



Spring Cleaning – It does a Soul (and Body) Good!

Every year around mid-march, I start to get excited because I know that a good, old-fashioned ‘spring cleaning’ will soon take place. There’s almost a sacredness about the whole event, as well as a metamorphosis if you will, of surrendering the past year, and opening up the doors to the new one ahead. As I dust off the cobwebs and the stale energy from the winter hibernation that just passed, there is no other time of year where I feel as much a part of the good Earth. It’s time to get our own sacred spaces into action; ready to work with us, not against us.

Some people may be groaning at the fact that a ‘spring clean’ need to be accomplished, but it does your soul a wonder of good; not to mention all aspects of your life. When we clean out, donate items, set goals, and clear the clutter, we are in fact saying to the Universe, “Yes, I am willing to surrender the past and I am ready to accept new opportunities and experiences into my life”. We realize in doing so, that the only constant in life is change, and that we must set intentions as we go to plan the life we wish to experience in the future. This way, we are not fighting the current of life, bogged down with things that no longer serve a valid purpose in our lives, but rather able to live and breathe the natural flow of life.

I’m sure that there are many reasons why people instinctively ‘shed their skins’ (so to speak) in a great ‘spring cleaning’, but my favorite is because it feels great to free myself from past energies! I really come alive at the fact that a renewed life is waiting for me. As I’m working, my mind seems to come into order, formulating plans and goals for the coming year. As Karen Kingston once said, “As we clear out our shelves, so too will we clear out the shelves of our minds”. Eureka!

So given the fact that spring is a time for new beginnings, let this be the year that you show the world a brand new face!!

Here are some simple Feng Shui tips to get you started:

- **First Impressions:** Front doors and pathways leading to your front door are of course the first thing that visitors notice. In Feng Shui, main entrances characterize how you present yourself to the world. How do you wish others to see you? At your front door, position a beautiful pot of flowers in a ceramic pot, while adding a touch of red. Ceramics represent the Earth element (grounding & stable), while red is a very auspicious colour in Feng Shui, adding the component of power and luck. Hang a seasonal wreath or a welcoming wind chime; as these will help to keep Chi moving. Ensure that the area is well lit, as light attracts good Chi thereby increasing its flow into your house.

- **Aromatherapy & Good Health:** to promote calm, health, and restfulness, incorporate the scent of vanilla into your home. Vanilla helps to soothe and comfort, as well as decrease stress. Breathe in relaxation, and give yourself a moment to just “be”.
- **Clean your stove and oven, inside and out:** a shiny, properly functioning, clean stove and oven are a symbol of prosperity and wealth. Place lucky bamboo or plants near the kitchen sink to discourage wealth from seeping down the drain. You may also tie a red ribbon on your tap to accomplish this as well.
- **What’s in your basement?** Sometimes we get caught up in the main parts of the house that, and forget about the basement. Typically in Feng Shui, the basement represents our past, and our long-ago buried feelings. Spring is an ideal time to tackle the ‘stuff’ you have moved there to take care of “later”. Take a few hours to sift through your belongings and see if there are items that you don’t use, that are broken, that are out of date, and that evoke unpleasant memories, or are just taking up space. You will sleep better at night and feel lighter knowing that your foundations are clear.

Although our calendar year starts in January, spring really is the beginning of (and the end of) so many things. It is an ideal time to un-weight ourselves from the heavy blankets of what transpired in recent months and do our souls a favor. Graciously surrender the old, set intentions positively, and look forward to new life experiences.

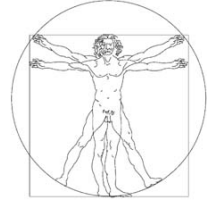
Happy spring cleaning!!!

Raised in Montreal, Joanna McDonald recently moved to the city of Calgary with her family. She is the owner of **ClutterBugz**, a company which specializes in home and office de-cluttering and organization, as well as Feng Shui consultations (www.freewebs.com/clutterbugzcalgary/).

Joanna is a Reiki Master, Massage Therapist, and Freelance Writer and is currently working on her first novel about digestive disorders and the health care system in Canada. She can be reached at clutterbugzcalgary@yahoo.ca.

Matters of Health

Energy Flowing Freely ... in your home and your body



One of my areas of study is the science of Ayurveda. I find it fascinating. Ayurveda simply means the science of life. This is a huge topic, one I would be ill-advised to cram into the newsletter, but I thought if I gave you a little taste of pita, kapha and vata, you may want to pursue some study on your own. This will be in two parts and I think you will find the science really fun....and fascinating.

The basic idea is that all life, including us, is comprised of three energy elements: Air is *vata*. Fire is *pita*, and water is *kapha*. Everyone is made up of their own special mix of these three energies, or, 'Doshas'.



