

# Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

## **PWE28: Healing from the Outside In with Feng Shui**

**Aubree:** Welcome to the Peace with Endo Podcast. My name's Aubree Deimler. I am an author and wellness coach who helps women with endometriosis to naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo. This is episode number 28 and on the show today we have Monica Castenada or Moni. She's a Feng Shui consultant, teacher and author of the new book *Room by Room: Feng Shui Secrets for a Happy Life*. I've been reading it and loving how it incorporates the different rooms of your home with tips on how to make these rooms happier along with her personal reflection on these rooms and her story along the way. So, I'm excited that she's here to share some of her story with us today. Thanks so much for being here.

**Moni:** Thank you Aubree. I'm really happy to be here.

**Aubree:** So can you share a little bit more about you?

**Moni:** Yes. Well as you can probably tell from my accent you know I was not born in the United States. I was born in a country in South America that's called Ecuador, and it is on the equator, but we also have the Andes mountains going through it you know so people think since I was born on the equator that it was a hot zone, but because of the Andes mountains and the altitude the city that I grew up you know Quito, which is the capital city of Ecuador is actually very cold.

And the way that this ties into my Feng Shui journey and my journey as a teacher and a Feng Shui consultant is that when you're on the equator and so high up things don't... they don't match. Your reality doesn't match what you see in books, right? So, when you read a book, when you're learning science you learn about the four seasons, but there's no seasons because you're on the equator, and then when you look at all the science experiments, when you look at cook books and you try to apply recipes or those experiments they don't work exactly as written because of the altitude.

And so one of the things that I think marked my growing up experience was that I never took anything at face value, because I had these experiences, you know. I don't know if

maybe listeners can imagine, you know, the experience of getting a cook book and trying to follow a recipe and it doesn't work, or getting a science book and trying to do an experiment and it doesn't work. So, I grew up skeptical (laughs).

And then, you know, I studied architecture. I was always very interested in space, and one of the things I talk about in the book is when I was a child, you know, I had a wonderful maternal grandmother and she was constantly receiving visitors or visiting her friends and she would take me along with her and so I had this opportunity from a very, very young age to see this myriad of different kinds of homes and to compare, you know, the way the home was built, the way people decorated their homes, the way they display their photographs, what kind of art they chose, and to see how that matched the person. That always called my attention as a child, you know, I remember being three, four, five years old and noticing the similarities between the way people arrange their homes, and the clothes they wore, even the jewelry they put on themselves, and so I always had a very strong interest in space.

And because the city that I grew up in, you know, it was at some point a colonial, Spanish city and so there's an old area of the city, a historic center of the city where you have these buildings made from taipa, which is mud bricks, and or adobes, you know, the differences between those old houses built with these mud bricks and made the walls so thick and made the window sills so thick and then the experience to live in more of a modern part of town where the buildings were made with concrete, glass and, you know cement and metal and so I studied architecture when I had... was done studying architecture I got married and my husband he was born in the United States and he wanted to come live in the United States. We moved to the United States and then I figured out I would not be able to practice architecture and so it was a big shock because I you know I had gotten this knowing, intuition, this instinct that I needed to study architecture at some point in my life and then as soon as I graduated and moved to a country where I can't practice it, right? And so for a while I was like Ok what is going on?

And then I found Feng Shui, and I think the reason it was important for me to study architecture so I could have... I could have a more global understanding of Feng Shui, a more global understanding of space and bringing the two together, you know, the Western or Western way of building and designing space and this Eastern, ancient art of space that is mostly concerned with the way spaces feel, with the energy of the space and where they see that beauty is a consequence of getting the right energy.

**Aubree:** Awesome. So, what inspired you then to write *Room by Room*?

**Moni:** Well, you know, I've been doing Feng Shui for about twenty years and I've taught a lot of courses and I have actually written eight books prior to this that were text books so I had written a book on how to do Feng Shui, the space arrangement of your home. I had written a book on de-cluttering, a book on Feng Shui for business, Feng Shui for

landscaping, but I had never written an emotional book and I wanted to write a book that would not just teach the how of things, how to do this or how to do that. I wanted to have a book that spoke to the why it is important to care for the home, because you know **the home mirrors what we believe**. Every single object in your home, like if you look around, you know, right now everybody if you're in your home look around. Every single object that's in your home right now somebody chose to put it there, and so the home mirrors how you live and how you feel about life and what you think about life, but it's also true that if you learn Feng Shui, and you make changes to your space, your space can also change the way you think about life, the way you feel about life, and actually the way you live.

