shelter, clothing, and so on. According to Feng Shui, the way humans position and orient themselves relative to their surroundings affects their welfare and destiny enormously. Applying Feng Shui to your environment maximizes the positive influences and minimizes the negative influences of the environment on your life. Early Chinese thinkers described the good fortune achieved by powerful and positive positioning as Earth luck. (Of course, humans affect the Earth as well. The best practice of Feng Shui helps humans live in harmony with the environment.)

The Human Realm

The third Realm that affects your life is the Human Realm. In addition to auspicious timing (Heaven luck) and proper positioning (Earth luck), *you* need to have the best possible energies, thoughts, and actions. By the same token, associations with the right people help create success in your endeavors. The actions you and your associates undertake — and the harmony between all parties — is the factor that completes the picture. To be blessed with Human luck, you need to have the best energies in yourself and surround yourself with the right people who support you in your efforts.

Five top factors affecting your fortune

Another way to look at life's equation for success is to consider a historical concept from Chinese culture called the Five Factors That Contribute to Life Fortune. This information has been distilled over several centuries of empirical observations by Chinese sages with a burning question on their minds: What are the key factors for human success? The Five Factors concept is the abridged version of their answer.

I explain these factors, in order of importance, in this list:

- » **Fate (or destiny):** The time in history, the country you're born into, your family type, and the socioeconomic status of your family are all elements that combine to set you on a particular life path from the start. Feng Shui scholars believe that this factor includes the date, time, and location of your birth. In theory, fate exerts about 70 percent influence over one's life destiny. Three types of fate generally affect humans: good, fair, and poor. Traditionally, you're stuck with the type of fate you're handed at birth. The best you can do is work to improve your basic situation by using the four other factors (so read on).
- » **Luck:** According to the Five Factors concept, luck is neither chance nor random coincidence striking like a bolt out of the blue. Luck is a discernible, if mysterious, pattern of influences on your life path. Some people seem to have a luckier path through life than others do. If destiny is the time, place, direction, and speed with which you hit the road at birth, your luck is the pattern of events that affects you as you head down your path.
- » **Feng Shui:** The third key factor affecting the quality of your life is your placement (positioning) on the Earth. How you situate yourself in life affects you so strongly that the ancient seers rated it as number three on life's hit parade. Here's the payoff: If your fate and luck are poor (or even if they're wonderful), you can improve things by properly applying Feng Shui in your life and environment. In fact, practicing good Feng Shui is one of the best ways

(besides winning the lottery) to maximize one's fate and luck, whether positive or negative.

- » **Charitable actions and good deeds:** The positive actions you undertake — especially to help others — are the fourth important factor that influences the quality of your life. Performing good deeds, without hope of reward or recognition, makes your actions more beneficial to you and others. To employ this factor, perform one good deed per day.
- » **Education and self-improvement:** This factor refers to improving one's knowledge, character, and moral fiber. To improve yourself in this way invites good people, events, and well-being into your life.

As you can see from the preceding list, when determining causes of success in life, the influence of Feng Shui ranks as the third most important factor. If the ancient Chinese were correct (and why shouldn't one take the longest continuously existing civilization on the planet seriously), your environmental surroundings can affect your success more than the good deeds you do or even the attempts you make to improve yourself. Can the environments in which you spend your time have massive and pervasive effects on your thoughts, feelings, actions, and life results? My answer is an emphatic yes!



REMEMBER

Of the Five Factors, the first one on the list you can do something about is your Feng Shui. Think about this for a second: You can't choose which family you're born into, and you can't change your luck pattern on a whim. But you can plant some beautiful flowers in your garden or start changing the colors in your home. Both are Feng Shui methods you can implement today and see the positive results tomorrow, or not long after. The truth is that all Five Factors affect you all the time. The point to grasp is that Feng Shui (the interaction between you and your environment) affects you powerfully. Arranging your environment to your advantage is one of the most powerful methods of life improvement the human species has yet discovered.

Understanding the Schools of Feng Shui

Though many schools of Feng Shui exist, all of them maintain the same basic purpose: Gaining life improvement by improving the energy of the environment. Most traditional schools of Feng Shui use a combination of two basic methods: the Landform Method and the Compass Method.

