

Your Home as a Mirror

Gina Lazenby



My love and interest in feng shui started in the early 90s. I was going through a life crisis and major change and became a seeker of new personal truths. One weekend I found myself in a feng shui workshop with William Spear at the East West Centre in London. By the end of that weekend my entire world had changed. If feng shui really did work then I decided that I would tell the whole world about it because I felt they should know and they were missing out. That quest dominated the next decade for me! I set out to put my small amount of knowledge to the test and found that when I made small intentional change in my home, some aspect of my life would shift. I was hungry for more knowledge the more success I had. From that initial encounter I was inspired to co-found the Feng Shui Society and created the world's first professional feng shui training programme for westerners.

What I would love to outline for you here is one of the easiest feng shui concepts to grasp, that your home is a mirror for your life. If you can get used to reading the signs around you then you have some clues to what is going on in your life and what you might need to change. A teacher can give you information but it doesn't always come alive and be fully understood until you

have an Aha! moment. For me, shifting from knowing that your home is a mirror to really getting that MY home IS a mirror of my life came from the experience of living in two homes.

Over a period of time I witnessed an extraordinary sequence of events that served to teach me the incredible relationship and link we have with our homes. I had lived in a mews cottage in central London for several years then I made a decision to leave the city, migrate up north to my home county of Yorkshire and relocate somewhere beautiful with a big view in order to help broaden my own inner horizons and possibilities. Where I lived in London I could not see any sky! The move up north also gave me the mental and physical space to complete the book on feng shui that I had been commissioned to write. That set off a chain of events (another amazing feng shui story for later) which brought me to my partner Morel and his seventeenth century cottage in the hills above Skipton. I moved in with him and we started a major renovation and building programme to create the house and life of our dreams. I still keep the house in London where we both spend time on business. So that is how we ended up living in two homes.

One of the first coincidences I noticed was the washing machine in Yorkshire. It broke down so we needed a new one. Days after that was installed we had to replace the dishwasher in London. Next,

we had a huge infestation of mice in Yorkshire; it was autumn and virtually every field mouse in the area decided to take refuge with us. At exactly the same time down in London our organic food was in a warmer environment than our cool northern larder and we had a major outbreak of maggots and moths. We are talking unusual and abnormal amounts here! This has never happened before or since and it happened in the same week. We each have a blue Volkswagen car. One parked outside each house. As I drove to the station in Yorkshire for the London train in one car, I noticed two things - a hubcap had fallen off and the steering was very creaky. I got to London and hopped in the car there to drive to an appointment and noticed one of the hubcaps had fallen off and when I got behind the wheel grrrrrrrrhhhhhh! Loud creaking. Totally bizarre and yet another coincidence to think about. By now I was really taking time to contemplate what each incident was meaning and the messages that were being given to me. My reflection on the infestations brought up the fact that I was OVER busy. There was too much going on in my life and I was engaged in too much activity and 'busyness' without any fruitful results. The car parallel caused me to reflect on my infrastructure which at that time was falling apart as I struggled to make life work in two places. My whole schedule was creaking from overload.

Some time later when we seemed to

Some Tips for reading messages in your home

- 1 Clutter** - this is the easiest barometer to check whether things are getting out of hand. The more order and clear space you have around you the more ease and clarity you will have in your life.
- 2 Art & ornaments** - these are often symbolic and speak of who we are. Make sure that what you surround yourself with truly represents not only who you are now, but also who you want to be. Be careful of outdated stuff from another era as this will make you feel stuck.
- 3 Easy layout** - make sure everything is set up for ease and don't put unnecessary blockages in your way. You will end up manoeuvring yourself round them physically then you will find yourself thwarted or compromising in life. Don't arrange your home so that it is actually working against you.
- 4 Broken things** - fix things as soon as they break. A stitch in time is a very apt feng shui phrase. Leaky taps and plumbing problems that go unresolved will doubtless show up as red entries on your bank statement. Dirty and cracked windows will affect your vision and how you see the world and your way into the future? Cracks in the wall might well indicate your infrastructure and life foundations need attention.
- 5 Maintenance** - It is an important part of life, making sure that everything in your home is in good working order. One of the biggest energy drains is ongoing maintenance that is not being attended to. You plan to strip the paint off the wooden stairs and do a bit every few months. A job like this dragging on and not tackled head on is a massive drain on your energy. Every time you go up the stairs you are thinking "I need to fix this". Such a waste of energy. Get things finished - just do it!

move out of the pattern of dual events, my partner rang me from London late one night to say he'd returned from a business dinner and found no water in the taps. A call to Thames Water and we discovered that the neighbour's builders had turned off our supply by accident. As I put the phone down from my conversation with Morel, I heard a graunching noise. It was the water pump in our Yorkshire cottage grinding to a halt all by itself for no apparent reason. So that was me without a supply of water either! Two homes, both with water problems and of course in feng shui, water is hugely symbolic of wealth and the flow of money and life force. Both of us looked at the sales channels for our businesses to see where we were experiencing blockages and interferences - where was someone turning off the flow for us and getting in the way? It was a valuable insight into where our businesses needed attention.

