

Creating Sanctuary Within and Without

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Creating a beautiful home and garden is a Soul filled endeavor. We have all been in homes that are designer perfect, yet leave us feeling cold or unengaged. When we create a living space that flows harmoniously from the center of our being, it exudes warmth, joy, and offers a feeling of coming home to ourselves that transcends rigid rules about decorating and design. Home should feel like sanctuary – a place that we can return to time after time feeling safe, loved and surrounded by those elements that give us comfort and joy. For some, this may be a home filled with vibrant colors, exciting shapes, and multiple textures. For others, a tranquil light filled space that feels soothing and calms the heart and mind may be the perfect place of repose.

The most important factor in creating our personal space is to know ourselves and to be able to hear and express our authentic inner voice. As a holistic nurse practitioner, I know that healing occurs naturally when we feel an integrated sense of self and when we cultivate joy, gratitude, and beauty in an intentional way. Creating a healing space – whether it's a room, a garden, a deck, a patio or an entire home, is one of the best ways to foster health and a deep sense of well-being. Research has demonstrated time and again that positive emotions are not just nice feelings. Positive emotions are the cornerstone of health and the foundation of a fulfilled life. And the creative process of bringing together the elements of a gracious living space can generate a profound sense of abundance and prosperity even when using recycled or re-purposed items.

Connecting our sense of home with the awareness that our bodies are both the home and the garden of our Spirit, we can renew our intentions to create an inner sanctuary. Setting aside time to just be present with ourselves away from the busyness (bus-i-ness) of everyday life is the only way to really connect with the authentic life that we want to experience. Meditation, prayer, guided imagery, art, and walks in nature offer us the opportunity to really tune in to what we believe, what we feel, and what we experience with our 5 senses. These practices also allow us to tune out many of the distractions that keep us moving on a treadmill rather than experiencing life through fresh eyes and an open heart. In this way, we come to renew our

relationship with ourselves, seeing the essential form of our lives and giving us the opportunity to create our lives anew with each turn of the season.

The energy of spring can be both turbulent and sweet. Strong winds and driving rains alternate with gentle soft breezes and the scent of wet earth. In Traditional Chinese Medicine [TCM], there is no separation between the outer environment and our personal inner environments. Just as we are intimately connected to our homes, our bodies reflect both our inner world and outer world. There are five elements in TCM – wood, fire, earth, metal, and water which are meant to flow within and without in a harmonious balance. In the spring, when the plants are in full and exuberant growth, the element of wood dominates. The wood element is associated with the liver and gall bladder meridian. When this meridian is out of balance, we can see the same range of excess as we see reflected in the capricious weather patterns. We may become angry, irritable, or have digestive problems if the liver is congested. Spring is a powerful time to “clean house” by eating simple, whole foods that are nutritious, and by avoiding rich, fatty foods and alcohol which congest the liver. Acupuncture, diet, herbs, and liver cleanses can be very healing at this time of year.

Spring brings a sense of new beginnings. It offers us the opportunity

to doing a final clearing or cleaning and see our lives and our homes with fresh eyes and a lightened Spirit. We feel a fresh sense of wonder as the days begin to grow longer and blossoms begin to appear. This is an important time when we too can sow new seeds. When we live in rhythm with the cycles of nature, we actually support our bodies, minds, and Spirit as we move through the seasons of our own lives.

Visit www.healingartscharlotte.com or call 704.315.5756 to learn more.



Join us for our one-day “playshop,” *Coming Home to Ourselves: Creating a Healing Inner Sanctuary* on May 2nd from 9a-5p at The Ivey Memory Wellness Day Center at Southpark, 6030 Park South Drive. We will be learning about practices that support us in becoming the best we can be. We will play with art, imagery, meditation, and nature as we share delicious wholesome foods and learn to nurture our mind, body, and Spirit! Call Center for the Healing Arts at 704.315.5756 to reserve your space; seating is limited.