

Feng Shui Case Study

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Andy and Clarissa "incredibly disorganized"

Graciously, Feng Shui designer Nancy Canestaro volunteered to do a sample consultation for two friends of a Metro Pulse reporter, a young couple, ages 33 and 25, who will henceforth be referred to as "Andy" and "Clarissa." (The chief reason for this being that their real names are "Randy" and "Melissa," and therefore sound remarkably similar.)

Andy and Clarissa present a series of particularly knotty Feng Shui issues for the prospective consultant in that: a) they are sometimes less than tidy (not to say "incredibly disorganized"); and b) their home is infested by two very small children, Cortland (3) and Caylor Ann (3 months), adding immeasurably to the already considerable household entropy.

In fact, upon visiting their suburban home in West Knoxville, Nancy first surveys the malignant clutter of lawn implements, household knick-knacks and bug-eyed plastic toys outside and recommends a prompt reordering as the first step in their Feng Shui makeover. "Clutter disrupts the flow of energy," she warns, stepping carefully, at Clarissa's urging, in order to avoid a particularly pulpy mass of collie poop.

As she walks a circle around the home, Nancy makes a number of recommendations; a mirror, to be placed on the carport, to "connect with the energy of the street;" a pond or waterfall (to maximize "abundance"), which Andy had already planned but which Nancy urges him to direct toward, rather than away from, the house; and a stone pathway leading to the front door in a meandering pattern so as to remain consonant with the energies at play in the front yard. (These energies include Cortland, who is pulling cherry tomatoes from a browning vine and throwing them at the dog.)

And finally, Nancy insists that an especially large, malignant wisteria bush, which currently threatens to consume the front step like some ravenous mutant flytrap, should be cut down in order to enable the flow of "abundance" at the front of the house. It's a fine suggestion, as the bush is brown and very, very ugly, in addition to being an "abundance" no-no. (Andy is incensed by such notions; "It's not ugly," he huffs. "It has very nice blooms in the spring.") Inside, Nancy again makes reference to the pervasive presence of "clutter." That's not a promising sign; Andy and Clarissa are very prone to

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"clutter" (in the same sense that a sea bass is very prone to "moisture.")

Then Nancy evaluates the individual energy statuses of each family member, a process that involves the correlation of birth dates with a metaphysical chart. Clarissa's energy is nurturing to Andy's, she observes, while Andy's energy tends to wear on Clarissa (who rolls her eyes tellingly). And of the four, Cortland stands apart by virtue of his "wood" energy. As Nancy makes note of this, odd sounds emanate from unseen regions of the room...squeals, burps, Big Twuck noises, miscellaneous expectorations...

After taking a series of measurements in each room of the house, Nancy leaves, only to return a few days later with an extensively detailed nine-page outline of recommendations for Andy and Clarissa's home. Some of the suggestions are long-term; she urges the couple to paint several rooms in bold, vibrant colors, rather than the neutral off-whites Andy had chosen. Mindful of budget and time constraints, however, most of her ideas are short-term and inexpensive. Most significantly, Clarissa is to rearrange wholesale the office where she spends much of her day, and the couple agree to move their mattress into the children's room for a two-week trial, an inconvenience which draws much grumpy response from Andy.

As Nancy outlines her plan, Cortland makes his own efforts to keep with the spirit of our endeavor, rearranging the shelves on a ground-level food cabinet, relocating most of the items therein to points in the house where the energies are apparently more compelling (his toy box, the commode, etc.) The Feng Shui steps Andy and Clarissa take are embryonic; the rearranging of several rooms, the placement of various inexpensive items at strategic outposts around the house, the pruning of a particularly hideous bush. And the period over which their efforts are monitored is brief, allowing the energies little time to react and behave appropriately. A fully-realized Feng Shui consultation would typically require months of gradual but extensive alteration.

But after two weeks, Clarissa does have two interesting things to report; her newly-arranged office seems to have encouraged the performance-enhancing energies which Nancy had targeted with the revision, permitting her to finish a long in-progress website, commence a new one, and feed a very small but extremely thirsty Caylor Ann countless bottles of baby formula all at the same time.

And Nancy's "abundance" enhancements may also have begun to permeate the household, as Andy,

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co-owner of a lawn and landscaping service, landed a large new contract shortly after the changes were put in place. "He was grouching a lot," reports Clarissa. "Then he got the new job and stopped complaining."

Cortland, for his part, has readily taken to his new playroom; his voluminous toy box has been moved, at Nancy's behest, from his bedroom to the one formerly occupied by his parents, as the energies therein are apparently very conducive to playing with Big Twucks.