A lesser-known school of Feng Shui is called *BTB* or *Black Sect Feng Shui*, which is the type of Feng Shui used in this book. My teacher, Grandmaster Lin Yun, further developed this style and brought it to the West. (*Note:* When I refer to BTB in this

book, I'm referring to Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school.) I fill you in on the basics of the different schools of Feng Shui and help you distinguish between the two in the next sections.

Landform and Compass Method Feng Shui

Landform Feng Shui reads the lay of the land and notes the contour, climate, shape, and other factors to determine the best locations for living and working. For example, in China, living with a mountain at your back and with your house facing south was recognized over the centuries as a safer living position. Why? This positioning helped the residents on at least three levels:

- » It gave protection from warring bands of infidels pillaging the countryside.
- » It provided a strong psychological feeling of support and stability, a continuous influence that helped the family's fortune grow over time.
- » It was a protective barrier against the storms and cold that could sweep down from the north in the winter. (This barrier helped preserve the croplands and the personal health of the occupants.)

The Landform Method was easier to apply in the countryside, but even today, many of its observations are still highly useful for city living.

Compass Method Feng Shui studies the directions (east, west, north, and south) that your front door and other key parts of your home face and compares these directions with your personal life directions, which are calculated from the time and date of your birth. Simple and complex formulas exist to determine your positive and negative directions. Other areas of the house that are aligned to positive directions include the bed, the stove, the desk, and the back door. The Compass Method says that these directions (as well as timing) are some of the most critical factors affecting your Feng Shui.

Note: I don't use the Compass Method in this book, so you can set aside any concerns you may have about cardinal or personal directions and how they affect your home and life. I respect this method, but I use a different approach.

Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school

One of the chief characteristics of Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school is its eclectic nature. With roots in the teachings of India, China, and Tibet, it pulls from multiple sources, weaving together a combination of traditional Feng Shui, Grandmaster Lin Yun's energy theories, and Chinese folklore. This school also benefits from the addition of Western concepts and explanations from various fields,

including physiology, psychology, ecology, and sociology. Its working philosophy is that the best result comes from a marriage of Eastern and Western viewpoints and knowledge.

Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school is

- » An easy-to-grasp and easy-to-apply form of Feng Shui
- » Highly practical and effective
- » Focused on creating beneficial results quickly with the least expenditure of time and money

I follow the teachings of Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school. In addition, I focus intently on solutions that produce noticeable effects but are relatively easy to perform. Feng Shui is one of the most effective methods available to change your circumstances and achieve more of what you really want out of life. You can put it into practice immediately, generate great results, and create a brand-new flow of life and energy. Also, with Feng Shui, no life scenario is hopeless or unworkable; you can always do something to improve your situation — if you so choose.

Distinguishing the schools from each other

A key tenet of Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui teachings is to honor and respect all other Feng Shui schools and practitioners and to refrain from criticizing other methods. Those who follow Grandmaster Lin Yun's teachings don't proclaim the method as superior to others; rather, they respect the differences and seek to learn from them. By the same token, Grandmaster Lin Yun's approach to Feng Shui does have its own special characteristics that distinguish it from other schools. Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school differs from traditional Feng Shui methods in that

- » **There's an "internal" rather than "external" compass.** Traditional Feng Shui employs a physical compass to diagnose key directions of the home and relate them to the residents through astrological calculations. Grandmaster Lin Yun's school doesn't use a physical compass to read the Feng Shui of a site. Instead, the practitioner uses an internalized or memorized compass traditionally called the *compass of the heart*. This *Feng Shui Octagon* (also known as the *Ba-Gua*) is one of several methods for mapping the energies of homes and properties. (Chapter 3 has details on how to apply the Feng Shui Octagon to your environment.)



REMEMBER

When you apply the Feng Shui method in this book, you don't need to know which earthly direction your door or any other part of your home faces.

