

# Space Coach

OVERCOME BY CLUTTER? CATHRYN GOLDEN, A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER FROM SAN DIEGO, HAS A METHOD FOR YOUR MADNESS—IT'S CALLED FENG SHUI.

BY MOLLY NANCE

The place is a mess. Underwear in the kitchen. Dirty plates in the bathroom. Week-old pizza boxes stacked on the desk. The clutter is closing in, and you're starting to feel claustrophobic.

Listen up, space cadet. If the thought of tackling the mess alone is overwhelming, you might have to (gulp) seek professional help. Space Girl to the rescue. Down to earth superhero, Cathryn Golden, is a professional organizer, Feng Shui consultant and founder of Balanced Environments. Here she shares her system for conquering clutter and invigorating your personal space.

## PHASE ONE

"The complaint I hear most often is, 'I just need more space,'" says Cathryn. She explains that households with growing families need more leg room, and that singles living alone need to learn to cut back. "If you're single and keep accumulating stuff," she says, "you don't need a bigger place—you need a dumpster!"

First, Cathryn suggests categorizing clutter into three piles: Yes, No and Maybe. She knows some people can't readily relinquish sentimental items and recommends giving the Maybes to charitable organiza-

tions or to friends. Give enough stuff to friends, and they may need Space Girl's phone number, too.

## PHASE TWO

With the junk gone, it's time to organize—Feng Shui style. Feng Shui is the ancient Chinese custom of item placement and space design, intended to channel positive energy and create environmental harmony. In terms of organization, "it's about keeping your home's energy fresh and new," Cathryn says.

The principles of Feng Shui indicate that the spaces in our homes correspond to aspects of our lives (see table below). When you're facing into a room from its entrance, for example, the far right corner is the room's relationship space. In this space, Cathryn suggests using red colors and pairing items together. In the kitchen, you might place a pair of wine glasses side-by-side. To improve your bedroom, she recommends using two lamps that "have the same illumination."

In the wealth and prosperity space (a room's far left corner), incorporate purple hues and items that signify financial progress. "Anything you bought when you were feeling wealthy," says Cathryn. If purple

makes your grimace, don't force Feng Shui. "These are just suggestions," she says.

## PHASE THREE

For the ultimate in organization, Cathryn offers her Three Ring Rule, which involves placing the items you use most frequently as close as possible (within the first ring), and relocating items you use less frequently away from your immediate vicinity.

In an office setting, for example, the first ring would be the top surface of your desk. Items like the computer, phone and notepad, should be placed within arm's reach "so you can effortlessly get to them," Cathryn says. Lesser-used office supplies, a computer printer and anything you don't use constantly, should be placed in the second ring: in this case either in a drawer or within a couple steps. Nearby cupboard space would represent the third ring and could house reams of paper, printer cartridges and photos of your step-mother.

"We're on autopilot sometimes, and put things out that we don't need," Cathryn says. "Feng Shui doesn't mean having a zen space with nothing there—it's just about making the space you have more user friendly." Finally, room to breathe.



**FENG SHUI ROOMSCAPE.** To harness positive energy, divide your home's rooms into nine conceptual spaces as follows:

### WEALTH AND PROSPERITY

Color: Purple  
Items: Personal symbols of wealth

### FAMILY AND HEALTH

Color: Greens & blues  
Items: Plants, crystals or family photos

### KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-CULTIVATION

Color: Dark blues & greens  
Items: Books or a yoga mat

### FAME AND REPUTATION

Color: Oranges & reds  
Items: Awards, diplomas, incense or candles

### CENTER: TAI/CHI

Color: Earth tones  
Items: A throw rug in the very center

### CAREER AND LIFE'S JOURNEY

Color: Navy & black  
Items: A fountain or anything with water

### LOVE AND MARRIAGE:

Color: Reds & pinks  
Items: Essential oils or anything in pairs

### CHILDREN AND CREATIVITY

Color: Pastels  
Items: Photos of children or playful art

### HELPFUL PEOPLE AND TRAVEL

Color: Whites and grays  
Items: Religious artifacts or souvenirs

ROOM ENTRANCE

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