And so I wanted to write an emotional book but to express the importance of Feng Shui, the importance of space arrangement, the importance of being in control of what happens in the home and you know I thought I meditated for a long time on how to write this emotional book and I decided to write it through stories, to teach what should be done in the home through stories starting with the way my grandmother, who was a great lady of refinement, my maternal grandmother, the stories of how she kept every single room in the home, then the story of how my parents did it, which my parents were not as happy people as my grandmother was, and then to the story of how my husband and I are creating a happy home for our children and creating this happy family.

And so **happiness needs a place to live**. If you think about all the things that you want to do in life that you enjoy doing, right? If you love to eat then there needs to be a place at home where you can really enjoy your food. If you love to read there needs to be a few places in the home where you can cuddle with a book. If you love watching movies, playing games, you know whatever things you love to do, whatever things make up the happiness in your life there needs to be space in your home where that happens. So I told... I wrote this book telling the stories of three homes and four generations you know the home of my grandmother, the home of my parents, the home today, and then general advice on what you should do room by room. You know I'm fascinated with the stories, you know, the retelling these stories of my memory. I'm fascinated with the perspective Feng Shui gives me to see why my grandmother, my aunts and uncles, my great grandmother, my parents, why they lived in the way they lived. How they made their decisions and how that was expressed in the home, but also how the home influenced them.

**Aubree:** Awesome and I can definitely tell that there's a lot of emotions that are coming through in some of these stories that you share. One particular story that stood out for me was in the dining room, which the space about health and family and community. So, can you share more about how that space played a role in your life?

**Moni:** Yes. So, you know there's a... in Feng Shui we recognize nine life areas, and one of those life areas is called health, family and community and the room of the home where that life area is expressed is the dining room and so for ancient Chinese healing and ancient Chinese wisdom **how you eat is as important as what you eat**, and I see a lot of people today in the United States they may be having a perfect diet, you know, their nutrition is impeccable, but they eat it standing up, or they eat it, you know, sitting on a stool at the kitchen counter or watching TV or while they check their Facebook and different things and there's not... what has been lost is that sense of sacredness sharing a meal as a family.

And so when I was growing up I had this contrast between the home of my grandmother who was a very sociable person, you know, who was a person who devoted her energy to her family and who was happy and healthy, and the dining room of my parents, who were not sociable people and especially my father, who had a lot of issues, you know, he... his father never wanted to have anything to do with him and his mother was never attached to him very much so he grew up being raised by a grandmother and then after she died he went to a boarding school and he never got to develop a strong sense of family so when he got married and had a family he didn't know what to do with it, but the interesting thing is how that was expressed in the furniture.

So my grandmother always had a rectangular table with an extension and she loved having visitors and so she had the table, comfortable chairs, the china cabinet, you know, with the heirlooms that she had inherited from her ancestors with different types of china and crystal, things that helped her remember where she came from, her roots. She also had a buffet table, and when you sat at my grandmother's table, of course you had to use proper manners because that was really important to her, but there's always this active and engaging conversation.

So the act of sharing the meal with the family, the eating part was only half of it and the other half was the interrelation and you know I think that this is super interesting that a recent study followed people I think it was at Harvard and they looked at the students that were really successful in college and they tried to look at what were the common denominators of their upbringing that may have influenced that success in college. Number one common denominator was that the kids that were successful in college would actually sit with the family to have dinner and so that was the number one factor that was the common denominator that influenced success in college and so you can get this idea of how important it is because it is during meals that you get to know your family and they get to know you.

If... for listeners that have children, if you take your kids and you know go in the car and you want them to tell you about their lives or if you have them sit in the family room and start asking them questions about school, about their clubs and the children and teens they

clam up. They don't volunteer any information, but when you are having a meal, when you are eating, it's at the dining table that they originate the information. They actually offer the information. That's where you actually get to know your family and so the contrast, you know, the huge contrast was now seeing this beautifully arranged dining room where beautiful meals happen at my grandmother's home and then to see my parents, you know, my parents had a round table, which by the way is not a good table for families.