- » **It employs a spiritual approach rather than a traditional one.** Traditional Feng Shui schools employ a traditional approach to the art and use traditionally styled solutions, such as employing positive and negative cardinal directions. Grandmaster Lin Yun's approach draws from traditional sources and adds spiritual methods such as the Three Secrets Reinforcement, which are a key part of the cures you perform. (Chapter 6 has more details about the Three Secrets Reinforcement.)
- » **It places a unique emphasis on Relative Positioning.** Traditional Feng Shui uses the birth date and time of the residents or the completion date of the home to determine Feng Shui factors. Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school instead emphasizes the *Theory of Relative Positioning*, which states that the areas of the environment that are physically closest to you affect your energy the most (Chapter 2 has more on this theory). The *Mouth of Chi* focuses on the energy of the main entrance as a primary influencing factor (see Chapter 9 for details).
- » **It uses the power of intention and visualization.** Grandmaster Lin Yun's school differs from traditional Feng Shui schools in that it emphasizes using the power of intention to dramatically enhance the effects of the Feng Shui cures you apply. It also considers mind as a sixth sense, employing visualization in addition to the traditional five (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). In Chapter 6, I detail how to use intention and visualization to make your cures highly effective.
- » **It offers personal cures.** Unlike traditional Feng Shui schools, which focus on environmental changes and astrological timing, Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school not only employs these factors but also adds a remarkable variety of cures you can apply directly to your own body and mind. I share these amazingly effective personal cures in Chapter 22.
- » **It considers self-development to be key.** Self-development, or bettering yourself as a human being, is paramount in Grandmaster Lin Yun's approach, in contrast with many traditional Feng Shui schools. According to Grandmaster Lin Yun's Feng Shui school, to derive the fullest benefits of Feng Shui, you must cultivate harmonious, balanced energy not only within your environment but also within yourself. Meditation and energy practices are some of the best ways to do this inner cultivation. I recommend starting a meditative practice; use a technique from your own tradition or one found in this book (see Chapter 22 for step-by-step meditation instruction).

Note: If you read other Feng Shui books, keep in mind that other schools of Feng Shui may use different principles and methods. This difference is okay; no one Feng Shui approach has a monopoly on value and effectiveness.

Looking at Feng Shui Factors That You Can Use to Your Advantage

By correctly applying the easy and sensible Feng Shui principles I present in this book, you can reverse negative patterns and strengthen positive ones to maximize your chances of success. When you improve your environment, you can also improve essential areas of your life such as relationships, career, wealth, and family connections. You may be amazed at how life obstacles can be cleared away with simple energy shifts that you can perform in your home.

The following list describes some important ways that Feng Shui is influencing you right now. By reading this book, you can discover how to use all of these factors — and more — to your advantage:

- » **Your front door:** This area receives most of the subtle energy in your home. It influences your opportunities and the amount of income you command. (See Chapter 9 for more information.)
- » **The ability to see your front door from the street:** You may have to struggle hard for the opportunities you receive if your front door is hidden from plain view. (Head to Chapter 9 for more information.)
- » **Your bed position:** This condition influences your love life and health to an amazing (and unseen) degree. (Flip to Chapter 11 for details.)
- » **The placement of your stove:** This location can influence your cash flow and physical health. A chronically dirty stove can significantly affect your financial status. (Flip to Chapter 12 for the scoop.)
- » **The locations of bathrooms:** This situation can result in a loss of money or significant health issues. (See Chapter 13 for more info.)
- » **The air quality and lighting levels:** These circumstances directly affect your thinking patterns and endorphin levels, which in turn influence your performance, attitude, and results. (Chapter 15 has more information.)
- » **The colors you see:** The colors around you powerfully influence your moods, energy level, and effectiveness. (See Chapter 15 for the scoop.)
- » **Your desk position:** This situation can make or break your career. The desk is a top Feng Shui factor for success on the job. (Chapter 17 has details.)
- » **The people who previously lived in your home:** They probably left behind some invisible vibes when they moved. The subtle traces of their feelings and experiences — if negative — may hinder you for the first several years you live in the home. (Chapter 20 has more details.)



A Midwestern dentist located in a small town was frustrated due to his difficulties in hiring additional staff to expand his practice. After performing Feng Shui in his office, he was pleasantly surprised to find that quality hygienists came out of the woodwork to apply for positions. Ultimately, changing the Feng Shui of your environment creates new options and choices. Feng Shui can open up a whole new realm of possibilities for you if you let it.

Finding Life Solutions with Feng Shui

When you have a problem, you can seek solutions through multiple avenues. For example, if you have a problem with your car, you can buy a new car, repair it yourself, have someone else repair it, hope the problem goes away, or live with the issue. Each option holds advantages and disadvantages. The option you choose depends on your level of cash on hand, your expertise with cars, and your current life status. In almost any situation, you can choose from a range of solutions. You almost never have only one road to follow.

