



Chapter 1

(How Feng Shui Came to Us)

In this chapter, James tells how Feng Shui came into his life during turbulent economic times and difficult personal financial circumstances. The catalyst for Feng Shui is Anezka, James' wife, who introduced him to the art. Throughout the story, Anezka provides insight into what she was teaching James.

James' Story

How did a left brained, fiscally conservative, educated guy like me end up involved in Feng Shui? I have an MBA and have worked in finance, capital budgeting, risk management, and now system application management. This chapter is dedicated to my journey into the world of Feng Shui, and specifically how it has transformed my career. John Lennon summed it up very well in his song *Beautiful Boy*: "Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans."

My journey into the art of Feng Shui has taught me that life is a gift when you learn to shift your world.

My Experience with Unemployment

I grew up in Orange County, California, in the 1970s, down the street from both Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland. By the time 1990 rolled around, Orange County was a mass of strip malls, cookie cutter housing developments, and traffic-laden freeways. The cost of local housing was out of reach for any recent grad, including me, an aerospace and defense contractor. The Reagan years were kind to this industry, but the party was about to end.

In March 1991, the United States had just won operation Desert Storm. The country was elated and relieved, and the future seemed really bright. I began searching for a new home. I wanted to stay in California, but everywhere I wanted to live was expensive and filled with people. I heard a lot of buzz coming out of Seattle. This was the time when Grunge Rock was making a musical impact. A visit there convinced me that if I moved there, I'd wind up in traffic again. So I set my sights on Portland, Oregon. I felt like it was a good time to make a change. I quit my job, and moved north seeking work.

Little did I know, I was in for a rough ride. The economy slid deeper into a recession. When you have a job during a recession, it doesn't seem so bad. When you are unemployed, the feeling is overwhelming. I was better prepared than most. I was in my late twenties; I had a master's degree, a few years of experience and a lot of

enthusiasm. I did all the traditional approaches to finding a job. I answered ads, I went on informational interviews, and I joined professional associations.

After close to 30 interviews over 13 months, hours spent at the employment office and rejection letter after rejection letter, my spirits sank, and my confidence and attitude began to erode. Eventually I found part-time work at an electronics store. My meager salary was barely enough for rent on my apartment, food and gas. This was a dark and hard chapter in my life. My days felt hopeless, endless. I began to wonder if it was ever going to end.

A year and a month later, it finally did. I interviewed at two high tech companies and received two offers. I was happy to accept one at a small high tech company. Even with the new job, it was still touch and go with the economy. My company experienced ups and downs with the changing winds of the economy, and fear was in the air.

At this point in my life, I knew and understood firsthand how hard, humiliating, and humbling being unemployed and seeking work is, especially in a recession. Unemployment doesn't care who you know, or what you know, or what you did in the past. In a recession, there are more people seeking fewer jobs and news constantly reminding everyone of our "struggling economy."

Feng Shui Comes into My Life

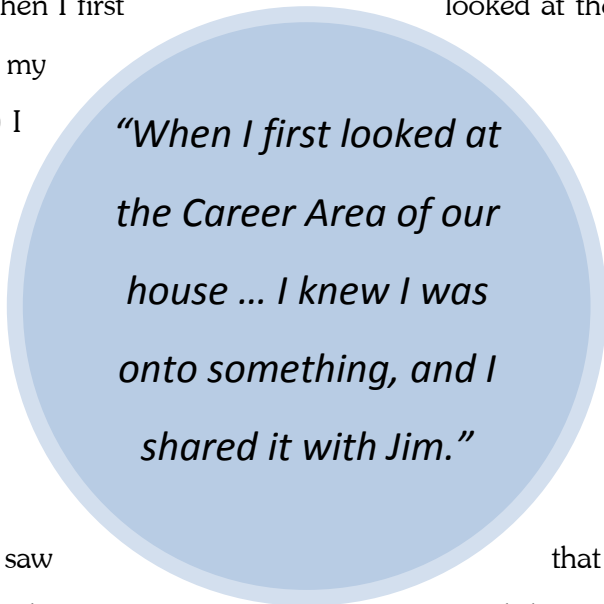
I was first introduced to Feng Shui in 1995 by my girlfriend, who would soon become my wife, Anezka. Like many people, I had a lot of skepticism and doubt. This was during the Clinton Administration, when the economy began to turn around. I had been at my high tech job for about three years and I had been asking my boss for a promotion and raise for the previous six months, and I was constantly being told to wait. Anezka had begun to study Feng Shui, and told me about the area of our house that represented 'career.' After looking over the area, we found the area filled with weeds, stairs in disrepair, a front door that was stuck, and a dilapidated mail box!

