

Susan Shehata, also known as the Space Guru, assists clients in transforming the space around and the space within, through feng shui, music, holistic healing and spiritual coaching. She is a holistic healing professional, producer, musician, columnist and radio personality. Her life's mission is to use her voice as a vocalist, writer, speaker and healer to assist in global transformation.

Sunny: Susan, first of all, thank you so much for sharing your talents with us at Normandale and our students. We are excited to work with you! Tell us a little about yourself!

Susan: I am a holistic wellness consultant and educator who works with clients with feng shui, holistic healing and spiritual coaching in both their home and life to create positive shifts. I am also a performing artist.

Sunny: You have been a feng shui consultant for some years now, what initially interested you in Feng Shui?

Susan: As a performing artist, I had sought another professional outlet to my creativity as well as a way to assist others in a holistic manner. I had always enjoyed working with space, design and décor. I already had a BFA in theatrical design, which I received while getting my BFA in performance. A friend suggested that I consider feng shui. I was very reluctant at first, which, I joke, is a definite sign that it's a perfect fit. So, I was really just combining my interests, skills and background in a new way. It would be several more years before my work as a feng shui practitioner would lead me into more expansive work as an all-around holistic wellness provider.

Sunny: Who has been your most influential role-model in your health and wellness journey and why?

Susan: Oh...so many! I can't pick just one, as they have influenced different aspects of my journey that now fit together to form the big picture. There are several master healers and teachers, in the yogic and Sufi traditions, that have laid the foundation of my journey. Then there are some of the pioneers of energy healing, such as Louise Hay and Caroline Myss. Healing and spiritual teachers that I have worked with personally, such as Dr. Ibrahim Jaffe, Leonard Orr, Sondra Ray and Paula Kuether. And equally important, personal friends who are amazing healers and teachers, such as local chiropractor, Dr. Rhys Preston, and my good friend and colleague, Colleen Buckman. Together, this team of professionals have taught me so much about my own well-being, as well as given me the tools to assist others in profound ways. I am very grateful to all of them and the many, many others I did not list, all of whom have greatly impacted my life and therefore the lives of all my clients.

Sunny: I think that it is hard for people to read a brochure and understand what they will "experience" when they sign up for a course. Is there something that you could tell the readers about yourself that would help us understand your style and approach to teaching and learning?

Susan: My approach is to meet people wherever they are on their journey. Sometimes I work with people whose knowledge on healing and/or feng shui is advanced, and other times I am introducing basic concepts, such as that there is an unseen energy in our homes and our bodies

that we affect and affects us. Either way, I love asking and answering questions that will leave people with new insights about their spaces and therefore their lives. My classes are casual and fun! After all, I have a background in improvisational comedy, which I guess means that you can yell out a suggestion about your bedroom and I will solve your relationship issues and do a funny scene about them, all at the same time. I won't even charge you extra.

Sunny: You also have a feng shui class coming on the 26th: “Is There a Glass Ceiling in My House? Feng Shui for Your Life Path.” Can you give the “Readers Digest” version of what to expect if they take this course?

Susan: This class is all about identifying and understanding both your career and life path goals as well as how to tell the difference between the two. Your home has so many answers to the very questions that may be troubling you. I will teach you how to use your home as a tool to both identify where you are blocked personally and professionally, as well as support your goals. You will leave the class with the knowledge and insight to begin making changes in your home that will push you forward with both your career and life goals.

Sunny: We are in an exciting time where health care and self-care are not only about managing blood pressure and lowering cholesterol. Holistic care is becoming much more mainstream and offers a much broader array of options. Is there anything that you are particularly excited about regarding integrative health and wellness? What's your vision for 5 years from now?

Susan: I am excited that more and more people have decided to “wake up” to how they are co-creating their own reality. There is so much personal suffering happening that could be alleviated by making conscious choices about our lives. Many people have felt so powerless in their life, but are now deciding that they can shift their reality by taking concrete steps toward wellness. And because of that, more and more wellness choices become available to meet the growing demands. I love that! When I began this work ten years ago, most people couldn't pronounce feng shui and certainly didn't want to talk about the “energy” in their home or body and how it is impacting their health. But, now I get way less weird looks. Well, at least when I am talking about healing.

In five years, my vision is that integrative wellness is covered by insurance so that people are not as limited to traditional medicine when they budget their wellness options. I envision a time when all people truly understand the relationship between their emotional and spiritual well-being and how that affects their physical health.

Sunny: I'm sure you have had many client experiences in the work that you do, can you share any one experience that was life-changing?

Susan: Immediately I think of one client in particular. She was a feng shui and wellness client. When she first came to me, she had fibromyalgia, anxiety/depression, asthma, and a variety of

life questions and challenges. Everyone needs a personal entry point into healing. Meaning that every person may need a different angle to approach their wellness; some will begin with dietary changes, others will start with talk therapy, and others take an energetic healing approach. Most people need a variety of techniques to assist them, but they won't always be open to everything they need right away. My job is to help people walk towards their healing goals, one step at a time, helping to lead them towards what they are ready for at any given time. This client definitely needed to address dietary changes to support her health, but she was not willing to even consider them. But, after tackling things from an energetic, emotional and spiritual angle, through her home and body, this client progressed into not only approaching her whole life differently but by making major shifts in both diet and exercise (with the help of a nutritional counselor). She now has no fibromyalgia or asthma symptoms, and her anxiety and depression are rarely triggered. We are talking about someone who found it difficult to get up off the couch, and needed steroids to breathe. She no longer needs the asthma meds and she is running for fun. That's progress.

My added question:

Sunny: I notice that you talk a lot about wellness in a broad way versus focusing on feng shui. Is that because you are also a holistic wellness practitioner? Do you have a preference between working with space and working with individuals?

Susan: To me, it is all the same work. Whether I am working with someone in their home or doing the other holistic wellness sessions I provide, my goal is to help them identify and dissolve patterns that are keeping them from achieving their highest goals.

Sunny: The fall season is full of hustle, bustle and stress. Any suggestions about how to manage the stress more effectively?

Susan: Turn off your television. Take a walk. Seriously. I eliminated my television from my home almost ten years ago. I overheard the news the other day at my mechanic's, and they were discussing the West Nile virus. The commentator said, "Should we be afraid?" He didn't ask about what we can do to be smart about prevention, but rather focused on fear. The media is notorious for spreading fear. By all means, seek out information that keeps you informed and up to date. But, having the TV on throughout the day, often without anyone even intentionally watching it, is just adding chaotic energy to your home and life.

Sunny: So, this is an odd question but a fun one. If you were to win the lottery, what would you do with the proceeds?

Susan: I would like to pretend that I would do something fun, but the truth is that my first reaction would be about the responsibility of having all that money and spending it well. After I got over that, I would travel more. Having that cushion would give me the comfort to pursue all of my creative goals without so much deliberation. I would also be philanthropic, focusing on organizations that support creativity and basic human rights.

Sunny: Susan, thank you for talking with us, again, we are incredibly excited to work with you. I can't wait to experience your class coming up.

Susan: Thanks Sunny!