

Turn Signals for the Unconscious

Richard L. Phillips

The secret of good Feng Shui design is to be aware of *turn signals* to the unconscious. This clear and easily understandable principle can be applied to any space. Turn signals are positive, visual clues and subliminal messages that you can use to create a relaxed and nurturing environment.

Turn signals in a home work like those in a car. When you are driving, you use turn signals to advise other drivers, and you rely on them to do the same. If you do not receive these visual clues, your body responds with the appropriate physiological changes, such as increased adrenalin and erratic breathing. Your unconscious redirects your energy from its normal, natural, healing functions to keeping you safe from danger.

Turn signals in a house work in a similar manner. They tell you where to go and what to do, which room to use, and how to behave there. Positive turn signals in your home lower stress levels and give your body more energy for healing, growing, and being creative. Turn signals for the unconscious set the stage so you can empower yourself.

Before continuing with this chapter, inhale slowly and deeply. Now exhale and bring your shoulders back and down toward your waist. This is the *feeling* you want to create. This is the feeling of letting go and being relaxed.



Outdoor Turn Signals

Unmarked landings and steps may add stress to your life. Often, contractors build steps, landings, and patios of white concrete, with no differentiation made between the elevation changes. If there is no visual demarcation between the landing that leads to steps, and the steps that lead to the patio, your unconscious is immediately put on guard. As you approach the steps, your thought pattern changes from what you are thinking to concentrating on not tripping and falling. This means that every time you go out to the patio, there is a behavioral change that may keep you from using the patio as much as you would like.

A good turn signal would be a clear transition to mark each separate elevation. Alternating colors, textures, and materials is a turn signal that says “landing ends, steps ahead, steps end, patio begins. Let’s use this patio and enjoy the outside.”

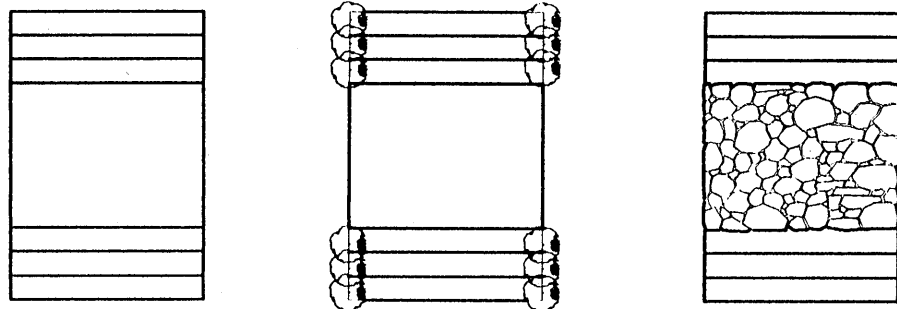
Appropriate changes may be:

Replacing concrete steps with flagstone or brick.

Covering the existing steps with brick pavers.

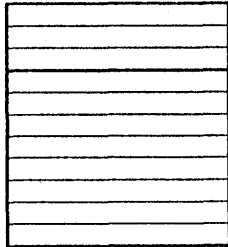
Staining the steps if they are made of wood.

Placing large pots of flowers or plants on both sides of the top and bottom step.

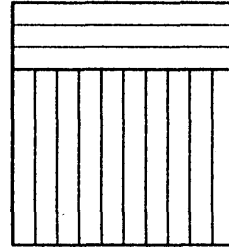


Positive Turn Signal Solutions

A good turn signal can be easy and inexpensive. If you are building a wooden deck with steps, instead of running the planks in the same direction, the solution is as simple as laying the wood on the deck in one direction and the wood on the steps in the opposite direction.

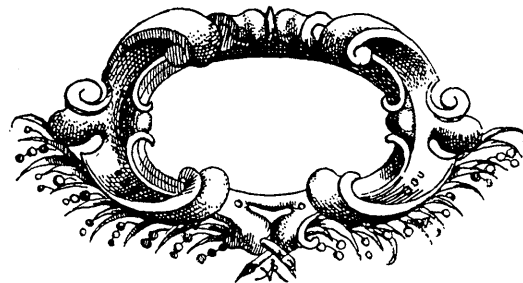


Situation



Solution

Undifferentiated landings and steps in front of a house give the subliminal message that extra effort is required to get to the front door. Opportunities will evade the occupants. A house with well-defined walkways, landings, and steps will have increased opportunities.



