

Feng Shui – By Tracy Boyce

"Is it important to keep the toilet lid down?" That is the only question asked about the bathroom in my years of practice in Feng Shui and giving seminars. The bathroom is a bit overlooked from a Feng Shui point of view, so for this issue, I will plunge right in.

Going back to days when Feng Shui was originating, there was no running water. Functions of the body were done outside the abode. The conditions, such as out-houses, would have been pretty unsanitary and best placed away from the inhabitants. Washing up, for the majority, was probably done in lakes or rivers. So realistically and energetically, "bathroom" space was separate from "living" space.

Today, the function of the bathroom basically remains the same, but with the invention of indoor plumbing, it has led us to use our bathrooms easily and conveniently. However, we should still be conscious of how the energy flows. We use water to eliminate waste via the toilet, shower, bath or sink. Then it drains to an outside receptacle, either a sewer or septic tank. This is where the concept of draining chi comes from. Chi is in everything. It is our life force, energy and the chi of water represents our wealth. We want to be sure that the only chi draining is intentionally eliminated. Conversely water is also flowing into the bathroom as in filling up. So you can see that it is essential that the plumbing must be in good working order. There should a good flow in, and a good flow out.

There are different ways of looking at where to locate the bathroom. The element of water, which rules the bathroom, is aligned with the direction of north according to the Compass School of Feng Shui. So one way of looking at best placement for the bathroom would be in the north sections of the home. Form school uses north and west as the quieter directions so those areas would be good placement options. Per Ba'zhai, the bathroom should be placed in the least auspicious area to drain

negative forces. When these are not known or practical, the best rule of thumb would be to have the bathroom in the least conspicuous place. Feng shui is about problem solving so if there's a bathroom poorly placed, there is a cure.

One placement problem is when the bathroom is located in the center of the house. The center is known as the tai chi and represents among other things, health.



This ideally should be an open space. Houses of this nature that I have seen in Florida, California, and India are built around a central garden or courtyard. Living in the Northeast, this may not be a practical solution. So create what you don't have. Treat the bathroom as if it were a garden or atrium, a place that represents openness or expansiveness and decorate accordingly. Perhaps a skylight could be installed.

Bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms are another concern. We don't want bathrooms draining our good living chi, so we need to keep each separate room contained. The function of the bedroom is to recharge for the next day, to have a restful sleep through the night. So the first place to

start is to have a good door that closes properly between the two rooms. The door should remain closed as much of the time as possible.

Many older homes have powder rooms in the foyer or near the front entrance. This could interfere with the prime source of chi entering the house. Here the toilet should be used as infrequently as possible and the seat should be left down. Other remedies include keeping the door closed and using red or yellow colors as cures.

Using color in Feng Shui comes from the Chinese Five Element theory. The color yellow is a symbol for the element earth. We can look to nature for examples of earth controlling water. Where does the rain go after a shower? How does a lake hold its shape?

Bathrooms should not open directly into kitchens or dining rooms. No matter if you have the cleanest, most beautiful bathroom, the image taints the food preparation or dining experience. Also per The Five Element theory, water destroys the fire element of the kitchen. You could use the color red to add more fire to neutralize water. The best thing to do is keep the door shut.

Now to address the question of whether the toilet lid needs to be shut. It is written and said that it should be left down for obvious reasons, preventing the chi from going down the toilet. However, in my experience, I haven't seen a direct correlation with this task. One can say it's better to be safe than sorry, and do it anyway. I do think what is more relevant is where the toilet is placed in the bathroom. Upon entering the bathroom, it should not be directly seen. Ideally the toilet should be in a separate chamber. If it is not, it is best to create some sort of screen, such as building a demi or knee wall or actually using a screen.