

Feng Shui and The Bedroom

Return to Sweet Dreams - Bringing Serenity & Sensuality back into the Room of Rest, Rejuvenation & Romance

Everyone deserves a great bedroom. We spend about a third of our lives in our bedrooms, sleeping, reading, reflecting, romancing, recharging our batteries. Ideally, it's a perfect combination of cozy nest, welcoming oasis, and romantic hideaway that reflects your personal tastes. However, I often see bedrooms that are neither restful, rejuvenating nor romantic. Sometimes they have remained sparse or unfinished while the other rooms in the house have been beautifully done. I recently visited clients who still had not painted their master bedroom and they'd lived there over fifteen years! Other times, bedrooms are dressed to the nines and fit the designer look, without having the first sign of any real cozy or romantic comfort.

Sometimes bedrooms are chaotic catch-alls, or the depository for furniture leftovers from times gone by. Old college pieces seem to be a favorite. Unfortunately, whenever bedrooms do not meet peoples' needs for rest and rejuvenation, the quality of their waking life is compromised.

My bedroom is my sacred retreat. I go there for complete quiet, often falling into the friendly embrace of my bed after a long and active day. It is serene, warm and uncomplicated. There is no telephone and no television. There is simply a king-sized bed, two reading lamps, two nightstands, and a small table with a mood lamp and candles. The bed is dressed in heaps of down comforters and pillows covered in golden and cabernet flannel. The headboard is a hand carved Chinese screen that depicts golden hills at night, lit only by a fingernail moon. The floor is covered with hand woven carpets in deep reds and golds, heirlooms from my husband's family. I love everything there, and the embrace I feel each time I go there is all-encompassing.

There are three basic Feng Shui principles that we can apply to enhance our bedrooms. The first principle is that everything, including our furniture, art and architecture, is alive.

For instance, consider the woman who has gorgeous bedroom furniture that she bought with her exhusband twenty years ago. As beautiful as the furniture is, it is alive with the memories of her exhusband and associations with their marriage. It is a giant anchor to the past that she may or may not be happy to live with NOW or into her future. When she looks through "Feng Shui eyes", her furniture changes

from being expensive and inanimate to expressive and animate. It's literally "talking" to her ALL the time about her married life. She needs to listen to what it's saying and decide whether she likes it's tone or not. When she REALLY listens, she may realize she doesn't like what it's saying and say "No wonder I can't put my divorce to BED!"

Ask yourself what memories, thoughts, feelings and associations is your bedroom ALIVE with? Is it dedicated to your rest, rejuvenation and romance? Many bedrooms are not. Along with things that carry unwanted memories, there are other challenges. For instance, a desk in your bedroom often carries a double message. The desk is alive with work, bills, or unfinished business, while the bed supports your sleep and rest. When you have no choice but to have your bed and desk live in the same room, I suggest that you put the desk "to sleep" when not in use by screening or covering it. Screen the bed from the desk as well, or throw a "work cloth" that represents wakefulness over the bed, such as a cloth that is brightly colored or "awake" in some way. At the end of the day, the cloth is put away, revealing the bed again as a place of rest. The same ideas apply to exercise equipment. It too needs to be covered or screened from view when not in use to maintain peace and tranquility in the bedroom.

Another feature that can be interruptive in the bedroom are mirrors. Because mirrors activate and awaken energy, they can keep a bedroom charged up and awake twenty-four hours a day. The bigger a mirror is and the closer it is to the bed, the more likely it's disturbing the peace. Experience has shown me that mirrors are one of the biggest causes for insomnia and restless nights. When large mirrors have to be located in your bedroom, such as mirrored closet doors, you can drape or curtain them just like they were a window. This way, you can cover them at night and uncover them during the day. However, to assure quiet and serenity in your bedroom, it's best to locate your mirrors elsewhere.

