

“A tranquil retreat that is warm and cozy. A space that promotes deep, restful sleep.” These were the objectives for a master bedroom redo as requested by my clients Carol and Charles.

This couple is like many today. They have busy, hectic schedules as mandated by their careers, elementary school-aged children, their families, and other community-related activities. They are a family of integrity and they honor their commitments, schedules, and obligations made to others. Because of this, they especially needed a sanctuary to sink into at the end of a stressful day. What better way to start off the New Year than by retiring together to a cozy, sensual retreat each evening—a sanctuary that honors their deep commitment to each other, a refuge to escape the stress of daily living, and a

problems. When utilized in their bedrooms, feng shui has helped many of my clients to sleep better and to renew deep connections and intimacy with their partners—two keys to leading healthy, holistic lives.

UNDERSTANDING FENG SHUI

So, what is feng shui? Simply stated, it is the study of an environment that enhances the quality of life. It is an art, a science, and spiritual in nature. It is the process of surrounding oneself with inspirational and uplifting symbols, art, color, furniture, and objects. It is understanding that everything, every object, is alive, connected, and always changing. Your beloved antique is alive with the memories of your dear grandmother. Your wedding ring is alive with the love of your partner.

Feng shui is predicated on the belief that the

“Sanctuary is a gift to yourself. If you identify a certain space in your home as a sanctuary you are investing in your soul.”

—Christopher Forrest McDowell

space that nourishes and replenishes their bodies while they sleep.

Unfortunately, many Americans recreate their hectic lives in their bedrooms. In the space that should provide restful slumber, we often find commanding television sets that impede intimacy, computers that herald long hours of work, exercise equipment nagging to be used, and stacks of books begging to be read. It's no wonder that 33% of Americans, according to the National Sleep Foundation, are getting 6% or fewer hours of sleep per night and are therefore classified as sleep-deprived.

Sleep deprivation causes a myriad of problems, including fluctuations in blood sugar levels and a reduction in both brain function and in the body's ability to fight infection and disease. According to online ABC News reports, lack of sleep is also detrimental to our sex lives.

Fortunately, there are simple solutions to these

choices you make, whether positive or negative, have ripple effects on those around you. The choices can be small or large, but generate a significant impact just the same. Change is constant, so it makes sense that our environment should change along with us. No longer need a guest room? Turn it into a personal retreat. Never use the dining room? Turn it into a home office. Why clutter up our lives with things that don't work, or things we've outgrown or stopped using? In order to feel comfortable and productive to you, your space must not be allowed to stagnate. This is why continually taking inventory of your belongings and purging on a regular basis is important.

Comfort and safety are also inherently important in feng shui. It's so much more difficult to be happy and healthy if you spend eight hours a day in an uncomfortable chair or every night in an uncomfortable bed. Safety enters the picture due to the discomfort it causes: The feeling of uneasiness ►