Interior Turn Signals

The turn signals you use for elevation changes inside your house can affect how often you use a room. If there are stairs separating a hallway and a room, and they are all carpeted with the same floor covering, your unconscious might say, “Why use this room? It is awfully hard to get into; let’s avoid it all together.”

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If it is the bathroom you avoid, your grooming habits may decline, and your organs of elimination may suffer. If it is the kitchen you are staying away from, you will probably not be nourishing the body or soul properly.

Provide clear turn signals by using contrasting carpets, rugs, and flooring patterns to highlight landings and stairs. Remember to put non-slip pads under area rugs. A sliding rug will send a message that this hallway or room is dangerous to use. Turn signals highlighting steps and stairs will make life easier and will improve the energetics of your house.

Doors

Focusing attention on the main entrance to your house can help you take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves. The front door does not have to be the traditional Feng Shui red,¹ but it should be a color that contrasts with (but still compliments) the exterior color. The front latch or lock should function easily to let opportunities flow easily into your life.

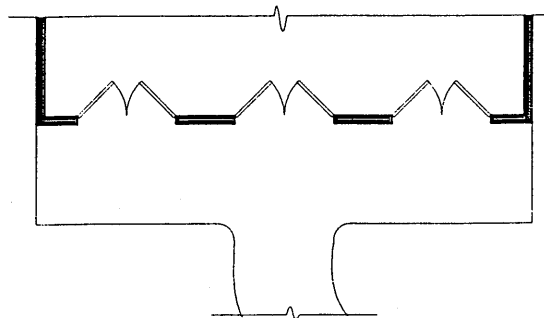
If your house has a series of doors or similar multiple entrances, you may have many opportunities but be confused about which choices to make. To focus attention on the preferred door, paint it a contrasting color and install lights and potted plants to highlight it as the main entrance.

Simple changes, such as defining entrances with paint or plants, can profoundly affect your life.

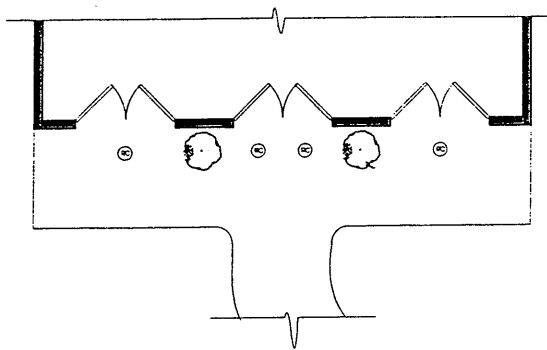
One woman had her home office in a smaller building across the garden from her house. There were three sets of identically painted French doors leading from the house into the garden. Only one could easily be opened and used without hitting the interior furniture. Each time she approached her house, her unconscious asked, "Which door is it?"

¹ Please refer to "Utilize All Your Resources," p. 189.

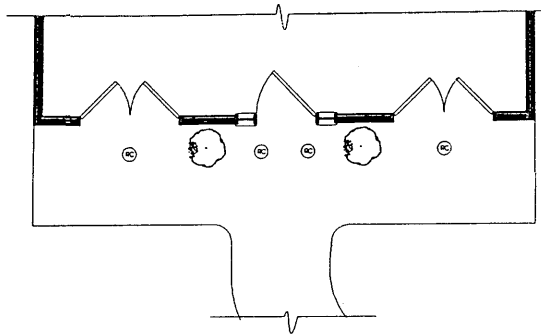
If I choose the wrong door, it will hit furniture. Can I squeeze past the furniture without bruising myself?" After painting the outside of the usable door in a vibrant color, she became calmer and found that she did not isolate herself in the office as much.



Situation



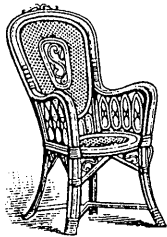
Solution



Solution

Furniture

The placement of furniture also provides turn signals to the unconscious. If you do not have a comfortable place to sit and eat, you will not properly honor and nourish your body. If there is not an area for two or more people to sit and talk, then conversation will be limited in that room; thus, relationships and partnership may not be fulfilling in your life.