The second basic principle in Feng Shui is that everything is connected. In the bedroom, this means that the quality of rest we receive is connected to every other part of our lives. Our entire waking life, including our health, our relationships and our careers, are all directly connected to our ability to rest. Therefore, setting your bedroom up to assure deep rest and complete rejuvenation becomes essential. Make sure that your connection or relationship with each and every object in your bedroom elicits a positive, nurturing response, so that you are surrounded with environmental affirmations. And remember, you are equally connected to what's

under the bed and in the closets as to anything else. Remove clutter and organize every part of your bedroom, including drawers, jewelry boxes and shelves.

Also, give your bedroom a safety and comfort check. Is there any furniture in your bedroom that could double as a weapon? This includes metal legs, pointed objects or sharp corners that reach out and grab you when you're not careful. The comfort and safety you feel in your bedroom is directly connected to how safe and comfortable you feel in the world in general.

Safety also includes bed placement. In Feng Shui, your bed is ideally located so that you have a view of the door, without being directly in front of the door. This way, you are in the "eddy" of the room, so to speak, while still maintaining the command position, or the ability to see the door.

Along with this, you want to check everything that you view from the bed. Ideally, you want a serene, beautiful view, whether it's a painting, a healthy plant, a restful color, a wonderful arrangement of items on a bureau, or Nature outside the window. If your view takes you straight into a bathroom, a chaotic closet, a violent or ugly painting, or an unpleasing or non-private view out your window, change it for the better. It is interesting to note that the harmony between couples is strengthened when they share the same beautiful view from the bed. Often, when two people sharing the bed each have distinctly different views from the bed, they will also begin to have different points of view in life.

There are other ways to apply Feng Shui principles to help nurture a relationship. Often, we optimistically assume that the strength of a new relationship will last a lifetime. However, as the daily grind of Western life wears on couples' days and nights, they may notice a decline in their romantic bliss. Many couples haven't made the connection that their environment can actually strengthen and nourish - or dampen and weaken - their love relationship. Like water dripping on a stone, their work and home surroundings steadily make an impression, for better or for worse, through sickness and through health, until death - or divorce - do they part. What couples need is a private sanctuary to truly rest, rejuvenate and connect with each other. Many couples put little or no importance on their bedroom environment, assuming that their love relationship can withstand just about anything. As our divorce rate shows us - not so!

In Feng Shui, there's a saying that the bigger the master bedroom gets, the higher

the divorce rate goes. This comes directly from the fact that it can be challenging to make a large room into a cozy, comfortable, romantic nest to be together.

Ideally, for couples, as well as single people, the bedroom is a place of sensuality, meaning a place where all the senses are subtly celebrated. If you want to engage and delight all your senses, what can you do?

You can add pleasing sounds, such as relaxing or romantic music, or the soothing sounds of Nature. You can introduce fabrics that are sensual to the touch, such as chenille, thick flannel, silk, pure cotton, and velvet. You can bring special taste treats into your bedroom - anything from coffee and croissants in the morning to champagne and strawberries in the evening. You can include incense, essential oils, and scented candles. And, to enhance your bedroom visually, you can bring in serene or romantic items, as well as the warm skin tone colors.

Most people find it especially comforting and sensual to be surrounded by warm colors in the bedroom. It's called "getting rid of the blues."

Think of skin, and all the colors healthy skin can be. There are all the blushy pink, apricot and peach tones. There are the subtle hues of lavender and gold that hint from just beneath the surface of skin. And, there is the whole spectrum of colors given to us by the skin tones of all the races of our world - everything from pearly beiges and tans, to creamy cocoas, subtle yellows, and burnished reds. We find a rich variety of skin colors in warm pastels, as well as the deeper, richer colors such as coral, chocolate, buttercream, terracotta, mauve, raspberry, violet, burgundy, copper and bronze.

Colors to use sparingly as accents, or not at all, are pure white, gray, black, blues and greens, because most people experience these colors as cool. Though they can be used to create a gorgeous effect, when they dominate, they will drop the perceived warmth of the bedroom.