And so my father would say we have a round table for the same reason that King Arthur had a round table and that's because we are all equal here and he would say that children shouldn't be treated as lesser people. Children were just people in smaller bodies and they needed to be respected and so it sounded really good you know, even as I say it right now he sounds like such a good person. Such a great guy, but that was just something he said, you know, because in reality he was very abusive and he was very cruel.

And so our table, our dining room showed it, you know, for example the table was round and it was covered in Formica, because it was the seventies and Formica was in fashion, but the edges of the... of the table were really, really sharp and so if you ever rested your forearms on the table you would get a mark and the table would only accommodate four people, you know, there were rarely any guests and if we did have a guest or two it was very uncomfortable to sit at that table. There was never a china cabinet, never a buffet, never photos of the family.

You know the one thing that as a Feng Shui consultant when I go into a home, when I look at, what gives me information about the family are the photos and so how... how a family arranges photos tells a lot about how they relate with each other and so my parents, in my parent's house, for example, there were no photos of the family except in an album and so it was very interesting to see that you know and because part of health is not just eating healthy but how you eat and so when I was growing up I was constantly... I had a lot of issues, digestive issues since I was a teenager and I think a lot of that was that the conversation at the table wasn't happy and so my father would use meal times to lecture us and to try and teach us, teach things to us, but not in a good way, and so I was always afraid to sit at the table and that started to affect my digestive health and so there's this relationship in Feng Shui between the dining room and the decisions you make in the dining room and your health and how you connect with family, you know.

Family, when you come from a functional home, you know, not I mean you know every home is going to have some type of dysfunctionality. Nobody's perfect. Families are imperfect, but if you come from a home that is, was mostly functional, your family gives you strength. Whenever you go through problems in life you know that you can call your brother. You can call your sister. That if you have problems of any kind you can lean on your parents and so part of the strength, you know, the strength comes from your health, it

comes from your gene, but it also comes from your family. And so for people who have had that you know and I could see it in my aunts and uncles you know whenever even as adults they had problems they knew they could always go to my grandmother and they would always be received with love and they would always receive the help they needed, but I didn't have that, you know when you come from a dysfunctional family you don't have that strength to hold you up.

When I work with my clients you know I ask questions and I look at the messages their homes give me and I help them make simple changes so that by making a change in their space they can make a change in their life for the better.

**Aubree:** So how did that upbringing that you had with your father and some things that you wrote in the book especially in the dining room about you know food and being overweight, some of the things he said to you, like how did that change your relationship with food?

**Moni:** Most of the people in my nuclear family, in my extended family, most people were very slim, like they were genetically slim, like it's hard for them to gain weight. Ok. And I didn't get those genes and so I was never actually overweight. Certain times of my life you know like right before I started my teenage years, you know I got a little bit of chubby, you know like many kids do before they shot up and so I was never actually overweight but I wasn't slim like my mother or like my grandmother or like my aunts.

And so my father convinced me that I had a problem with obesity, because I had a little bit of a potbelly, you know, like my belly wasn't flat like my mom's and stuff and so he convinced me that I had a problem with obesity and he said it was latent obesity that was just not... you know it's like it was like saying like when a person has been an alcoholic and they stop drinking they're still an alcoholic. They're just not drinking right now and he said that was me and I was obese. I had these obesity problem and it wasn't showing because they were controlling my food and they were making me exercise and I was in essence obese.

You know he would say really cruel things. You know he would... I was sitting at the table since I was eight years old or so and he'd go, you know, he'd start with my hair, my eyes, my mouth and he'd like go over all my body telling me how it was horrible. He would say that I was subnormal and so for me you know I thought as a child I thought I was protecting myself like in my head I would say that's not true. He's wrong. That's not true. That's not true. And I just kept saying that in my mind and I thought I could protect myself from that but the cruel words he said, the false words he said,

And he convinced me that I was overweight. He convinced me that I had a problem. I had all these digestive problems, but also around age 14 I became bulimic, and I wasn't you know I

was probably at that age I was a little bit under five feet tall and I weighed a 107 pounds. So you know I just... just by looking at the numbers you know I did not have a problem with you know being overweight even, much less a problem with obesity.