For general life problems, your solutions can include

- » Working harder and/or smarter (or acquiring new information)
- » Calling in an expert
- » Calling on a higher power and praying
- » Trying to learn from the situation, becoming a better person and building character
- » Improving the environment to create change (in other words, performing Feng Shui adjustments)

You may be surprised to find out that the best choice on the list is often the last one: Adjust the Feng Shui of your home to change your situation and resolve your problem. In the following sections, I outline the types of Feng Shui approaches you can use and the range of cures available to you.

Selecting a Feng Shui approach

Grandmaster Lin Yun's school of Feng Shui involves identifying energetic problems (or opportunities for improvement) in your environment and coming up with a solution that's viable for your needs, including your taste, budget, aesthetic values, and temperament.

You can apply Feng Shui to your life in two basic ways: generally and specifically. Though both approaches are effective, the general approach can sometimes lead to frustration and confusion. I recommend the specific approach because of its clarity, power, and straightforward progress toward tangible results. However, as usual in Feng Shui, the best method is the one that feels right for you and creates the results you need.

The general approach: Improving the environment at random

With the general approach to Feng Shui, you start by looking at your house in Feng Shui terms, without first taking your current life needs into account. Then you apply solutions to improve the overall energy of the environment with the general intention of making things better for you and your home.

I consider this method a general approach because you're not analyzing your life to determine the results you want to create. Yes, this approach produces results, but because you don't set specific intentions first, those results may not be as powerful or as targeted as you desire. Using a general approach to Feng Shui can therefore make it more difficult to know how well your cures are working or what additional improvements you need to make.

The specific approach: Setting your goals and achieving them



REMEMBER

If you're looking for powerful results, I recommend you take the specific approach to Feng Shui. This approach requires you to perform two steps:

- 1. Examine your life and pinpoint the parts of your life (relationship, work, money, and so on) that aren't working as desired and are crying out for improvement.**

Now's the time to decide specifically how you want these areas to improve. (See the following section for help getting started.)

- 2. Adjust your environment to achieve specific changes in different parts of your life.**

Use the information packed into this book to determine how you can adjust your environment, pick the cures that work for you and your lifestyle, and implement them.

Overall, the specific approach is effective and is focused on getting you the results you want. You know your goals and targets, and you can hone in on and achieve them. Instead of just making general improvements to the environment and

hoping they can help, you know the specific, practical purpose of each cure, which enhances the power of the cure. The specific approach puts you in the driver's seat. You get to decide which areas of your life to improve and which areas are fine for now. Because you set goals and implement changes to reach them, you can easily track your results to see how well your Feng Shui is working. Finally, you can adjust your cures over time to fine-tune the energy for even better results.

Choosing the Life Areas to improve

When you're ready to begin using Feng Shui to improve your life, you can start by deciding exactly what you want to change or improve. Don't worry about addressing every possible Feng Shui issue in your home (after all, no home is perfect). Instead, focus on how your environment is currently helping or halting your progress.

More significantly, focus on what you can do now. By taking proper action, sooner or later you'll create new results. Start by filling out Table 1-1 to find out what parts of your life you want to improve first through Feng Shui (see Chapter 3 for more about the Life Areas listed in the table). This life-assessment exercise gives you a clear look at the status of several parts of your life and helps you decide which ones you want to improve. For each Life Area listed in the first column, write one or two words describing the general situation for that part of your life in the middle column. Use the third column to prioritize the urgency of improvement by assigning 1 (high priority), 2 (medium priority), or 3 (low priority) to each Life Area. (*Tip:* Photocopy the worksheet before using it so you can use it again later.)

TABLE 1-1

Life-Assessment Exercise

Life Area	Description	Priority (1, 2, 3)
Wealth/Money		
Marriage/Partnership		
Health		
Career		
Fame/Reputation		
Family		
Children		
Helpful People		
Knowledge		

After you complete the life-assessment exercise, select (from the ones you've rated as high priorities) the one Life Area you want to focus on immediately. Keep this Life Area firmly in mind. As you read this book, notice the cures you can perform to improve this part of your life. This awareness keeps you focused on finding practical techniques you can implement right away.

Taking steps to Feng Shui success with a range of available cures

You can perform a wide range of possible cures to transform a Feng Shui malady. For any situation, cures may range anywhere from simple, quick, and easy (like rearranging your existing furniture) to complex, difficult, and expensive (like buying a new house). In this book, I keep things as easy and inexpensive as possible.



