

CREATING CRYSTALS FROM HUMAN ASHES

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We all lose loved ones, and naturally, we want to preserve the memory of those dear to our hearts. But here's the dilemma: traditional burial methods tie you to a specific location, while urns containing ashes risk being spilled. What if I told you that you could always carry a part of your loved one on your finger?

Creating crystals from human ashes is the most innovative way to memorialize someone special. "To understand how memorial diamonds are made, it's essential to grasp the basics of human biology. The human body consists of 92 unique elements. However, only four key elements are considered fundamental to its composition: oxygen (65%), carbon (18.5%), hydrogen (9.5%), and nitrogen (3.2%)" [1].

Cremated remains contain approximately 3-4% carbon, which forms the basis of the future crystal. Currently, there are two methods for growing these diamonds: HPHT (High-Pressure High-Temperature) and CVD (Chemical Vapor Deposition) [2]. HPHT mimics natural diamond formation, compressing carbon at over 2,500°F and 1.5 million psi. Alternatively, CVD breaks down carbon-rich gases in a vacuum chamber, allowing carbon atoms to crystallize on a substrate. Both methods require weeks to months, depending on desired crystal size and quality. Resultant crystals are faceted and polished by gemologists to enhance brilliance, they give them different shapes, like the ones shown in Fig. 1.



Figure 1 – Types of crystal faceting shapes

What do the resulting crystals look like? The finished diamond is 1-1.8 carats in size. “Blue-toned diamonds are most common, due to the presence of boron in the ashes. Much like the autobiographical uniqueness of the individuals whose ashes are used, each diamond’s color is one-of-a-kind (you can see it in Fig. 2), ranging from deep black to completely transparent, without any intermediate shades” [3].



Figure 2 – Possible crystal colors

These crystals can be used in jewelry or to adorn tableware and figurines. Currently, pendants are the most popular choice, as they create a sense that a part of the loved one remains close to the heart.

Of course, ethical questions arise. In response, one can ask: Do you know how much land is currently occupied by cemeteries? How much harm is caused by plastic wreaths and other non-biodegradable memorial items that linger for centuries? Wouldn't you prefer to become a beautiful heirloom for your loved ones after death, rather than decomposing in the ground or sitting in an urn? Memorial diamonds are also practical: they're unbreakable, require no maintenance, and can stay with you always. As an aspiring jeweler, I am deeply inspired by this idea and believe it deserves global recognition and widespread adoption.

References

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