

## Lifebeat

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# Feng Shui: It's all about bringing balance and harmony

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Dana T. Duellman wasn't always a believer.

To her, Feng Shui was just another thing out there. She changed her mind after receiving a reading from a visionary who told her she would become an alchemist. That prediction at first meant nothing to Duellman, a busy mother of two, wife and at the time, a restaurant owner.

But when things at home started becoming unsettled, she decided to give Feng Shui a try to see if it would help clear the air.

It worked. Convinced that the ancient Chinese practice of placement helped redirect the Ch'i, or the flow of energy in her home, thus bringing balance and harmony to her family, Duellman sought the masters to learn more.

"I'm a huge skeptic," said Duellman, who added she wouldn't have tried Feng Shui practices had it not been for some profound life-changing events. "It gave us an opportunity to find out how we are energetically connected to our space. It brought us closer together."

Duellman, 40, calls herself an alchemist of the home. Since 2004, she has been a certified Feng Shui practitioner of the Interior Alignment and Graceful Lifestyles schools, among dozens of Feng Shui approaches. Duellman is a licensed Realtor at Keller Williams Aspire Realty in Cranston, and blends her knowledge of the ancient practice with her work.

As a Realtor, she helps people who are selling their homes assess what they need to do to make their homes more inviting, to attract a buyer faster. For buyers, she helps people choose the right space layout for what their needs are. As a Feng Shui practitioner, she helps anyone looking to bring more balance and harmony into their space, and she helps people figure out how best to make that happen.

“It’s about having space for energy to flow through,” Duellman said. “It comes back to telling a story, and what interests you and how you define yourself. Ninety-five percent of Feng Shui has to do with intention.”

Duellman uses a square BaGua Map, the tool more commonly used with Western Feng Shui practitioners. The traditional Chinese BaGua map is octagonal and contains the symbols of the I-Ching, the ancient oracle that Feng Shui is based upon. The map that Duellman uses is laid out as a nine-square grid. The map is held at the architectural entrance of the home, or the entrance of the room that you want to focus on. Each smaller square in the map represents a different life area. Duellman recommends using the map for every room and for every surface in your home to make the most out of Feng Shui.

When Duellman starts working with a client, one of the first things she wants to know is the birth date of everyone living there, to determine their elements: earth, water, metal, fire, wood.

“That in and of itself will tell me a lot,” she said. For example wood and metal don’t get along harmoniously, but wood and water do. Knowing your element helps to understand what to incorporate into the space, so it will have supportive energy, as well as what elements to minimize that might make you feel uncomfortable, she said. In addition, knowing the elements of the people you share space with can help you recognize the strengths and challenges in personalities so that a conscious effort to balance and support everyone is made.

The most popular inquiry she gets from prospective clients is how to help them find love.

“They want to attract the right person. They need to improve their money and wealth. They want a new job, or promotion,” Duellman said. “[I tell them] let’s really focus on that area of the home.”

Duellman describes how using Feng Shui principals in her front vestibule, which has two entrances, helps prevent the flow of energy from coming in the front door and going right out the back. Her vestibule is in her home’s inner knowledge sector, a place for self-expression. There, she has her cooking appliances, books, arts and crafts from her children, and other items collected from family trips abroad. On a side wall is a painting of two animated faces. Near the back door is a teal chest her husband inherited. Hanging from the ceiling is a crystal that helps to refract light and energy.

“[The entrance] really needs to be warm and inviting. It’s here to tell a story about who you are,” she said. “Color is important to me. We wanted this to have a vibrant appeal.”

Additional information about Duellman is available at

[www.myperfectspace.com](http://www.myperfectspace.com)

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