Anezka: My first guide in Feng Shui was a book called *A Western Guide to Feng Shui* by Terra Kathrin Collins. It rocked my world completely. The very day I started it, I spent all day reading it and then applying the information to my own home. In fact it affected me so deeply I left a party very early that night (and I **love** parties!) and came home to finish reading. I then stayed up till **3:00** in the morning dismantling my house and putting it all back together in a brand new way. My complete "revamp" took place over the next several weeks. I was obsessed, elated, and with every change, I was more and more energized. It made sense to me on every level of my being. I could see Jim watching me through this process and the look on his face was wary and questioning. "What are you going to do next?" -- but more to the point, "What am *I* going to have to do *with* you and *how much is this going to cost me?*" was the attitude I got! But regardless of his skepticism, Jim would listen to me talk excitedly about Feng Shui again and again, as I told him about all the changes that were taking effect in my life.

The topic that came up a lot during this time period for Jim and I was around his job promotion, or rather lack thereof, and the weirdness of how every time it was going to be made official something would happen and block it from happening. With Feng Shui on my mind all the time I began to think that maybe there was a connection between our career area of the house and Jim's blocked career advancement. When I first looked at the career area of our house (using my beginning baby Feng Shui eyes) I knew I was onto something, and I shared it with Jim.

Here is what I found: The front door was broken and not working well, which symbolizes being stuck, and blocked opportunities in Jim's career. I saw that our mail box was wobbly and hard to open, and the paint was chipping. This symbolized an unstable (the wobbly part of the mailbox) career, and the difficulty in opening symbolized opportunities and money having a hard time getting to us (because the objects in our life are meant to flow and work easily without resistance). The mail box was also halfway in between our helpful people area and the career area of our home (identified by using the Bagua map), which validated that we were definitely feeling the lack of support and help in moving this promotion through.

The whole front entrance was dirty and dusty, with dirty windows and an old ratty mat. There were cobwebs everywhere and a light that was burnt out. There



“When I first looked at the Career Area of our house ... I knew I was onto something, and I shared it with Jim.”

was peeling paint on the stairs leading up to the front door, a symbol of neglect and low, tired energy. As we would walk up to the house we were greeted with a feeling of hopelessness, avoidance, and resistance. To me this was a very clear symbol that somewhere inside of us we were holding these feelings and reflecting it out into the world, thus keeping ourselves blocked and stuck, with the end result being no job promotion.

Anezka and James Get Busy

At first I thought that Anezka was just trying to get me to do more chores around the house! I was convinced that it was a ploy to get me to check off items on her “Honey Do” list. But because I was frustrated from the waiting process at work, we made an agreement: I agreed to dedicate one weekend to fix up the “career area” and see what happened at work. Frankly I intended to prove Anezka wrong. And I thought, at the very least, in the end I’ll have a nicer home. We rolled up our sleeves and cleaned up the career area and performed several small repairs.

We first started with the prep work. We threw out the old ratty mat. We cleaned away all traces of dirt and dust. We lived in a 130-year-old Victorian so we had to go to a specialty store to buy the parts to fix the door handle so it would work properly, We fixed the hinges until the door closed snugly and easily. We bought a new mailbox and focused our intention on it being a new way to receive opportunities and support (help) in our career as well as all areas of our life. Jim cemented the mail box in place so it would be connected and stable, a symbol of constant lifelong support. We prepped the stairs and the mail box and then painted them. We weeded a huge flower bed in the career area next to the stairs. We planted a whole bed of red and pink flowers: red to

symbolize action and fire energy, pink for softness, patience, and love for all we do and have.

We bought three flower pots to symbolize creativity and planted red geraniums in them for activation and fire energy. We placed them down our stairs for two reasons. The first reason was to bring passion and live activation energy into our home and Jim's career. Second, our stairs were very steep so the flowers would help make sure our luck did not fall away fast. The flower pots with live plants would help hold the chi ("energy") up to our home. Lastly we washed the windows, replaced the light bulb (symbolizing that our career energy is hooked up and working), we bought a new front door mat with reds, blacks and greens (colors supportive to the career area), and hung up a wind chime in the north west corner (which for us is half helpful people area and half career) to attract more energy into our home as well.