REMEMBER

Feng Shui isn't inherently cheap, but you can find creative ways to implement low-cost Feng Shui cures in many situations. Most importantly, choose practical solutions for your situation.



TIP

Be sure to get a scale drawing of your home and lot (or at least one that's close to scale) to use with this book. (Hey, if you're going to practice Feng Shui, do it right.) Find the architectural drawings you stashed in the garage or make a drawing of your home including the internal walls and the doors. This tool is your guide when using Feng Shui to actually make something happen (instead of just thinking about making a change).

In the following list, I present nine steps you can use to implement powerful Feng Shui changes. I use the life example of improving one's marriage in each step to help you understand how to apply the steps.

1. Choose which Life Area you want to work on first.

Refer to Table 1-1 to see what I'm talking about. In this example, say you want more harmony and closeness with your partner.

2. Make a commitment to see new results (changes!) in your life in the chosen area.

You need to make changes in your home or on your property to get the new results you desire, so commit yourself to finding and correcting the imbalances. Or, following the example, add positive energy to Marriage Areas if no problems are obvious. At this point, you may want to recruit your spouse to help make the Feng Shui changes; this is a beneficial approach for all of your Feng Shui endeavors (not just the marriage cures!).

3. Scan your environment to see where you need to implement Feng Shui adjustments.

So to improve your marriage, for example, you may note the placement of your bed and the colors in your bedroom.

4. Select the best cure options for each environmental problem you notice.

You may choose to cure the situation by moving your bed to the best possible position in the room and improving the colors as needed.

5. Implement the chosen cures.

In this example, you physically move the bed and install the new colors.

6. Perform the Three Secrets Reinforcement for each cure you do.

This one's self-explanatory provided you know all about the Three Secrets Reinforcement. I explain this important internal step, which empowers the cures you perform, in Chapter 6.

7. Pay attention to changes that occur in your life after you implement your cures.

Keep on the lookout for the new effects you desire. Ideally, you and your spouse will experience greater harmony and increased communication after you put your cures in place.



TIP

Keep a written record of the cures you do and the results you get (see Chapter 18.)

8. Based on the feedback you get from your life, perform additional cures for the same area of your life as needed.

If things have improved somewhat but you want further benefits, apply some more marriage cures.

9. Start the whole process again, focusing on another area of your life.

Now that you have a success under your belt, you can target another aspect of your life — such as career or income — that you want to improve.



REMEMBER

How and when results come isn't something you can control directly (refer to Chapter 18 for info on results). However, keep in mind that even if you see quick or immediate benefits from your cures, they continue to work indefinitely and provide you with ongoing energy and results for years to come — unless of course you move, in which case there's even more important Feng Shui work to do (particularly before you move). Chapter 20 has the skinny on this vital Feng Shui topic.

INTENTION: THE REAL POWER BEHIND FENG SHUI

Feng Shui can be divided into two parts — the visible and the invisible — both of which are important for success in life and in Feng Shui.

- Visible factors include the chi (life force energy) of the land, as well as the walls, doors, streets, and other tangible elements that we analyze and alter using Feng Shui.
- The invisible factors include *predecessor influences* (the energies of the people who previously lived in your home), ghosts and spirits, and other intangible qualities of the environment.
- The most important invisible factor is *intention*, or the simultaneous strong desire and visualization of what you want a cure to produce. Everything you do in life involves an intention and an action.
- The action is the physical side of the process. In Feng Shui, this means some tangible activity, like moving your bed to a better location, changing a wall color, or decorating with healthy potted plants.
- Intention is the invisible, or spiritual, side of Feng Shui. It's the reason why you move the bed. Specifically, it's the life change you hope to accomplish when you make this adjustment. Intention includes two parts: what you want and how clearly you want it. If you move the bed to improve your marriage and you visualize the improvement while changing the bed position, your cure will be much more effective. (See Chapter 6 for powerful methods of empowering your intention.)

Getting Additional Help



TIP

Occasionally, a situation is so burdened with Feng Shui problems that you can't decide where to begin. Or you may perform some good cures and see incremental improvement but feel that you still have a long way to go. If you need help to tackle your issues fully, you can take a Feng Shui course or you can call in a professional consultant for assistance (see Chapter 24 and the appendix for details). Meanwhile, make any improvements that you can right now and better your odds of creating positive effects — inevitably, things will begin to shift in the right direction.