I recently worked with a couple who had decorated their master bedroom entirely in sage green. The carpet, walls, window treatments, bed linens, and upholstered chairs were all done in the same gray-green color. As the various components were added one by one, both partners noticed a cooling in their love life. By the time the last touches were being added, the wife was sleeping in the guest room. Though the effect was beautiful, the couple was very uncomfortable with the monochromatic

look. We discussed the need to balance the cool green and warm up their bedroom by adding some skin tones. He didn't like peach, and she didn't care for yellow, but they both liked pink. They added pink and raspberry bed linens, pillows, throws, and an area rug to their room, and their romantic interest in each other was soon rekindled.

If your bedroom is done primarily in cool colors, you can balance it by bringing in an equal or greater proportion of complementary warm tones. This can be done in many ways, such as with a new coat of paint, new sheets, pillowcases, pillows, throws, art, comforters, slipcovers, rugs, tablecloths, and candles.

The art in your bedroom is also very important. Ideally, it depicts sensuality, serenity and/or romance; and you love it! I was once in a couples' bedroom where neither partner was sleeping well. Over the bed was a framed poster of a three-ring circus in full performance! And, the wallpaper border around the entire room was a chorus line of dancing girls. They had chosen the poster and the border because they matched the blue and terracotta color scheme of the room. It had never occurred to them that the content of these art pieces might have a negative impact on their ability to sleep. They changed both items to a more serene subject matter and have slept much better ever since.

And, does anyone really want to be looked at by dozens of pictures of family members while in bed?? Many couples rediscover their romantic life after finding a new home AWAY from the bed for the photos of their children, parents, and friends. A little privacy, please! The same applies to religious figures, such as the Virgin Mary or a crucifix. As meaningful as these items may be, they can color the mood when they preside over the bed.

Happy couples usually enjoy a sense of equality in their relationship, and their equality is reflected in their furniture choices. Ideally, there is the same amount of space, as well as equally sized tables and lamps on both sides of a couple's bed.

Consider what meaningful objects you would like in the bedroom and on your side table. The "environmental affirmations" that you see first thing in the morning and last thing at night make a strong impact on your psyche. Be sure it is a positive one!

Also, simplicity in decor is usually best. Most people won't lay down to take a

much needed nap if there's twenty pillows that have to be removed first. The bed is ideally always open and available to receive and comfort a tired soul. It's my experience that most men hate lots of frilly pillows on a bed. They can never seem to move them without bending a bow or wrinkling the lace.

I visit many people who enjoy having a television in their bedrooms. When this is the case, it is best housed in an armoire or cabinet that has doors so that it can disappear between uses. TVs are watched more often when they are in plain view and perpetually "staring" at their owners. And, in most cases, when TV viewing increases in the bedroom, romantic life decreases.

What about bedrooms that belong to single people? First of all, the same basic rules apply. Creating a peaceful, comforting, sensually appealing bedroom is important for everyone. When single people want to attract a mate, they need to prepare a space in their bedrooms to welcome a new partner. Put a table and lamp on the other side of the bed, even when you are only using one side. Also, bring in the romantic, sensual items you would if you were already involved in a love affair. Single men have a tendency to make their bedrooms into an "everything" room - storage, office, den, and exercise room. This often gives the bedroom a chaotic appearance. I visited one single man whose room was in such chaos that it took me a few minutes to visually locate the bed. He wondered why he never had a girlfriend for very long.... I could see that any woman who saw this man's room would run in the other direction!

On the other hand, single women tend to fill their bedrooms with dolls, stuffed animals, pretty pillows, photographs, and other memorabilia. Their new date takes one look and assumes there's no room for him! There's no place to sit or lay down, because the furniture is already taken by cute, cuddly guardians.

And, finally, the third basic Feng Shui principle is that everything is constantly changing. Embrace and enjoy the changes in your life by expressing who you are NOW in your bedroom. Move your furniture around, change the colors of your sheets, buy the most romantic painting you've ever seen, put something especially meaningful beside your bed. Remember, the nocturnal serenity and sensuality you experience in your bedroom provides the foundation for your success in your daily activities. When your bedroom is truly serene, deeply soothing, and continually inviting to all the senses, you will be nurtured and rejuvenated every time you walk through its threshold.

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