When we were done we were tired, yet at the same time we felt energized. Our front entrance was beautiful, and our whole house felt like it was buzzing with energy. I knew something had shifted in our lives and selves.

The Proof is in the Pudding

I returned to work Monday, exhausted, and started working like I would on any other Monday. I was called in to a conference room mid-morning. My boss informed me that I was indeed getting a promotion, with a significant raise, AND he would also give me the difference in back pay for the last two months of waiting for the promotion! I couldn't believe it! Here I'd been waiting for six months, and after one weekend of very simple, practical changes, my wait was over.

The point of the story is not whether or not the changes got me the raise. The point is that whatever “stuck energy” that was constantly postponing and delaying the process was removed. I realized that this process we had gone through was a way to move toward goals faster (along with working hard and asking for the promotion, of course).

Jim called me and told me the great news. We were so excited that we actually screamed and whooped it up on the phone together, and then we talked about how this Feng Shui stuff REALLY works. The biggest surprise for me was what came out of Jim’s mouth, “What’s next?” Inside I chuckled at the complete turn-around Jim had made. Since that moment we have worked together using the Art of Feng Shui to completely transform our lives.

After that, my opinion about Feng Shui was changed forever.

The Bank Job

As life unfolded for us, job opportunities kept presenting themselves to me. I left the high tech job in early 1997 for a job at a large regional bank. This represented another significant raise. Moving from a fast-paced work environment to a slow-paced banking environment was like switching from being a NASCAR race driver to driving a tractor on a country road! I remember getting assignments that were due in two weeks and finishing them in two hours.

As with everything in life, it changes. Eventually Jim grew out of his old job. Even though he had completed getting a promotion and a raise, other parts of his job created a disharmony in our life. We didn't make too many additional Feng Shui changes as Jim looked for a new job, but we were conscious about our career area. We kept it clean, kept a working light bulb, and we left it on intentionally and constantly for extra career energy to help Jim in his job search (this is a Feng Shui cure).

Our intention was to create a lighthouse effect calling to Jim his perfect next job. We also kept up with the yard work, removing weeds and any dead plants, replacing them with new ones. Inside our entrance is a hallway where the kids loved to dump their stuff. I would help them pick up their shoes, school backpacks, and coats, and put them in their correct places to keep this area clear, clean and flowing. Shortly after Jim focused on changing jobs one appeared out of nowhere and landed in his lap. This job was more in alignment with his personal values. And it would bring in more money. Again we celebrated Feng Shui and the help we received in this smooth transition. We were ecstatic, because it was a step up from the last job.

Another Job Loss ... But All Is Well

There were a lot of positive aspects about the job. The commute to work was easier. I was driving the opposite way of traffic. My co-workers were great people. They had an on-site gym with trainers. But the bank was acquired by another bank from the Midwest. I was going to lose my job in August of 1997. In spite of impending job loss and looming unemployment, I had a consistent sense of calm and wellbeing.

One aspect that helped foster that feeling was that I was eligible for six months' severance. Also, by this time, Anezka and I were well into using the principles of Feng Shui. When I left my job at the bank, I came home to a sanctuary that revitalized and supported me. The bank was very proactive and supportive in allowing us to seek alternative employment. Employees only had to tell their managers when they were taking time off for interviews, and they granted us the time and resources to find other work.

Using traditional sources of job postings, I found a great Financial Analyst job in the growing and exciting field of telecommunications. I was able to start a month before being severed from the bank job and ended up getting yet another raise, and severance for the first six months of the transition.

From a Feng Shui perspective, what supported the smoother transition was implementing further changes to the career area. We rebuilt the front stairs, added water features, and added landscape lighting. These simple actions strengthened the career area further.

The Financial “Quantum Leap”

This period of our life is what I call our “financial quantum leap.” We had huge financial and career growth after he moved from the bank job to his new job. It’s also worth mentioning that in August of 1997 Jim and I were married in our backyard. The year before Jim even found out he was going to lose his bank job we were making significant changes in our home. We had decided to put the love and money into our own home rather than rent a space elsewhere. Every weekend we worked: we gardened, we painted; we cleared out old garbage in our basement, and we cleaned and cleaned.

