

En-trance to NLP & Feng Shui

by Lou & Bruce Stewart

The practice of NLP and Feng Shui are closely related in many ways. Both deal with the arrangement of structures and how they affect us. These structures are calibrated through careful observation and analyzed for their impact upon our well being, productivity and success.

When working with someone in an NLP process you are observing their internal patterns and arrangements—their body language, breathing, and how they move their eyes, all provide you with information about their inner workings.

The same is done in Feng Shui, however the focus here is on the environment. A Feng Shui practitioner calibrates the state of an environment noticing how the energy moves throughout that space. Is it inviting and comfortable? Is it confusing or disorganized? Does the space reflect what the client wants and needs in their life? Feng Shui practitioners know that the health and well being of a person is reflected in how they create and interact with their environmental spaces. These become an extension of their life.

Just as in NLP, Feng Shui is solution-oriented. The Feng Shui process focuses on transforming a detrimental pattern into a new, supportive and nurturing one. When calibration is complete, these solutions, called *adjustments* or *cures*, are implemented as specific strategies.

Historic Roots of Feng Shui

Chinese cultural history contains a wealth of knowledge that continues to surface. Perhaps being

the world's oldest consistently surviving culture is reason enough to investigate how the backbone of this civilization endured and thrived for millennia.

The ancient Chinese saw life in everything. They characterized a location by the animal shapes they noticed in the surrounding landscape. They also interpreted the patterns they saw in clouds and watched how the winds (*feng*) moved through a landscape. The rivers and waters (*shui*) also played an important role in characterizing an area. This revealed where the best locations were for specific uses. It became common practice to look for the distinctive shaping of a dragon's back in mountain ridges. They felt this gave a location the added protection they needed.

Drink Water, Know the Source

The first evidence of the practice of Feng Shui was recorded in Anhui Province around 960 B.C. People used careful procedures to choose the most tillable land. The better they could farm the land, the healthier they were and the more their villages prospered. They found that open areas with strong, prevailing winds created more barren landscapes. Mountains provided protection from these strong winds and embraced valleys where crops could grow more abundantly.

An ancient Chinese saying, "Drink water, know the source," underscored the awareness needed to establish a thriving culture. On the fundamental level, this referred to the practice of carefully choosing places to collect water that were safe and clean. In the bigger picture, it pointed to the genetic source of life, knowing who their ancestors were.

Reverence for their ancestors strongly influenced the intricate Feng Shui practice of grave site selection. By providing their loved ones with an auspicious burial site, they believed these ancestors would take care of them in return, just as their crops provided for their continued health. Following the lay of the land, they positioned their ancestors' graves in very protected locations. The most desired placement had a mountain in the back (remember the dragon) and smaller hills along the sides, which acted as arms to cradle and protect the grave. This idea of using Nature's protection had its prehistoric roots in cave dwellings. The protection in back and the view of the front provided a very commanding position.

The impact Nature has upon humans and humans upon Nature is the focus of the ancient China classics, the *I Ching*, *Tao Te*

Ching, and *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*. These texts have bequeathed to us great wisdom to draw upon even today, since we still all must survive and thrive in Nature. In studying the great historical texts, it becomes evident that these ancient sages were masters at calibrating and balancing people with Nature. We can see this expertise in acupuncture as well as in the design and building of the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and most of the ancient structures in China.

Frank Lloyd Wright, one of the most revered 20th century architects, was known for his demanding intention to balance his architecture with the surrounding Nature. His dedication to this principle is well demonstrated in his design of the Fallingwater residence in Bear Run, PA. In this dramatic design, the structure appears to rise up out of an incredible waterfall. Wright deliberately created many levels in the

house to resemble the many levels found along the river bank. The cohesiveness and complexity of Fallingwater is balanced in relationship to its dynamic and serene setting.

