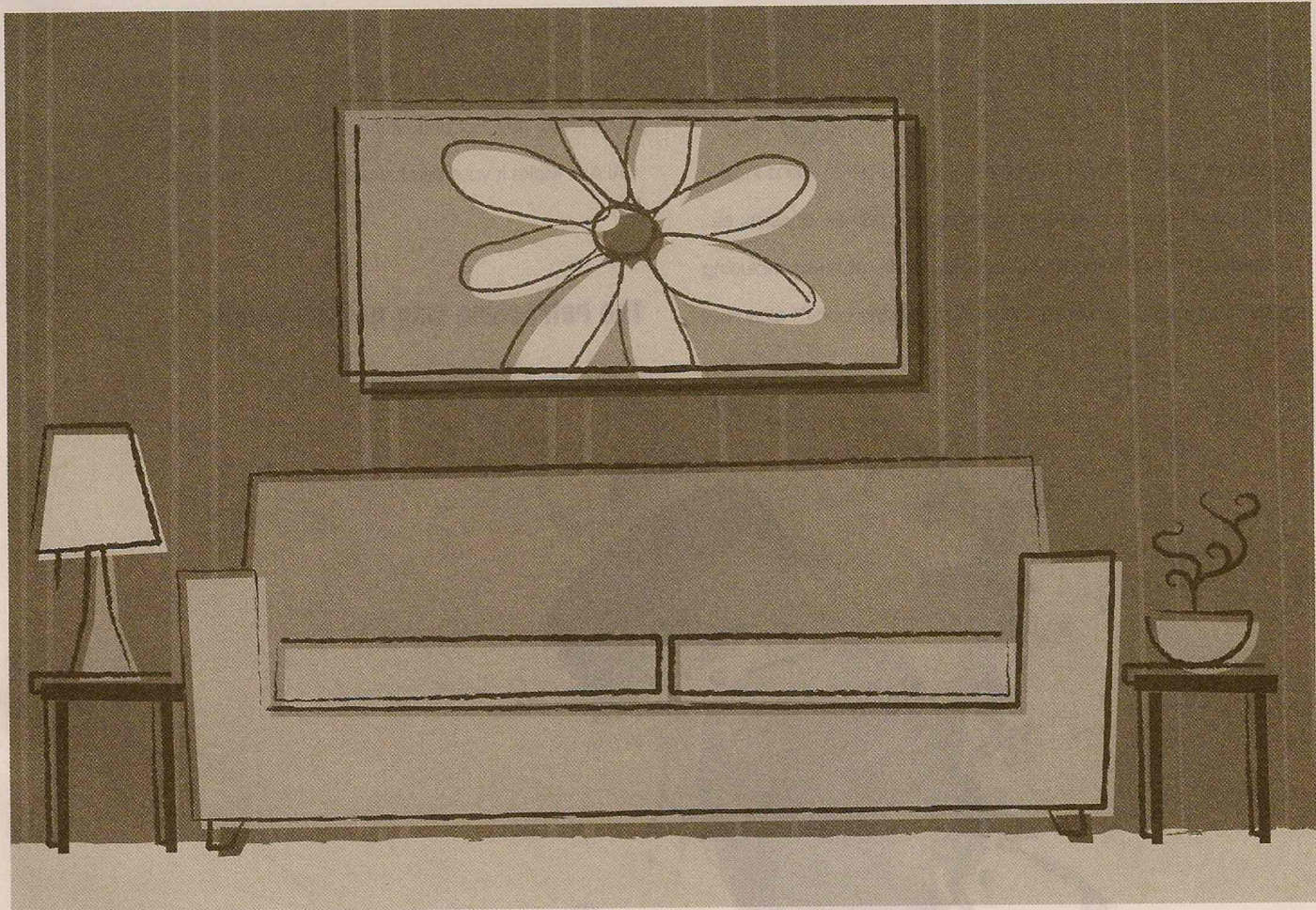


Changing rooms



Before you stampede through IKEA at a rate of knots, erratically grabbing bags of 1,000 tea lights and spatulas from here, there and everywhere, take a deep breath, listen to what feng shui master **Shivani Adalja** has to say and sort out your bagua. Words **Anna Whitehouse**.

Feng shui is a practice that has been bandied about for so long now that we've almost convinced ourselves that we know what it is. But Abu Dhabi-based feng shui consultant Shivani Adalja reckons we need to iron out a few major creases in our knowledge: 'Feng shui is an ancient Chinese art that balances the chi or positive energy in people's lives through the arrangement of items and colours,' she says. 'The bagua is a diagram of the nine areas of your life that

you can apply to your floor plan,' she adds. 'Each area corresponds to a different natural element, such as water or fire, and can be represented by a shape, colour, object or texture.' Even if you're concerned about only one 'sphere' (money, for example), you must feng shui your whole space.

While it's difficult to justify investing in a rental, spending the energy to create the proper space is worth it, according to Adalja - particularly since so many people move to the city to grow, prosper and expand their careers. 'A correctly laid-out apartment will bring you comfort and balance,' she adds. 'You will actually be in harmony with your space.'

This doesn't mean that your apartment needs to look as Zen-like as a spa interior, either. 'There are no concrete rules - nothing needs to be a specific colour, and every design will be different,' Adalja says. 'Feng shui is about comfort and how you feel, and you should ultimately choose the elements yourself, so you identify with them.' For more information call 050 681 1728, or email Shivani Adalja on chariot70@hotmail.com.

A-Zen

1 To progress in your career, keep the area around your front door clear of clutter and make sure the hinges don't squeak. Put down a black or dark-blue doormat. Since the front door is represented by water, place a fountain, a picture of water, a vase with water, a fishbowl or a mirror near it.

2 Having living things - plants, pets, fresh flowers - in your space helps the chi circulate. Pop on down to your local florist now.

3 Ensure there are no broken objects or clutter in your wealth corner. Put a plant with round leaves there and use accents like purple, green or gold.

4 To empower your intentions and help you focus on your objectives, display pictures and objects representing what you want. Make a 'vision board' of your ideal life.

5 Mirrors - which represent good luck - are excellent everywhere (except in front of your bed, which can look more Playboy Mansion than Zen-like).

6 Feng shui is about balance and equality, and in the relationship sector everything must be in pairs. For example, there should be two bedside tables, and if you have one painting over your bed, add another.

7 Don't keep a TV in the bedroom; if you live in a studio, cover it. According to Adalja, the tube takes the focus out of a relationship: It's always moving energy around, meaning you're not inclined to focus on each other.

8 It may seem obvious, but keep your flat tidy - not meticulously so - but don't leave washing up for more than a day, or leave your washing in the machine. All these things block chi.