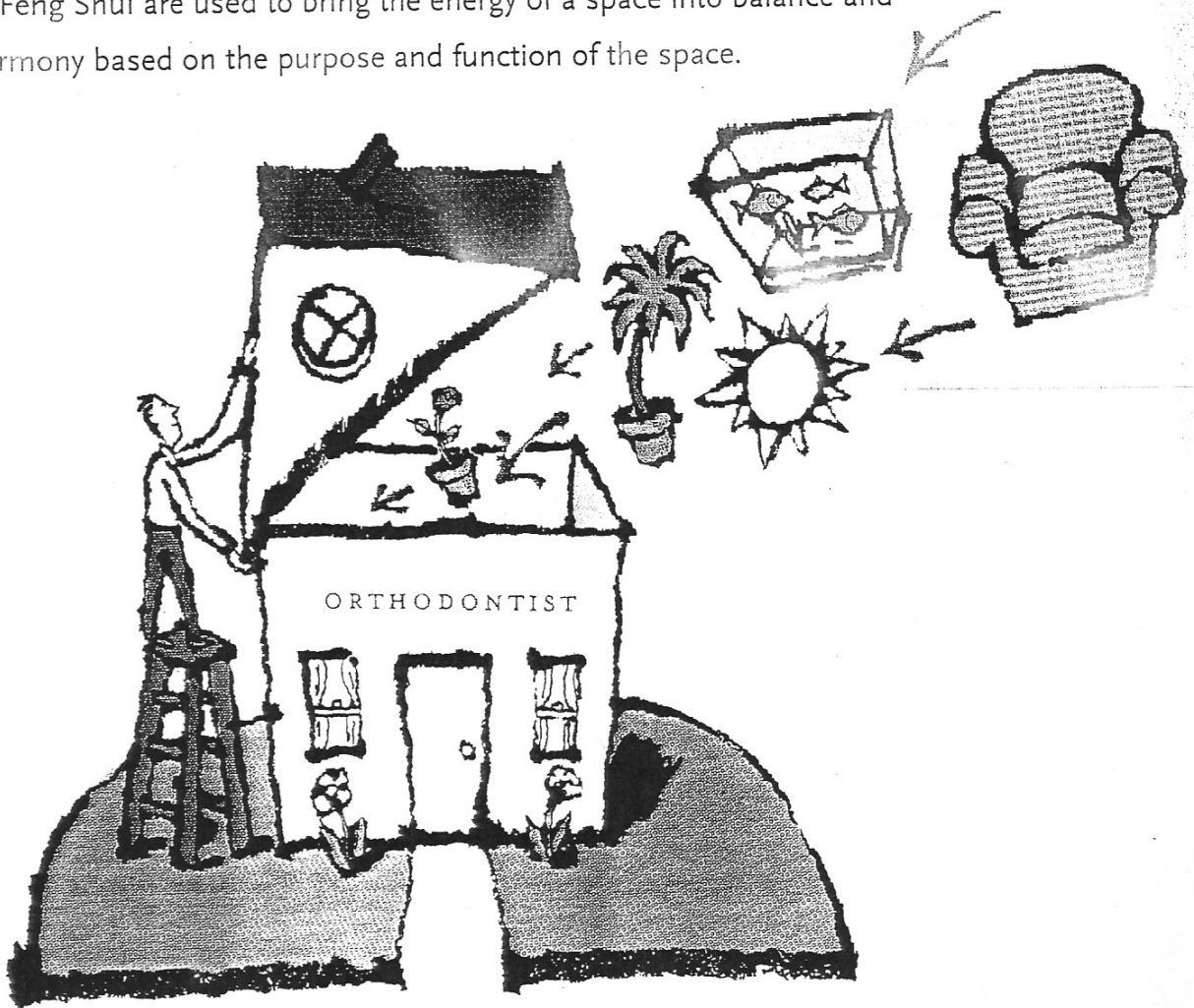


# Increase Your Chi

BY MARGARET M. RICHARDS

Have you ever just walked into a place and immediately felt relaxed, comfortable and secure? Now compare that to another space that evokes opposite feelings of confusion, chaos and coldness. What you're feeling and sensing can be thought of as the Feng Shui of the space.