But it was such a... the anxiety he planted in me during meals was such that I ended up being bulimic and so then when Karen Carpenter died of the Carpenters and they started talking about anorexia and bulimia, you know because I had never ever heard about eating disorders before and so when they talked about her death. They talked about all these eating disorders and I was like oh my gosh I have that. I am bulimic and so that was enough of a shock that it made me stop you know but my whole life I have had to struggle with this tendency that was planted in me by my parents of thinking that I am not worthy because my body doesn't look a certain way.

I'm a muscular person. I'm 51 now, and I work out a lot. I teach fitness classes on the side, and I'm fitter than I have ever been, and now I recognize you know I was never meant genetically to be a slim, little wee person (laughs) you know I'm muscular. I put on muscle easily, and so part of what was going on as they were making me miserable because of my body type, because they wanted me to look like my mother, who looked like a model, and they just tormented me and so when you berate a person while they're eating as they chew their food, as they swallow their food they're also swallowing the cruel words that someone's saying, and so you know just like in a healthy family environment in the dining room you know is where you have that sharing of food, the conversation, those words, those beautiful conversations that can happen and the strengthening of the family.

When you have an abusive person in the relationship in the family that abusive person is going to use the potential of the dining room for evil, in other words, right?

And so one thing that we do today you know I am amazed sometimes you know we're having... because my husband and I we both work from home. We get to have lunch... breakfast, lunch and dinner together most of the time and they're such happy times, you know, my children love our meal times and they love it because it's the time where they get to share their ideas you know their... share their things they're building, the books they are reading, and they have, they are great conversationalists. It's amazing to me to see them speak with this confidence because they know when they speak up they're going to be listened to, and that people are not going to ridicule them. People are not going to tell them to shut up. Everybody's going to listen to them. Everybody gets a turn to talk and so that's just amazing to me.

And one of the things that we need to do and one of the reasons that I wrote this book, *Room by Room: Feng Shui Secrets for a Happy Life*, is that I want people to learn how to record good memories over the bad. So if listeners and for some of the younger listeners this comparison may not make any sense, you know, but when I was growing up we had

cassette tapes, right? And so you could get a blank cassette tape and you could record music that you like from the radio or you could buy one that was already recorded and then when you get tired of the music on the cassette tape you could record over it and you didn't have to erase it and then record over it, you know, you could just go directly and record the new music that you like over the music you were tired of and what I have seen that is possible with Feng Shui, with the arranging of the home is that you can actually go room by room and you can record happy memories in every room of your home today and the recording of those happy memories will have the effect of erasing the bad memories.

**Aubree:** I love that. So how did you feel writing out some of these parts of your story like what emotions came up for you?

**Moni:** Well you know because I was... you know I was really lucky in that I found amazing healers in my twenties and so since I was 23 I found my next healer and then the next one, and the next one so I had worked on a lot of these issues before, you know, there wasn't... I know for some people because this book is part Feng Shui, part memoir. I know for a lot of people when they write their memoirs they... a lot of negative emotions come up and they get triggered and... but that wasn't the case for me, because I had done so much alternative healing and therapies, you know, a lot of those things had been handled.

The emotions that were surprising to me when writing the book was when I wrote the first draft of the book and I sent it to my editor to check and his feedback back was that some of the stories that I had to actually take out of the book because of his feedback was horror, and so he actually told me you need to take out these stories, because if you keep those stories people are not going to be able to connect to the Feng Shui and so the emotions that came up at that moment was seeing like oh my gosh you know like it was probably worse than what I think it was, because I hadn't even written some of the worst things that happened to me in the, you know, being raised in this dysfunctional home and still my editor was saying you have to take these things out and so I think sometimes and when you tell your story and you see the reactions from other people it gives you a dimension of how bad things were or how good things were in certain ways, right?

And so the... it was... I felt a little bit shocked if I hadn't gone through all the healing that I have gone through all these years I think I probably could have been triggering myself by writing the stories, but I think that the most interesting thing of writing the stories was a feeling of liberation. Somehow like getting the memories out of my head and putting them on paper make them less daunting.

