

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI
Feng Shui by Maria
February Column for the Benicia Herald

The Year of the Sheep: Are You Ready to Relax?

The 2014 Year of Horse is coming to an end. Has a year of riding in the saddle left you tired and sore? For many it proved to be a tumultuous year; moving fast, buying a home, launching a business, traveling the world, making a big purchase, getting a promotion at work and taking on more responsibility, or starting big projects either at home or at work. The year of the horse brought with it many opportunities for growth and success, but along with these opportunities were transitions, movement, stress and sometimes painful endings. Our family lost three close friends, a young cousin, my husband's father and even our dog. Yet at the same time I was given the opportunity to connect with my Italian family with a delightful two month visit of my cousin, and my daughter bought and renovated two new properties to add to her expanding real estate portfolio. Through the good and the bad, we are all ready for the rest that the Year of the Sheep will bring.

Year of the Sheep:

According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2015 is the Year of the Sheep which begins on February 18, 2015. The Sheep is the Eighth Sign of the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of 12 Animal Signs. The Sheep stand for peace and happiness. Generally speaking, people born in the Year of the Sheep are said to be peacemakers, generous, caring, kind, tolerant, and easily touched by other people's misfortunes. For all, this year is a time to heal after the chaos of 2014's Horse year, as well as relaxing and enjoying the growth that occurred. Whatever has been disturbed, hurt, left unfinished or out of place can be more easily brought back into harmony this year, and the very process of doing so will enrich you. What is of value now is intimacy, family and close friendships. We can be more caring, kind and sensitive with each other, develop a gentle heart, and be open to love and acceptance on all levels. Another theme of the Sheep year is to express your creative side. Now is the time for art, creativity and cultivation of beauty. If you ever wanted to explore your creative side, this is your year. Do not give up, be pessimistic or become discouraged because Sheep can only move forward! This animal is unable to move backwards or sideways. This will be a year to get cozy and enjoy life's comforts in all their artistic forms.

Sheep year is most fortunate for Sheep. This good luck is especially true for people born in the years 2015, 2003, 1991, 1979, 1967, 1955, 1943, 1931, and 1919. If you were born in one of these sheep years - Congratulations! Success is with you in 2015 as you will benefit from Sheep Year creativity. Finally, others are on your wavelength and progress is made.

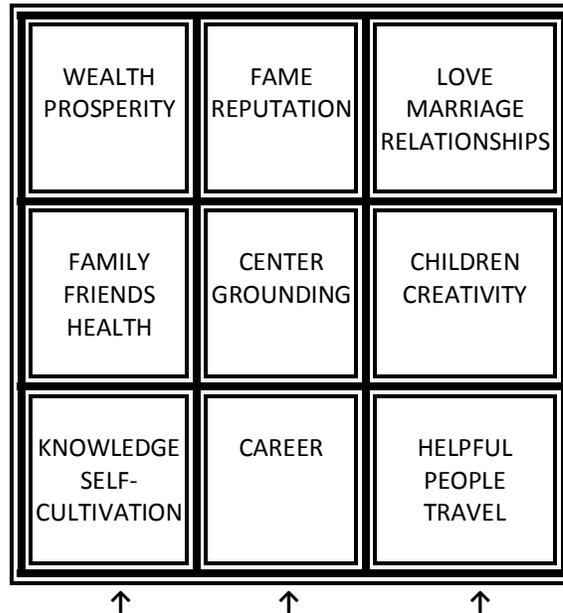
For everybody this is the perfect year to relax. Take time for the small pleasures of life, turn within, and pay attention to the people around you. Be open to the delight of receiving more love from everywhere and everyone. The year of the Sheep offers us this message: Create blissful peace in your home and in yourself and you will light the way for others to follow. Enjoy the much deserved rest and the new connections you'll make.

Creating Blissful Peace in Your Home

This is a perfect time for Feng Shui to help you imbue the calming spirit of the Sheep. The first step in Feng Shui is always to declutter, clear out and pass on items in your home that keep you stuck and unhappy. This begins the energy moving. The second step is to determine which areas of your life are not working for you and align your home with the Feng Shui Bagua Map to discover which areas need enhancing. Once you locate the area in your home use the list of enhancement recommendations below to create a peaceful, balanced, nourishing environment. If an area is missing use anchoring techniques from ([www.fengshuibymaria](http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/pdfs/newsletters/Nov2013.pdf) newspaper columns – Nov. 2013). <http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/pdfs/newsletters/Nov2013.pdf>

The Bagua

The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors. The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, "The I Ching," and literally means "eight trigrams", with the center being for centering and grounding.