The relationship we have with the things around us has a great impact on our well being. When we let the functional task of something take precedence over our relationship with it, *challenges* can occur. Take for instance, a condo that is designed to use the least possible amount of land. It is designed with the bedroom over the garage. Now, from a *task* perspective, this is very efficient. From a *relationship* perspective, the inhabitants are sleeping over their car night after night. The residual exhaust fumes eventually may rise up and seep through the floor into the bedroom. The relationship with what could be a peaceful and nurturing bedroom is compromised. Clearly, the task has overwhelmed the relationship. This can create real health challenges.

The Balance of Yin and Yang

While there are many different schools of this ancient study, they all embrace the importance of creating equilibrium. Feng Shui honors the balance between the forces of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* describes the feminine, receptive aspects of Nature, while *yang* represents the masculine and more assertive traits. Every time we step out into the bright warm sunshine

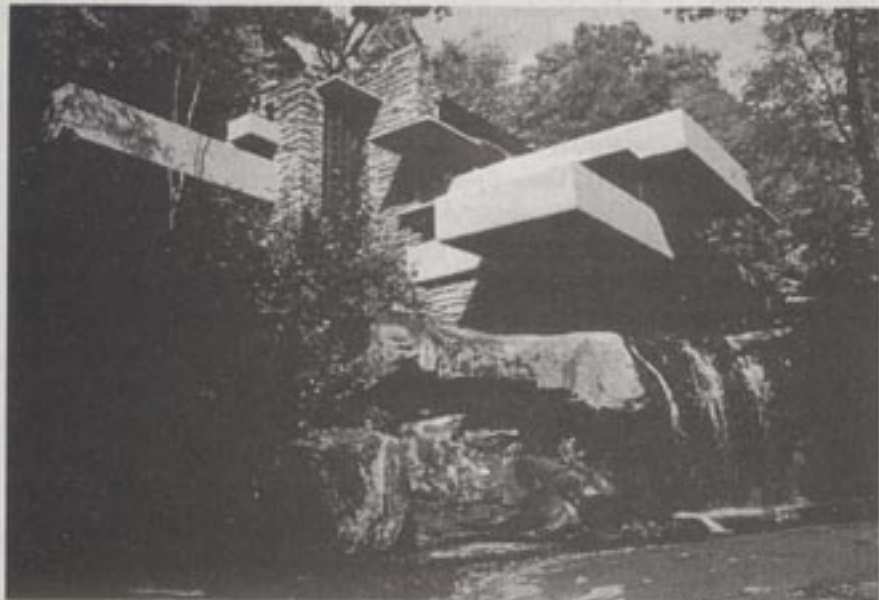


photo by Bruce Stewart

we experience yang. When we stroll in the moonlight and gaze at its reflective glow, we are basking in the yin. We also experience yang when we run to catch a ball, and yin when we gently swing in a hammock. It is important to realize that the environments and qualities we chose to be around expose us to greater or lesser amounts of yin and yang *chi*. *Chi* is the quality of energy contained or expressed in both living and inanimate objects. Just as a person has chi, so does a stone and an inch worm. Thoughts and feelings certainly have chi, as shown in the changing states of mind during NLP techniques.

Yin and yang are used to nourish people in their environments. Proper nourishment builds the *chi* of a place and of those who reside or visit there. If someone is needing more movement in their life, then adding some bright red objects or a cheerful mobile could stimulate their yang. On the other hand, if a person's life is already too active, they could benefit from items that instill a more relaxing or yin atmosphere. The refreshing and soothing sound of a waterfall or the feel of a soft comfortable chair invites one to pause and settle down for a while. Feng Shui specializes in cultivating life supporting and nourishing qualities (*chi*) into living spaces. Perhaps this is why it has recently become so popular in Western cultures. Feng Shui gives a sense of place and encourages places to make sense.