Doshas are responsible for every process of our mind and body. The flow is eternal and the energy is intermingling. It could be viewed as a mass of influence that affects everything we do, everything we eat, how much sleep we need and how we react to biological changes or stimuli from outside forces. Doshas – or energies, can even effect how relaxed we are feeling or how compassionate or chatty we are in any given moment. And, because each one of us has a unique blend of these 'tri-energies', they determine in a sense, who we are.

Let's first mix up a little Prakriti. This is the very basic stuff we are born with...our constitutions and perhaps even hard-wired tendencies. Prakriti is the 'essential being' and is as individual as a person's fingerprints. So, your Prakriti is a blend of your three Doshas.

The Vrikriti is attached to the Prakriti and is in essence the process of how we live our lives. Ever fluctuating factors in our lives is never-ending. *Change* is the only thing that *does not change*. We are constantly being reminded to grow, alter, and adapt as we encounter life conditions around us. Life is a process that keeps us on our toes to say the least. Our in-born constitution stays static but the expressions are fluid. Our Doshas are also ever changing – minute by minute, day-by-day, and season by season. Thus – this variance is the Vrikriti...temporary states of flux on the Doshas. Because the Doshas are in motion at all times, different symptoms and behaviors appear.

Consider *vata* as the moving force, taking care of motion in the body including the digestive system, nerve conduction, blood circulation and bone and reproductive systems. It is also the flow of thoughts and emotions. *Vata's* qualities are airiness, dryness, cold and motion.



Pita is the transforming force with moisture, sharpness and hot qualities. *Pita* loves the digestive system the most – changing nutrients into energy. It is hot and fiery giving the person a sense of determination and focus when the digestive system is in optimum balance.



Kapha is our binding force...providing structure. Think of it as earthy, watery, oily and cold.

Kapha supplies us with the 'potential' energy we must have to maintain synergy within our systems. *Kapha* is weighty and stable, and the overseer of lubrication in our bodies, including gastric juices and fluid in the joints.

For example, the mobile element of *vata* is involved with chewing food to break it down. The *kapha* secretions of the salivary enzymes to the gastric juices complete the process. It is the lubricating action that makes it easier for food to go from our mouths to our tummies. *Pita* is the catalyst supplying digestive fire so the food can be broken down by enzymes in the stomach and appropriately absorbed. The digested food is moved along to the small intestine (*vata* organ) to be transformed into energy (a *pita* force). The nutrients are carried around by *pita* via the blood for delivery to our *vata* cells which need them. And then – we 'move' on to another *vata* action – transportation of the remaining waste to the colon for elimination. I know, sounds like an Arnie Schwartzisbetter movie. That aside, just remember – any alteration in one Doshia is going to affect the others.

In Ayurveda, illness is defined as an imbalance of your three energy elements. The idea in this science is to understand the actions and intimate interactions of the three energies to gain knowledge and even an intuitive sense of how to bring 'you' back into balance. The ideal of course is to do this before you have strayed too far from your innate state of equilibrium.

Next month I am going to provide you with Dosha Assessments. These tables are found in many Ayurvedic books but are slightly simplified for our use in the newsletter. So – you will need to stay tuned for the next exciting episode of '*Energy flowing freely...the delightful Dosha home.*'

In the meantime some other stuff. Chi – our integral life force needs to remain strong, free flowing and beautifully balanced. This means we need to treat our bodies like we would a small child. With reverence. Awe. Love. These bodies of ours are completely our responsibility. So we need to tend them like our life-force' depended on it. Because it really dosha. Sorry – couldn't help it.

Margo Laing, RHN, NCP is a Certified Holistic Breast Health Specialist, Registered Holistic Nutritionist and Natural Health Practitioner. Margo has been a natural health writer for about 15 years, with a strong interest in children's health and cancer prevention. Her goal? To assist those with imbalances by using her gentle 'warrior makeovers' involving body, mind and spirit. Margo can be reached at margolaing@shaw.ca

"The body will always strive for homeostasis. You have inside you what you need for balance...for a powerful and perfected life. It is in the strength of intention, love for self, love for others...an awareness of something more when you draw each breath."
~ Margo

What's New?

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with Grand Master Professor Lin Yun

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Prerequisite – Balancing Energy with Feng Shui or a Basic Understanding of Feng Shui

Ashley Doull, a Certified Feng Shui Practitioner, with a University of Calgary Certificate of Visual Design specializing in Interior Design, presents this workshop. Complimenting her 'hand drafting' expertise and experience, Ashley has completed AutoCAD Computer Drafting courses. In addition to being a licensed realtor, Ashley owns and operates her own company - Balance (Feng Shui Consulting and Interior Design).

Saturday, April 19, 2008 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
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