

What Are You Holding On To?

by Tracy Boyce

Addressing clutter from a feng shui point of view is a meaningful and effective way of clearing it from your home and your life. Clutter represents a loss of vital energy and power; removing it stops the leak of energy. Feelings of tiredness and stress disappear.

A rush of energy kicks in and lightness of being emerges, allowing you to take control of your life in your own unique way. That is why Clutter Clearing is considered Feng Shui 101.

Clutter needs to be distinguished from mess. Mess is stuff that is out of order. When motivated, you could pick it up and put it away in its place. Clutter is a different story. It serves no purpose in your life and even seems to have a life of its own, piling up and leaving you feeling out of control. It actually is sticky, stagnant energy and can indicate you are stuck in some area of your life.

Items that you don't know where to put, too much stuff for a space, such as overflowing clothes drawers and things that are unloved, unwanted, or no longer useful are all examples of clutter. Be wary of less-obvious yet detrimental clutter—never ending “to-do” lists, unfinished projects, and overbooked schedules. Clutter is not just about physical objects.

Either on a conscious or subconscious level, when we see clutter, we are reminded about whatever our issue is around it. We may feel guilt, stress, frustration, anxiety, or confusion. Overriding all of these feelings is fear because the clutter is a mask or cover for something we are afraid of and don't want to deal with. It can actually bring on physical sensations like queasiness, teeth-grinding, fist-clenching, neck or shoulder tightness, or breathing restrictions. Over time, these can lead to disease.

Determine the pattern of your clutter and ask yourself questions like: What is going on here? What am I afraid of? Is it a fear of scarcity? Am I



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afraid that if I throw out these ten year old black boots, I will not have the money to replace them? Are you trying to please other people? If I throw out the ugly vase Aunt Jenny gave me, she might find out! Once you find your fear, ask yourself whether it is real or imagined. You may discover that your reasoning has no sound basis, and this can free and energize you to move forward

Once you get to the root of the clutter problem, throwing things out is no longer a problem. Sometimes the process works backwards. You find what you are avoiding in the process of clearing things out. Consider that you are looking for gold or buried treasure during this exercise.

In feng shui terms, clearings happen instantly. Once you shift the energy from a negative to a positive

direction, you are free to move forward. Events miraculously occur. A wife and mother of two teenage boys could not access her basement office because of the clutter covering the floor. We began at the stairs clearing boyhood toys, and mementos, appliances, and piles of old travel magazines. She realized she had been stuck in the past. She had difficulty letting her sons grow up, had wasted money re-buying appliances she already had, and had kept the magazines as a reminder of planned family trips not taken, harboring resentment towards her husband. Several weeks after tossing out the baggage, she registered for the Connecticut Bar Exam to follow her dream of a locally based legal practice. Within the year, the family enjoyed a vacation together, and her son even increased his grades from D's to B's.

To get started in clearing your clutter, ask a friend to help. Friends are not attached to your stuff. Develop a plan with deadlines and make a game out of it. For example, someone with clothes clutter may plan to go through all the closets in one week, by a stated date. Break down day-by-day what will be done. Notice any patterns if you feel afraid to let some things go. Take the items to a store like Goodwill if they can be recycled. If not, dispose of them immediately.

Remember, every baby step you take to clear clutter is empowering. Once clutter is removed from without you will also feel it within. Celebrate and honor the new space you have created. Invite friends and family over to share in your newfound insights. Everything that is in our path has meaning and energy, so it only makes sense to surround ourselves with things that we love. Enjoy your newfound peace and serenity.

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