The Syntax of Feng Shui

Room arrangements reflect the integrity of a space by the very nature of how things are positioned. Just as in language, changing the syntax or arrangement, alters the outcome. For instance, if you face your desk away from the door of your office, you are literally turning your back on potential opportunities that could come through your door. In addition, you could easily be startled when someone comes up from behind you. When one's back is exposed, the reptilian brain is constantly on edge and the body's flight or fight response goes on the alert. Can you conceive how much energy (*chi*) and consciousness is required to maintain that edge? For an analogy, imagine how hard it would be to drive a car without having any rear view mirrors. As you sense, the effect of this exposure day after day could be detrimental to a person's overall feeling of security, success and well-being.

It is a well known fact that we do much better when we feel safe and comfortable. Why not make the spaces we live and work in feel more secure and relaxed? For some reason, there are still people who think that their environment has little effect on them. Replace their soft chair with an uncomfortable bench or play some loud, obnoxious music and they may perceive things differently. Being aware of our environments is the first step in Feng Shui. Environ-

mental awareness also appears in NLP's neuro-logical congruency levels (Robert Dilts), although it is often considered last.

Psycho-geography of Spaces

Consider that in any environment each space has a primary purpose and a geographical location which helps the space fulfill that function. This can be likened to NLP's *Psycho-geography* where specific locations create "a type of relational 'circuitry' between people, determining the type and quality of interaction."¹ This interaction is the exact faculty Feng Shui calls forth in its detailed map of psychological space called the *Bagua*. This includes nine areas that relate to nine predominant influences in our lives.

For simplicity's sake, let's begin with the *Career* area in the *Bagua*. This area denotes our service in life, what we provide the Universe. It is represented by the element of water and the colors dark blue and black. A school of fish swimming and swirling in the currents is an auspicious symbol for the networking qualities of the *Career* area.

The *Self Cultivation* area embodies our approach for gaining wisdom. What do we do to improve our consciousness, emotions, body and spirit? This is a great location for a study, meditation cushion or even a comfortable chair to sit and read.

The *Family* area is our ancestral foundation and is represented by wood. Imagine a grove of beautiful trees, all the same type, yet each one exhibits its own unique characteristics. Trees resemble a family unit that thrives in a specific locale, while developing their own distinctive qualities. Thus, live plants or a landscape painting enhance the family area, as do family pictures. Using the color green or any striped pattern is an easy way to

remind us of this wood/family attribute.

The *Wealth* area invokes our ability to attract abundance in our lives. Observing Nature's laws quickly reveals the pattern of flow between receiving and letting go. The more congruent this area is with our aspirations for abundance, the greater are our chances of receiving it. The first adjustment I recommend in the wealth area is to remove anything

that is broken or unwanted. This act of letting go can create an opening for us to receive our Highest Outcomes. Red, purple and green are royal colors and signify wealth and abundance.

The *Fame* area relates to our reputation and how others see our actions. It does not necessarily have to do with being famous, although this can happen if it is our intention. This area is represented by the element Fire

Psycho-geography of Feng Shui – the Bagua

Wealth Green, Red, Purple	Fame Red FIRE	Relationship Pink, Red, White
Family Green WOOD	Health Yellow EARTH	Children Creativity White METAL
Self Cultivation Blue, Green	Career Black, Dark Blue WATER	Helpful People Travel Grey

The *Bagua* is positioned according to your main entry (even if another entry is used more frequently). Thus your front door will either be in the *Self Cultivation*, *Career*, or *Helpful People* area.

Source: H.H. Grandmaster Lin Yun

and displays how we shine forth in the world. Enhancing your Fame area is like adjusting the spotlight to shine on your best attributes. Allow the things in your environment to illuminate you. Just as wearing the color red attracts attention, using red or triangular shapes in this space can spark your Fame chi.

The *Relationship* area focuses on our main human relationship and how we are receptive and nurturing to others. Enhancing the physical properties of this area has the wonderful benefit of improving our primary partner relationship. This is a great place for those precious

wedding pictures or anything that contains a pair of things. The colors of red, pink and white enhance the Marriage area. Having the master bedroom in this area is quite auspicious.

