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Questions and Answers with Ann-Marie Holmes

From Earth Spirit Living: Bringing Heaven and Nature Into Your Home

What is Earth Spirit Living?

Whether you live in a high rise with cement all around, work in an office, or live in the country, you impact the earth and the earth impacts you. With Earth Spirit Living, you learn to hone your instincts to observe, listen, and interact with the earth. You become a partner with the earth and watch for easy signals and signs from your environment that open you more to the sensory language of the earth and create life scenarios where both you and the planet flourish. Like any partnership, when both flourish, success happens.

How can we modern folks hear nature, especially in the city?

While it's true that our modern civilization places emphasis on the mind and intellect, this basic awareness of nature and the ability to tune in to it is intrinsic to all human beings. Everything in the natural world holds information for us. A veteran fisherman knows how to read the water. A farmer is in tune with growing cycles and the soil. What was possibly meaningless background sight and sound can give you essential information for your life.

The natural patterns on the surface are gone with a dense city, but the earth chi (energy) is still present, often slumbering deeper in the earth in these areas. Nevertheless, the embers are still there and, given attention and time, nature will respond with balance. Set aside time every day to invite nature in to where you are. Expect an exchange.

What are some everyday influences of the earth?

The earth operates within certain natural laws that regulate the complex interactions of life. When earth patterns are abruptly altered, the earth's regulatory system can break down and affect human activity as well. So how we make changes on the earth is important. For instance, when we cut trees abruptly or re-route water quickly around building sites, many times I have seen work stop. Schedules and budgets get put on hold. Emotions and thoughts from humans can become unstable. Like any partner, give nature time to change and re-adjust the nature program that is operating and in place.

How is Earth Spirit Living different from Feng Shui?

Earth Spirit Living takes Feng Shui principles and bridges them with other cultures and presents the principles in a totally new western way. Stories and references to science, intuition, and psychology give readers more familiar cues leading to new interest, excitement, and a

broadening for the topic of Feng Shui. The book also brings to the forefront the ancient concept of two-way communication with nature as a means of improving our living environments.

You mention something called body radar. What's that?

Body radar is an instinctive system for detecting and deciphering subtle information. We all have it. Body radar refers to your body's ability to function as an energy instrument—determining, detecting, and responding to energy fields in your surroundings. Our bodies are transmitters and receivers, sending energy waves out and interpreting the energy echoes that come back, similar to radar. As the physical body sends out these waves, our antenna or aura scans the area, detecting other energy fields.

What can one individual really do to help the environment?

Touching any part of the web of life affects the entire web. The richness and full power of the earth exists everywhere. The fullness of a giant oak or sequoia is completely contained within a small seed, and within the DNA of each tiny cell. The boisterous dandelions springing up through a city sidewalk or the few plants lovingly placed in the dirt between curb and sidewalk embody a concentrated spot of life force. Like concentrated drops of liquid fertilizer, these small spots are potent sources of healthy growth, with an effect on their surroundings. Small touches, done with awareness and intention, have a surprising and mysterious effect on human life and on the natural world, supporting human needs such as prosperity, health, and thriving relationships. In fact, every small act with nature counts.

We are hearing a lot about "building green." What is it and how does ESL fit into that category?

Many architects, developers, lenders, and real estate industry professionals are aware of the new trend in sustainable buildings to create strategies to implement energy conservation. Their most effective strategy, the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System, measures the effect construction has on energy use, ecosystems, and other social/environmental impact, by offering a certification system for owners where points are earned in such areas as energy conservation, indoor air quality, reduction in water usage, and day-lighting. Demonstrating both the economic advantages and less quantifiable benefits, the LEEDS rating is sought after by more and more players in the building process now. Earth Spirit Living qualifies under the less quantifiable benefits. Most professional groups and schools have some committees, departments, or councils geared toward sustainability, and popular two- or three-day Green Building Conferences are scheduled regularly in the U.S and other countries.

Today, the interest in green or sustainable building, Feng Shui, and quantum physics a new renaissance, enabling us to once again reach beyond apparent polarities to achieve a more profound integration in our environmental designs and in our lives. During the Renaissance, the line between mystery and science wasn't as defined as it became with the rise of rationalism and the industrial revolution. For instance, Vitruvius, the first architect, suggested that we can bring life and longevity to our designs by paying attention to proportion, pattern, and shape, thus incorporating the intangible mystery of life along with science and the humanities in our built environments.