ENTRANCE QUADRANT

If an area in your life is not working locate the corresponding area in your home, declutter it and nourish it with some of the following enhancements.

Career Area (Water Element)

- * Items in items in black or very dark colors, glass/crystal items
- * Water features, (fountains, waterfalls or aquariums)
- * Art depicting water scenes

Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area (Wood Element)

- * Items in wood, the colors of blues, greens, or black and in the shape of columns or stripes
- * Healthy plants with rounded soft leaves
- * Art depicting nature scenes

Friends/Family/Health Area (Wood Element)

- * Healthy floral arrangements or art depicting vibrant flowers
- * Photos of family, friends or representing perfect health
- * Items in wood and the colors of blues, greens, or black

Wealth Area (Fire Element)

- * Opulent items in the purple color spectrum
- * Art representing wealth such as luxurious vacation spots, stunning architectural homes etc.
- * Healthy, round leaf plants

Fame Area (Fire Element)

- * Photos or art representing achievements or inspiration
- * Items in the colors red
- * Items representing the fire element with candles and lighting

Love and Marriage Area (Fire Element)

- * Pairs of items (candles, love birds, vases)
- * Art or photos depicting romance
- * Colors of reds, pinks and white

Children and Creativity Area (Metal Element)

- * Photos of children or items made by children
- * Items in metal and the colors of white and pastels
- * Whimsical art

Helpful People and Travel Area (Metal Element)

- * Art or figures pertaining to spiritual guides, and/or mentors, helpful people or places where you have traveled or want to travel
- * Items in metal and colors of white, black or grey

Center Area (Earth Element)

- * Items in ceramics, the colors yellow, earth tones, and rectangle shapes
- * Art depicting earth tone scenes such as fields, deserts, sunflowers etc.

Affirmations:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. That's why all enhancements need to be made with intentionality; written or stated affirmations are very important. It is also important for them to be expressed as if they are already happening. Examples while you're in the year of the Sheep: *"I have mended fences with my family."* *"We are experiencing a rebirth of our relationship."* *"My creativity is thriving. Ideas are flowing in."*

Feng Shui at Work: (Client testimonial)

"I took a class from Maria a few years ago, and feel that Feng Shui certainly contributed to the huge turnaround in my life. I changed the artwork in my bedroom, using only sets of 2. No more solitary figures. I repainted my guest room a skin tone (sensual), added a leather chair, table, lamp and plant. This room served as the site for my new relationship to blossom! A 7-month long distance friendship has been transformed into a full blown romance. We've been dancing ever since! I believe applying some basic Feng Shui principles was the beginning of this transformation. Thank you, Maria!"

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. The Year of the Sheep will allow you to have a relaxing peaceful, creative year. Reach out to friends, declutter your home, and take up your creative pursuits; all for free...

Questions, Questions, Questions:

I encourage you to email me with question, which I will respond in this column or by email.

Reader: "We were having issues with our sump pump unfortunately located in our Wealth Area. The plumbers have dug it up and left the area under our home in disarray. Our beautiful planting table, which I had painted purple for wealth, is all muddy and has been used as a dumping ground. We are watching money issues arising and the pump, which has been ordered, taking an unbearable time to arrive. What can we do to stop this flow? We are tired of living like this.

Dear Reader: "I recommend cleaning up the area as best as you can immediately. Remove clutter from the planting table, clean it thoroughly and then place a beautiful 5 element display on the bench. For example: Red (representing fire), flowers (representing wood), in a round, black ceramic pot (round shape representing metal, black representing water and ceramic representing earth) (see www.fengshuibymaria.com Newspaper Column – Sept. 2011) I also recommend clearing the energy by burning white sage and stating positive affirmations that the job will be completed quickly and under the proposed budget.

Reader: "Thank you so much. I did everything you recommended. The job was completed to our satisfaction and at a discount for our trouble that same week. I also received a check in the mail that had been delayed for some time."

For questions or home consultations email at mtmccull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, (where you can read past columns), or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria", where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

* Check out my BLOG – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

Maria McCullough – Bio

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of Feng Shui by Maria (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 20 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."