The *Children and Creativity* area represents what we cultivate in our life, what we give seed to. In addition to children, it involves the joyous creation of our actions. The element of metal adds precision and brilliance to this inventive area, as does the color white.

The *Helpful People and Travel* area includes teachers, good friends and our interest in

travel. These people and places are in our lives for a certain amount of time, but often not on a steady basis. This is a great area to keep your travel books, maps or pictures of teachers and people who have helped you along your journey.

At the center of the *Bagua* is the *Health* area, since our health is paramount to all the other areas in our life. It is the hub of our wheel, and needs to stay well-rounded and in sturdy condition. This ensures that the other eight relationships will be balanced and supported. This area is represented by the element of Earth, which is all-supportive and nourishing.

Feng Shui's Meta Programs Revealed

When the functions of a room are congruent, the space feels and looks welcoming. A child's room designed with the child in mind is a great example. All the furniture is scaled down and the colors are bright and inspiring. If the child is encouraged to embellish it themselves, their sense of self is stimulated and nurtured. This creates a reassuring foundation for the multi-dimensional growth of that child.

However, congruency does not always occur. When we mix or mismatch functions in a space, confusion and challenges can arise. Feng Shui provides the vehicle for guiding your spaces back to congruency.

One client called me because she was having trouble sleeping. Once I saw her bedroom, the situation became easy to reconcile. She had a computer, a large screen TV, and a huge treadmill encircling her bed. All these electronic devices are very stimulating and, in fact, can give off harmful electromagnetic fields. The treadmill was a constant reminder that she didn't have time to exercise, because she was too busy *running around*. This and the other equipment had a negative effect on her ability to calm down and relax. She had filled her bedroom, an area meant for relaxation and rejuvenation, with anchors for the very opposite. The functions were mismatched.

She happily agreed to move the rarely-used treadmill, and her computer found a more appropriate home in her library. The big screen TV was built-in with doors which she agreed to close every night. Her bedroom now looked and felt much more congruent. With this new arrangement, she was able to feel more relaxed and soon she began sleeping better. Before long, she was less tired at work and accomplished more. As a result, she did not have to take her work home. This gave her more time to spend with her husband and kids. As you can see, the benefits from simple adjustments like this ripple into many aspects of a client's life.

Unlocking Change

Practicing Feng Shui is a valuable transformational tool. Intentionally altering an environment allows the pathways for change within a person to open at deeper and more energetic levels. In fact, when changes take place on these deep and often unconscious levels, both the chi of a space and a person's internal structure transform.

A client was feeling trapped in her life due to a difficult legal situation concerning her business. When I arrived at her house, I went to the front door and rang the bell. She came to the door, and realized that she could not get it open. It had a dead bolt and she had lost the key. She apologized, saying that she couldn't remember the last time she had opened

her front door. After a lengthy explanation, she ushered me through her garage door, which was the one she used daily. It was a revelation when I told her that the front door was in the area relating to her career. After repairing the lock she felt relieved, and the legal situation was resolved within a few months.

Spatial Anchors

Many times I have recommended that my clients place a special object in a certain place to remind them of a personal resource or an outcome they want to manifest in their life. This is equivalent to NLP's *anchoring*. By locating this physical *anchor* in a specific space, clients are constantly reminded, both consciously and unconsciously, about their desired outcome. This anchoring becomes a type of visioning since these objects are seen and then pictured in the exact location of the Bagua, where they will be the most powerful and effective.