Feng Shui (pronounced Fung Shwee), a Mandarin Chinese phrase meaning "wind-water," is an art and science that is over 3,000 years old. The premise is that one's personal energy or "chi" is interacting with a space and everything in it. The principles of Feng Shui are used to bring the energy of a space into balance and harmony based on the purpose and function of the space.



For instance, the quiet and serenity of a library would not work well in a setting that needs to promote physical activity. In a home, the bedroom and family room should have very contrasting “energies”, that is layout, shapes, and colors that create a restful, yet sensual environment.

In your practice, it is just as important that your patients receive a message upon entering your office that conveys trust in your ability to provide them with the very best care. The layout should exude comfort, caring, and offer a “calming” effect. The waiting room should give one a sense of welcome and safety.

Let’s start with the entryway—the first physical/visual impression a patient has with your office. If you have control of the space outside the entryway, make sure the path leading to the front door is clear and well marked, so that “chi” can move freely and directly towards you without encountering any obstacles along the way. Overgrown bushes or trees can actually be confusing and block the “good energy” from arriving. No one likes to run an obstacle course to find his or her way to their destination. One result of this situation could be that new patients are prevented from being called to your practice; or they may walk in annoyed – a situation not conducive to producing calm and confidence. Signs are also very important, as they announce to the universe (or more importantly to your patients) who you are, and where to find you. Assuming you can control directional signs in surrounding hallways and building entrance, review their placement, visibility, and utility.

The front door itself is very significant in Feng Shui and is called the

“mouth of chi”. Just as nourishment for the body comes through our mouth, so does the front door bring nourishment through to your space (the income that feeds your staff and family). It should be in excellent working condition with no loose handles, missing hardware, peeling paint, or broken glass. The area behind the front door should be kept clear of any obstacles that would prevent

it from opening fully. This will ensure that “good opportunity and energy” will have room to enter unhindered.

Upon entering the office, the patient should be greeted by a staff member or encounter a clearly posted set of instructions indicating what the patient should do next. Think about how uncomfortable it is to arrive at a new place and be greeted only by a roomful of waiting people who all stare up. This creates a feeling of insecurity and apprehension – not a good way to get your relationship off the ground!

The waiting room should be as comfortable and calming as possible. Avoid the use of colors like red or bright purple. These colors stimulate the nervous system and add to the apprehension that many experience in a dental office. Introduce calming earth tones that promote feelings of stability, or green, the color associated with good health. A soothing water feature such as an aquarium or tabletop fountain can do wonders in easing tensions. Floor plants can be used to soften sharp edges of furniture or corners that contribute to piercing, fast moving “chi”, making navigation difficult and even dangerous. Try to introduce round shapes

wherever possible.

The layout of examining areas in most offices causes both the orthodontist and the patient to be in a vulnerable position – with their backs to the door. In Feng Shui, the command position is critical to the well being of the occupants in a room. The command position is that which is the furthest away from the door, with the widest view of the door. So try turning the chairs around and see what happens. You will be able to work more comfortably (no surprises from behind) and the patient will feel more supported. When one feels supported, it is much easier to relax. The

same rules for using color apply here as in the waiting room. Avoid red at all costs!

The beauty of Feng Shui is that very small changes or adjustments in colors and layout can make a very significant impact in the overall harmony in the office. Consider using the services of a Feng Shui practitioner who can assess the effect your office layout and decor have on patients. They will be able to make appropriate recommendations to increase better “energy” flow. Patients and employees alike will be positively affected once changes have been made. ■

#### Internet Resources

Feng Shui Guild Homepage  
<http://www.fengshuiguild.com>

American Feng Shui Institute  
<http://www.amfengshui.com>

The Feng Shui Directory: Feng Shui Consultants and Schools  
<http://www.fengshuidirectory.com>

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