When we first heard Jim was going to lose his job our initial reaction was “OH NO!” but shortly thereafter there was a feeling of peace. As I looked at it from a Feng Shui perspective it made sense that he was losing his job because we were dramatically altering our home. It was becoming more beautiful, functional and energized every day, and so were we. One of our wedding gifts was a Feng Shui consultation from a professional from China (I was excited to learn from someone who learned in China, Feng Shui’s birthplace). The consultant instructed us to plant shrubs at the bottom of our outside stairs to hold the chi back into our home even more. We created and built a water fountain outside our front entrance in the career area to create more flow and healthy chi.

We placed a mirror inside our front entrance just to the left of the front door where a stairwell is. This helped with keeping our luck and energy from rolling out the front door.

We placed a large wind chime in our prosperity corner to anchor a missing part of our wealth corner and cleaned this area as well as replaced the burnt out lights. We talked about seeing the cemetery from our upstairs windows and how it is not good chi or healthy for our home (and subsequently our lives) as it is a reminder of death and mourning (we could see funerals from our back windows), and how we needed to create a barrier by planting something strong, green, and healthy. It took a while to grow the bamboo in our backyard, but that

site was fully covered. In the short term we placed a bagua mirror outside our upstairs windows to reflect that death chi away from our home.

We planted two trees in the love and marriage corner as a symbol of our love that we would be married under and created a white circle of stones in a yin and yang symbol for relationship harmony and balance.

We planted beauty everywhere in our yard, rebuilt our front stairs strong and sturdy, and finally placed outdoor lighting. Everything we did was a labor of love. It was also proving to be very beneficial. Jim in the midst of this was looking for a new job. Again it seemed to come effortlessly. He was hired, and when we realized he not only was going to make significantly more, was much closer to home, and he would be paid from his old job for the month of August without having to actually be there, as well as start his new job and get paid. We received two paychecks every two weeks while he worked only one job. It was very good news as our wedding cost more than we had thought. It seemed like through this time period, everywhere we turned we received money. Surprise lump sums of money came as wedding gifts out of the blue. We received abundance in all forms, love, support from friends and neighbors, health etc. Everyday felt like Christmas. We definitely were in a new money league and Jim was also in a new career league. We were grateful beyond words. Our love and belief in Feng Shui grew and grew.

My Time at Enron with “The Smartest Men in the Room”

I wish I could say this was the last time I had to face job loss but that is not the case. My new company was called FirstPoint Communications, which became Enron Communications, which became Enron Broadband.

Not to get too far into the technical aspect, the third phase moved us from a small company, to being absorbed into the huge giant called Enron. When Enron figured out that they may be able to trade broadband like it was natural gas or power, these folks from Texas did things like they always do in Texas: Big. In the early days, they would fly a private jet between Houston and Portland transporting not only executives, but several of us mid level workers as well.

I just hung on watching the spectacle unfold. Little by little, our company was being siphoned down to Houston. And the people who moved earlier were being terminated for various reasons. In 2000, the Internet bubble burst. All our market potential melted away in six months.

Enron began downsizing the broadband division, so I dodged the bullet and ended up on the Enron West Power Trading floor working in settlements. This was my first exposure to the energy business. I enjoyed the work and I still consider the people I worked with some of the best people I've ever met.

With Feng Shui a lot of people think it is a one-time event. "I've been 'Shuied' and now I never have to do it again." That's not so. We are constantly changing and so is our environment. So in the journey to this point in time my Feng Shui would translate into little projects around the house, like cleaning out a drawer and reorganizing an area, or painting a scrappy piece of furniture and turning it into beautiful art, always with intention and meaning. For instance, on one desk that I worked on, I painted a man and a woman with their faces close together symbolizing harmony and love and a guardian angel to guide our business dealings. Feng Shui is not a magic bullet that means you will never

have difficulties or challenges. There are cycles in everything. This was one of those challenging times for Jim and me.