Unfortunately, what happens sometimes is that people become numb to their surroundings and are unconscious of the *negative* anchors they have placed in their space. An example of this was a family portrait that a client had in her bedroom. It was directly across from her bed. In questioning her about the portrait, I found out it was her father-in-law. He had always been very overbearing and had caused her much distress. Curiously, she saw this portrait first

thing in the morning and the last thing at night. When I asked her if she had ever considered moving it to another location, she replied that this had never crossed her mind. We quickly found a new location for it in her hallway, which was in the *Family* area of her house. She replaced the portrait with a cheerful drawing done by her daughter. From that moment on things began to improve for her. For not only did she have a more restful bedroom; she had empowered herself by putting her father-in-law *in his place* among other family photos already in the hallway.

Feng Shui *solutions* are positive anchors intentionally placed with a definite outcome in mind. NLP advocates that outcomes must be stated in positive, inviting terms rather than using negative or avoidance language. This empowers clients by creating a sense of *moving toward* their Highest Outcomes. My teacher, H. H. Grandmaster Lin Yun, emphasizes the importance of setting positive intentions. Positive intentions enlist the power of our unconscious and can make the placement of a spatial anchor a resourceful and beneficial addition to precise needs in our lives.

Feng Shui solutions and adjustments are often simple, however some can be more complex. The positive intention behind every Feng Shui adjustment directly affects the outcome a person experiences. As with anchoring, the intention behind an adjustment charges it with positive energy

and makes it a solution capable of enhancing your life. A Feng Shui adjustment is similar to the NLP process of recognizing a negative pattern, choosing to do something about it, and then actually changing it.

Frank Lloyd Wright knew the impact of conscious intentions and beliefs. He once said, "The thing happens that you believe in. And the belief in a thing makes it happen." From an NLP perspective we know that our beliefs mediate the logical levels above and below it, affecting the whole person.

A client called because she had just lost her job and was very dis-

tressed. Losing her steady paycheck did not change the fact that she still had two kids to raise. When I diagnosed her home, I discovered that the laundry room was in her wealth area. The door was broken and it was filled with clutter. After seeing the whole house, we sat down and discussed that this might be a great opportunity for change. We looked at options for improving the laundry area. In doing so, she discovered that she had to confront her belief structure. During our conversation she changed her thoughts from seeing the situation as a crisis to embracing a new opportunity. She decided to implement the Feng Shui adjustments at little cost to her tight

budget. Two weeks later she called to let me know that she had just signed a \$40,000 consulting contract doing what she really loved to do. It turned out that she was going to make more money as a consultant than as an employee. This is one of the many ways a Feng Shui consultation can save a person money in the long run.

What if the Map Became the Territory?

Through a series of exercises we have developed, clients are able to observe what is effective and what is not working in their lives. In blending the arts of NLP and Feng Shui, we have found it most helpful for our clients to write down their Vision, Mission, and Highest Outcomes (VMH). We then encourage them to relate any obstacles or resistance they or members of their family may have to the possibilities of change.

Using strategies that intermingle these two complimentary arts, we help clients physically map their VMH into their living spaces according to the living Bagua. In this way, their home/office arrangements become the actual territory for beneficial change to take place. We have discovered that Feng Shui adjustments and solutions help arrange the external living spaces by making them congruent with the client's VMH. And of course, NLP helps clear and rearrange their internal spaces.

Feng Shui opens us to a new set of inner resources reinforced by the power of our unconscious. Our environments certainly help us be who we are. They can also help us become who we want to be. Change is inevitable in our lives. Why not guide our journey toward adjustments and solutions that help us realize our Highest Outcomes? With an understanding of our mind and emotions strengthened through NLP and an awareness of supportive environments enhanced with Feng Shui, we can uplift, nourish and reclaim our birthright—to live a positive, healthy and happy life.



¹ *The Encyclopedia of Systemic Neuro-Linguistic Programming and NLP New Coding*, Robert B. Dilts & Judith DeLozier.

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Lou & Bruce teach and offer workshops & retreats in NLP, Feng Shui and the healing aspects of the martial arts. To receive more information about their work, please contact Lou & Bruce at (985) 892-6460 or stewart22@aol.com.

photo by Lou Stewart

