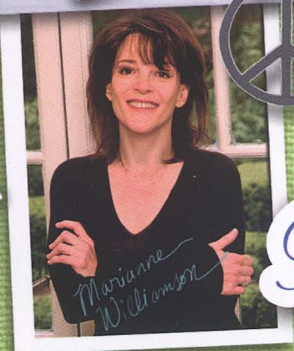
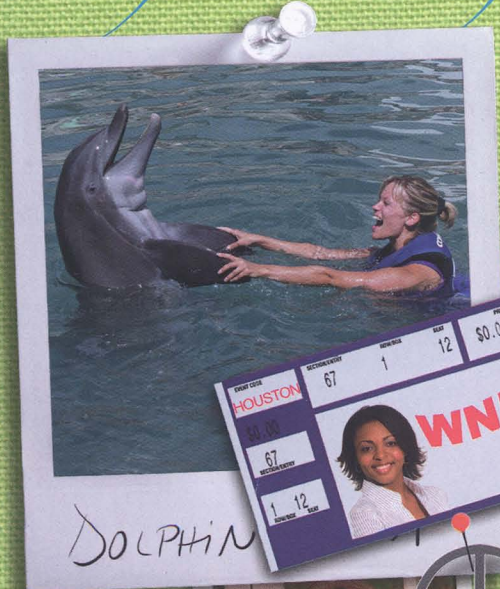


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Harmony at Home...

Uniting the philosophies behind Green Design and Feng Shui seems a natural progression to designers who seek to revolutionize the way we think about the spaces we inhabit. Green Design is the practice of using materials within a space that are sustainably harvested and manufactured in an environmentally and socially conscious way. Feng Shui is an ancient art and method that focuses on the proper placement of objects within a space and how it affects the people who live or work there. The resulting partnership, the Feng Shui of Green Design, emphasizes the principle of balance and respect for nature within the space you live and work. In order to live in harmony with nature, it is important to eliminate toxic materials and any substances that block harmonious flow or Chi within a space.

While many who practice conventional Feng Shui rely on mirrors, crystals and other tools and remedies, another approach recommends a streamlined practice to pare down the elements within a space and eliminate all superfluous clutter. Additional emphasis is placed on using natural materials and bringing more of the outdoors in. To achieve harmony and prosperity, it is essential that only those things with function and purpose as well as beauty inhabit a space.

If your space is clutter free and clear, yet made from toxic materials, then it still is not balanced with nature. You can take small steps toward living a greener, healthier lifestyle by making more informed choices when purchasing or replacing furnishings for your home or office.

ELIMINATING TOXIC MATERIALS

Toxic elements to eliminate are formaldehyde, commonly found in MDF, or medium density fiberboard, typically found as a substrate in furniture and cabinetry, and vinyl as found in window blinds, wall coverings, flooring and exterior siding. The manufacturing process of vinyl creates pollutants in the atmosphere as well as "off-gassing" toxins within interior space. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), are typically found in paints, stains and liquid solvents. These can cause headaches, asthma and other respiratory issues, among other

maladies. Low VOC and No VOC paints, stains and cleaning products are readily available and are a much wiser choice. Use only No VOC paints, especially when painting a nursery, as children are much more vulnerable to these toxins.

Avoid fabric treatments such as Stainmaster, Scotchguard, flame-retardants and Teflon when possible. Many of these



formulations are highly used because of liability within the home furnishings industry, however the environmental conditions of so many chemical compounds being used and installed on a daily basis has contributed to increasing cancer levels. The image of a baby crawling on a Stainmaster-treated carpet gives one pause when the true cost of the low-cost, low-maintenance product is really factored in. A better choice for carpet is natural wool, humanely processed. For area rugs and especially Oriental and carpets woven in India, Nepal and other Asian countries, always look for the Rugmark symbol, which ensures that no child labor has been used. Rugmark also supports building schools and other important social programs that sustain these communities.

BY KAREN KAPLAN

Balancing Green Design and Feng Shui

EARTH FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS

Weaning ourselves from the petroleum-based economy is another important way we can move toward more natural, less processed materials. Conventional upholstery and mattresses are made from polyurethane foam, which creates PFOAs and

we need to keep as many trees as possible to help cool our atmosphere and avoid further climate change. All-natural hemp and organic cotton and wool are great fabric choices. Also Earth-friendly is fabric made from 100 percent recycled polyester, typically made by recycling plastic bottles into fabric filament, closing the recycling loop. Eliminating the toxic materials from our spaces and replacing with the most natural, least processed materials will "cleanse" the space and positively affect the marketplace as well as the energy of the universe, thus making these more desirable, healthy, green products more popular, affordable and widely available to everyone.

GREEN FENG SHUI

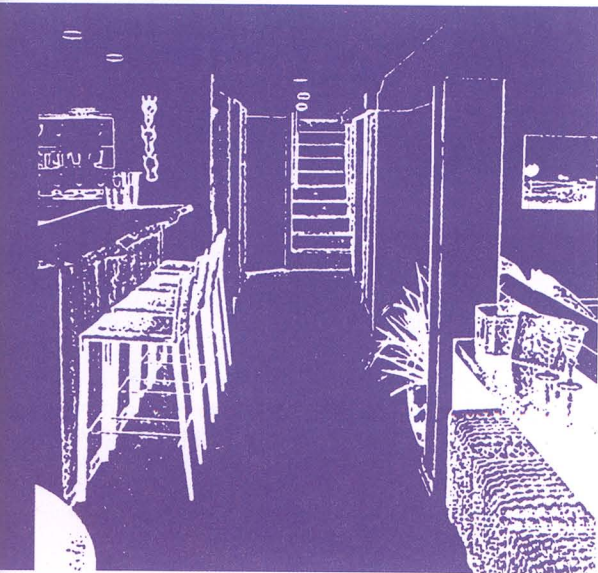
Green Feng Shui emphasizes open, serene space that allows the flow of Chi, or energy, which brings creativity and prosperity, while at the same time respecting the quality of the elements within the space.

Antiques, sentimental heirlooms, artwork and personal items are important and essential, however careful placement of these elements is critical. Personal photos and artwork can be distracting if placed here, there and everywhere, whereas if they are grouped in collections they will make more of a statement and create impact rather than distract. These groupings are also more likely to "tell a story" and capture the true essence of the person who lives within the space and make a space feel more personal and welcoming.

Proper flow of traffic and not blocking doorways, windows and the access in and out of a space is important. Whenever possible in an office, face the doorway so your back is not to those approaching and entering a space. Being able to see who is entering your space is very empowering.

Natural light is another important feature to consider. Whenever possible let the sun shine in! When a window is not available, try to install Solatubes and skylights to access natural light and cut down on energy use. These natural light sources are a great way to beat Seasonal Affective Disorder and create a cheerful and bright atmosphere.

Opting to remake your space into one that is clear from clutter, clean and healthy is a great way to turn a new leaf and live in a space that is your sanctuary.



Photos by Scott Kaplan.

PDBEs as a byproduct of its manufacture. Structurally, they are similar to dioxin and PCBs, which accumulate in the body and are known endocrine disruptors, which can cause many diseases and hormonal imbalances.

When choosing upholstery and mattresses, opt instead for natural rubber latex, organic cotton and organic wool for the loft and fill. The natural rubber latex, also known as Talalay or pincore foam, is a renewable and biodegradable resource. Tempurpedic and other similar synthetic foam products are petroleum-based and not from this safer source material.

Leather that is not treated with aluminum oxide is more Earth-friendly. Choose reclaimed wood for building projects and floors in order to prevent the cutting of trees—right now