The Light Bulb Explodes

In 2001 Enron imploded. From August to November Enron went bankrupt. I could write a whole book on my adventures at Enron, but there are many of those already written. Having experienced what happened first hand, I can only say that Enron was too smart for its own good. While many books make everyone out to be villains with a few heroic whistle blowers, the truth is a lot less dramatic, and a lot less cut and dry. However, this event was a huge lesson to the world in not over-extending on credit (and bravado?), and being true to values of fairness rather than simply asking “is it legal?”

The day that Enron filed for bankruptcy, the employees lamented with beers on the trading floor. In early December, our manager told us that we had 90 days before layoffs were to begin. Thirty-one days later I found my current job in energy. At Enron I had worked with people who had far more experience than I had. Yet I was the first to find a job. Several of them followed me in the subsequent months and years.

Anezka Discovers Space Clearing

During this period, Anezka had been training in Western Intuitive Feng Shui and became really adept at space clearing. During all the stressful transitions, we were able to keep our home free from stuck energy and holding on to all the stress I brought home

from work. This was also the time of 911. Space clearing helped us maintain perspective and stay focused on the task of finding a job in a more challenging environment.

We had two children and up to that point our top priority had been on raising them. Now our son was starting high school and our daughter was entering middle school, so both exhibited more independence which left me with more free time. This is where my job as wife and mother began to share more space with me having a more serious Feng Shui career. I was taking my skills to whole new level and starting to provide Feng Shui help for friends and family. I was getting very adept at space clearing which was a natural next step and love for me. Again it just made sense to clear our homes and objects on an energetic level as we evolved, and to combine this with Feng Shui was like a perfect marriage. I started doing clearings at our home on a weekly basis during this transitional time. There was a lot of fear coming up for both Jim and myself as the financial picture looked like we would lose a lot of money and possibly Jim's job.

I knew we needed a lot of extra help to keep the fears from sticking, and we needed to keep things moving and flowing. We had taken our house to the peak of being Feng Shuied with more cosmetic remedies and Feng Shui Cures, now we needed bigger repairs and work which seemed so symbolic of doing deeper work on ourselves. We needed a new roof. The paint was peeling more and more on the outside of our home and needed to be repainted. This was creating depression, a sense hopelessness and low tired energy, which I was experiencing. The stairs needed to be rebuilt as they were rotting (in the wealth corner area), which symbolized decomposing wealth and unstable money. We were having electrical problems with all the lights in the home. When our house was remodeled before we purchased it the previous owners had put in a new power box, but our appliances and lights were on the old circuits. So this was symbolizing we have the power in ourselves and our home to create what we want, we just aren't hooked up to it!

Also the light fixtures were cheap and wires would short out leaving some light fixtures in the house unusable. We were still keeping up with all the Feng Shui cures we had placed in our home making sure they were activated, alive and fresh, yet we knew it was going to take us longer to get through the bigger Feng Shui repairs we needed.

Jim did lose his job, we experienced a loss of money, but because we kept up with what we had in place and continued with the space clearings again, he found a job in what was considered to be an impossible situation. I remember people at Enron were completely shocked that he found not only a great stable job, but again had an increase in pay. It took us a few years to make all the repairs on our house, but with each item we accomplished we have again noticed huge shifts moving out of a challenging cycle once again into a more abundant cycle. Jim has made shifts in his career within his current company, but always moving up and each change has brought him more happiness in his job and better pay.

A Happy Now

Seven years later, I am still with my current employer. My company is involved in Renewable Energy, which is a key factor in President Obama's plans for our recovery. While nothing is secure in these times, for the present moment it is a good place to be. Before I was introduced to Feng Shui, when life sent me the curve ball of losing my job, I was slammed hard. I was only left with the tools everyone else was doing, nothing made me stand out. The steps we propose in this book will help you stand apart from the crowd and shine a beacon in the world to find you and send you better fortune.

Anezka continued to advance her training, and I began to learn from her and started to take Feng Shui courses with her. We traveled to China in 2006 for an immersion program in Feng Shui. Visiting temples and palaces built with Feng Shui principles in the country of its origin took our skills and understanding to a new level. Since returning from China we have studied with famous Masters and now operate the Portland Feng Shui Institute. We have been blessed with the ability to help many people improve their lives.

