

**EVERYDAY FENG SHUI**  
Feng Shui by Maria  
November Column for Benicia Herald

**Thanksgiving Gratitude: Let Your Dining Rooms Nurture You**

“Gratitude is important to happiness. Studies show that consistently grateful people are happier and more satisfied with their lives; they even feel more physically healthy and spend more time exercising. Gratitude makes it easier to live within your means, brings freedom from envy and connects you to the natural world.” Gretchen Rubin, in her book The Happiness Project gives gratitude such importance that she keeps a daily Gratitude Notebook, each day writing three things she’s grateful for. This has made her aware of her many blessings. I personally feel grateful for having the opportunity to share Feng Shui wisdom through this column, to meet many motivated learners in my classes, and to visit beautiful homes with the intent to make the energy flow even better.

With Thanksgiving upon us people gather with friends and families to share love and feelings of gratitude. These gatherings usually take place in the dining room around a bounty of food, blessings and laughter. Our dining rooms become our oasis where we nourish and renew our bodies, hearts and spirits. Our cultural tendency is to rush through most of our meals perched at a kitchen counter, standing over the sink or sitting in front of a television. It is important to note the importance the dining room has on your energy flow. Because nourishment is so vital to our health and wellbeing, Feng Shui encourages us to design a pleasant and serene dining environment; turn off the telephone and TV, play soft music, set the table, light candles and dine at a leisurely pace. Arrange furniture, plants, rugs and other Chi enhancers to slow the body down, aiding digestion and stimulating conversation.

Whether you have a formal dining room, a breakfast nook or a kitchen counter there are a few enhancements that help make your dining experience a pleasant one and make us more aware of the Chi qualities in our food. There are also a few things that are NOT recommended for enjoyable dining.

Here are a few general Dos and Don’ts to ensure your dining room is following the Feng Shui guides of Comfort and Safety:

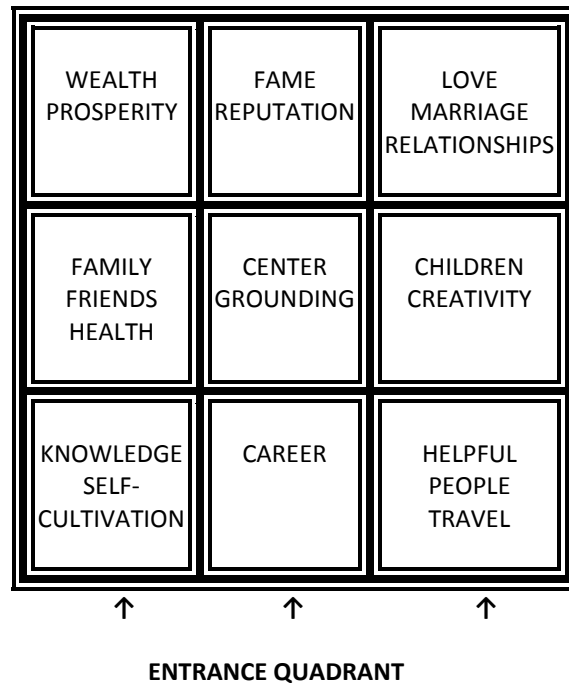
- Comfort is inherent in the positive flow of Chi. Make sure your furniture is comfortable, if not, replace or pad the chairs.
- Ensure safety by making sure that there are no sharp edges on the table or chairs. Soften sharp edges glass tables with cloths or table runners. Round and oval tables are more Feng Shui friendly.
- Make sure your dining area is defined enough to have its own identity; screens, plants, lighting, area rugs and furniture placement can help define the space.
- Choose art that relaxes and inspires you.
- Give each chair a pleasant view.

Dining Room Don’ts:

- Mirrors, especially when large, can over activate a room meant to be tranquil, and make your guests uncomfortable. If possible, avoid mirrors in dining rooms, or break the reflection with plants, screens, candles, vases etc.

### Dining Rooms and 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."



Dining Rooms should take on the qualities of the Bagua area they reside in. Here are some examples of using the Bagua enhancements for Dining Rooms:

#### Dining Rooms in Career Area

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

#### Dining Rooms in Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area

- \* 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

#### Dining Rooms in Friends/Family/Health Area

- \* 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

#### Dining Rooms in Wealth Area

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

#### Dining Rooms in Fame Area

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

#### Dining Rooms in Love and Marriage Area

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

#### Dining Rooms in Children and Creativity Area

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

#### Dining Rooms in Helpful People and Travel Area

- \* 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

#### Dining Rooms in Center Area

- \* This is an auspicious location for the dining room because food is associated with the Earth Element.
- \* Items in ceramics, the colors yellow, earth tones, and rectangle shapes
- \* Art depicting earth tone scenes such as fields, deserts, sunflowers etc.

#### Feng Shui at Work

One of the greatest Dining Room transformations was with a client who had her dining room in the Wealth Area. At the time of our initial consultation she had a very large mirror overlooking the table. I told her this was too active of a feature for restful dining. In fact, I had to keep resisting the urge to check my hair while we were talking. I would have hated to be facing it during a meal. After her transformation she sent me a picture of the room; she chose to paint the walls a shade of light purple and added purple and gold accents creating an opulent table setting, replaced the mirror with a stunning painting of gold and purple flowers, and placed a small bubbling fountain on the sideboard. She later reported that her life had indeed become more prosperous in many ways.

Another client had her dining room in her Career Area. She confided that her career seemed to be stuck, and she was having trouble with the flow of communication. I observed that, although this was her water element area, she had nothing but wood; wooden table, basket of fruit, large dry flower arrangement and a brown and gold batik on the wall. Too much wood keeps life rooted. I suggested that she bring in items of the water element, as well as metal which cuts wood and holds water. She replaced the batik with a dark painting of a Venice waterway in a metal frame, placed a black runner on the table and a round crystal vase with white flowers on the table. She removed the dried flowers and placed a beautiful black vase in its place. She also brought in a small bubbling fountain. She immediately noticed the difference and told me that now her ideas were being accepted and communications was finally "flowing." Learn more about elemental balance in my September 2011 column on <http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>

#### Affirmations and Inner Work:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. Intent is the inner work that leads you to a more harmonious life. This particular inner work is about nurturing your body, heart and spirit. Consider how you nourish not only your body, but your emotional and spiritual aspirations as well. If you are hungry on any level, decide how you can create a nurturing atmosphere that feeds that part of you. LIFE IS A FEAST! Make sure you're enjoying every bite.

#### Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. Setting a pretty table and turning off the TV makes a huge difference in the flow of your Chi at mealtimes. Keep a Gratitude Notebook; write 3 things you are grateful for each day. Let others know you are grateful for them.

You can review any of the areas of the Bagua in greater detail in past columns on my website:

<http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>

Your dining room represents the nurturing of all aspects of your life. Once you have enhanced the space enjoy a great meal and express your gratitude for all your blessings.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** I give thanks to all of my readers.

For questions or home consultations email at [mtmccull@aol.com](mailto:mtmccull@aol.com) and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at [www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://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.

**LEARN MORE IN MY NEXT CLASSES- and Receive \$40 Off a Home Consultation**

I will be teaching more 3 hour classes through the Benicia Parks and Recreation this winter and spring!

**Saturday Jan. 26 - 9:00 am**

**Saturday April 20 - 9:00 am**

The Parks and Recreation Guide is now available, if you'd like to register. (Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.) - Mark your calendars and invite friends.

Until then...Blessings!

**Maria McCullough - Bio**

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of *Feng Shui by Maria* ([www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://www.fengshuibymaria.com)) and is a speaker and educator with over 15 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."