The last example of the twin incidences is the strangest. In December two years ago I was in Yorkshire on a Sunday afternoon when I got the kind of call none of us likes to receive, "Miss Lazenby? Are you the owner of this mews cottage? This is PC Jones in London and I am standing in your front room". Great! How did he get in there? He told me about the attempted break-in, which he had completed in order to investigate and secure my house. He kindly arranged for the front door to be boarded up and padlocked until I came to London two days later. Thankfully, the original door had held out and the burglars never actually got in. Now I am about to go to London for a week - what would be going through your mind if you were me? Exactly! I was worried that the Yorkshire property, empty for a week, would be broken into. It didn't help that that night I fantasised hearing footsteps outside my front door. So of course, on Monday I called the police to report the strong possibility of a future break in. (I must have sounded like a pre-cog from that Tom Cruise film, *Minority Report*.) Unbelievably, the local bobby was very understanding. He didn't think I was mad at all when I recounted the full history of the twin event syndrome in the two homes. He spent a couple of hours going through every window and entry door advising

me on how I could improve my security and he gave me quite a few important recommendations. He said he would keep an eye on the place so I went off to London feeling better but not until I had checked out and increased my insurance cover.

One week later I arrived back in Yorkshire. What do you think I found? We HAD been broken into but what I discovered was totally unexpected. The house was fine but the temporary garden fence where we were to have a new dry stone wall made had been breached - by a flock of sheep. A hundred of the blighters had got in and decimated the garden. Their nose marks were half way up the glass kitchen door; they had knocked over the guardian angel door posts and systematically eaten every single ivy leaf up to their height. It would take years to fully grow back the greenery around the front of our ivy-clad cottage. I was shocked. But in the ravages of destruction always lay the seeds for something good. We'd had the kind of savage pruning that we would NEVER have done ourselves and in the tidying up process we found an area under a tree that didn't exist before. We placed a wooden seat there in the new gap and it's now our favourite place to sit. For me that was another big lesson in learning not to judge what initially looks like a disaster but to go with the process with an enquiring state of mind to find out what is good about the situation. What is the message? I now look back on that incident and think of it as a gift that radically changed our garden.

When your borders and boundaries are violated in such a way, as with our London front door and Yorkshire fence, it is useful to examine all boundaries in your life - your personal and professional ones - to see what needs strengthening and maybe repairing.

I looked at this whole episode as both a practical message to review security arrangements (most people take out policies and insurance cover AFTER the fact!) but also on another level to examine my relationships and the boundaries around various parts of my life. I took it as a tip off to bring my work and life back into balance; it was a great warning.

When something happens in your home life it is helpful to see it as a microcosm for your bigger world of work and enquire as to what message there might be. That is of course if you believe there is a link! Most people accept the idea of a mind, body, spirit connection and when we apply that holistic thinking to health it serves us to reflect on the spiritual, mental and emotional causes behind a physical disease or condition. One of the key learnings I took from my teachings with William Spear is that our body is our first home for our spirit and our house is our second home for body, mind and spirit. They are ALL linked.

The role of the home is crucial in shaping our lives. We choose it, decorate it and put our personal stamp on it. Home is an expression of who we are and what we feel is important to us. Everything in there counts. You can learn to read the patterns and ask the question: what does this mean beyond the physical evidence in front of me? How is it a message for what is going on in my life? What can I learn? Clutter and stuff are the big

issues in people's lives now. We have too much of everything and doesn't everyone complain they are stretched and overloaded? We are connected to far too many things. Simplify, simplify, that's the key. I have lost count of the times that people have read my books and called me from their loft while they are clutter clearing. They get to the clutter section, stop reading and dive right into a big, usually over-due, clear-out. As soon as you shift something in your physical environment you will feel the repercussions throughout the rest of your life, especially when you do it with conscious intention. Just take an objective glance around your home. What is it saying about you? Malcolm Gladwell, in his brilliant book 'Blink', talks about thin-slicing and getting to the essence of someone by, for example, taking a look at their homes rather than spend hours interviewing them. Remember the crooked man with his crooked stick walking the crooked mile? Where did he live? In a crooked house of course!

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is the author of 'The Healthy Home', 'Simple Feng Shui' & 'The Feng Shui House Book' which have been translated into over a dozen languages

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