A real turning point for me as a Feng Shui practitioner happened when we went to China, home to all the theory I had been learning. I had a very powerful osmosis experience. The trip to China was also the beginning of Jim becoming an expert at Feng Shui and he began to assist me in consultations, sharing his knowledge and experience with others. It has been and continues to be a most amazing journey that seems to just get better and better regardless of life's twists and turns along the way.

“Good for You ... But, You Could Just Be Drinking Your Own Whiskey”

So, maybe I've been lucky. Maybe it works for me, but not so well for other people. Maybe because my wife is a brilliant Feng Shui consultant, I was able to do things that a typical reader will not be able to do. Or maybe it was just coincidence. Would it work for others?

I had the opportunity to see the effectiveness of Feng Shui first-hand, this time with a dear friend. When I worked at the high tech company I met George. Like me,

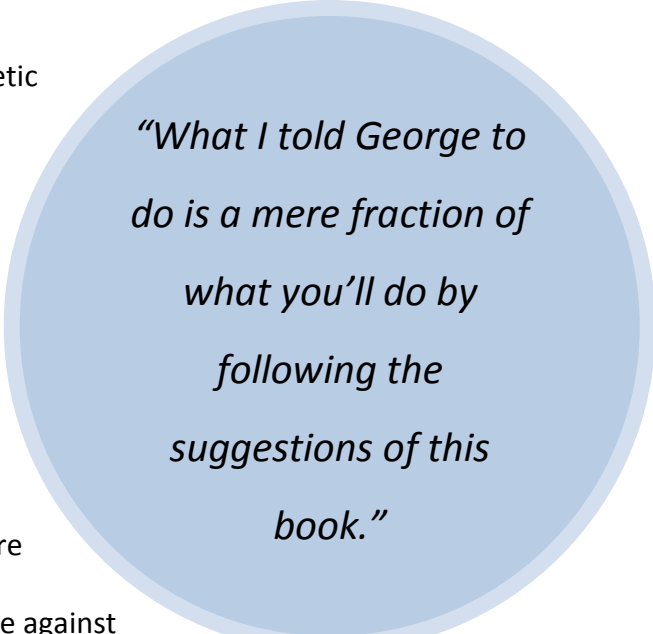
George has an MBA. George took the marketing track, while I took the finance track in business. After leaving the high tech company, George moved on to other high tech companies.

In 2007 George decided to part ways with his current employer. He decided to sell his home, and move downtown, and take a little break from work. George and I have the kind of friendship that we can get caught in our respective lives for months at a time, then re-connect as if we didn't miss a day. George called me early in 2008. He was having a tough time. He was dating a lady but that relationship went sour. His money was about gone. He had no luck finding a job and felt overwhelmed by life.

George and I had discussed Feng Shui before, and he was always open. Now he was ready to make some changes. I gave him a few things to do. I had George move his furniture around, find better places to put pictures and candles, and placement crystals in auspicious areas of his condo. I also advised George to perform a visualization exercise.

After making some of the changes, George got an e-mail from a recruiter. Within the week, George filled out a questionnaire and arranged an interview. In the period of about 1-2 months, George was given a six-figure offer. George's self empowerment came back, his confidence was back. A few months later, George bought a house. His job is going well and he is well respected in the community. He has a healthy perspective on the failed relationship, and has moved on in his life.

George had some practical and energetic issues with finding a job. Conventional wisdom states that it is easier to find a job when you have a job. That was a strike against George. On a Feng Shui level, George was born in the Year of the Horse. This sign is incompatible with the year we were in (2008), the Year of the Rat. That was a strike against George. The economy was slowing down. Remember when President Bush sent us all stimulus checks? The economy was a strike against my friend. Still George found a great job. What I told George to do is a mere fraction of what you'll do by following the suggestions of this book.



“What I told George to do is a mere fraction of what you’ll do by following the suggestions of this book.”

How This Book is Set Up

This is a practical book that will take you step by step to using the principles of Feng Shui and will give you the tools you need to improve luck with your career. Each chapter covers in detail the steps you need to take, and includes a checklist summarizing what to do. The idea is to practice this on a budget with little to no cash outlay.

This book focuses on results, not theory. However, in order to practice any art, you need a basic understanding of the tools of the trade. The chapter called “Luck,

Energy, and the Year of the Ox” will give you a simple and easy understanding of some powerful tools. We try to keep the language simple and practical.

The rest of the book includes practical steps to help you move to success in recession- proofing your career.