A woman had several furniture groupings in her front room but only one chair. The main piece of art was a painting of weeping girls. It is little wonder why the woman felt lonely, isolated, and sad.

Her furniture placement and art choices sent a message to anyone entering the room, "It will be difficult for two people to talk in this room, and even if space is found, tears will flow."

Rearranging her existing furniture to create an inviting conversation area and removing the melancholy art had a profound effect on the woman's life. Shortly after making the changes, she began dating a sensitive man, her friends began to drop by more frequently, and communication with her children was better than it had ever been before.

Pay attention to the symbolism of art and objects you have in your home. Make sure your rooms and its furnishings are accessible and inviting.

A single man seeking romance had his bed so close to a wall that he had to turn sideways to tuck in the sheets. He had only one reading light on the more accessible side. This arrangement sent a strong message to his unconscious and to anyone invited into his room, "This is a one-person bedroom. There are no provisions for another person to be comfortable."

After making the bed accessible from both sides and adding another light, he was able to find a steady partner. Additionally, with the new bed placement, Chi was able to circulate freely around the bed, so the man slept better and his health improved.

Lighting

Both exterior and interior lights should be bright enough to enhance a space but not to cause a glare.

A restaurant known for its excellent food and service recently relocated. The new building, chef, kitchen, dining room interiors, and location were considered superior to the original. Daytime business far exceeded expectations, but at night, the business was negligible. An examination of the parking lot showed why. The lighting fixtures in the lot shined directly into the eyes of automobile drivers approaching the restaurant. Potential customers were temporarily blinded while looking for a parking space. The customers received the message, "Entering the restaurant parking lot at night is painful and confusing. These lights blind me, and I might have an accident while parking the car. There are other places to go." Adjusting the lights sent the message that it was safe to park there, and night time business dramatically improved.

Remember to pay attention to the details. Overhead lights that are too bright will make people in a room feel agitated and uncomfortable. Use table or free-standing lamps to improve the lighting and comfort in a room. Care should also be taken with the placement of ceiling fans. The bottom should always be higher than the trim above the nearest doorway, or at least 6'8" above the floor. In most houses, a ceiling-mounted fan should be the same color as the ceiling to make the fan feel less intrusive. Lights from most ceiling fans are usually too bright and should not be used.

The owner of a business could not understand why business was far below projections and customers rarely returned. Between the front door and the reception desk was a low-hanging ceiling fan with a light. Anyone approaching the reception area had to decide how to get from the front door to the reception desk without hitting the light.

The low-hanging ceiling fan and light sent a very clear message, "There is a food processor-like blade whirling ahead. How tall am I in relation to the blades? Perhaps I should avoid this office." Even the receptionist, who knew the exact height of

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the ceiling fan and also knew that it was securely installed, avoided walking under it. Taking the ceiling fan out removed the perceived danger from the reception area and dramatically improved the company's business.

Clutter

Seemingly innocuous garage clutter can give a powerful message to your unconscious.

An admired, professional woman felt overwhelmed by little tasks in life. She had difficulty both leaving and returning to her house. The woman stayed away from home longer than she intended, and once home, she had difficulty leaving. She parked her car in the garage and used the garage door to enter. Paint cans and sprinklers were perched precariously on a shelf that was next to her car. She had to walk past sharp-edged tools, including the prongs of a pitchfork that pointed toward her face. Unfinished projects, boxes, and debris created an obstacle course between her car and the house. Her unconscious said, "This is a potentially dangerous and difficult situation. Do I really want to go from the car to the door?" Moreover, each time she saw unfinished projects, she got the stressful message, "Oh no, something else to do. When will I ever get it done?"

Simply organizing her garage created a clear path between her car and her house. It suggested that she could manage her time both at home and away. This turn signal became symbolic of her career path and has had a profound effect on her life.

Giving turn signals to the unconscious will positively influence patterns of behavior in your home or office. Providing clear markers will remove stress from your environment and instruct your unconscious to relax. When your body is at ease, your breathing improves and your heart opens. New opportunities and energy can now enter your life.

**Excerpted from
*The Feng Shui Anthology***

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