

Consultant puts rooms, lives in order

By *KEVIN PARKS* August 6, 2015 *Columbus Dispatch* Page: 1A
(Columbus, OH)

When the basement of Laura Staley's Clintonville home flooded in February 2000, she had no way of knowing that act of God would open the door to a whole new career.

In fact, she wasn't even aware of the career she would soon pursue.

All she knew was that she lost some things in the flood -- possessions she thought she valued.

In the wake of that mini-disaster, Staley said last week, a friend gave her a book on feng shui, the Chinese philosophy of arranging one's environment to maximize happiness.

"I'd never heard of it," Staley recalled.

Opening the book, she came across the phrase "live with what you love," and it had a profound effect upon her. She realized she didn't love much of what she had -- not only the items damaged by the floodwaters but other hand-me-downs that cluttered the house.

"I was very inspired by living with things you love, and not just stuff," Staley said. "I don't think I was clear on what my true purpose was. In the process of letting go of these things I didn't like and were hand-me-downs ... I began to find my passion.

"Pretty quickly, it got clear this was what I needed to do."

That need took the form of an intensive one-week training course in New Jersey put on by the

American Feng Shui Institute, based in San Gabriel, Calif. Staley became certified by the institute in February 2004 and launched her feng shui consulting business, Cherish Your World.

She said last week she has plans to dramatically expand her practice by offering her services not only to individuals but also businesses, as well as joining a variety of networking groups and organizations.

"Pretty much everyone who asks me is often intrigued by what it is I do," Staley said. "They get it pretty quickly that their belongings impact their lives. The simplest definition is it's the art and practice of arranging your physical space to enhance your life. I help people thrive in spaces where they live, work, eat and play.

"The lovely thing about feng shui is it's about empowering everyone, from the CEO right down to the person who has that tiny office, a cubicle, and how is that environment nourishing and supporting their productivity and creativity at work. When we find that sweet spot, our lives work very well."

Staley, who said she charges for her consultations based on the level of service a client seeks, emphasized that she offers advice. She doesn't tell people to relocate furniture they don't want to move or get rid of things they want to keep.

"It can be pretty challenging," she said. "As you can imagine, I've seen all kinds of situations. I've seen basements and garages stuffed full of belongings the client no longer uses or loves. I'm not there to judge them; I'm there to awaken the person to that comfort and safety. I know I don't take action when someone's waving their finger at me.

"Some people just want one room. That's how they want to start. I will set the fees according to their needs. I work to keep my rates reasonable, but it is my business and I know what I provide is valuable."

Her new career is fulfilling, Staley said.

"I've had the privilege of walking back into the space of clients who not only took the ideas but ran with them and created this exquisite space they're so excited to be in," she said. "Amazing things are happening to their lives. I know ultimately all I've done is given them permission to do intuitively what they knew to do.

"I think of myself as a muse. It's incredibly gratifying."

For more information, visit cherishyourworld.com.
