

Diamonds are forever

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OK so lets face it. Death. None of us like to think about what may happen when we die and it's hardly a go-to topic when you get home after a long day. To some, or maybe even most, it may seem incredibly morbid to think about the end of our lives.

For probate lawyers we spend an awful lot of time trying to get people to contemplate their own mortality and ensure they've put, at the very least, basic Wills in place. And don't get me wrong, it is exceptionally important. If you die without a Will, your family can face all sorts of unnecessary complications, stress and expense.

But thinking about what happens when we die however isn't just about the assets that we leave behind.

Increasingly the human race is coming up with more and more alternative ways to deal with our mortal remains. Now we know this subject seems a bit gruesome but we're pretty sure from experience that it's probably peaked your interest.

Marilyn Monroe famously said that, "diamonds are a girl's best friend" and, let's face it, who doesn't love a bit of bling. But, macabre as it may be, there are now companies which mean those diamonds could also be your grandma, uncle or beloved pet too.

Using high heat and compression underground, a little chemistry can now turn your loved ones ashes into diamonds. Whilst it takes around 11 pounds of ash to make just one diamond, in the US one individual's ashes were reportedly made into nine diamonds for their family to wear.

Whilst I'm not sure that it's something I really buy into, (I think I'm more a fan of Breakfast at Tiffany's than "Cremorials"), it is a trend that's on the up, with an estimated 800 - 900 people in the last few years asking to have their remains dealt with in this way. And as they say, diamonds are forever.

For the environmentally friendly amongst us, "promession" is something which some people may have heard of but which hasn't had a lot of press. For those with green fingers, this is an environmentally friendly method by which your body can be turned into an organic powder, buried into top soil, eventually decomposing into compost. Yes, that's right, fertilizer. You could literally be pushing up the daisies.

In another twist on eco friendly burials, a few years ago two imaginative designers created egg shaped burial pods made from biodegradable plastic which could be buried under the ground, a tree seed planted on top, and over time... well, let's say, that seed would grow creating forests instead of cemeteries.

And it doesn't stop there. Burial at sea? Being shot out of a firework? How about your ashes being painted into a masterpiece to be hung above the family fireplace? Being sent into space (usual we know, but the director of Star Trek and other famous astronomers, who shall remain nameless, are all rumoured to have selected this).

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So perhaps planning for death is something that doesn't always have to seem so morbid. We've taken a light-hearted approach to a serious issue and one that we know, and see on a daily basis, is very distressing for families and almost always the first question that we get asked when a loved one has passed away. When making your Will you can include your thoughts and wishes on how you would like your funeral, burial, cremation (or other) to be and that can often prove to be just as valuable as the other assets which you've left behind.

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