And sometimes you know there's healing in just calling things what they are, and what I see with a lot of my clients, you know, because I offer a number of online courses and I offer courses room by room. Every room is connected to something so as I said the dining room is health, family and community. The kitchen is related to wealth. The bedrooms of children



are related to creativity and the master bedroom is related to love and relationships. The family or living room is related to social life and reputation and so when I work with people in their dining rooms a lot of issues around their families come up and many times there is a need for forgiveness, you know, this need for forgiveness arrives and what I do with my clients, you know, we work on the dining room we work with photographs to assist forgiveness. So this may sound for some people if they have a story of abuse. The person who raised them was very cruel to them. They don't keep a photo of them and that actually makes the situation worse.

And so I help people do for their dining rooms they set up like these collages of photos, but they're very specific, you know, you have to have a photo of your nuclear family today, the one that you are creating and it has to be a certain size and then one side you put the photos of the extended family, your original nuclear family of when you were a child and especially with parents and grandparents when there has been dysfunctionality or there has been abuse it is very important that people do keep a photo of them, you know, I had a client that I had she had been terribly abused by both of her parents, so she couldn't keep a photo of them and so finally I convinced her you know put a very little photo of them in your dining area and so I work clients in these kinds of... it's kind of **Feng Shui is healing from the outside in.**

So by putting things on your walls or making the decisions about colors, by choosing the images of the photos you put anywhere in the home but specifically for family in the dining room there's a profound healing that happens, and so for example I was working with a student on her dining room and forgiveness and to strengthen her family, health and family life area and she gave me this feedback. She said when I started this program my hope was to stop feeling angry at my mother all the time, but what has happened is that I actually feel tenderness towards her again, which I thought was something that would never happen and you know speaking about all the emotions that come up there is this liberation from putting things on paper and there's this liberation in calling things what they are.

And so some... some of my clients the reason they have such a hard time with forgiveness is because they cannot call things what they are. They'll say things like well my parents they did the best they could but... and the truth is if you explore a little, if you ask a few key questions their parents they didn't actually do the best they could, you know, they weren't even doing a half way job, but being able to call things what they were, being able to say, you know, my mother was abusive or my father neglected me, or my grandmother preferred my brother or whatever it was, being able to say the things that happened is very healing in itself because you can only heal and forgive the truth, you know, you cannot heal and forgive your interpretation of things. You can only heal and forgive the truth. I hope that makes sense?

**Aubree:** It's so true, and I can tell as... reading the stories that you've written I can see how you've in a way, you know, re-written that history in the way that you're raising your family that's reflected. I can tell by the stories in the book so I think that's beautiful.

**Moni:** Yeah (laughs).

**Aubree:** So Moni how can people get a copy of the book and find out more about you?

**Moni:** Well yeah I have a web site and blog and that's www dot and then the number nine, the word steps, the number two, and then Feng Shui, which is F-E-N-G-S-H-U-I .com so it's 9steps2fengshui.com. So nine, the number nine, steps, the number two, Feng Shui .com, and that's my website and blog and if they go there there's going to be a link there that says new book *Room by Room* and they can click on that to get forwarded to where they can get the information about the book.

The book is published September 26<sup>th</sup> and when it comes out it's first going to be released as a Kindle book and for the first 48 hours it's going to have a discounted rate so it's just going to be 99 cents to buy the book on Kindle and for the first 50 people to purchase the book they are actually going to receive a whole year of free access to my members only site, you know, which is an awesome deal for one dollar to get all this.

So they go to my website it's 9steps2fengshui.com and there's going to be a pop up window and you can enter your email your name there to receive the free life areas map that I offer and some videos on basic information on Feng Shui, and they can click on the link that says new book *Room by Room* and there's going to be a little icon at the top part of the web site too on the right and they can click on the book and that's how they can get the book or contact me.

**Aubree:** Excellent. Well thank you so much for coming on the show today and sharing some of your wisdom, and sharing so openly in the book I did find it to be quite helpful. I encourage the listeners out there to definitely pick it up on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Moni:** Thank you so much, and **I think it's important for people to know that they can control their own destiny by doing something so simple and so easy as putting love into their home.**

**Aubree:** That's beautiful. Well thank you again for coming on today.

**Moni:** Thank you.

**Aubree:** If you enjoyed this episode, I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. If you want to connect with me further you can find me at [peacewithendo.com](http://peacewithendo.com) or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. I hope that you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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